

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SOMERSET TOWNS FORUM

Mission

To promote and support community-based action to revitalize the towns of Somerset.

To do this, we will aim to bring together representatives of all the towns and larger villages across Somerset in a network, so as to share issues of common concern, and help in the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the local communities.

Objectives

1. To promote mutual support and collaboration between Somerset towns and the larger villages - by sharing good practice through visits, events including with invited speakers and the circulation of information.
2. To develop the capacity of the Forum and its participant towns and villages to serve and assist Somerset's communities - by advising and signposting to appropriate seminars and training for its members.
3. To have an active role for the Forum in promoting regeneration in Somerset's towns - including as a "voice" from across the County in discussion with other bodies and forum's.

Participation

The Forum will look to involve representatives from all the towns and larger villages from across the County of Somerset.

This participation will encompass:

1. Towns, villages or organisations willing to be "Hosts", taking on the responsibility of organising events and overseeing the continuing activities of the Forum, including the distribution of information, mainly in the form of the regular bulletin.
2. Those organisations, community groups and supportive individuals in towns and larger villages who are active in the Forum's activities and wish to be on the information distribution lists.
3. Representatives of the County, District and Town and Parish councils, whether councillors or officers, who support and are party to the Forums activities and information distribution.

Organization

The organisation of the Forum will rest with those towns, villages or organisations willing to be hosts on a self-help basis.

This will comprise:

1. The agreement between the Hosts for one to take a 6 month period of responsibility, in rotation, to set up and run a Forum network event. Hosts will also provide a record of their Network event and its content for distribution and to be posted on the STF website.
2. The provision of the means by which the regular Bulletin can be prepared and distributed at periods not exceeding 2 months.
3. The maintenance of an STF website for at least the first year of self-help.
4. The holding of a Coordination Group meeting at least every 6 months, or when required by circumstances, at a time to enable the agreement of the next Hosting arrangements and the planning of the associated event. The Group will elect a Chair for these meetings. Each Host is welcome to send a representative to this group.
5. A Forum meeting at least annually, which can be with a coordination meeting, to enable active Forum participants to assist the Hosts in their event organisation, and to provide any input to the continuation of the Forum's activities.

Hosting

Any organisation or community group that is involved in regeneration in a town or larger village in Somerset is welcome to become a Host.

Hosts must give a good period of notice if withdrawing from this arrangement. If they are the current Host then they are expected to fulfil this commitment before withdrawing. If they have agreed to be the next Host, then it is expected that this commitment will also be met, unless the notice is given before or at the start of the preceding 6 months so an alternate Host can be identified.

Finance

There is no specific fee involved in participation, but the generation and distribution of the Bulletin will require funding, as will the events, website hosting and accountancy services.

The funding of the events will be part of the Host's responsibilities; this will mainly involve venue hire and refreshments. A small fee will be charged for each attendee to offset these costs, and to contribute to the Bulletin and other costs.

As the Forum will now be run on a "self-help" basis, financial contributions at any level will be welcome from participants to help sustain the Forum and its objectives.

Appendix:

Hosting Towns, Villages and Organisations as at Sept 2013

Aster Communities, Ilminster Forum, Langport Town Council, Martock Community Partnership, Minehead Town Council, Somerton Town Council, Watchet Association of Commerce Environment and Trade, Wellington Town Council, Wiveliscombe Area Partnership, Vision4Frome.