

The Doncaster Federation Of Tenants And Residents Associations

The Constitution

1. INTERPRETATION

- 1.1 The “Council” means Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. St Leger Homes of Doncaster is the Arms Length Management Organisation that manages all Council homes within the Borough.
- 1.2 “SJC” means the Standing Joint Committee of the Doncaster Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To represent tenants and resident views to St Leger Homes and the Council. To ensure that tenants and residents receive appropriate and effective consultation on issues which affect them.
- 2.2 To maintain and assist to improve the comprehensive Housing Services in Doncaster, based primarily on the provision made by St Leger Homes of Doncaster.
- 2.3 To seek to improve the ‘quality of life’ for tenants and residents, including issues of security and environmental concern.
- 2.4 To ensure adequate funding and premises are available for tenants and residents groups.
- 2.5 To establish a working partnership between the Federation, Councillors, St Leger Homes officers, Council officers and other charitable organisations and voluntary bodies.

3 POWERS

In furtherance of the aims and objectives of the constitution the federation shall have the power to:

- a) collect and disseminate information on all matters relating to its aims and objectives and to exchange such information with other associations and bodies having similar aims and objectives
- b) bring together in meetings and discussions local members, officers of St Leger Homes, the Council and other agencies and individuals.
- c) carry out banking with an institution of the group’s choice and maintain their own financial accounts.
- d) raise finances that will benefit the group through social and fund raising events
- e) provide community empowerment opportunities.

4. PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION

- 4.1 The Standing Joint Committee shall be non-political and non-sectarian. Members will always conduct themselves in such a way that no conflict of interest arises between their duties as a representative of tenants and residents as a whole and their own private political interests.
- 4.2 Any member of the committee known as the Standing Joint Committee (SJC) to the Doncaster Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations or committee member of a recognised Tenants Residents Association who is elected as a member of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council shall stand down immediately upon election.
- 4.3 As a representative body the Standing Joint Committee will seek the views of its members on important matters of policy before deciding the position it will adopt.
- 4.4 Where possible, individual members of the Standing Joint Committee will liaise with registered Associations in their areas to maintain adequate contact between Associations and the Standing Joint Committee.

5 CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- 5.1 Any member of the association involved in supervising or working with groups of children or vulnerable adults must agree to completing a Criminal Records Bureau check.

6. MEMBERSHIP

- 6.1 Membership of the Doncaster Federation will be open to all groups of tenants and residents on Council or former Council, or mixed tenure estates, provided that certain minimum representative criteria are met.
- 6.2 Membership of the Standing Joint Committee will be open to St Leger Homes of Doncaster tenants and those who are residents and members of Associations and Clubs affiliated to the Doncaster Federation.
- 6.3 There will be 20 members of the Standing Joint Committee, of these 12 will be tenants of Council properties, 4 will be residents of Council or mixed tenure estates, 2 will be tenant representatives of registered Housing Association properties and 2 will be tenant representatives from the private landlord rented sector. Members will serve three years on the Standing Joint Committee and will only be eligible to serve a further term if they are re-nominated by their own constituent Association (see appendix i and ii).
- 6.4 To serve the Standing Joint Committee association members must be nominated by their own group who must be registered as 'bona fide' affiliates of the Doncaster Federation.
- 6.5 That member of the Standing Joint Committee who changes tenure during their term of office (i.e. a resident becomes a tenant or vice versa) remain on the Standing Joint Committee and keep full voting rights until the next Annual General Meeting.

- 6.6 Standing Joint Committee members should not be members of more than one tenants and/or residents Associations.
- 6.7 Individual Associations may not have more than one tenant member and one resident member as representatives on the Standing Joint Committee. Nominations for residents shall be confined to owner-occupiers and housing association tenants within registered tenants and residents associations.
- 6.8 The Standing Joint Committee has the right, by majority vote, to co-opt members of Tenants & Residents Associations, Tenants Clubs, onto the Standing Joint Committee. The period of the co-option will be at the discretion of the Standing Joint Committee, but will not exceed a twelve month period.
- 6.9 The counting of Association members will be done through a count of properties.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Standing Joint Committee expects consultation with St Leger Homes of Doncaster and the Council on all general matters, which affect tenants as a whole.
- 7.2 The Standing Joint Committee would wish to be involved in any estate based consultation process between St Leger Homes and the Council and groups of tenants on particular estates where St Leger Homes proposes major changes which would affect the tenants; for example major improvement schemes. In seeking to be invited to such meetings the Standing Joint Committee recognises that issues, which affect individual estates, must be subject to a consultation process involving these individual tenants and St Leger Homes.
- 7.3 The Standing Joint Committee expects to be advised annually over the make up of the Company Accounts and their relationship to the Housing Revenue Account and the Annual performance Review of St Leger Homes as judged by District Audit.
- 7.4 The Standing Joint Committee expects to be consulted over any new forms of housing management which may occur due to Government legislation and to be kept informed of all changes which may affect its role vis a vis its members.

8. OFFICERS OF THE STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE

- 8.1 The Officers of the Standing Joint Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary, the Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer. All the officers will be elected annually at the first meeting of the Standing Joint Committee following the Annual General Meeting.
- 8.2 The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer shall continue in office until the next Annual General Meeting, resignation or election of a new Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer.

9. MEETINGS

- 9.1 Ordinary meetings of the Standing Joint Committee will take place every month on mutually agreed dates.
- 9.2 An extraordinary meeting of the Standing Joint Committee may be called at any time by three Officers of the Standing Joint Committee or by half of its members.
- 9.3 The quorum of the Committee shall be seven members of the whole Committee and no business shall be transacted at any Committee meeting unless a quorum is present.
- 9.4 Every month the Standing Joint Committee will meet with the Chief Executive (or a senior member of the management team) and officers of St Leger Homes of Doncaster on formal matters of consultation or on issues of mutual concern.

10. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- 10.1 Meetings will be chaired by the Chairperson of the Standing Joint Committee or, in his/her absence, by the Vice-Chairperson. When both officers are absent, a Chairperson will be elected by the members present.
- 10.2 When a vote is tied the Chairperson has the casting vote.
- 10.3 The agenda for meetings of the Standing Joint Committee and St Leger Homes of Doncaster representatives shall be circulated not less than one week before the meeting by the arrangement of St Leger Homes. The agenda to be decided jointly between the Chief Executive and the Chairperson of the Standing Joint Committee.
- 10.4 The agenda for an ordinary meeting of the Standing Joint Committee shall be circulated not less than one week before the meeting by the Secretary of the Committee.
- 10.5 Minutes of consultation meetings between the Standing Joint Committee and St Leger Homes of Doncaster will be taken by a member of St Leger Home's Community Liaison Section. The text will be agreed by the Chief Executive (or St Leger Homes Manager present) and a member of the Standing Joint Committee before circulation to the affiliated Associations.
- 10.6 Ordinary meetings will be minuted by the Secretary of the Standing Joint Committee who will circulate copies to affiliated Associations following the meeting.
- 10.7 Officers of St Leger Home's Community Liaison Section will have the right to attend meetings of the Standing Joint Committee on behalf of St Leger Homes and the Standing Joint Committee may, at its discretion, invite Officers of St Leger Homes, the Council or other parties to attend its meetings.
- 10.8 Motions to be discussed by the Standing Joint Committee shall be numbered and dated by the Secretary of the Standing Joint Committee in order in which they are received and shall be printed on the agenda in that order. Motions may be received

either from members of the Standing Joint Committee or from affiliated Associations. The Chairperson may rule out of order any motion that does not bear on the objects and purposes of the Standing Joint Committee. No member may have more than one notice of motion on the agenda for each meeting. If members are not present to speak on motions proposed, written proposals can be accepted to support motions taken.

10.9 The following motions and amendments may be moved without prior notice:-

- i. motions related to the accuracy of Minutes, closure, adjournment, proceeding to next business or the motion “that the question be now put,”
- ii. variation of the order of business,
- iii. adoption of reports or recommendations of Committees,
- iv. that leave can be given to withdraw a motion,
- v. amendments to motions (amendments to motions passed at previous meetings will only be taken as a new motion and dealt with by prior notice).

10.10 During the discussion of motions the Chairperson will only accept amendments relevant to the main motion, a motion of adjournment, a motion to move the vote or that the motion be deferred. Amendments will be moved at the end of debates in the order in which they are proposed and the substantive motion will then be put. Voting on amendments, motions or the substantive motion will be by show of hands. The Chairperson of the SJC meeting to have a casting vote. All votes taken will be recorded in the minutes.

11. SUB-COMMITTEES

11.1 The Standing joint Committee may at any time appoint such other Sub-Committees as are necessary to carry out any functions of the Standing Joint Committee and decide their terms of reference.

11.2 The Chairperson and Secretary of the Standing Joint Committee shall be ex-officio members of every Sub-Committee.

11.3 The Sub-Committee shall comprise of members of the Standing Joint Committee or invited co-opted members of affiliated Associations.

11.4 The Sub-Committee will meet in accordance with a timetable agreed by the Standing Joint Committee. The Chairperson and Secretary of the Sub-Committee shall be appointed at the first meeting of the Sub-Committee.

11.5 The Sub-Committee may agree recommendations by majority vote to be presented to the Standing Joint Committee for confirmation or adoption.

11.6 The Secretary of the Sub-Committee will produce minutes of the meetings which will form part of the business of the next Standing Joint Committee meeting.

12 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 12.1 In March of each year, or thereabouts, the Standing Joint Committee will arrange and call an Annual General Meeting for the Doncaster Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations.
- 12.2 The agenda for the meeting will include the submission of the Annual report of the Committee, the submission of an audited statement of accounts for the past year and the publication and issue of ballot papers to accredited delegate of the AGM.
- 12.3 All associations that have been accredited as bona fide organisations and are affiliated to the Doncaster Federation will be eligible to send three voting delegates and three guests to the Annual General Meeting.
- 12.4 At least six members of the Standing Joint Committee will be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- 12.5 Voting for Standing Joint Committee places will be by secret ballot. The ballot will be in two parts – those for tenant representative and those for resident representatives. Ballot papers for resident representatives will only be distributed to Tenants and Residents Associations affiliated to the Doncaster Federation. All motions to be considered by the Annual General Meeting must be placed before the Standing Joint Committee and be forwarded to all associations and clubs four weeks prior the date of the Annual General Meeting. All motions must be sponsored by affiliated Associations or the Standing Committee and the adoption of motions, resolutions or constitutional amendments will be by simple majority. Voting will be by show of hands or ballot.
- 12.6 VOTING: - All associations will carry 3 votes.

13. ACCREDITATION OF ASSOCIATIONS

- 13.1 All affiliated Associations will be subject to annual independent accreditation on the following basis. Associations will need to show that they have held an Annual General Meeting within the last year and Officers of the Association were duly elected, that the Association keeps appropriate membership and financial records and the Association deals with members' business as part of their normal proceedings prior to the end of February in each year. All Associations who fail this accreditation will have their affiliation with the Federation reviewed. The Standing Joint Committee retain the right, in extreme circumstances to revoke the affiliation. An appeal against the review decision can be made by letter and will be heard by the next meeting of the Standing Joint Committee. If affiliates fail to be accredited and they have a member elected to the Standing Joint Committee, the member will be required to retire from the Standing Joint Committee. In this instance the vacancy will remain open until the following Annual General Meeting.

14. CONDUCT

- 14.1 Any breach of the terms of the Constitution by members of the Standing Joint Committee will be considered by the Officers of the Committee. In cases of severe breach, the Officers will have the authority to withdraw membership from the individual concerned. Any appeals would be subject to consideration by members of the Standing Joint Committee except those Officers of the Committee who were part to the decision appealed against.
An opportunity will be available for the appeal to be heard by an independent arbitrator.
Should a vacancy arise, co-option from the sponsoring Association will be pursued.
- 14.2 The Standing Joint Committee, by majority decision, has the right to take appropriate actions against any individual Association or Club where it has brought the Federation or the tenant movement as a whole into disrepute.
In extremely serious circumstances this action could result in the association or Club being dis-affiliated for the period of one calendar year, after which, the group's situation would be re-assessed .

15. AFFILIATION

- 15.1 All associations that are accredited by the Community Liaison Section of St Leger Homes of Doncaster will be automatically affiliated to the Federation.

16. FINANCE

- 16.1 The finances of the Standing Joint Committee will be utilised to best achieve the objects of the Federation.
- 16.2 The responsibility for disbursing monies held by the Standing Joint Committee will be vested by the Treasurer.
- 16.3 The Treasurer will only authorise expenditure in accordance with minuted decisions of the Standing Joint Committee.
- 16.4 Monies available by Grant from St Leger Homes of Doncaster will only be expended on matters which relate solely to federation business.
- 16.5 Allowances may be paid but only in accordance with reasonable rates decided by a prior minuted resolution of the Standing Joint Committee.
- 16.6 Accounts of the Standing Joint Committee will be audited annually by either St Leger Homes of Doncaster Audit Service or an independent external auditor approved by the Federation and SLHD.
- 16.7 Monies available through St Leger Homes of Doncaster Revenue Account for the support of Tenant and Resident Organisations will be under the management and control of the Chief Executive, administered through the Community Liaison Section.

17. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

- 17.1 The Federation is opposed to any form of discrimination or oppression against men and women, people from minority ethnic groups, disabled people, gay men, lesbians and any other group that may be less powerful in society. The Federation adopts and accepts the St Leger Homes of Doncaster's equal opportunities policy and code of conduct.

APPENDIX

- i. Tenants places on the Standing Joint Committee (12) will be elected on a three yearly cycle (4 places per year), together with any vacancies existing due to resignation. Members will normally serve three years.

Residents' places on the Standing Joint Committee (4) will also be elected on a three yearly cycle (2 places in the first year, one place in second and third years), together with any vacancies existing due to resignation. Again, members will normally serve 3 years.

- ii. Tenant representatives of Housing Association properties and tenant representatives from the private rented sector are not eligible for officer appointment within the Standing Joint Committee.
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