



Midlands Working Newfoundland

CONSTITUTION

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The name of the Club shall be Midlands Working Newfoundland (MWN).
- 1.2. It shall be an independent, non-profit making club.
- 1.3. MWN will operate as an Unincorporated Association; a group of individuals that come together for a mutual hobby, which in this instance is training our dogs and other associated activities.
- 1.4. Members attend as individuals and are responsible for their own involvement and the well-being of themselves and their dogs.
- 1.5. The underlying principle of MWN activities is to have fun with our dogs.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. To promote the working characteristics of the Newfoundland dog.
- 2.2. To safeguard the welfare of the Newfoundland dog.
- 2.3. To raise money for various charities.
- 2.4. To highlight the dangers of open water and promote water safety.

3. Membership

3.1. Membership Categories

- a) **Single Full Membership** is open to an individual who owns a Newfoundland dog. The member must be aged 16 or over and will have voting rights and may hold office
- b) **Joint Full Membership** is open to two individuals residing at the same address, where at least one owns a Newfoundland dog. Both members must be aged 16 or over. Each has voting rights and may hold office.
- c) **Family Full Membership** is open to a household where at least one individual owns a Newfoundland dog. This includes their spouse/partner and up to 4 children under the age of 18 residing at the same address. Young adults aged 16-18 have voting rights and may hold office. Junior handlers are welcome and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at Club activities

- d) **Supporters Membership** is available to individuals who do not own a Newfoundland dog but wish to actively participate in Club activities and training sessions as permitted by the Committee. This includes those who intend to acquire a Newfoundland in future. Supporters Members may not vote or hold office. If a Supporters Member acquires a Newfoundland dog, they must convert to Full Membership by paying any applicable difference in fees.
- e) **Honorary Membership** may be awarded by the Committee in recognition of significant past service. Honorary Members may attend events but shall not vote or hold office unless they hold Full Membership under Clause 3.1a.

- 3.2. Membership may be limited depending on training facilities; numbers will be reviewed at the AGM.
- 3.3. Members must support MWN's objectives and promote the group in a positive and honourable manner.
- 3.4. New members undergo a probation period as per a separate procedure.
- 3.5. Members may belong to other Newfoundland training groups; cross-group collaboration is encouraged.
- 3.6. Members attending training sessions and Club events must assist with setup, pack down, and training of other dogs when needed.
- 3.7. Voting on training sessions or Club events is limited to members who have a genuine intention to attend. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Committee.
- 3.8. Members must inform the Secretary of any illness or physical limitations affecting safety.
- 3.9. No member may make formal commitments on behalf of MWN without Officer approval.
- 3.10. Any complaints must be made in accordance with Section 11.
- 3.11. Members agree to abide by the Code of Conduct, rules, and this Constitution.
- 3.12. Club uniform should be worn at public events where appropriate.

4. Membership Fees & Training Subs

- 4.1. Annual Membership Fees and training Subs will be agreed at the AGM.
- 4.2. Annual membership fees are due by Aug 1st. Non-payment by Sept 1st may result in the member's place being offered to someone on the waiting list.
- 4.3. Training subs are expected to be pre-paid before any training session. Training subs can be paid quarterly or on a 'Pay as You Train' basis. MWN will work on a cashless basis for training subs. If paying quarterly any unused subs will be carried forward to the next quarter. Any unused subs at the end of the final quarter of the financial year will be considered a donation to the Club.

5. General Meetings

- 5.1. There will be 3 Quarterly Meetings and 1 AGM.
- 5.2. Annual General Meeting (AGM): Held in October after the end of water training season. Reports, accounts, elections, and other business will be covered.
- 5.3. Quarterly Meetings (QM): Held in January, April, and July will handle Club business between AGMs.

- 5.4. Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM): Can be called by 6 members or 2 Officers. Notice will be issued by the Secretary or another Officer if unavailable.
- 5.5. 14 days' notice is required for all meetings. AGMs and QMs should be notified at least 1 month in advance.
- 5.6. Quorum for all meetings is 35% of active members.
- 5.7. The Chairperson will chair all meetings unless the matter relates to their role. Then, the Secretary will act.
- 5.8. Officers will provide reports at the AGM and EGM when required.
- 5.9. Proposals for the AGM must be submitted 4 weeks prior. Late items go under AOB.
- 5.10. Meetings will be minuted and minutes circulated in a timely manner.
- 5.11. Meetings may be held in person or virtually (via video conferencing) to ensure accessibility and continuity. Some meetings may be deemed to be unsuitable to be held virtually. Members will be given advance notice if this is the case.
- 5.12. Minutes and decisions from all meetings will be circulated to members via the Club portal or email within a reasonable timeframe.
- 5.13. Items which have been raised and voted on at any of the meetings cannot be revisited for another vote for the next 2 meetings (e.g. 9 months.) The Exec has the right to table an issue sooner if it is deemed necessary, however.

6. Officers

- 6.1. The Club shall have a Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer (Executive Officers). These roles will form the Committee.
- 6.2. Non-executive roles (not Officers): Equipment, Events, Training, Communications and Health & Safety Coordinators. These roles are advisory and operational in nature and do not carry voting rights in Officer decisions unless otherwise specified.
- 6.3. All Officers are elected at the AGM and must consent to stand. Non-Exec roles will be assigned to volunteers.
- 6.4. Term of office is initially one year, to be reviewed annually. Re-election is permitted.
- 6.5. Club administration is carried out by the Officers.
- 6.6. Officers may appoint individuals to perform specific duties, which may include standing in for an Officer.
- 6.7. Candidates for election must have 12 months of continuous and active membership.
- 6.8. Officers can be removed by majority vote at an EGM if deemed to have failed in their duties. Removed Officers may retain membership.
- 6.9. Until the first AGM following the Club's establishment, the Committee shall consist of an interim Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer who will carry out all Officer functions. These interim Officers shall be responsible for ensuring the Club's effective setup, governance, and transition. They will stand down or may stand for election at the first AGM.
- 6.10. In the event of a tie in Officer elections, the Chairperson shall cast the deciding vote.

- 6.11. Officers may resign by submitting written notice to the Committee. The remaining Officers may co-opt a replacement until the next General Meeting.
- 6.12. If an Officer finds themselves without a Newfoundland dog during their term of office, they will be able to continue in their Exec role until the end of their membership or for a period of 4 months, whichever is longer.
- 6.13. All Officers must declare any personal or financial conflict of interest and must not participate in any related decision-making.

7. Voting

- 7.1. Voting rights require 6 months of continuous membership and status as an active member. One vote per member. The Chairperson has a casting vote.
- 7.2. Proxy voting is allowed with prior notice to the Committee.
- 7.3. The Committee may propose alternate voting rules for specific meetings with member agreement.
- 7.4. Supporters Members and Honorary Members do not have voting rights unless they convert to Full Membership.

8. Finance and Expenditure

- 8.1. Financial year runs from Aug 1st to Jul 31st.
- 8.2. Withdrawals from the bank account must be approved by the Treasurer and another authorised Officer (not from the same household).
- 8.3. All expenses must have prior approval by an Executive Officer and be accompanied by receipts.
- 8.4. A summary of the Club's annual accounts will be circulated to all members prior to the AGM.

9. Communication

- 9.1. Communication channels include the MWN Facebook page, Membermojo portal, and WhatsApp chat.

10. Training & Non-Newfoundland Involvement

- 10.1. Priority is given to training Newfoundlands.
- 10.2. Full Members may, with prior approval, bring non-Newfoundlands to training, subject to Training Coordinator discretion and session availability.
- 10.3. Visitors will be welcomed and charged a fee for training, once again subject to Training Coordinator discretion.

11.Complaints & Disciplinary Issues

11.1. Complaints Procedure:

- Must be submitted in writing to an Officer.
- Any complaint will be reviewed and actioned by the Committee plus one member from the non-Exec roles to form the Complaints Panel.
- All complaints will be acknowledged within 10 days of receipt.
- The Complaints Panel will respond in writing within 14 days of any clarification with decision and actions.
- The Complaints Panel decision may be appealed in accordance with Clause 11.4.

11.2. Disciplinary Procedure:

- Disciplinary action will be taken against any member who is in breach of the MWN Code of Conduct or Constitution.
- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- EGM called (by 6 members or 2 Officers) to vote on expulsion.
- If expelled, membership ends immediately, no refund given, and all Club property must be returned.

11.3. The Secretary will maintain a confidential register of complaints and disciplinary actions for Committee monitoring.

11.4. Right of Appeal: In cases of disciplinary expulsion, the member has the right to request an appeal in writing within 14 days of notification. A separate Appeals Panel composed of three neutral Full Members (not Officers), appointed by the Committee, will review the case within 21 days. The Committee will notify the member in writing of the outcome. The Appeals Panel decision is final.

11.5. Members must not bring the Club into disrepute through comments or behaviour on social media or online platforms. Respectful online conduct is always expected.

11.6. The Complaints and the Disciplinary procedure will be kept confidential and apply to all named members involved.

12.Amendments to the Constitution

12.1. The Constitution may be amended at any meeting, including a Quarterly or Extraordinary meeting, but will require a 65% majority vote of all active members. If 65% of active members are not in attendance at the meeting, then the vote will be carried out virtually via an online poll.

12.2. The Committee may make interim decisions in unforeseen situations, so long as they align with Club objectives.

13. Dissolution of the Club

- 13.1. Dissolution may occur if the Club becomes financially unviable or loses its training venue with no replacement.
- 13.2. In the event of the Club ceasing to exist, all debts must be paid and assets sold. Remaining funds will be distributed among the Welfare sections of the UK Newfoundland clubs. A financial report will be made available to members from the prior 12 months.

14. Division of the Club

- 14.1. The Club will be deemed to have formally split if at least 25% of all members leave to form a new group.
- 14.2. A fair and equitable split of funds and equipment shall be made based on the proportion of active members aligning with each group.
- 14.3. The allocation of funds and equipment shall be jointly agreed by the Officers of the exiting Club and a nominated representative from each emerging group. Funds will only be transferred to a designated account for any new group.
- 14.4. Any disputes shall be resolved via an independent mediator agreed by all parties.

15. Insurance and Liability

- 15.1. MWN and its Officers are not liable for injuries or damages caused by or to members or guests.
- 15.2. MWN and its Officers are not responsible for individual behaviour at events.
- 15.3. Insurance cover will be maintained at a minimum of £5 million.
- 15.4. Members must be capable of swimming at least 10 metres unaided and must declare any medical condition that may affect their ability to handle their dog or participate safely in water-based activities.

16. Summary

- 16.1. MWN avoids unnecessary rules but acknowledges the need for structure to protect members and ensure smooth operations. Common sense and cooperation are expected to prevail.
- 16.2. In unforeseen or urgent situations not covered by this Constitution, the Committee may act in good faith to ensure the continued functioning and safety of the Club, provided any action taken is reported to members and reviewed at the next General Meeting.

17. Definitions

17.1. For clarity and consistency, the following have been adopted as the definitions used within this Constitution. If there is any unintended inconsistency above, then these definitions will be the ones adhered to.

- a) **'The Club'** means Midlands Working Newfoundlands (MWN).
- b) **'Unincorporated Association (UA)'** means a group of individuals that come together for a mutual hobby, in this instance to train and have fun with our dogs. The group has an informal structure and is not a legal entity. All members of the UA are therefore personally liable for any debts or group obligations. The UA cannot own assets in its own right; ownership of any property or assets sits with the Committee on behalf of all members.
- c) **'Officers'** means the elected Executive Officers of the Club: the Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- d) **'Committee'** means the body composed of the Executive Officers.
- e) **'Non-Exec Roles'** means the advisory and operational roles such as Equipment, Events, Training, and Communications Coordinators. These are not Officers.
- f) **'Member'** or **'Membership'** refers to any individual who has been accepted into one of the membership categories defined in Section 3 and whose subscription is current.
- g) **'Full Membership'** is a collective term referring to Single Full, Joint Full, and Family Full Membership categories. Full members have the right to vote and hold office if they meet the other required criteria.
- h) **'Junior Handler'** means a member under the age of 16 who is actively handling a dog at Club activities.
- i) **'Active Members'** must have been MWN members for at least 6 months and attended at least 25% of MWN training sessions, events and meetings. If a member has been a member for a full year or more, then attendance is calculated on the previous 12 months. Active members are people who help make the group run, not just those who come along. This includes things like setting up, packing away, helping at sessions or events, or being an officer. Those who only attend but don't take part in helping or organizing are not classed as active members.
- j) **'Event'** means any activity which MWN either hosts or attends as a group. This can include tests, Meet & Greets, visits to schools, attending other events such as the National, etc.
- k) **'Training Subs'** means the fees paid for attendance at training sessions, separate from the annual membership subscription.
- l) **'General meeting'** is the collective term used for all formal MWN meetings (AGM, QM & EGM)
- m) **'AGM'** means the Annual General Meeting.
- n) **'QM'** means a Quarterly Meeting.
- o) **'EGM'** means an Extraordinary General Meeting.

p) **'In Writing'** includes communication via email or the Club's official digital portal (e.g. Membermojo).

18.Data Protection and Privacy Statement

- 18.1. MWN will collect, store, and use personal data only for the legitimate purposes of running the Club, in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 18.2. Personal information may include contact details, dog ownership status, health information relevant to participation, and attendance records.
- 18.3. Member data will be handled securely and only accessible to Officers on a need-to-know basis.
- 18.4. Members have the right to request access to, correction, or deletion of their personal data.
- 18.5. The Club will not share personal data with third parties without explicit consent unless legally required.
- 18.6. By joining MWN, members consent to the use of their data for administrative and safety purposes.

Date of Last Review: Aug 2025

Date of Next Review: Oct 2026

Version History

| Version | Comments | Date |
|---------|--|----------|
| V0.1 | First draft created by K Rhodes based on the RVWN Constitution and addressing some of the lessons learned | 02/08/25 |
| V0.2 | Second draft with L Smith comments | 02/08/25 |
| V0.3 | Draft version sent to MWN founding members for review with the aim of approval as the first MWN Constitution | 09/08/25 |
| V.04 | Includes amendments and additions discussed at the Founders meeting on 17/08/2025. | 18/08/25 |
| V.05 | Amendments to % for Quorum and for changes to the Constitution along with revisiting issues voted on highlighted at Exec review | 18/08/25 |
| V1.0 | Formally agreed by the MWN Exec and K Rhodes as the first MWN Constitution | 19/08/25 |
| V1.1 | Updates to V1.0 to clarify definition of 'active member', includes a definitions section and clarifies the division of money if MWN dissolves. | 21/08/25 |
| V1.2 | Includes edits following review from the MWN Exec and K Rhodes | 28/08/25 |
| V2.0 | Formally agreed by the MWN Exec following revisions | 29/08/25 |