

1.0 AIMS

- 1.1 This policy describes;
- 1.1.1 The eligibility criteria for membership of GWHA.
- 1.1.2 How GWHA will promote membership, and how membership applications will be decided.
- 1.1.3 How we will keep members informed and encourage them to participate in GWHA's affairs.

2.0 CONTEXT

- 2.1 GWHA is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014:
- 2.1.1 Members of GWHA are those people who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered into the Register of Members.
- 2.1.2 GWHA's Rules require the Management Committee (MC) to set, review and publish a membership policy for admitting new members.

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 GWHA will promote membership as part of its commitment to local control and accountability. We will:
- 3.1.1 Endeavour to ensure that membership is reflective of the communities GWHA serves.
- 3.1.2 Promote membership within the community, especially to GWHA tenants and service users.
- 3.1.3 Consider applications from organisations as well as individuals.
- 3.1.4 Keep members informed about GWHA's aims and objectives and encourage them to participate in our Annual General Meeting (AGM).

4.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Applications by Individuals

- 4.1.1 Prospective members must be aged 16 years or over and be:
 - (a) A GWHA tenant or service user, or
 - (b) Another person who supports GWHA's objectives.
 - (c) Organisations sympathetic to GWHA's objectives.
- 4.1.2 For individuals who are not GWHA tenants or service users, GWHA expect that the vast majority of applicants will live in GWHA's main housing stock areas. Applications from people living outside these areas may be considered if the MC considers that the applicant's membership would be of benefit to GWHA (see section 6).
- 4.1.3 All former employees should be excluded from membership of GWHA for a minimum period of 5 years. This applies to all membership categories. Applications after the 5 year minimum will be treated as Category C applicants (ref 6.4)

4.2 Applications by Organisations

- 4.2.1 Examples of potential organisational members include the local authority; other partner agencies; and voluntary or community organisations operating in our housing stock areas.

5.0 MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

- 5.1 GWHA will promote and encourage membership in our area of operation:
 - (a) Tenants will be encouraged to become members at Tenancy sign up and through newsletters.
 - (b) The benefits of membership will be promoted at our Annual Tenant Conference and other tenant and community events
 - (c) Observers at the AGM will be given a membership form and leaflet
 - (d) Our website and factored owners information leaflet will have membership details
- 5.2 Promotion compliance will be monitored annually by the Corporate Director

6.0 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Application Forms are available from the Registered Office of GWHA. The completed form should be sent with £1 to the office.

- 6.2 To ensure that applications are legitimate, GWHA may:
- Record and number application forms when we issue them.
 - Reject bulk applications (i.e. the return of more than two applications at the same time, except for applications submitted by members of the same household).
- 6.3 Validate applications, by contacting the person in whose name a membership application has been submitted or by seeking proof of identity.
- 6.4 All completed Application Forms from individuals are presented to the MC at the earliest opportunity. A standard template ensures consistent and appropriate consideration of applications. The MC will not consider applications for membership within the period of 14 days before the date of a general meeting.
- 6.5 Applications will be placed in one of three categories:
- Cat A:** Tenants of GWHA who will usually be automatically approved
- Cat B:** Owners who receive a factoring service from GWEn¹, and other residents in our main housing stock areas, who are required to confirm their reasons for applying
- Cat C:** All other applicants, including former employees >5years (ref 4.1.3)
- 6.6 For applicants in Category C, GWHA will ask the applicant to attend a meeting with a **Membership Panel** before a decision on granting membership is made:
- GWHA will use the meeting to establish the applicant's motivation for applying for membership, and to seek assurance that granting membership would benefit GWHA and be in the Association's best interests.
 - The Membership Panel will normally consist of the Chairperson and Secretary, or such other members as appointed by the Chairperson. The Panel will have full delegated authority to consider and decide category C applications.
- 6.7 GWHA will write to applicants as soon as possible after the MC (or Membership Panel, for category C applications) has met:
- 6.7.1 Applicants who have been accepted as members will be entered in the Register of Members within 7 days, and will receive a Share Certificate² and a copy of the Rules within 14 days.
- 6.7.2 If the MC or Membership Panel has rejected an application, the applicant will be advised of the reasons for the decision and the applicant's £1.00 payment will be returned.
- 6.8 Refusal of applications is expected to be exceptional. In this regard, the Rules give the MC absolute discretion in deciding applications for membership, including the following grounds for rejecting a membership application:
- Membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or other policies.
 - Approving an application would create a conflict of interest that, even if disclosed, might adversely affect GWHA's work.
 - The MC considers that accepting an application would not be in GWHA's best interests
- 6.9 Refusal of membership applications must be managed in an accountable way and should not be used to undermine attempts to make GWHA locally accountable and representative. If an application is rejected in any of Categories A, B or C, the applicant will be offered **one further opportunity** to request membership, and to give reasons why GWHA's original decision should be changed. The MC will consider the applicant's response at its next practical meeting, and its decision on that occasion will be final.

7.0 MEMBER PARTICIPATION

- 7.1 GWHA will ensure that members are well informed and can actively participate in GWHA's affairs, by:
- Providing members with an annual report and publishing this on our website.
 - Publicising general meetings at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.
 - Providing information that allows members to make informed decisions at general meetings. Where information in a particular format or language is required, reasonable efforts will be made to provide this.

¹ Glasgow West Enterprises Ltd

² Signed by the Secretary and two committee members

- Holding general meetings at times and locations that maximise opportunities to attend.
- Promoting opportunities for serving on the MC.

8.0 DISPUTES AND TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP⁸

8.1 Any dispute between a member and GWHA about membership or any other aspect of the Rules, shall be dealt with in accordance with the Rules and GWHA's supporting policies. If a member (or someone who has been a member in the previous six months) wishes to challenge a decision made by the MC, he/she will be invited to write to the MC setting out their concerns, with reference to the Rules. The MC shall consider and decide any such submissions. This shall be the final decision-making stage within the Association.

8.2 Membership will be ended in accordance with the Rules, when a member:

8.2.1 Resigns by giving 7 days written notice to the Secretary; OR

8.2.2 Fails to attend or be represented at five consecutive annual general meetings or does not submit apologies for absence; OR

8.2.3 Changes address but does not tell us their new address within three months (not applicable if the new address is a property GWHA owns); OR

8.2.4 Is expelled in accordance with the Rules; OR

8.2.5 Dies (share can be transferred to a nominated person).

8.3 If membership has been ended due to 1-3 above a fresh application to re-join may be submitted for consideration by the MC under our normal procedures. In the case of 4 above, a member who has been expelled can only be re-admitted to membership if a two-thirds majority voting at a special meeting of the GWHA membership give approval.

8.4 The Membership Register will be regularly updated, to reflect cases where membership has ended. The £1.00 membership fee is not refundable on termination of membership.

9.0 EQUALITY

9.1 GWHA welcomes membership applications from all sections of the community. GWHA expect those attending GWHA events such as general meetings to show respect towards others, and behaviour that is at odds with our commitment to equality will not be tolerated.

10.0 POLICY REVIEW

10.1 The Membership Policy will be reviewed in 5 years. The MC will review periodically the profile of the membership, in order to identify any priorities for promoting membership to groups that are currently under-represented.

10.2 Prior to each Annual General Meeting, the Management Committee shall receive a report on the requirements relating to the Register of Members as set out in Rules 64 and 65.

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