

***HOMES FOR CHANGE HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE Secondary  
Rules (standing orders)***

***Version - Secondary Rules 2014 05***

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## ***1 - MEMBERS***

1.1 Attendance Requirements: Members must come to at least 2 General Meetings in a 6 monthly period, taking an active involvement in at least one working group, to maintain an active role in the co-op. Should a member be absent from six consecutive General Meetings, their membership will be examined by the Membership Group.

1.2 Membership Group may vote to suspend the attendance requirement of membership according to the leave of absence policy. A leave of absence can be granted in the following circumstances:

- i) ill health (mental or physical), hospitalisation or stress related conditions;
- ii) exceptional work or study commitments;
- iii) family commitments e.g. pregnancy, caring for family or partners, adoption or new born children, etc.;
- iv) short break from Co-op duties following a sustained period of Co-op work;
- v) bereavement;
- vi) other exceptional circumstances.

1.3 Deleted.

1.4 The co-operative is committed to providing affordable homes for those in housing need.

1.5 Members must abide by the co-op's practices, principles and policies as defined by General Meeting.

1.6 The co-operative recognises and supports the activities of its sister co-op Work for Change.

## ***2 - PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS***

2.1 Attendance Requirements. Prospective members must:

- i) be qualified for rehousing according to HfC's policy.
- ii) Go to at least two general meetings in the 6 month period before the meeting at which their membership is to be voted on.
- iii) register with and take an active role in at least one working group that is acknowledged and recorded by the Working Group so that their activity can be fairly represented by the Coordinator at the General Meeting proposing their election.
- iv) be present during the open section of the General Meeting at which their admission to membership is to be decided
- v) have been to at least one of the induction training sessions unless they had previously been members.

2.2 Prospective members must represent themselves and their circumstances accurately- and fairly to the membership group. Failure to do so will result in the removal of their name from the register of members and prospective members.

2.3 A vote electing a new member of the co-op takes place in the closed section of the General Meeting. They will be deemed elected by a majority of those present and voting. The prospective member must go to the meeting at which they wish to be elected.

2.4 Notice of nomination must be on the agenda of that meeting.

2.5 Prospective members may not vote at General Meetings.

2.6 Prospective members are excluded from the closed parts of all meetings.

2.7 Membership will not be offered if, in the opinion of the General Meeting, the prospective members membership is not beneficial to the life of the co-op.

Note: 'Membership' 'Termination' and 'Expulsion from Membership' are to be found in the Primary Rules of HfC

### ***3 - GENERAL MEETINGS***

3.1 A general meeting shall be called 12 times a year at monthly intervals. The meetings are open to all members and at the discretion of the meeting to observers.

3.2 Notice of a General Meeting is distributed to all members at least seven days before, detailing the time, place and the agenda.

3.3 General Meetings shall have the power to do all things necessary to oversee the management the co-op (Under section 18a of the primary rules). If a general meeting is inquorate it will delegate its powers for that meeting to the Committee. The subsequent reconvened General meeting which has to be called under section 13 (when the meeting has been inquorate) shall have no power except to amend the rules, elect members of the committee (In this event the chair of the inquorate general meeting shall have the power to close nominations at any time not less that 5 minutes after the meeting was declared inquorate.) and elect the General Meeting Chairperson as long as proper notice of these items had been given. If the committee meeting is inquorate the reconvened general meeting shall keep its power as above.

This section does not apply to Annual General Meetings

3.4 General Meeting Procedure

General Meetings shall start at the advertised time. If the general meeting is inquorate then a committee meeting shall be held. If the committee is inquorate then the General meeting shall reconvene under section 13 of the primary rules.

Otherwise the reconvened general meeting shall only be allowed to discuss items reserved for it. If there are not items which can be discussed the reconvened general meeting shall be deemed to have occurred.

If there are items for the reconvened general meetings then all members shall be given notice of the time and place and the items which shall be discussed. The General meeting chairperson must not be an elected committee member. The general meeting chairperson shall be elected for a period of one year at the September General Meeting and shall be allowed to stand for re-election. The GM Chairperson shall be elected by the single transferable vote. The General meeting chairperson shall also be the returning officer.

If the GM chairperson is not present or wishes not to chair part of the meeting in order to take part in the debate the chair will be taken by the Deputy GM Chairperson.

The deputy GM Chairperson shall be elected at the AGM following the same procedure as the election of Coordinators. The Deputy GM chairperson shall act as the returning officer if the GM chairperson is unable to do so. If the GM chairperson and the Deputy GM Chairperson are not able to chair the meeting or conduct an election a temporary chair/returning officer shall be elected by the GM for that period.

### 3.5 General Meeting Agenda

The agenda shall include at least

- i) Minutes of last month's meeting
- ii) Committee report
- iii) Committee Proposals
- iv) Agenda items earlier notified

- v) Elections for GM Chairperson and Committee
- vi) Any other business

3.6 Members wishing to propose items for the agenda must give 14 days notice to the publicity and information Group. These items shall be passed to the committee for investigation and comment

#### ***4 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS***

4.1 Any Other Business is an agenda item brought to the attention of the chair before a meeting opens, and shall be discussed at the discretion of the chair.

4.2 Restrictions placed on items discussed under the heading of any other business:

- i) These discussions cannot be of a constitutional nature (see S.O.16)
- ii) Items will only be voted on if they do not change policy and if it is an emergency. Items will only be counted as emergencies if they relate to event occurring after members can propose items for discussion, and that reasonable attempts (electronic or other) have been made to give members notice before the meeting.

#### ***5 - DISCUSSION IN CLOSED SESSION***

5.1 Those allowed to go to closed sections of meetings are members of the co-op and the co-op's employee/s.

5.2 The following items will be discussed in the closed section of the General Meeting, having been included as an agenda item and circulated to all members of the co-op:

- i) election of new members

- ii) expulsion of members
- iii) the co-op's employee/s
- iv) Complaints
- v) Rent Arrears
- vi) Any item may be discussed in closed session at the discretion of the General Meeting

5.3. The summary minutes circulated to the mailing list will list decisions on items discussed in the closed section of the meeting, but not details of the discussion. Full minutes of this section may be found in the minutes book.

## ***6 - POWER OF THE GENERAL MEETING***

6.1 Management by General Meeting.

- i) The General Meeting is the sovereign body of the co-op.
- ii) Actions arising from decisions of the General Meeting are undertaken by a delegated agent of the co-op.
- iii) The General Meeting must endorse business conducted on behalf of the co-op.

6.2 No agent or constituted body of the co-op has the right to override decisions made at General Meeting. However, tabling said items on the agenda of a General Meeting can revisit decisions.

6.3 Deleted

6.4 Business arising between General Meetings is to be conducted by the Management Committee of the co-op, who are to be held responsible for their conduct. They may choose appropriately between:

- i) seeking further consultation with other informed members/officers/working groups and then must notify and seek ratification of the decision at the next General Meeting
- ii) calling an Emergency General Meeting.

## ***7 - RULES FOR DEBATES AT GENERAL MEETINGS***

7.1 General Meetings will normally be chaired by the General Meeting Chairperson

7.2 The Chair of each General Meeting shall have a duty to conduct each meeting according to the Primary and Secondary rules

7.3 The Chair

7.3.1 Members will accept the authority of the chair, expressing all questions and points of view through the chair.

7.3.2 Members should listen to the views of colleagues with an open mind, seeking advice or clarification where needed.

7.3.3 Members should not resort to behaviour that could be considered to be aggressive or intimidating, anyone doing so can be excluded from the rest of the meeting or given a public warning by the chair.

7.3.4 The Chair shall be impartial and shall ensure that all debates are balanced (except that the proposer of a motion or amendment shall have the right to reply to the debate before the vote.)

7.4 The following procedural motions shall apply:

- i) No confidence in the Chairperson. (If passed, there shall be an election for a Chairperson for the rest of the meeting.)
- ii) Change the Chairperson's decision
- iii) Suspend Standing Orders for a specific time or purpose. (This needs a two thirds majority.)
- iv) Refer the matter to another specific time or body.
- v) Vote now on the motion, or amendment.

7.5 Procedural motions may be moved without notice and shall take priority over any other business. They must be proposed and seconded. The proposer of a procedural motion does not have the right to reply.

7.6 When a motion is discussed there shall first be a speech in favor of the motion. The motion may then be amended. Amendments must be proposed and seconded. Each amendment shall be debated one at a time and then voted on. If the amendment is accepted by the proposer it shall not be debated. There will then be a speech against the motion as amended.

7.7 Voting Procedure: The Chairperson shall make sure that non-members do not vote. the Chairperson shall not vote unless it is a casting vote or a secret ballot.

7.8 Unless stated otherwise, all votes shall be decided by a simple majority.

7.9 If there are an equal number of votes for and against, the Chairperson(if they are entitled) may decide the matter by using a casting vote (Unless it is a secret ballot.) Or it will be a tie and the motion or amendment shall fail. If the majority needed is a two thirds majority this procedure shall be adopted if there are twice as many votes in favor as against.

7.10 The Co-op does not allow voting by proxy.

7.11 A secret ballot will be held if one tenth of the members present ask for it.

7.12 Before It can be discussed a motion must have a Proposer and a Secunder.

## ***8 - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING***

8.1 The Annual General Meeting is held within the six-month period of the co-op's financial year-end.

8.2 Before the Annual General Meeting, the agenda, written reports from each working group, the year's accounts and financial projections for the current year starting must be circulated in a mail out to all members.

8.3 Annual General Meeting Procedure. Standard agenda items are listed below:

- i) Finance report
- ii) The accounts
- iii) Appointment of an auditor
- iv) Formal Reports from each Working Group including a list of active members
- v) Attendance records at General Meetings
- vi) List of new members since last AGM
- vii) List of resigned members since last AGM
- Viii) Election of working group Coordinators
- ix) Election of Committee

## ***9 - EMERGENCY GENERAL MEETING***

- 9.1 Convening an Emergency General Meeting.
- i) An emergency General Meeting shall be held at the request of the General Meeting, or at the request of not less than ten members, or by the Management Committee.
  - ii) Those requesting such a meeting shall inform the GM Chairperson in writing, stating the purpose for which the meeting is required.
  - iii) The meeting shall be held within five days of the receipt of the request, and written details of its date, time, place and purpose circulated to the full membership.
- 9.2 No formal business will be discussed apart from the matter for which the meeting was convened.

## ***10 - WORKING GROUPS***

- 10.1 Each working group shall have a coordinator elected by General Meeting. Candidates for coordinator must be an individual member or a prospective member of the Co-op
- 10.2 The coordinator will coordinate the activities of the working group and make sure the group is represented at other necessary meetings.
- 10.3 At the next working group meeting after the AGM each working group shall appoint a deputy coordinator. The deputy coordinator shall function as the coordinator in his or her absence.

10.4 Working Groups shall meet monthly and make their minutes available to the members (except those parts of the minutes that are confidential).

10.5 Working Groups may appoint sub groups which will meet when necessary. The sub group coordinators will be elected by the main working group when the sub group is formed and at the first Working group meeting after the AGM. Sub Group coordinators can be removed by a vote of no confidence at a working group meeting.

10.6 Coordinators can only be removed by a vote of no confidence at a general meeting. This proposal must be included in the agenda.

10.7 Prospective members may not vote in working group meetings

10.8 The General Meeting or Management Committee may condense, dissolve or add to the number of working groups, as it sees fit.

## ***11- MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING***

11. Management committee

11.1 There shall be 9 elected members of the management committee. Casual vacancies shall be filled at the next general meeting that at least 7 days notice of a vacancy can be given to.

11.2 The committee shall meet monthly at least 10 and not more than 14 days before the General meeting at its own convenience

11.3 The committee shall discuss item of concern to the co-op in detail at it's monthly meetings. It shall report to the General meeting all decisions that are

needed in its report. Notice of each decision shall be given at least 7 days before the General meeting. The General meeting has the power to accept, amend or reject any of these decisions.

11.4 If the general meeting is inquorate the committee shall have the powers of that general meeting. (except where specifically excluded in the General meeting section)

11.5 In a genuine emergency the committee shall have the power to act without General meeting approval. If it does so it must explain to the general meeting's satisfaction the reasons for the emergency.

11.6 If a member of the committee fails to go to 2 consecutive monthly meetings of the committee without their apologies being accepted by the committee the following procedure shall apply:

- i) They shall be told that if they do not to go to the next committee meeting or present reasonable apologies will result in their position on the committee being declared vacant.
- ii) At the third meeting which they fail to go to or have their apologies accepted they will have deemed to have resigned from the committee
- iii) The committee will decide whether apologies are reasonable.

11.7 The committee can adopt new members of the committee at its sole discretion. Co-opted members shall have the same rights and responsibilities as elected committee members, except that they may not vote in the committee or add to the quorum. Co-opted members can be removed without notice by a majority vote of the committee or by a general meeting under rule 21 of the Primary Rules.

## ***12 & 13 - DELETED***

## ***14 - ELECTIONS***

### 14.1 Timing

- i) Sessional elections of officers and Coordinators shall take place at the Annual General Meeting.
- ii) Should a vacancy occur mid-term, the General Meeting that contains notice of election in its agenda shall deal with it.

14.2 Notice of pending election/s shall be circulated as an agenda item for the subsequent General Meeting in the mailout.

14.3 Candidates for committee elections must sign a form consenting to nomination before the election. Nominated candidates are expected to attend the meeting at which the election takes place. If a candidate cannot attend the election, and they present a reason for not attending, that the returning officer decides is reasonable, they may appoint someone to make a statement on their behalf. Candidates at the meeting must provide an answer to any questions put to them by the returning officer on behalf of the electorate.

## ***15 - DELETED***

## ***16 - THE CONSTITUTION***

16.1 The constitution of the co-op consists of

- i) The Tenancy Agreement
- ii) The Tenant's Guarantee
- iii) The Fully Mutual Rules

- iv) The Co-op Standing Orders ( Secondary Rules)
- v) The Financial Standing Orders
- vi) The Co-op's policies affecting membership/tenancy

16.2 Every member receives a copy of iii,iv,v and vi. A copy of i and ii are received by every member of the co-op taking up a tenancy. Copies of the constitutional rules and all other documents are kept at the co-op office for the inspection of members.

16.3 Constitutional Decisions are those that affect the enforcement or principle of the rules listed in S.O.16.1

16.4 Deleted

16.5 Any constitutional amendment must attain a majority of those present and voting to carry the motion, and must thereafter attain a two thirds majority of those present and voting at the subsequent General Meeting to amend the constitution. The General Meeting should consider whether the action in amending the constitution violates any other part of the co-op's constitution. Policies affecting membership/tenancy shall require a simple majority at one general meeting

16.6 A standing order may be suspended without notice by a two thirds majority present and voting (except standing orders 16.5 and 16.6)

16.7 Contravening the constitutional rules listed in S.O.16.1 is considered to be a breach of membership.

16.8 The General meeting chairperson shall in the first instance rule on the meaning and interpretation of the rules.

## ***17 - DELETED***

## ***18 - THE SIX CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES***

The Co-op is committed to the six cooperative Principles as defined in section 43a of the Primary rules they are:

### **1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership**

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

### **2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control**

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

### **3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

**4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence**

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

**5th Principle: Education, Training and Information**

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

**6th Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives**

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.