



Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership Terms of Reference

The **Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership** will promote the sharing of knowledge to encourage local people to look for local solutions and ensure resilience to climate change. The Partnership will foster actions that protect and enhance the natural environment.

Our Vision is that Mid Sussex will have a thriving sustainable economy where the rural and urban communities work together to champion environmentally friendly behaviour.

Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership Sharing ideas and taking action

The Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership and Network brings together organisations, businesses, groups and individuals to find solutions to protect and enhance our environment.

Our Chair represents the MSSP on the Mid Sussex Partnership Board. A chair and vice-chair are elected by the MSSP members.

The MSSP is open to individuals and groups within Mid Sussex who have an interest in contributing to planning and facilitating programmes and projects to meet the stated aims.

Member responsibilities

- Fostering partnerships and relationships to further the aims of the Partnership
- Encouraging and considering all views in our decision making process
- Involved in the decision making or support the implementation of proposed actions
- Agenda issues to be raised in advance of the meeting and members come prepared for their own and others agenda items
- Commitment to being respectful and welcoming of different perspectives and challenging your own views
- Members actively participate in discussions and projects
- Adopting a tolerant and non-blaming culture in the group and taking personal responsibility for actions and commitments
- Commitment to using the best scientific data available in the preparation and presentation of events and workshops
- Fostering an honest, open and trusting and sensitive environment
- Facilitators are expected to have regard for the bigger picture and cross-over with other groups

The MSSP is open to anyone who signs up to pursuing the partnerships vision. Anyone found to not be following the responsibilities outlined here and who is acting against the aims of the partnership will be asked to leave.



Meetings procedures

- General MSSP meetings are held monthly
- Agenda items will be requested 10 working days in advance of the meeting and sent 3 working days ahead
- Observers can attend with the permission of the chair
- Guest speakers are to be invited by the chair
- Organising additional meetings to be undertaken by a facilitator with a specific agenda
- Action points of meetings will be sent within 10 working days of a meeting

Meeting Groundrules are listed in Annex A. Members commit to following the ground rules which are in place because:

- We often deal with controversial issues
- We need to make the best use of meeting time
- We want to have fruitful discussions
- Then we know what to expect
- This allows everyone to take responsibility for meetings
- We want to ensure everyone has a chance to participate

Interactions with business

The MSSP is independent of, and does not support or endorse particular businesses but may seek sponsorship from, but not by association endorse companies.

The MSSP may use its resources to work in partnership with businesses where there is an explicit benefit to the aims of the MSSP.

Interests or affiliations to any profit or non-profit making organisation must be declared.

Politics

The MSSP is an apolitical group but recognises the potential political implications of the work that it undertakes.

Councillors are free to join the group in the same way as any other individual, however they will be expected to:

- Leave party politics outside the partnership
- Not use the partnership for political gain
- Be sensitive in their approach to the difficult issues

Otherwise take account of the same principles as the rest of the group.

If the chair considers a member to be in breach of these conditions they may be asked to leave the partnership.



Communications

There are a number of ways in which the group communicates including:

www.midsussexsustainability.org

www.twitter.com/midsussexsp

www.facebook.com search: Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership

midsussexsp@gmail.com

All communications need to be approved by the chair and Sustainability Officer unless they have delegated responsibility to another.

- All group members are required to document relevant conversations with journalists
- Press releases should come from the chair and be posted on the website at the earliest opportunity
- Facebook and twitter should be used to promote events and verifiable facts avoiding opinions and commentary

Financial management

All expenditure should meet the aims of the MSSP and the specific purposes that it was awarded for if it is from a grant.

Expenditure must be agreed by the chair with the support of at least 3 others.

Reimbursement of expenses must be agreed by the chair in advance of expenditure

Annex A - Groundrules

- Keep the big picture and group goal in mind; think about what's best for the group and not just you individually.
- Listen to each other with a spirit of learning, curiosity, and openness and without interruption - one person speaks at a time.
- Respect each person's right to their values, beliefs, and perspective.
- We are all responsible for the meeting so come prepared
- Use "I" statements, speak for yourself and not for others - instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.
- Check out assumptions before reacting; assume that everyone's trying their best.
- Stick to the topic at hand but suggest future agenda items that are important
- Allow others the opportunity to speak and do not have side conversations.
- Be flexible and open to alternative viewpoints and solutions.
- Keeping personal issues out of the session



- Maintaining confidentiality within the group.
- Facilitator manages process – group manages substance
- Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks, focus on ideas.
- Participate to the fullest of your ability; community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- The goal is not to agree, it is to gain a deeper understanding.
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses, they can be as disrespectful as words.
- Starting and finishing on time
- Switching off mobile phones

Adopted 3rd December 2012