DRAFT Example basic constitution for a simple Allotment Group.

This constitution was adopted by [no of members] on [date].

{These amendments/this amended constitution were adopted by a General Meeting on [date]}

1. The name of the organisation shall be the Example Allotment Club which can also be known as EAC.
2. The members shall be all tenants and co-workers who garden at the Example Allotments on Example Street [Brighton or Hove].
3. The aim(s) of the club shall be
   1. to discuss matters relevant to the members,
   2. to agree and carry ways of improving the experience of gardening at the site and
   3. to communicate opinions shared by a majority of members to other relevant bodies.
4. The club shall be governed by General Meetings of members which will be held at least once a year.
5. General Meetings will be advertised (at minimum) by notices placed at all entrances to the Allotment site at least one month before the date of the General Meeting.
6. The club may select representatives to speak on behalf of the club to other relevant bodies, and to report back to the club from any meetings such representatives may attend.
7. This constitution may be amended or extended by a General Meeting of the club provided notice of a **change to the constitution** has been advertised in accordance with rule 5 above.

Signed:

Notes on the example basic constitution.

**General**: If a small group of people want to get together to do something; they can. A “constitution” is just a record of the fact. It can explain to outsiders or new members the very basics about the group.

It’s helpful to keep a note of how many people were involved in starting the group, it shows others that it isn’t just “Me, me husband and our Kevin”.

The bigger the group, or the more things it wants to do, the more rules it is likely to need. This basic constitution wouldn’t be enough for the group to open a bank account, become a charity, apply for grants from the council etc. or enter a team in the FA cup. That’s why the rules include a way of changing the rules.

You might hope that the group will be very big, very important, very rich and very busy in future. In that case you may want all the rules about quorums (how many people count as a proper meeting), finances (who is allowed to spend money, what on, how much, and who ends up losing their house if the group goes bankrupt), and so on.

1. There’s no reason you can’t call your group “Sally” or “Rover”. Most people prefer a name that explains itself. You may need to be careful of names that have already been registered, “Ronald McDonald’s Allotment Group” would be asking for trouble. If you think it may be shortened, say so now at the beginning. You may want “society”, “association” or whatever instead of club.
2. If you are going to charge any membership fees the membership may have to be “open to all.....” on payment of a subscription. You might have a two-tier membership. Everybody is a member, but only those who pay are “subscribers” and probably only subscribers would be allowed to vote on issues involving the group in spending money. You may want to be more open (include families, people on the waiting list, interested outsiders) or less open (tenants only).
3. These first three: what we’re called; who we are; and what we do are absolutely basic. You can have as many or as few aims as you want. As long as your aims are legal it’s fine.
4. The governance of the group may be controversial. You could have a group governed entirely by its “President for Life”. You could have a group governed by a committee. You could have a group governed by referendums of all members, on every issue (fairly easy if you’re all on the internet). Almost all outside bodies expect to see some degree of democracy.
5. Even at this early stage you need some rule to make sure that everybody at least *has a chance* to take part.
6. You may want a committee with a President, Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Officer.....etc. You may want to have elections by ballot and specific Representatives for each organisation you want to talk to. This basic constitution assumes that you’ll be saying (for example) “Anybody fancy going to the Federation Committee meetings?” and agreeing to send the only person who says yes.