



Procedure:	Membership Policy and procedures
Governance	
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BLOCHAIRN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

MEMBERSHIP POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION

1.1 General

Blochairn Housing Association (BHA) is a membership organisation that is committed to the involvement of tenants and local residents in the running of its affairs, and to being accountable to tenants and the wider community. Membership of BHA is open to anyone from the local area and beyond who supports its aims and objectives, and is interested in being kept informed about its affairs, or helping to further develop those aims and objectives.

Its Rules require that the management committee should set, review and publish its membership policy for admitting new members. This policy reflects any requirements set out in its Rules.

Members of BHA shall be those people, or organisations, who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered in the Register of Members.

1.2 Eligibility for membership

The following groups are eligible to become members of the association:

- Tenants of BHA
- Other users of BHA services
- Other people who support the aims and objectives of BHA
- Organisations sympathetic to the aims and objectives of BHA

Applications for membership can be received from any person aged 16 or over. There is no upper age limit on applying for, or continuing to be a member.

Applicants who are neither tenants nor service users must confirm their support for BHA's aims and objectives, and the nature of their interest in the work of the Association.

Applicants who have a joint tenancy with BHA should apply individually for membership. BHA cannot accept joint applications for membership.

1.3 Promoting membership

BHA is a community-based housing association, and is positive about attracting people from the communities it serves, and beyond, to become members of the association.

We seek to establish a broad and active membership by encouraging individuals and local organisations who have an interest in, and support the aims and objectives of the Association to become members. We wish to make use of the skills and experience of

our members where possible, particularly where those skills match the identified skills being sought as part of the process of recruiting new management committee members.

BHA will promote membership to relevant people and organisations in the following ways:

- Encouraging new tenants to become members of the association at the point when they sign their tenancy agreement.
- Promotion in BHA's regular newsletter, and on our website.
- At open days and local community events.
- During staff discussions with tenants
- Advertising and inviting applications from people with relevant skills, knowledge and experience who may be potential committee members, and must first become members of the association.

1.4 Applying for membership

Any individual or organisation who wishes to apply for membership should send a completed and signed membership application form (copy obtainable from BHA) to BHA's office, together with the sum of £1.00.

Applications for membership will be considered by the management committee as soon as reasonably practicable, normally at its next scheduled meeting following receipt of the application. No application can be considered within 14 days preceding the date of a general meeting.

The management committee has absolute discretion as to whether to accept or reject an application for membership. Some examples of reasons for refusing an application are:

- Membership would be contrary to BHA's Rules or policies.
- The management committee considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of BHA.
- Where a significant conflict of interest may exist.

Applicants will be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest in their application form. The existence of potential conflicts of interest are not in themselves grounds for the rejection of an application. This would only occur where, even allowing for the disclosure of such a conflict, it may adversely affect the work of BHA.

We wish to encourage membership, and only in rare circumstances would an application be refused. If this should happen, the applicant will be informed of the reasons in writing, and the £1.00 payment will be refunded.

1.5 Membership approval and records

When an application is approved, BHA will write to the new member to confirm this, and will enter their name in the Register of Members.

The Register of Members will list the name, address and date that the new member was entered into the Register and the date at which any person ceased to be a member. The Register will also contain the names and addresses of the Officers of the Association with the offices held by them and the dates on which they assumed and vacated the office.

Upon having their membership approved, new members will receive:

- One £1 share in the Association issued in the form of a share certificate
- A copy of BHA's Rules
- A copy of the latest Annual Report, newsletter and the current Membership Policy

The date on which the member's name is entered in the Register of Members and the share issued will be the date of start of membership. The entry in the Register is the substantive evidence of membership.

1.6 Equality and diversity

Membership will be open to all those entitled to apply regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstances. This includes their colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, age, sexuality, disability, religion or beliefs, and marital, pregnancy, maternity or family status.

Membership application forms will include diversity information, and BHA may, from time to time, analyse data that it holds on its members, to ascertain whether the membership is representative of the communities that it serves, and whether any initiatives to promote membership to particular sections of the community may be appropriate.

1.7 Appeals

A person whose application for membership has been refused may appeal the decision.

Appeals should be made within 10 working days of the applicant being informed of the refusal of membership. Appeals should be made in writing and state if a personal hearing is requested.

If a personal appeals hearing is requested, the applicant may be accompanied by another person of their choice. Such person will have the right to speak on behalf of the applicant. Appeals will be heard by a panel of management committee members and their decision will be final.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the Appeals Panel in writing, within 14 days of the appeal being heard.

1.8 Membership of organisations

Organisations who are sympathetic to the aims and objectives of BHA may apply for membership in the same way as individual applicants. Once approved as a member, the organisation is free to nominate anyone it considers suitable to be its representative to BHA. That person represents all of the organisation's rights and powers at general meetings.

The organisation must send BHA a copy of the authorisation or appointment of their representative, to confirm the identity of the individual concerned. This should be signed by an authorised signatory of the organisation, and the signature must be independently witnessed. The identity of the representative can be changed at any time, by confirming the identity of the new representative, as above, and withdrawing the authority of the original representative.

Any person who is designated as a representative of an organisation cannot also be a member of BHA as an individual. If BHA is notified of the identity of a representative, and that person is already a member of BHA, we will suspend their individual membership for as long as they remain the representative of an organisation.

1.9 Member involvement

During their period of membership, members should expect to receive:

- Regular newsletters
- BHA's Annual Report
- A summary of the annual Financial Statements
- Invitations to events and open days hosted by BHA
- Invitations to the Annual General Meeting, and any other general meetings called by BHA

We will make every effort to hold general meetings at times and locations suitable for all members, which is accessible to all.

Members are entitled to vote on any matters requiring a decision at a general meeting. They are also entitled to nominate another member to stand for election onto the management committee, or to be nominated themselves for election, and to vote in any election for the appointment of committee members.

BHA is committed to keeping its members informed about key issues and developments at the Association, so that members can make informed contributions and decisions at general meetings. It will do this primarily via its quarterly newsletters, but may issue other reports from time to time.

BHA will actively promote to its members the opportunities that exist for being elected and serving on the management committee. Every year, BHA makes an assessment of the skills, knowledge, diversity and objectivity that it needs amongst its committee members in order to have a fully effective governing body membership, and identifies any gaps that need filling via committee recruitment and elections. BHA will provide information to its members each year in advance of any Annual General Meeting, to guide members in making suitable nominations for committee membership as part of the election process.

Members are obliged to notify BHA of any change of address in writing within 3 months of the change. This is important as failure to do so may lead to termination of membership. This requirement does not apply to tenants who move home in order to transfer to another BHA property.

1.10 Ending membership of the Association

Membership of the Association can be ended in the following ways:

- You resign your membership giving seven days' notice in writing to the Secretary at the registered office; or
- The Committee reasonably believes that you have failed to tell the Association of a change of address as required by Rule 10; or
- For five annual general meetings in a row you have not attended, submitted apologies, exercised a postal vote or appointed a representative to attend and vote on your behalf by proxy; or
- The Association receives a complaint about your behaviour and two-thirds of the Members voting at a special general meeting agree to end your membership.

It is BHA's policy that its staff members should not be permitted to be members of the Association. If an existing Association member is appointed as an BHA member of staff (whether temporary or permanent), they must resign their membership before being permitted to accept any offer of employment.

1.11 Publication, data protection and review

A copy of this policy will be made available to any applicants for membership on request, and to new members at the time of their appointment.

We regard privacy as important and any personal information given to BHA in respect of its members will be handled in accordance with the requirements of data protection legislation, will only be used for the reasons specified, and will not be shared with any third party without consent, except as required by law.

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years, or sooner should circumstances require.

1.12 Notifiable Events

Any issues which arise as a result of the execution of this policy, that constitute a Notifiable Event, shall be notified to the Scottish Housing Regulator, in line with the Associations Notifiable Events policy.

2.0 PROCEDURE FOR THE ENDING OF MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Introduction

BHA's Rules set out the arrangements for membership of the Association, including the issuing of shares, and the circumstances in which membership will end.

Following appointment, a person remains indefinitely as a member, unless one of the following events occurs to end the membership (as set out in Rule 11):

- The member resign your membership giving seven days' notice in writing to the Secretary at the registered office; or
- The Committee reasonably believes that the member has failed to tell the Association of a change of address as required by Rule 10; or
- For five annual general meetings in a row the member has not attended, submitted apologies, exercised a postal vote or appointed a representative to attend and vote on your behalf by proxy; or
- The Association receives a complaint about the member's behaviour and two-thirds of the Members voting at a special general meeting agree to end the member's membership.

2.2 Procedures relating to the ending of membership

Resignation for non-personal reasons - When a resignation letter is received from a member, if the reason given for resignation involves some issue or concern about the policy or performance of the Association or its people (staff or committee members), the Director will report this to the management committee, who will decide if any further action is to be taken in respect of the issues raised, including whether or not this constitutes a notifiable event.

Change of address - Where some evidence is received that a member may have changed address, (e.g. correspondence sent to the member's last known address is "returned to sender"), and no notification of this has been received, BHA staff will make brief internal enquiries to ascertain if there is any knowledge about whether the member may have moved house and where they may now be contacted.

If an alternative address is established, one letter will be sent to this address to establish whether or not the Member wishes to remain as a Member. If a negative or no reply is received, the membership will be ended. If no alternative address is established, after a period of 3 months with no further contact from the Member, membership will be ended.

Failure to attend five consecutive AGMs - Records will be kept by the Director of attendance, apologies received, postal votes exercised and any appointments of proxies made for all general meetings. These records will be monitored after each Annual General Meeting to establish whether or not **four** consecutive meetings have been missed without apology, etc. The Director will write to any such member, alerting them that failure to attend for a fifth consecutive meeting will result in automatic loss of membership, and inviting them to resign if they no longer wish to be a Member.

Following the fifth consecutive non-attendance at an AGM without apology, etc. the Director will notify the management committee that membership has ended.

In all three of the above situations where membership has ended – through notice, non-notification of change of address or failure to attend five consecutive AGMs without apology, etc. – the Director will submit a short report to the management committee for information, noting the ending of certain memberships and the reason for it, and the name and effective date of ending of membership will be recorded in a confidential addendum to the minutes of that meeting. Within 7 days following the meeting the Director will enter the date at which membership ceased in the Register of Members.

Complaint about behaviour - Where a complaint is received about the behaviour of a member, the Director will ensure that the procedures set out in Rules 11.1.4.1 to 11.1.4.6 are followed. If this results in a decision to end the membership of the member concerned, the Director will enter the date that membership ceased (the date of the Special General Meeting called to consider the complaint) in the Register of Members.

Any further application for membership from anyone whose membership is ended in this way must be approved by two-thirds of those members present and voting at a general meeting.

2.3 Dealing with shares when membership ends

Rule 16 provides that if a member dies, or resigns, or their membership is ended for other reasons, the board will cancel their £1 share, and the value will belong to the Association. In such circumstances the Director will notify the Finance Officer, who will make the necessary entries in the Association's books of record.

Rule 17.1 states that a member can nominate a person to whom the £1 share is paid when they die, provided that the person nominated is eligible to become a member in their own right, within the terms of the Rules and the Association's Membership Policy.

Where such a nomination under Rule 17.1 is received, the Director will check the nomination to confirm that it complies with the above requirements, and report accordingly to the management committee. Provided that the committee agrees that the nomination is an eligible one, the name of the nominating member and of the person nominated will be recorded in the minutes, and records appended to the member's entry in the Register of Members. On notification of the death of the member, the Director will arrange for the share to be transferred to the nominee.

Rule 17.2 provides that on death or bankruptcy of a member, if the personal representatives or trustee in bankruptcy seeks to claim the share, provided that they can establish their rights in the matter, the management committee will transfer either the share or its £1 value to them, according to their instructions. The Director will oversee such matters, and ensure that appropriate information is passed to the Finance Officer so that transactions can be made and recorded as required.

3.0 PROCEDURE FOR INSPECTION OF SECOND COPY OF REGISTER

3.1 Introduction

BHA's Rules set out arrangements for membership of the Association, including the issuing of shares, and the Registers that must be kept at BHA's registered office, recording certain details about its members.

These procedures for the inspection of certain information held about its members will ensure that BHA's obligations in this area, as set out in the Rules, are properly complied with.

3.2 Register of Members

Rule 64 requires that BHA must keep a Register at its registered office (at 1 Blochairn Road, G21 2ED) recording certain details about members of the Association. BHA has in place a Register of Members, which is added to when any new member is appointed, and amended when any membership is ended (see section 2.0 of this policy).

Rule 65.1 requires that a second copy of the Register of Members should also be held at the registered office, containing less detail than the main Register of Members, but including the following:

- the names and addresses of the members;
- the date each person was entered in the Register as a member and the date at which any person ceased to be a member;
- the names and addresses of the Office Bearers of the Association, their positions and the dates they took and left office.

The purpose of this second register is to confirm the information recorded in the main Register.

3.3 Right to inspect the second copy of the Register

Rule 81 states that any member of the Association can inspect the second copy of the Register of Members, which must be made available for inspection within 7 days of any such request at the place they are kept (1 Blochairn Road, G21 2ED) at all reasonable hours. The management committee may set conditions for inspecting this Register.

An electronic summary copy of the main Register of Members is kept and updated from time to time by the Director . The committee has decided that this will be used as the second copy of the Register of Members, which can be made available for inspection when required. It contains details of all members, including name, address, share certificate number and date of commencement (and termination, if relevant) of membership. It also includes details of office bearer appointments.

3.4 Procedure for inspecting the second copy of the Register of Members

Any request to inspect the second copy of the Register of Members will be passed to the Administrative Assistant, who will deal with the matter and arrange an appointment for the inspection.

Appointments must be arranged within 7 days of receiving the request, but allowing sufficient time for BHA to check the details on the electronic summary copy, and amend

and update it if necessary. The time of the appointment will be any time during the working day between 9am and 4:00pm, to suit the convenience of the person requesting the inspection. Appointments may be available out with these times to accommodate the needs of the individual requesting the information.

The Director will confer with appropriate personnel to confirm whether there have been any recent resignations, changes of address or other loss of membership, and produce an up-to-date copy for inspection. This will include up-to-date details of office bearers.

Prior to the appointment day, the Housing Services Officer will take steps to verify the identity of the member who has requested the inspection, and confirm that they are indeed a current member of the Association. If the person concerned is not known to them personally, the help of another member of staff who may be expected to be able to identify them should be enlisted, or else a form of photographic identity must be provided. The name should then be checked against the current Register of Members.

On the day of the appointment, the Director will arrange for a private office to be available for the inspection. They will remain in the room when the second copy of the Register is passed to the enquirer. No copy will be provided to the enquirer. Any request for a photo-copy will be refused.