



Membership Policy

Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA . Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849	
Policy Name	Membership Policy
Policy Category	Governance
Approved by Board	June 2018
Review Period	5 years
Review Due	June 2023

1. Introduction

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.

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.

Other Association documents that are relevant to this policy are:

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

2. Promotion of Membership

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 disseminated through the Association's website, the Tenant Handbook, our Rural Matters newsletter, and other publicity material, events and information, including electronic media where possible.

Information about membership of the Association will be provided to all new Association residents who will be encouraged to join and 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.

All potential members will be advised that membership does not confer any priority for, or special access to, the Association's services.

The Membership Policy will be available on the Association's website.

3. Who Can Join?

People can apply for membership from the age of 16.

The Association rules¹ 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

¹ RSHA Rules (2018) 7.1

- 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.

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 colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, age, or sexuality.

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.

The Association accepts applications from organisations as well as individuals, in accordance with the rules relating to representing an organisation².

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.

4. Procedures for Applying for Membership

Membership application forms (**Appendix 1**) can be downloaded from the Association's website, are 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 sent with £1.00 to the Secretary at the registered office.

Every application is considered by the Board of Management as soon as is reasonably practicable after its receipt by the Association.

An application for membership will not be considered by the Board within the period of 14 days before the date of a General Meeting.

Once approved the membership commences immediately and the Association will, within seven working days, write to the new member to confirm their membership, and 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.

While it is the Association's intention to encourage membership, the Board of Management has absolute discretion in deciding on applications for

² RSHA Rules (2018) 7.1 and Rule 12

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

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.

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.

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.

5. Member Participation in General Meetings

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 well in advance of meetings,
- 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.

6. Other engagement with members

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 as agreed as part of our communications strategy).
- 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.

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.

7. Termination of Membership

In accordance with the Rules³, membership will cease if a member:

- Resigns by giving seven days' written notice to the Secretary;

³ RSHA Rules (2018); Rules 11 and 16

- 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.

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

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 5 years or sooner, as required.



Application Form for Membership

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. 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: [INSERT DETAILS]

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

Full Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Are you over 16?	
E-mail	
Telephone number	

Are you a tenant or a resident of Rural Stirling Housing Association?
 YES NO

Are you related to an employee or Member of the Board of Management of RSHA?
 YES NO

(If yes, please say who _____)

Are you a member of any other housing association or co-operative?
 YES NO

(if yes, please state which _____)

Please say why you want to join RSHA and which aspects of our work you are especially interested in

I apply to become a member of Rural Stirling Housing Association and enclose £1 as payment for a Share.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Decisions about Membership are made by the Board of Management. To be eligible to vote at the 2018 AGM, your application for membership must be received not later than [INSERT DATE]