



Constitution of The St John's Society

2026

St John's, Lewisham, London SE8 • est. 1998



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1. Name

The Society is called The St John's Society ("the Society").

2. Definitions

A few terms are used throughout this Constitution with a specific meaning:

- **Member** — a resident of the St John's area (see Annex A) who has joined the Society. Membership is free and open to all eligible residents.
- **Officer** — one of the five elected roles: Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Communications Officer.
- **Committee** — the Society's governing body: the five Officers plus up to 12 other elected Committee members. All Committee members can vote on Committee business.
- **Volunteer** — someone who helps with activities without becoming a Member. Volunteers are welcome at meetings and can speak, but don't vote or hold a governance role.
- **Working Group** — a group formed to deliver a specific project, led by an elected Committee member, open to Members and Volunteers.
- **Areas of Interest** — the topics the Society focuses on (listed in Section 8b). The Committee can update this list at any time without amending this Constitution.
- **SJS** — The St John's Society.

3. Purpose

To promote, protect and enhance the character of the St John's area and the well-being of its community, as a positive, vibrant and healthy place to live and work.

The St John's Society is a not-for-profit, unincorporated membership organisation, and may seek and receive funds in pursuit of this purpose.

4. Our Values

These values guide how the Society works, engages with the community, and makes decisions:

- **Community** — bringing people together and strengthening local connections.
- **Inclusivity** — welcoming everyone and valuing diverse perspectives.
- **Stewardship** — caring for our environment, heritage and public spaces.
- **Collaboration** — working with others to achieve positive change.
- **Action** — turning ideas into tangible improvements for the community.

5. Strategy

Each year the Society will agree a strategy with its members, setting out its priorities and a workplan. The Committee will make its policies and actions available to members.

The Society will aim to:

- Build relationships between the community, the council, public utilities, agencies and other local groups.
- Act as a voice for maintaining and improving parks, recreational areas and the built environment.
- Hold public meetings from time to time to involve the community.
- Gather local opinions and share up-to-date information on matters affecting the area.

6. Membership

All residents of the St John's area (see Annex A) are eligible to become Members and to receive Society communications.

- Membership is free and open to all eligible residents. Apply via a short form on the Society's website (name, address, confirmation of eligibility), which sends an automatic acknowledgement. The Secretary adds new Members to the list within 14 days, unless there are grounds for refusal. People can also apply in person at any meeting, with help from a Committee member.
- People who don't live in the St John's area can also apply; the Committee decides these applications at its discretion.
- Volunteers helping with a Working Group are encouraged, but not required, to become Members.
- Members are asked to support the Society's purpose and to follow this Constitution.
- The Secretary may refuse an application that doesn't meet the conditions above; any refusal is reported to the next Committee meeting.
- The Committee may revoke a Member's membership where, for example, they: no longer live in the area (and haven't been approved as a non-resident Member); gave false information when applying; have acted in a way that damages the Society's reputation; have been discriminatory, abusive, harassing or bullying towards anyone connected with the Society; have seriously or repeatedly breached the Safeguarding or Equal Opportunities policies; or have misused the Society's name or channels without authorisation.
- If a concern is raised that could lead to revocation, the Committee may suspend the Member's rights while it looks into it — in writing, stating why, for no more than 60 days, and handled confidentially. Suspension isn't a finding of wrongdoing.
- Anyone facing suspension or revocation will be told the reasons in writing and given a chance to respond before a final decision is made. A Committee member involved in the matter steps back from the discussion and decision.
- A Member can resign at any time by telling the Secretary.
- The Society will periodically ask Members to confirm they want to stay on the list; anyone who doesn't respond will lapse.

- The Secretary keeps membership records electronically, in line with data protection law.
- Only Committee members may speak or act officially on the Society's behalf, unless the Committee has authorised someone else to do so.

7. Meetings

- Meetings are open to all Members and Volunteers to attend and speak, including the section of the agenda covering Committee business. Only Committee members can vote on Committee business; only Members can vote at the AGM and Special Meetings.
- To vote at an AGM or Special Meeting, or to stand for the Committee, a Member must have attended at least one meeting of the Society in the previous 12 months (or be attending the meeting at which they wish to vote or stand).
- The Committee may invite guests to speak on matters of interest to the Society.
- An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held each year, no later than 15 months after the last one, to receive the Annual Report and Accounts and to elect Officers and Committee members.
- Ordinary meetings are held at least 3 times a year, covering: Committee reports; open discussion of member topics; and any other business.
- Any Member can propose an agenda item in writing (email or WhatsApp) at least 7 days before a meeting, via the Secretary.
- Minutes and relevant papers are published on the website.
- Notice of all meetings — ordinary, Special and AGM — is given to Members at least 14 days in advance, by email, WhatsApp, social media and/or the website, and is also publicised more widely to local residents through the same channels and local notice boards, with the time and venue.
- Meetings can be held virtually, with clear joining details (including any codes or passwords) provided in the notice.
- A Special Meeting can be called in writing by Members representing at least 20% of the membership, or by the Committee in special circumstances.
- Quorum: at least 6 Members for the AGM or a Special Meeting; at least 5 Committee members (including at least 2 Officers) for a Committee meeting.
- If a meeting isn't quorate within 30 minutes of its start time, it's adjourned and reconvened within 28 days, on notice given in the same way as the original meeting; business at the reconvened meeting can proceed with whoever is present.
- Votes are decided by a simple majority of those present and eligible to vote on the matter (abstentions aren't counted either way). The Chairperson has the casting vote if tied.
- All meeting are formalised afterwards by written minutes of meeting, which are to be reviewed, approved and shared with the wider community.

8. Organisation

- The Chairperson invites nominations for the Committee at least 14 days before the AGM, by email to Members.
- Nominations go to the Secretary in writing, at least 2 working days before the AGM, specifying whether the nomination is for a named Officer role or as a general Committee member.
- The Committee is elected at the AGM and consists of at least: Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer, and up to 12 further Committee members who lead ongoing business or agreed activities for the year. Officers and Committee members are elected for a one-year term, running from the AGM at which they're elected until the next AGM, and may stand for re-election with no limit on the number of terms.
- Nominations are published on the website before the AGM, and results within 28 days after.
- The Committee can co-opt people from the membership to fill vacancies between AGMs.
- Working Groups are the main way the Society delivers projects — see Section 8b.
- The Committee meets at least 3 times a year, in addition to the AGM.

8a. Committee Responsibilities

- Committee members act in good faith, in the Society's best interests, and in line with this Constitution.
- Where possible, Committee members attend at least 2 of 3 ordinary meetings a year and one AGM every two years. The Society recognises everyone is a volunteer with their own commitments — if attendance slips consistently, the Secretary will check in supportively.
- If someone can't keep up their role over a sustained period, the Chairperson will have a private conversation about whether stepping down from the Committee — while remaining a Member — is the right move.
- A Committee member can resign at any time by telling the Secretary; this doesn't affect their membership. The Committee can co-opt a replacement.
- As a last resort, where a Committee member persistently fails their duties, breaches this Constitution, or seriously damages the Society, the Committee can remove them by majority vote — after written notice and a chance to respond. This doesn't automatically affect their membership.
- If a Working Group Lead doesn't report on or progress their project without good reason, the Committee can reassign it, after giving them a chance to explain.

8b. Areas of Interest and Working Groups

- Areas of Interest reflect local priorities and are a reference point, not a limit. The Committee can add, remove or amend them at any time without a constitutional amendment. Current Areas of Interest: Greening; Planning; Arts & Culture; Transport; Waste & Recycling; Health and Wellbeing.
- Any Member or Volunteer can get involved in an Area of Interest — no election or formal appointment needed.
- Working Groups pursue specific projects, agreed by the Committee at its final ordinary meeting of the year and led by an elected Committee member accountable to the Committee. They're open to Members and Volunteers alike. The year's project list is published on the website; groups wind up when the project's finished or the year ends, unless renewed.

- Working Group Leads report on progress at each ordinary meeting.
- Working Groups can seek funding (grants, sponsorship, proposals to the Committee) but can't commit the Society's funds or make commitments on its behalf unless the Committee has delegated that. The Treasurer should be told about any funding applications.

Areas of Interest	Focus
Greening	Green and blue spaces, trees, planting, biodiversity and the natural environment; stewardship and community use of Friendly Gardens and local green spaces; watering of plants and trees; SuDS maintenance; urban greening and habitat improvement; and advocacy for the protection and enhancement of local green infrastructure.
Planning	Local planning applications, development and the built environment; monitoring and responding to planning consultations; design quality and streetscape; conservation and heritage assets; housing and mixed-use development; and engagement with the Local Plan.
Arts & Culture	Arts, culture, heritage and creative life in the community; public art and murals; local history and archives; support for community events, performances and exhibitions; celebrating local artists and makers; and preservation of culturally significant buildings and spaces.
Transport	Public transport, cycling, e-bikes, walking and road safety; trains and rail connectivity; cycle infrastructure and secure parking; pavement condition and accessibility; traffic calming and low-traffic measures; bus routes and connectivity; and advocacy for safer streets and crossings.
Waste & Recycling	Reducing waste, recycling and environmental sustainability; fly-tipping and litter; bin provision and collection services; repair, reuse and sharing initiatives; food waste reduction; and campaigning for improved local waste infrastructure.
Health and Wellbeing	Physical and mental health, wellbeing and active community life; community spaces and gathering places; social isolation and community connection; sport, leisure and green exercise; access to and maintenance of local parks and open spaces, including Friendly Gardens; air quality and environmental health; and support for vulnerable and elderly residents.

8c. Affiliated Community Groups

- The Society can recognise and support independent local groups whose aims align with its own. They remain independent, are not part of the Society, and the Society isn't liable for their activities.
- Currently recognised: The Brookmill Road Local Nature Reserve; the St Johns Station Users Group; That Place in the Park; Community Collective. The Committee can update this list at any time.
- The Committee appoints a named Liaison for each group, co-opted onto the Committee for that role, who reports on the group's activities at ordinary meetings.
- Current Liaisons are listed on the website and can change without a constitutional amendment.

- Support can include shared communications channels, promotion, help with funding applications, and representation with the council and coordinated to keep a consistent local voice.
- Recognition doesn't make a group or its members part of the Society, or give them a vote. Individuals can join as Members in the usual way (Section 6).

Current as at adoption date. For the up-to-date list of Liaisons, see the Society's website.

8d. Communications, Growth and Funding

- Growing membership, encouraging Volunteers, and finding funding is a shared responsibility across the whole Committee and is not one person's job alone.
- Committee members are expected to contribute content about their work for the website and social media, via the Communications Officer.
- Routine content (Working Group updates, event notices, meeting reminders) is approved by the Communications Officer. Official statements or positions on public matters also need the Chairperson's sign-off first.
- The Committee agrees communications priorities each year alongside the work plan.

8e. Community Events

- Planning and running community events is a shared Committee responsibility, in keeping with the Society's values and purpose.
- Any Committee member can propose an event; once the Committee agrees it, a named lead is accountable for delivery.
- Events are published and kept up to date on the website.
- Event spending needs Committee agreement in advance and follows the procurement rules in Section 11.

8f. Brand and Merchandise

- The Society's name, logo and visual identity belong to the Society and are controlled by the Committee. Nobody uses them without the Chairperson's approval.
- Merchandise or marketing materials need Committee agreement before ordering, and sign-off from the Chairperson and Communications Officer on designs. Spending and any income follow Section 11 and are promoted via the website.

9. Additional Powers

Acting only in line with its purpose and this Constitution, the Committee can also:

- Raise, manage and use funds for the Society's purposes — except taking out loans, buying property, or speculative investments.
- Use funds to buy indemnity insurance for members and elected officers, where reasonable and necessary.

- Pursue registering the Society as a legally incorporated entity, if and when that's needed.

10. Amendments

- This Constitution can be amended by a two-thirds majority of Members present and eligible to vote, at the AGM or a Special Meeting. The proposed wording is circulated to Members at least 14 days before the meeting, alongside the meeting notice.
- This Constitution was approved and adopted at a Special Meeting dated 31st August 2026.

11. Finance

- The financial year runs from 1 February to 31 January.
- The Treasurer keeps accurate accounts of income and expenditure and presents an Annual Report and Accounts to the AGM.
- Accounts cover all Society activity, including funds held or spent by Working Groups or Areas of Interest.
- Any Society bank account needs two Committee-member signatories to authorise a payment or withdrawal.
- Before any purchase, get at least three quotes and have both the Chairperson and Treasurer approve the purchase before ordering or spending.

12. Conflicts of Interest

- A Committee member with a personal, financial or family interest in a matter must declare it as soon as it comes up.
- They then step back from discussing or voting on that matter, unless the rest of the Committee agrees their involvement is fine.
- Declared interests are recorded in the meeting minutes.

13. Dissolution

- The Society can be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of Members present and eligible to vote, at a Special Meeting called for that purpose.
- Any funds or assets left after debts are settled won't be shared among Members — they'll go to one or more local not-for-profit organisations with similar purposes, as agreed by Members at the dissolution meeting.

14. Communications

- The website, social media accounts, email addresses and other official channels belong to the Society; the Committee controls them regardless of who holds the login details.
- Current social media channels include platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and X and the Committee decides which platforms to use and can change this at any time without amending this Constitution.
- The Communications Officer oversees the website and social media day to day, keeps a record of all account logins and domain details, and shares it with the Committee on request.
- Anyone stepping down from a role with channel access, hands over all logins within 14 days.
- Content posted as the Society must be accurate, on purpose (Section 3), respectful and non-discriminatory.
- Personal views on personal accounts shouldn't be presented as the Society's position.
- The Society follows data protection law across all its channels.
- The website is the primary, definitive source for notices, minutes, policies and decisions. Social media, WhatsApp, notice boards and email support and point back to it, rather than standing alone as the record.
- Email is used for formal notices and individual correspondence, not as the main way of reaching everyone.
- An email is sent four times a year, ahead of each planned meeting, setting out the agenda and attaching the minutes of the previous meeting.
- The Society has two main WhatsApp groups. The SJS Committee Group is for Committee members only, used for day-to-day coordination between meetings. The SJS Volunteer & Members Group includes Committee members together with non-voted-in 'members' and 'volunteers' and is used for wider Society updates and discussion.
- Neither WhatsApp group replaces formal decision-making. Matters requiring a Committee decision are still decided at a meeting, in line with Section 7.
- Further WhatsApp groups may support specific Areas of Interest or Working Group activity, open to Members and Volunteers. Being in any WhatsApp group doesn't make you a Member or give you a vote.
- The Society also administers a Community WhatsApp Group, open to anyone within St Johns, to promote wider communication across the area. It covers general chitchat, notifications, and an opportunity for people to sell or give away items. Being in this group doesn't make you a Member or give you a vote.

15. Safeguarding

The Society is committed to the safety and wellbeing of everyone who takes part in its activities, including children and vulnerable adults, across all events, meetings and activities it runs or supports.

- The Committee names a Safeguarding Lead, responsible for keeping the Safeguarding Policy up to date and being the first point of contact for concerns.
- The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed at least annually, kept in line with current law and guidance, and published on the website.
- Anyone with a safeguarding concern should report it promptly to the Safeguarding Lead — or, if it concerns the Safeguarding Lead, to the Chairperson.

- Concerns are recorded and handled under the Safeguarding Policy, and referred to the authorities where needed.
- The Society takes reasonable steps to ensure anyone responsible for activities involving children or vulnerable adults has the right checks and training.

16. Equal Opportunities

The Society won't unlawfully discriminate against anyone on the grounds of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation).

- This applies to membership, taking part in activities, joining the Committee, and involvement in Working Groups, Areas of Interest and Affiliated Groups.
- The Committee actively promotes equality and diversity, and works to make the Society accessible to as many in the community as possible.
- Anyone who believes they've faced discrimination can raise a complaint under Section 18.

17. Officer Roles and Responsibilities

The five elected Officers carry these responsibilities but are not limited to and on top of the general duties that apply to all Committee members.

Chairperson

- Chairs Committee meetings, the AGM and Special Meetings, keeping them efficient, fair and constitutional.
- Acts as the Society's main spokesperson with external bodies, the council and the media, unless this is delegated.
- Presents an Annual Report to the AGM.
- Holds the casting vote on a tie.

Deputy Chairperson

- Steps in for the Chairperson whenever they're absent, unable to act, or have declared a conflict of interest and taking on all the Chairperson's responsibilities and powers, including the casting vote, for that time.
- Otherwise fulfils the general duties of a committee member and supports the Chairperson.
- If the Chairperson can't fulfil their role over a sustained period, the Deputy Chairperson takes over until the Chairperson returns or a replacement is elected.

Secretary

- Keeps the Society's official records, including this Constitution, minutes and correspondence.
- Issues meeting notices, prepares agendas with the Chairperson, and circulates papers in advance.
- Takes and distributes minutes, and ensures approved minutes go on the website.

- Handles official correspondence on the Society's behalf.
- Maintains membership records in line with Section 6 and data protection law.
- Processes applications, resignations and renewals, and reports membership numbers to the Committee.

Treasurer

- Keeps accurate, up-to-date accounts in line with Section 11.
- Reports on finances at each ordinary Committee meeting, and presents the Annual Report and Accounts to the AGM.
- Ensures bank accounts are run in line with Section 11 and all payments are properly authorised.
- Liaises with the Society's accountant or auditor and ensures accounts are independently examined each year before the AGM.

Communications Officer

- Makes sure messaging across the Society's channels is consistent, and that the resources needed to deliver communications activities are in place.
- Website management sits with an elected Committee member, who keeps it accurate, current and web-first (Section 14).
- Manages the Society's social media, signposting back to the website.
- Oversees the WhatsApp groups and other community messaging channels.
- Supports Working Groups and the Committee in communicating their activities.
- Keeps a record of account logins and digital access, handing these over to the Committee on request or on leaving the role.
- Ensures the membership form is easy to find on the website and encourages Working Group volunteers to become Members.

18. Complaints

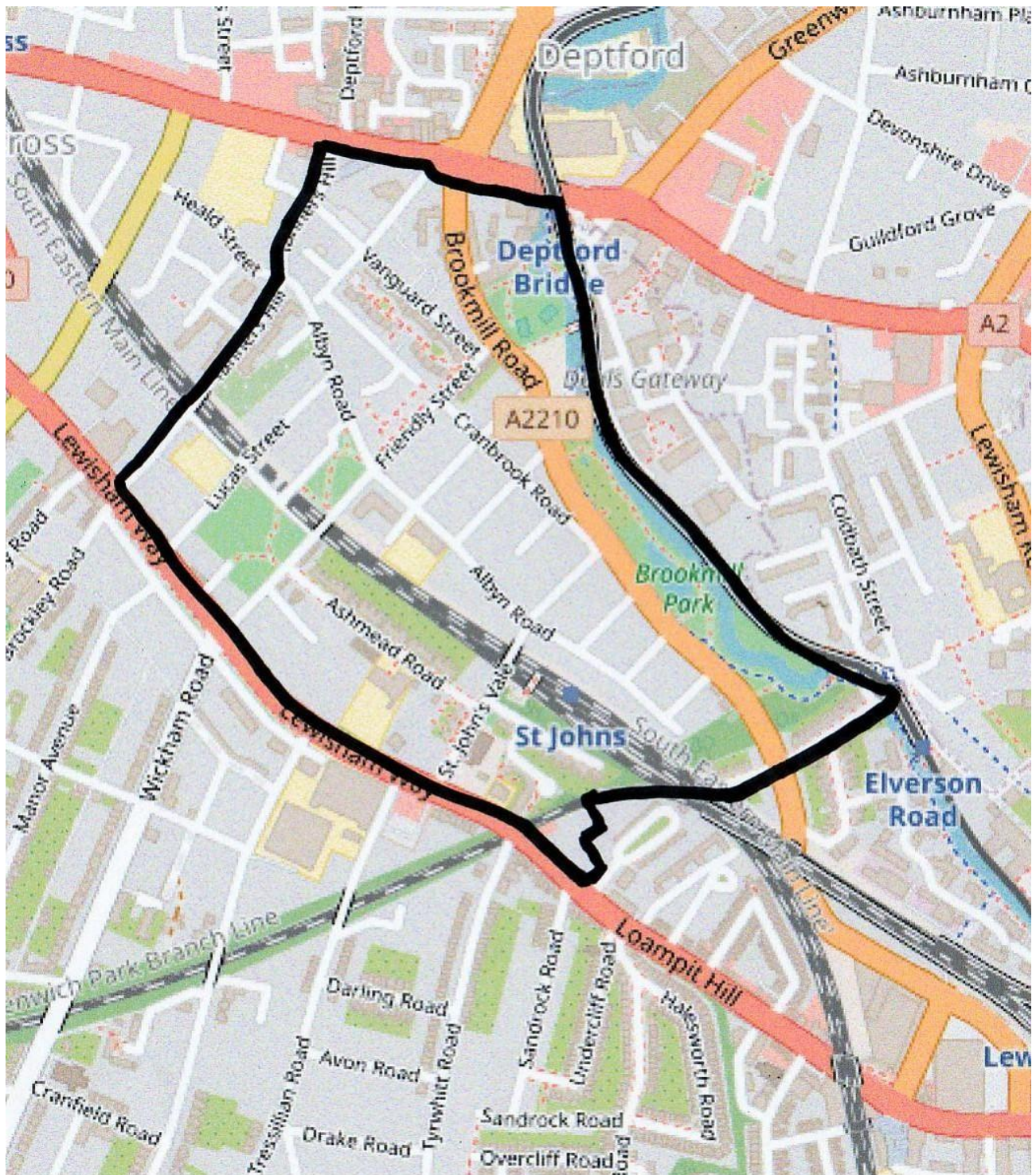
The Society handles complaints fairly, promptly and confidentially. Any Member or member of the public with a concern about the Society, its Committee, or any of its members can raise it as follows.

- Send the complaint in writing (including by email) to the Secretary, setting out the concern and what outcome you're looking for. If it's about the Secretary, send it to the Chairperson instead.
- The Secretary acknowledges it within 7 days and refers it to the Committee at its next meeting, or sooner if urgent.
- The Committee considers it fairly, giving the complainant and anyone named the chance to put their side, in writing or in person, before deciding.
- The Committee tells the complainant its decision and reasons, in writing, within 14 days of deciding.
- If the complaint is about a Committee member, they step back from discussing and deciding it.
- If the complainant is still unhappy, they can ask for the matter to go to the next AGM or Special Meeting — the members' decision there is final.

19. Indemnity

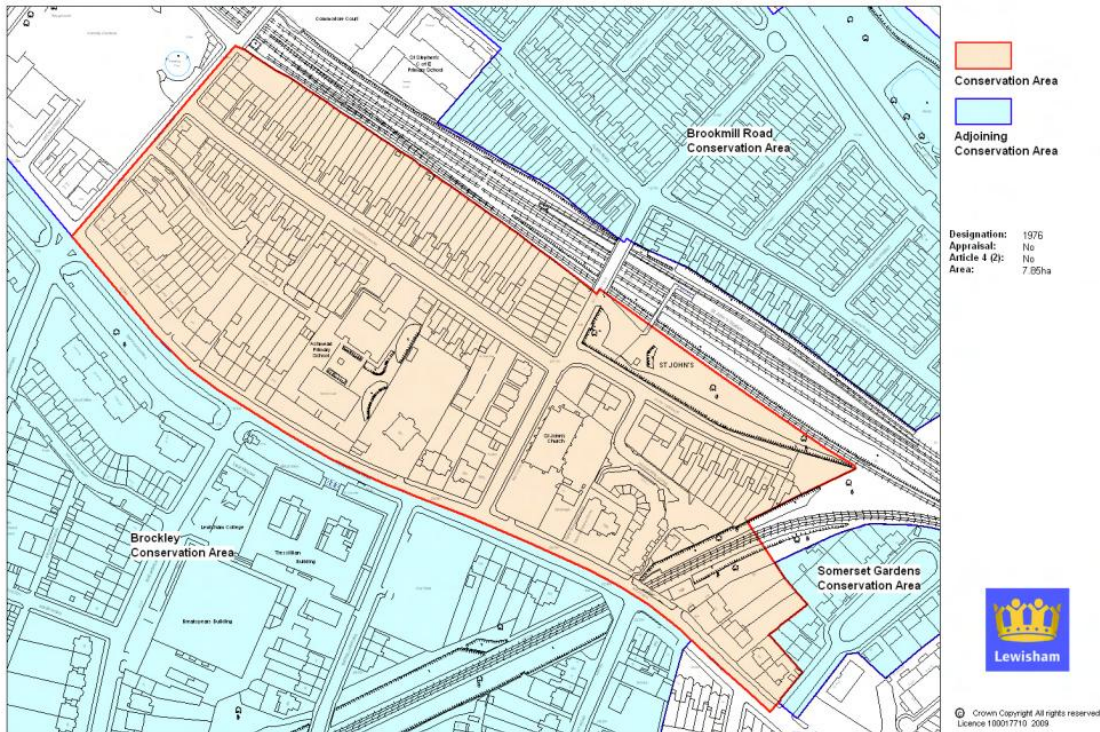
- Committee members and Liaisons (“Covered Persons”) can be reimbursed from the Society’s funds for costs and liabilities incurred while properly carrying out their role — except where these arise from their own fraud, wilful default or gross negligence.
- As allowed under Section 9, the Society will buy indemnity insurance for its Officers where the Committee considers it reasonable.
- No Officer is personally liable for a Society debt or liability incurred properly and in line with this Constitution, provided they acted honestly and in good faith.
- This doesn’t stop the Society recovering money from an Officer if their breach of duty caused it loss or damage.

Annex A. St John's Area Boundary Map

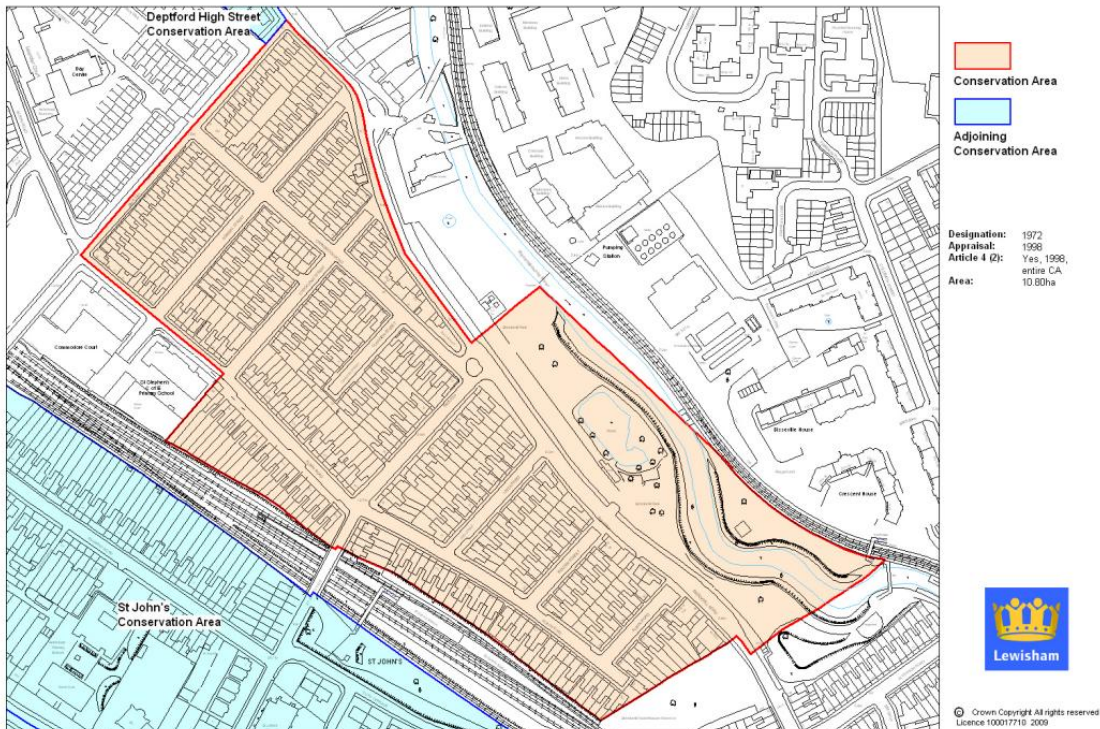


Annex B. St John's Conservation Area Boundary Map

St John's Conservation Area



Brookmill Road Conservation Area



Signatures

Name: Paul Middleton

Signed:

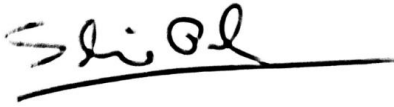


Date: 31st August 2026

Chair, St John's Society

Name: Sabine Pusch

Signed:



Date: 31st August 2026

Secretary, St John's Society

Name: Christine Cronin

Signed:



Date: 31st August 2026

Treasurer, St John's Society
