Constitution: Stork and The Bees

formerly known as 'Watford Sling Library'

Who we are and what we do:
Run by trained professionals and committed volunteers, we offer community baby support to families in south and west Hertfordshire.

Our primary services are:

- empowering families, health care providers and support workers to use available tools and knowledge to offer responsive care for infants in a biologically and emotionally appropriate way
- support and advice relating to normal development of babies and what to expect, including but not limited to using a sling or carrier as a positive parenting tool to respond to a baby's need by keeping them close, how babies develop and what to expect post-partum
- offering opportunities for families to connect and engage, fostering positive mental and physical health for all
- providing a community baby library with low-cost access to safe, comfortable baby carriers, slings and reusable nappies, with guidance on how to use them effectively
- hire of reusable nappies, slings, carriers and related accessories
- signposting to other support service in the area

Structure of the group:
We are a constituted group operating as not-for-profit. Income is invested back into the growth of the group for the benefit of the community we serve.

Aims and objectives:

- To help families meet the needs of their infants
- To support families to keep close and connected, facilitating loving nurture and building strong communities.
- Using a sling or carrier to bring wellbeing benefits, positive child development and long-lasting positive health effects for parent and child.
- To support and facilitate the use of reusable nappies to replace the use of single-use disposable nappies.
- To promote, encourage and support our community service in south and west Hertfordshire (including Three Rivers, Watford, Hemel Hempstead and the surrounding areas), on social media/ online and via our newsletter.
- To offer high quality support and advice around the safe use of slings or carriers to families via our trained professionals and experienced volunteers

We will:

- Promote the benefits of using a sling or carrier for adult and infant, including positive mental health.
- Facilitate access to a range of slings, carriers and reusable nappies for trial and hire with guidance on how to use them safely, and on which particular types might suit individuals.
- Provide opportunities for community engagement so families can access unbiased information, support and a social network relating to normal infant care, which can be facilitated by using a carrier or sling and reusable nappies.
- Reduce the cost of accessing carriers, slings and reusable nappies by offering them for hire as part of our lending library

- Support families in carrying their infants safely using a range of carriers and slings: including but not limited to woven and stretchy wraps, semi structured carriers, structured carriers and ring slings.
- Provide simple and effective safety messages, making sure that carriers or slings are used correctly and ensuring to the best of our ability the safety of each child we assist.
- Provide a social setting for families to help combat the social isolation and depression that can sometimes occur when caring for infants in modern society.
- Support families and communities with high quality advice and guidance though regular refresher training from recognised training providers (such as Born to Carry, Slingababy, School of Babywearing or Trageschule).
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are reported as required
- Promote the benefits of reusable nappies
- Provide face-to-face and online support opportunities.

Please see minutes of the latest AGM for details of our objectives.

Who can we help?

- Anyone seeking advice, support or assistance regarding carrying an infant, or looking to understand how to safely wear their child(ren) and/or use reusable nappies.
- Families at any stage of parenthood, i.e. before and after an infant joins the family.
- Anyone seeking to support and improve the wellbeing of infants
- Mothers, fathers, foster parents, carers and their families
- Health agencies, doulas, midwives, family centres, health visitors and similar professionals – in order to provide additional, continuous support to anyone in need.
- Other groups in the area with similar aims.

How we will achieve our aims:

- operate a lending library of safe and comfortable stock (slings, carriers, reusable nappies and accessories)
- offer opportunities for interaction, such as sling walks and social meets
- attend events locally
- Raise revenue through hire fees, managed via 'Lend Engine' at hire@storkandthebees.com
- Promote the group in a positive light in a variety of locations, including but not limited to: social media, online, via our website, via our newsletter, via related groups (e.g. antenatal clinics, family centres, health visitor clinics), public notice boards, local venues
- Promote the group through networking
- Collaborate with healthcare professionals and local groups with similar aims
- Raise funds to finance group activities and training
- Make payments from the group's bank account
- Hire premises necessary for meeting the objectives
- Procure goods and services as necessary for meeting the objectives
- Look into additional ways of supporting and educating
- Seek feedback and continual improvement on provided services

Committee members

- The Committee will consist of at least 3 members, an elected Chair, Treasurer and secretary. Other roles might be assigned if necessary.
- Committee Meetings will be held at least twice a year. At least 2 members must be present to form a quorum which can take decisions.
- All Committee members are elected for a period of three years as standard. Committee members will retire at the AGM but may be re-elected.

- The Committee shall have the power to add additional members to the Committee, up to a total of five members.
- No committee member should be engaging in any act which may bring the committee into public disrepute, scandal or ridicule, any sort of illegal activities or those which may reflect unfavourably on the committee and group, whether acting as a representative of the group, as a peer supporter/consultant or on social media.
- Any support provided and public presence should be in line with Born to Carry, Slingababy or Trageschule professional and babywearing guidelines and our own code of conduct.
- Those found in breach of the above policies will face disciplinary action which may include dismissal from the committee.

Volunteers
We welcome volunteers to support the running of the group. A volunteer agreement is available which outlines roles, responsibilities and expectations. We will support those wishing to be involved. Volunteers are asked to agree to our terms and conditions, aims and objectives and to maintain a professional standard at all times. Training may be provided to offer skills and tools required to undertake duties. If for any reason a volunteer is not engaging in the expected way, they may be asked to leave the group.

As a thank you for offering their time and support, volunteers are able to hire any item from the library for free. This does not constitute employment in any form.

Volunteers can stand as a committee member as long as there is no conflict of interest.

Clients
Clients are any family or health care provider or support worker wishing to engage in the services of the group. Clients are required to register with an online hire portal called Lend Engine if they wish to hire an item. This also manages payment. All clients are welcome to attend the AGM in a non-voting capacity.

Clients are accountable for their own actions; the committee cannot be held responsible for the activity of clients. However, accurate and relevant information will be provided to ensure the safety and care of infants using our stock, and attending any of our events.

Meetings
Each year we will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM). All Committee members will be invited to attend. Each Committee member has one vote and if needed, the Chair has the deciding vote.

Electronic communication shall be taken as a valid method for meetings approvals, and official/ general communication. The meeting will be advertised at least 2 weeks ahead of time to enable volunteers and clients to attend should they wish, noting they hold no voting power.

During the AGM, a report for the preceding year will be presented along with a summary of finances. The constitution shall be reviewed during each AGM. At each AGM, committee members will resign by rotation based on the length of term served. This will be at least one third (or the number closest to one third if their number is not a multiple of three). A member who hands in their resignation at any time prior to the AGM will officially resign at the AGM.

Extraordinary meetings can be called at any time by 2 members of the Committee.

Finances
The Committee will ensure proper and lawful running of accounting records and bank accounts. An online bookkeeping system (Pandle) is in use for this reason. The group will maintain a bank account that requires two Committee members to authorise payments. The group also has a PayPal and a Stripe account. Cash and cheques are not accepted. Purchases will be agreed in writing by the Chair (including email).

Expenses
Committee members and volunteers are invited to claim back expenses related to their involvement with the group, including but not limited to car park charges, mileage, postage, sling or nappy washes.

Provided there are sufficient funds, trained Consultants will also be able to claim back reimbursement for, but not limited to, engagement in libraries, workshops and consultations, and administrative tasks. Trained Consultants may be Committee members or external individuals/ companies.

Further details are contained within the Expenses Policy.

Insurance
The group will maintain indemnity insurance for the protection of clients, volunteers, committee members, and trained Consultants. Insurance is currently held with Wellbeing Insurers, specialists in babywearing.

Equal Opportunities
Stork and the Bees will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.

Please refer to our Equalities Policy for more details.

Safeguarding
We recognise our duty to promote the wellbeing of every child and young person as well as protect them from harm. We have the privilege of interacting with families at a time when they may feel vulnerable, and will take action to enable the family unit to have the best outcomes.

Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy for more details.

Dissolution
The Committee members can agree to close the group if at least two thirds of members agree at a committee meeting. Prior to closing, the committee has the power to realise all of the group's assets in order to settle its liabilities.

Liability of each committee member to contribute to the assets of the group is limited to £1 if this is wound up while they are a committee member, or within one year after they cease to be involved. Any assets remaining shall be donated to a charity or organisation having similar aims as the group.

Written on 24/7/2016
Agreed on 24/7/2016 at a committee meeting
Agreed on 15/7/2017 at the AGM
Agreed on 20/8/2018 at the AGM
Agreed on 16/8/2019 at the AGM
Agreed on 14/5/2021 at a committee meeting
Agreed on 10/2/2022 at the AGM
Amended on 13/10/2022 in preparation for the AGM