

CODE OF CONDUCT

1 OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

The objective of this policy is to specify how members should behave within the co-operative and, when engaged on the co-operative's business, how members should maintain a high standard of conduct, probity and business ethics. It also outlines how employees should conduct themselves in carrying out the duties of their roles.

2 GENERAL

- 2.1 The co-operative will, from time to time, review its stated values and how those values are implemented in practice.
- 2.2 The co-operative has signed up to the joint Confederation of Co-operative Housing / National Housing Federation Code of Governance for Housing Co-operatives. From time to time, the co-operative will review how the co-op is implementing the principles within the Code of Governance.

3 MEMBER BEHAVIOUR

- 3.1 Members will not commit or allow members of their household, guests or visitors to commit any form of harassment or cause offence to any employees and contractors of the co-operative, or any other visitor to the premises on the co-operative's business.
- 3.2 Members will not resort to behaviour that could be considered threatening, abusive or insulting when addressing employees, contractors or any other visitor to the premises on the co-operative's business.

4 BEHAVIOUR AT MEETINGS

General

- 4.1 Members must ensure that their private and personal interests do not influence their decisions, and that they do not use positions of responsibility within the co-operative to obtain personal gain of any sort that does not apply equitably to all members.

- 4.2 Members will abide at all times by co-operative's rules and policies.
- 4.3 Members will respect other members' viewpoints and encourage all members to express themselves.
- 4.4 Members will abide by the agenda prepared for the meeting. Discussions that are not pertinent to the meeting should not take place during the meeting.
- 4.5 Members will remember that 'Matters Arising' is for feedback on actions following previous decisions and not for revisiting previous debates.
- 4.6 Members will not bring up issues at a meeting if they have to be referred to other Sub-Committees or dealt with through other channels as agreed by the co-operative's policies.
- 4.7 If members wish to raise issues not on the agenda, they should bring this up under "Any Other Business". Wherever possible, the Chair should be notified of such items before the meeting. Items that are not urgent, that can wait until the next meeting, have already been discussed at previous meetings or that require a long discussion must not be brought up under AOB and should be put on the agenda for the following meeting.

Behaviour during the meeting

- 4.8 Members must recognise the role of the Chair throughout the meeting. All questions, comments and points of view should be expressed through the Chair. Members wishing to speak will indicate this by raising their hand. Members should express their opinion once during a debate; this does not restrict members' ability to respond to direct questions arising from their statement.
- 4.9 The Chair will keep note of the order of the speakers and will name the person who has the turn to speak. To ensure that all members have an equal opportunity to speak, the chair will call speakers on the list who have not yet spoken to speak before others who had already expressed their points of view or comments.
- 4.10 The person responsible for the Minutes will take minutes only from the person speaking who has been given his/her turn by the Chair and will

only record statements of fact and decisions made. The recognised speaker is hereafter referred to as “the prime speaker”.

- 4.11 The Chair may only speak on agenda items in introduction and then in summary when all other members wishing to do so have spoken.
- 4.12 Speakers will restrict their comments to matters pertinent to the agenda item under discussion. They should avoid repetition of comments made by previous speakers.
- 4.13 The prime speaker should not speak for more than 5 minutes. If this is exceeded the Chair will impose a guillotine on the speaker.
- 4.14 Members should not interrupt the prime speaker. The Chair will inform the person interrupting that they should not do so. If such a member is told more than once in any meeting, the Chair will instruct that member to leave the meeting.
- 4.15 If after discussion the meeting decides to defer an item to a subsequent meeting, any member who spoke on the original discussion shall be given the priority in speaking when it is re-discussed.
- 4.16 Members will not attend the meeting under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs.
- 4.17 Members will abide by the co-operative’s Equality and Diversity Policy at meetings and should ensure that no comments are made that could be deemed offensive.
- 4.18 Members will conduct themselves in a manner that ensures that discussions take place in a mature and constructive manner.
- 4.19 The Chair will warn members using abusive or threatening language not to do so. If such a member is told more than once in any meeting, the Chair will instruct that member to leave the meeting.
- 4.20 If the member refuses to leave the meeting at the request of the Chair the meeting should be adjourned until the member leaves.

- 4.21 If a Management Committee member behaves unacceptably at meetings they will be warned by the Chair not to do so and if they continue they may be expelled, by the Chair, from the Management Committee.

Declaring Personal Interest

- 4.22 All members should inform the Secretary or the Chair of any interests that may lead to potential conflict of interest. The co-operative will maintain a register of interests.
- 4.23 Members should inform the Chair of any personal interest in an issue prior to the discussion of said issue on the agenda.
- 4.24 Depending upon the nature of the personal interest they may be required to leave the meeting whilst the issue is discussed.
- 4.25 Members should not attempt to influence another member of an issue for which they might have a potential conflict of interest.

Confidentiality

- 4.26 All members of the Management Committee and Sub-Committees must sign a Confidentiality agreement before taking up their position.
- 4.27 Members should not disclose items deemed confidential. Members of the Management Committee who discuss confidential items and members of any Sub-Committee should keep all members' personal information strictly confidential.
- 4.28 Members who breach confidentiality face being removed from the Management Committee and Sub-Committees.

Hospitality and Gifts

- 4.29 Members and employees should ensure that all instances of receiving hospitality and gifts when on the co-operative's business are meticulously recorded.
- 4.30 Personal gifts should not be accepted.

5 EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 At all times employees should treat members with courtesy and respect.
- 5.2 Employees will remember that whilst Management Committee members can advise on general policy matters they are not to be drawn into the management of individual tenancies.
- 5.3 Employees must not provide or discuss details of the personal circumstances of members without the written permission of that member.
- 5.4 Employees will remember that Management Committee members' homes are not offices.
- 5.5 Employees will ensure that they do not allow outside interests to affect their work for the co-operative.
- 5.6 Employees will not make disparaging remarks about members.

6 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE & SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 6.1 Committee members will address employees in a professional manner. Personal attacks and comments are not acceptable.
- 6.2 Committee members will not ask employees about their personal views about the management of the co-operative.
- 6.3 Committee members will not give employees direct instructions on the day to day performance of their duties.
- 6.4 Committee members should remember that although employees will attempt to be available at short notice, access may be restricted by the demands on other parts of their work.
- 6.5 Employees will try to attend meetings outside of normal office hours which are relevant to the running of the co-operative. However, Committee members should appreciate that such availability will sometimes be restricted by family and private commitments.

- 6.6 Committee members should remember that the co-operative's office is the workplace of employees.
- 6.7 Access to the co-operative's office by Committee members will not be unreasonably restricted. However, Committee members will normally attend the offices by appointment. If the matter is urgent they will make their presence known at the agreed reception point. Committee members should not enter offices unannounced.
- 6.8 Committee Members must not expect favourable treatment from employees nor should they be treated any less favourably. All requests as a resident should be made through the accepted reporting channels (e.g. repairs).
- 6.9 Committee members should not put themselves in a position whereby they seek to oppose action taken by employees or officers on behalf of the co-operative.
- 6.10 Committee members should remember that all decisions taken by the committees are binding and that they should not seek to disassociate themselves publicly from the decisions taken.

7 BREACHES & EXCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Any member who is in breach of the Code of Conduct faces being excluded from active participation; this may be a temporary or permanent exclusion from a committee or membership.
- 7.2 Any member who has had their membership terminated following the serving of a Notice to Quit will no longer be entitled to participate in the running of the co-operative due to them not being a member.
- 7.3 Any committee member who has had successful legal action taken against them for rent arrears (possession order or suspended possession order obtained) will be suspended from the all committees until such time as the outstanding arrears have been cleared. In order to protect the confidential nature of such matters this action will be delegated to the Director of Housing. Any challenge to the decision taken will be heard by the Management Committee and can only be made in the event of a factual error.

- 7.4 Any member engaged in legal action against the co-operative cannot be involved on both sides of a dispute due to the conflict of interest that this creates. Therefore, any member engaged in such actions will be suspended from all relevant committees or discussions until such time as the legal action is concluded.

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