

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

APPROVED BY HHP BOARD:

EFFECTIVE DATE:



hebridean housing
partnership

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The objective of this policy is to promote the good governance of the Partnership and to ensure the proper accountability of its Board by having a membership which can serve and represent our community as fully as possible, subject to the criteria listed below.
- 1.2 The policy aims to be open, fair and accountable, and to empower members to participate in and contribute to the wider aspects of our activities.
- 1.3 Our Rules deal with Membership in considerable detail. This policy aims to be consistent with the Rules, to clarify aspects not dealt with in detail, and not to duplicate matters dealt with clearly, unless essential for the sense of the policy.

PROMOTION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 We will promote membership throughout our community and will particularly seek to attract members from our tenants.
- 2.2 We will widely publicise and encourage membership in the following ways:
 - a) explain and encourage membership in the tenants' handbook;
 - b) include articles on membership in tenants' newsletters;
 - c) distribute membership application forms when tenants are signing tenancy agreements;
 - d) issue invitations to relevant organisations and individuals with a background in an appropriate profession, trade or discipline, or with a community of interest with the Partnership;
 - e) distribute membership leaflets freely;
 - f) seek opportunities for adverts, articles and other publicity in the local media and on our Social Media platforms; and
 - g) develop strategies to communicate with potential members with literacy problems, blindness or visual impairment.
- 2.3 We emphasise that the obtaining of a tenancy is not affected by whether an applicant is a member of the Partnership or not.

MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 The members shall be those people who hold a share in the Partnership and whose names are entered in the Register of Members referred to in Rule 64.
- 3.2 There shall be two categories of membership comprising the following:
- a) **Tenant Members; and**
 - b) **Community Members.**
- 3.3 No-one can be a member in more than one category at any one time.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 To apply for membership, you must send an application form and £1.00, to the Secretary at our registered office. Your application will be considered as soon as possible after receipt. We will return your money if we do not approve your application. An application for membership will not be considered by the Board within the 14-day period occurring before the date of a general meeting.
- 4.2 If we approve your application, you will immediately become a member of the Partnership and your name will be included in our Register of Members referred to in Rule 64 within seven working days. You will then be issued one share in the Partnership.
- 4.3 If you are a representative of an organisation which is a member of the Partnership or an elected Local Councillor in accordance with Rule 89.11, you cannot be a member of the Partnership as an individual yourself. If you are already a member as an individual when you start to represent an organisation which is a member, we shall suspend your membership as an individual, until such times as you are no longer a representative of an organisation which is a member.
- 4.4 You can apply for membership from the age of 16. You must be 18 years old to be considered for membership of the Board.
- 4.5 No member can hold more than one share in the Partnership.

- 4.6 If you change your address, you must let us know by writing to our Secretary at our registered office within three months. This rule does not apply if you are our tenant and have moved home by transferring your tenancy to another property owned and managed by us.

APPLICATION PROCESSING

- 5.1 Before an application for either Community or Tenant Membership is presented to the Board for consideration, the Secretary will ensure by appropriate checks that the applicant fulfils the respective membership criteria.
- 5.2 Each application for Community or Tenant Membership shall be considered by the Board at the earliest possible meeting held after receipt of the written application and any additional information required.
- 5.3 All membership applicants will be notified as soon as possible after a decision being made by the Secretary. The notification will be in writing and where an application has been refused, the reasons for the decision will be outlined in the letter. The letter will be sent using the applicant's preferred method of communication. Share certificates will be sent by post or hand delivered by an HHP officer.

APPLICATION REJECTION AND APPEAL

- 6.1 Whilst it is the Partnership's intention to encourage membership, the Board has absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership and the following shall constitute grounds for refusal of an application for membership:
- 6.1.1 Where membership would be contrary to the Partnership's Rules or policies;
- 6.1.2 Where a conflict of interest may exist which, even allowing for the disclosure of such an interest, may adversely affect the work of the Partnership;
- 6.1.3 an applicant does not satisfy the "local connection" criteria of having a main or principal residence or principal place of business or operation in the Outer Hebrides and having lived or operated in the Outer Hebrides for a period of one years

- 6.1.4 Where the Board considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of the Partnership or would be likely to compromise the independence of the Partnership; or
- 6.1.5 A re-application within five years after an expulsion may also face a refusal decision depending on the circumstances at the time of the application.
- 6.2 If an application is rejected, the Secretary will notify the applicant of the Board's decision and the reasons for it in writing, within seven days of the Board meeting at which the decision was taken. The applicant shall have the right to lodge an appeal against the decision within fourteen days of receipt of the decision.
- 6.3 If the applicant lodges an appeal, an Appeals Panel, comprising three members of the Board, shall consider the appeal within fourteen days, or at a time agreed with the applicant. The applicant shall have the right to attend the appeal hearing and be accompanied by a representative to present their case.

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

- 7.1 We seek to have a balanced representative membership, with no particular group having an undue influence. The membership shall comprise persons who have, in a personal or professional capacity, the requisite knowledge, skills and experience, or a community of interest in housing and the care of people with housing needs, appropriate to achieving the Partnership's objects defined in Rule 2. Our tenants applying for membership will normally be considered to have the relevant community of interest.
- 7.2 Members shall have a "local connection" by having:
- a) a main or principal residence or principal place of business or operation in the administrative area of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar and having lived or operated in the Outer Hebrides for a period of at least one year; or
 - b) in relation to Tenant Membership Categories, by having a tenancy in the Outer Hebrides.
- 7.3 We seek to achieve equality of opportunity and to this end; the membership is open to all sections of the community regardless of colour, race, religion, nationality, ethnic

origins, gender, disability, age or sexuality. We will make every effort to ensure applications from sections of the community that are unrepresented are encouraged.

7.4 We also welcome applications for membership from those who have, in a personal or professional capacity, experience of or a personal interest in:

- a) housing, social work or health;
- b) finance, law, business or commerce; or
- c) voluntary organisations or academic institutions.

7.5 Membership is open to nominees of unincorporated bodies, societies and companies. A corporate body may appoint a deputy to exercise its rights and powers at any of our general meetings.

MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1 The main role of our Members is to advance good governance and to ensure that the Board is accountable for its acts or omissions. Members' powers are usually exercised at general meetings mainly by scrutinising the Annual Accounts and Balance Sheet, the appointment of the Auditor, the election of the Board, the application of surpluses for particular purposes, the amendment of the Rules and the dissolution of the Partnership. In addition, the requisite number of members may apply to the Registrar to appoint an accountant or actuary to inspect our books, appoint an inspector to report on the affairs of the Partnership or to call a Special General Meeting.
- 8.2 It shall be the responsibility of Members to tell the Secretary when they no longer meet the membership criteria and will no longer be Members.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- 9.1 Members are entitled to be given 14 days notice of, and to be present and vote at any General Meeting.
- 9.2 Members will also receive an invitation to any other meetings of general interest which may be held during the course of the year.
- 9.3 Members have the opportunity to stand for election to the Board of Management under the terms of our Rules. Details of the composition of the Board, roles and

responsibilities of Board Members, etc. can be found in paragraphs 37 to 44 of the Partnership's Rules and in paragraphs 5.1 to 13.6 of the Standing Orders.

- 9.4 The membership has voting rights as provided for by our Rules, including the right to vote to appoint members to the Board.
- 9.5 Members shall receive copies of relevant communications including our Annual Report and Accounts and any relevant newsletters.

ENDING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

- 10.1 You can end your membership by giving the Secretary seven days' notice in writing.
- 10.2 If you are a Tenant Member and cease to be a tenant you will automatically become a Community Member from the date on which your tenancy ends. The Secretary will amend the Register of Members to reflect the change in your category of membership.
- 10.3 If you are a Community Member (including someone who has changed from being a Tenant Member in terms of Rule 11.1.3) and cease to have or maintain sufficient local connection with the Outer Hebrides, we shall end your membership and cancel your share.
- 10.4 If the Board is satisfied that you have failed to:
- a) tell us of a change of address as set out in Rule 10; or
 - b) attend five annual general meetings in a row and you did not submit apologies;
- we shall end your membership and cancel your share.
- 10.5 The value of the share will then belong to us with effect from the date of a Board resolution to that effect. The ending of your membership will be recorded in the Register of Members referred to in Rule 64.
- 10.6 We may end your membership if we receive a complaint about your behaviour and two-thirds of the members voting at a special general meeting (SGM) agree to this. The following conditions apply to this procedure:
- a) the complaint must be in writing and must relate to behaviour which could harm the interests of the Partnership;
 - b) the notice for the SGM will give details of the business for which the meeting is being called;
 - c) the Secretary must notify the member of the complaint in writing not less than one calendar month before the meeting referred to in Rule 11.1.5 takes place;

- d) you will be called to answer the complaint at the meeting. The members present will consider the evidence supporting the complaint and any evidence you decide to introduce;
 - e) the members can vote in person or through a representative by proxy; and
 - f) if you receive proper notice but do not go to the meeting referred to at Rule 11.1. 5 above without providing a good reason, the meeting may come to a decision without you.
- 10.7 If you are expelled from membership, you will immediately cease to be a member from the date that the resolution to expel you was passed.
- 10.8 If we end your membership in this way, any further application for membership by you within five years will need to be approved by two-thirds of the members voting at a general meeting.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 11.1 We will monitor our membership annually to establish the extent to which our membership criteria are being met.
- 11.2 We will monitor the following aspects of our membership by asking applicants to complete an application form to give information on:
- a) membership category;
 - b) evidence of local connection: residence or business in the Outer Hebrides;
 - b) profession, trade, etc. and involvement in voluntary work;
 - c) other skills and experience that could be of benefit to the Partnership; and
 - d) age, gender, ethnicity and disability (for monitoring purposes only).
- 11.3 The information supplied will be collated and used to address skills gaps for Board membership, to assess the effectiveness of the promotion of membership and how representative the membership is of the local community. We will include an analysis of membership within the annual report, including the number of new members approved, the number resigned and the number expelled.

CONSULTATION

- 12.1 We will consult with Tenants and Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTOs) prior to any amendment to the Rules.

REVIEW

- 13.1 The Membership Policy shall be reviewed every three years, or in accordance with any change to the Rules.
- 13.2 The Board shall receive a report on the operation of this policy as part of the Annual Governance Report.

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INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

WORD	INTERPRETATION
<i>HHP or Partnership</i>	Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board</i>	Means the Board of the Hebridean Housing Partnership
<i>Board Members</i>	All Members of the Board including co-opted Members
<i>RTO</i>	Registered Tenants' Organisation
<i>Member</i>	Member of the Partnership
<i>Secretary</i>	Company Secretary
All references to the masculine gender in this policy shall read as equally applicable to the feminine gender	



HHP is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Registered Number: 2644R(S), Registered Office: Creed Court, Gleann Seileach Business Park, Willowglen Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2QP. It is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number: SCO35767, registered as Registered Social Landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Registration Number: 359 and registered as a Property Factor, Registration Number PF000183

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