



# Rural Stirling

## Housing Association

### MEMBERSHIP POLICY

<b>Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA</b> <b>Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849</b>	
<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Membership Policy</b>
<b>Policy Category</b>	<b>Governance</b>
<b>Date Policy Last Approved</b>	<b>June 2018</b>
<b>Date Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>December 2022</b>
<b>Review Period</b>	<b>5 years</b>
<b>Next Review Due</b>	<b>December 2027</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Yes</b>

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 Rural Stirling Housing Association (the Association) is a membership organisation, and aims to attract people from the groups and communities it serves to become members. The Association seeks to establish a wide and active membership by recruiting as members, individuals with an interest in the work of the organisation and to make effective use of skills, experience and views of its members.
- 1.2 Members of the Association are those people who hold a share in the Association and whose names are entered into the Register of Members. It is a requirement of membership that members are supportive of the aims and objectives of the Association.

## **2.0 Statement of Intent**

- 2.1 We will ensure that all applications for membership are treated fairly in line with the Rules of the Association and this policy.

## **3.0 Equality & Diversity Statement**

- 3.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. In implementing this policy, we will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other grounds. Our commitment to equality and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes.

This policy and any other Rural Stirling Housing Association (RSHA) publication is available in other formats e.g., other languages, Braille, large print, audio.

## **4.0 SHR Regulatory Standards**

- 4.1 The SHR's regulatory framework sets out Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management to be achieved by all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The Board accepts that it is responsible for ensuring that the Association complies with these standards. The standards of direct relevance to this policy are noted below:

- *Standard 1 - The Governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users*
- *Standard 2 - The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and proprieties of its tenants, services users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities*
- *Standard 5 - The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity*

## **5.0 Relevant Legislation**

The Association is required to conduct its affairs in line with its Rules and Constitution.

## **6.0 Promotion of the Policy**

- 6.1 The Association will promote membership by circulating information on membership to tenants, local community and representative groups and others who might have an interest in the work of the Association. Information on membership will be distributed through the Association's website, the Tenant Handbook, our Rural Matters newsletter, and other publicity material, events and information, including electronic media where possible
- 6.2 Information will be provided to all new Association residents about membership of the Association and all new residents will be encouraged to join. They will be advised of the special rights that membership confers in giving a say in the running of the Association. It will be explained that this is additional to the statutory rights for tenants to participate in decisions over housing services.
- 6.3 All potential members will be advised that membership does not give any priority for, or special access to, the Association's services.
- 6.4 The Membership Policy will be available on the Association's website.

## **7.0 Who Can Join?**

- 7.1 People can apply for membership from the age of 16.

The Association rules<sup>1</sup> set down the main criteria relating to membership eligibility. The Association seeks to ensure broad representation in its membership of the groups and communities that it serves. To this end, the Association will particularly welcome applications from:

- a) Tenants of the Association
- b) Service users of the Association
- c) Other persons who support the objects of the Association
- d) Organisations sympathetic to the objects of the Association

We particularly welcome and strongly encourage applications from individuals who live within the RSHA area and organisations which are located or are active in the RSHA area.

- 7.2 The Association seeks to ensure that its membership reflects the communities it serves and that all sections of the community are represented. Membership is open to all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment,

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<sup>1</sup> RSHA Rules (2020) 7.1

marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

- 7.3 The Association also seeks to recruit as members those with a particular interest in the running of the organisation and who can contribute particular community, business or professional insights, skills and experience for the Association's benefit.
- 7.4 The Association accepts applications from organisations as well as individuals, in accordance with the rules relating to representing an organisation<sup>2</sup>.
- 7.5 The Association will monitor and from time to time review the composition of its membership and will particularly encourage applications from those groups which are under-represented.

## **8.0 Procedures for Applying for Membership**

- 8.1 A Membership application form (**Appendix 1**) can be downloaded from the Association's website, as well as being included with the information packs provided to all new residents and can be obtained from the Association's office. The completed and signed form should be returned with £1.00 to Rural Stirling HA's registered office.
- 8.2 An acknowledgement letter will be issued to the applicant within 3 working days of the membership application being received and it will advise the date of the Board meeting when the application will be presented for a decision.
- 8.3
- 8.3 An application for membership will not be considered by the Board within the period of 14 days before the date of a General Meeting.
- 8. Once approved the membership commences immediately and the Association will, within seven working days, write to the new member to confirm their membership, issue them with a Share Certificate, a copy of the Association's Rules and details of how members can participate in the organisation including the AGM and how to stand for election to the Board of Management.
- 8.5 While it is the Association's intention to encourage membership, the Board of Management has absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership, taking full account of the Membership Policy and Rules of the Association. The Rules state the following grounds for refusal of an application:
  - a) Where membership would be contrary to the Association's Rules or policies;
  - b) Where a conflict of interest may exist which, even allowing for the disclosure of such an interest, may adversely affect the work of the Association;

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<sup>2</sup> RSHA Rules (2020) 7.1 and Rule 12

- c) Where the Board considers that accepting the application would not be in the best interests of the Association.

8.6 Current employees of the Association and people closely associated with them shall not be eligible for membership, unless they are also a tenant of RSHA.

8.7 The Board will not approve applications from persons or organisations where there are reasonable grounds to believe that they are not supportive of the Association. Where an application is believed to be part of an organised campaign by a group that is not genuinely supportive of the Association, the application will be refused.

8.8 The Board of Management must have regard to the terms of this policy but retains absolute discretion in determining the outcome of applications for membership.

## **9.0 Member Participation in General Meetings**

9.1 The Association wishes to ensure that all of its members can actively participate in the organisation. To this end the Association will:

- Publicise general meetings at least 14 days before the date of the meeting
- Circulate information to members so they can make informed decisions at general meetings. (Where information in a particular format or language is required, the Association will endeavour to provide this);
- Make every effort to hold general meetings at times and locations suitable for members, and in a venue which is as accessible as possible.

## **10.0 Other Engagement with Members**

10.1 Aside from participation in general meetings the Association will seek to engage with share-holding members throughout the course of a year. This will be in addition to other tenant consultation/participation activities around service delivery issues. The objective will be to:

- Stimulate interest and help ensure healthy levels of attendance and engagement at general meetings from both tenant and community members
- Encourage applications to join the Board of Management from those with the necessary interest and commitment
- More generally, strengthen our community base by expanding the number of people with a good understanding of the Association's work who might also be capable of relaying that information to the wider community.

This will be done by ensuring that all members, with an interest, are:

- Kept well informed about our plans, activities and achievements, and the main issues being faced by the Association. (All members will receive regular editions of our Rural Matters newsletter, other publications and alerted to any electronic /social media communications.).
- Provided with occasional opportunities to attend specific events such as scheme openings and other events to hear about the Association’s work
- Consulted from time to time on the overall direction of the Association or specific issues of relevance
- Kept informed about the role of the Board of Management and opportunities to join the Board of Management.

10.2 When joining the Association, new members will be invited to state their preferences about methods of contact / engagement with RSHA and their specific areas of interest in the Association’s activities. All members are expected to be positive ambassadors for the Association and RSHA will provide relevant information to members to ensure that they remain informed about the Association’s work. RSHA will provide periodic opportunities for members to update or amend their preferences to ensure communications remain effective. Particular encouragement will however be given to the following:

- Tenant members with an interest in how the Association is more generally run (beyond matters relating to the service they receive) – including regular attenders at the Tenant Forum.
- Other members in the local community (and in particular those active in Community Councils and Trusts).
- Individual members known to have relevant professional skills/contacts.

Where members express interest in a specific aspect of the Association’s activities, the arrangements for communicating and engaging with them will be agreed with them.

## **11.0 Termination of Membership**

In accordance with the Rules<sup>3</sup>, membership will cease if a member:

- Resigns by giving seven days’ written notice to the Secretary;
- Changes address but does not notify the Association of their new address within three months, unless the new address is also a property of the Association;
- For five consecutive AGMs fails to attend, submit apologies for, exercise a postal vote or appoint a representative to attend and vote on your behalf by proxy;
- Been the subject of a vote to end their membership by 2/3 of the members voting at a Special General Meeting, following a complaint about their behaviour;
- Dies.

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<sup>3</sup> RSHA Rules (2020); Rules 11 and 16

If a member becomes an employee of the Association, their membership will be ended and their share will be cancelled.

## **12.0 Related Documents.**

11.1 This policy relates to the following documents:

- The Rules of the Association
- Policy on Recruitment of Board of Management Members

## **13.0 Review**

13.1 We will review and update this policy every 5 years. More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy or regulatory guidance.



**Application for Membership of Rural Stirling Housing Association**

Rural Stirling Housing Association is a Registered Social Landlord. We are a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and a Scottish Charity. We welcome and encourage applications from all groups and communities we serve. Membership is open to people who are interested in supporting our activities – our membership policy explains who can apply.

If you would like to apply to become a Member, please complete this form and send it to [sandra@rsha.org.uk](mailto:sandra@rsha.org.uk) or by post to Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Road, Doune, Perthshire, FK16, 6AA

You must enclose £1 with your application which will purchase your ‘share’ if your application is successful (it will be returned if not).

<b>Full Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	
<b>Are you over 16?</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	
<b>Contact Telephone Number</b>	

<b>(i) Are you a tenant or resident of Rural Stirling Housing Association?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>(ii) Are you related to an employee or member of the Board of Management of Rural Stirling housing Association?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please say who _____	
<b>(iii) Are you a member of any other Housing Association or Co-operative?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please provide further details _____	

**Please advise why you want to become a member Rural Stirling Housing Association and which aspect of our work you are especially interest in.**

**Would you be interest in joining our Board of Management** Yes  No

**I,(print Name) \_\_\_\_\_ wish to become a member of Rural Stirling Housing Association and I enclose £1 as payment for one share.**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership applications are presented to our Board of Management for approval. If you application is approved you will be issued with a Share Certificate shortly after the approval meeting.**

**For internal Use:**

**Application Received** \_\_\_\_\_

**£1 payment received** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presented to Board of Management** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Approved:** Yes  No