



cairn

Social Committee Handbook  
A tenants' guide to forming successful  
social committees

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## Introduction and the role of a social committee

A Social Committee is the group of people who come together to build their community through social activities while fostering a sense of community spirit.

Running community activities can build a stronger sense of friendship with all residents involved and allow social interaction with other residents.

The list of activities a committee could organise is endless, some examples include quiz nights, luncheon clubs, coffee mornings, jumble sales, shopping trips and outings, exercise sessions, gardening and disco nights.

Social committees are usually informal groups but they can choose to register as a Registered Tenant Organisation with Cairn. Recognised Registered Tenant Organisations have additional benefits such as access to funds which informal groups would not have but they do have to follow more formal procedures which puts some of them off the idea. For more information on becoming a recognised Registered Tenant Organisation please contact me on the phone numbers or email address at the back of this guide.

Committee members have ultimate responsibility for ensuring the committee delivers the outcomes for which it was set up and for the effective management and monitoring of its activities. Members are equally responsible for actions and decisions made by the committee and the evaluation of all areas of the committee's performance.

Everything the committee and its members do must be in line with its Constitution (the aims, objectives and rules of the group). All members must ensure the committee understands and complies with any relevant rules, seeks guidance around any uncertainties and ensures that all money and resources are properly used, managed and accounted for.

**The committee must be fair and open to all sections of the community in all of its activities and events.**

This guide has been produced by Cairn to offer help, guidance and support for any tenants who wish to form a social committee. While it is ultimately up to groups to decide how best to organise their social activities we recommend that they read and consider following this guide. Keep in mind that every group is different and groups may wish to consider adapting this guide, or the model constitution and code of conduct to best suit their needs.

Good luck and please get in touch if with myself, your Housing Officer or Court Coordinator/Sheltered Housing Service Manager if we can be of any help.

**Neil Golightly**  
Business Services Manager

## The role of the Chair

Chairing is a key role on any committee and it can be time consuming. The Chairperson must ensure that the Committee functions properly, there is full participation during meetings, all relevant matters are discussed and effective decisions are made and carried out.

The Chairperson is responsible for making sure that each meeting is planned effectively, conducted according to the constitution and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.

The Chairperson must make the most of all his/her committee members and 'lead the team'. This also involves regularly reviewing the Committee's performance and identifying and managing the process for renewal of the Committee through recruitment of new members.

The Chairperson must co-ordinate the Committee to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the effective management of the committee. The Chairperson may from time to time be called upon to represent the committee and sometimes be its spokesperson at external functions or meetings.

## Chairing meetings

One of the most important roles of the Chairperson is steering a Committee through its business effectively and efficiently. A good Chair will be mindful of the following basic points:

### **Before the Meeting**

- Plan the agenda including items brought to you by other members. Decide the order and timing of the agenda, and who will present each one.
- Identify which agenda items are for information, discussion or a decision.
- Be well briefed about each item, and actions taken since the last meeting.
- Ensure all necessary background papers (including the last meeting's minutes) are sent out with the agenda beforehand.
- Check all relevant practical arrangements have been made, e.g. room layout, visual aids, etc.
- Arrive in good time before the meeting is due to start.

### **During the Meeting**

- Start the meeting, welcome any new members and make any necessary introductions.
- Receive apologies for absence.
- Ensure that additions or amendments to minutes are recorded.
- Set the scene. State the objectives of the meeting and each item.
- Maintain control. Set out any time limits and ensure time is used effectively.
- Allow flexibility and freedom of expression.
- Keep to the agenda.
- Ensure quorum is present.

- Ensure full participation and draw out quieter members and discourage those who are monopolising the meeting.
- Be prepared to highlight issues that no-one else will and to be the one who always has to ask the awkward questions.
- Weigh up contributions impartially.
- Summarise discussions and ensure everyone understands what is being discussed.
- Ensure that if jargon and abbreviations are used, all present understand them.
- Ensure that decisions are taken in the context of the committee's aims and that they are recorded, together with who is going to implement them.
- Steer members to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team.
- Agree a date for the next meeting - it is usually best to set dates for the year's meetings well in advance.

### **After the meeting**

- Agree what items will be put on the agenda of the next meeting and what work needs to be done, by whom etc.
- Ensure that the minutes are written up, checked and sent out in good time.

### **A good chairperson will:**

- speak clearly and succinctly;
- be sensitive to the feelings of members;
- be impartial and objective;
- ensure meetings start and finish on time;
- be approachable;
- be tactful;
- be able to delegate;
- show interest in member's viewpoints;
- have sound knowledge of the committee's work;
- have an ability to respect confidences; and ensure decisions are taken and recorded

## The role of the Secretary

The Secretary often acts as an information and reference point for the Chair and other committee members. The role of the Secretary is to support the Chair in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Committee by:

- Keeping up-to-date contact details
- Compiling lists of names and addresses that are useful to the committee
- Keeping a record of the committee's activities and reporting the activities of the committee and future programmes to members
- Ensuring elections and the committee's activities are in line with the constitution
- Ensuring charity and company law requirements are met (where relevant)
- Sitting on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels, as required.
- Responding to all committee correspondence and filing all correspondence received and copies of replies sent
- Keeping a record of any of the committee's publications
- Preparing a report of the committee's activities for the year, for the Annual General Meeting.
- To keep the Sheltered Housing Services Manager or Court Coordinator informed of the committee activities and membership

### **A good Committee Secretary will:**

- be methodical, with a good eye for detail;
- be well organised, with an orderly mind;
- bring objectivity to the proceedings;
- deal promptly with correspondence;
- be able to take accurate notes of meetings;
- make sure members receive all the necessary material;
- bring the necessary material to the meeting;
- work well with the Chairperson;
- ensure quorum is met for meetings; and
- have knowledge or experience of committee procedures.

## The secretary's role at meetings

The Secretary is crucial to the smooth running of a Committee meeting. The role involves activities before, during and after Committee meetings. In order to be effective, the Secretary should ensure that they carry out the following activities:

### **Before the Meeting**

- Consult with the Chairperson on the order of items for the agenda for the meeting. Decide what requires discussion and what requires a decision by the Committee;
- Ensure that the notice of the meeting is given, that suitable accommodation is arranged and confirmed, and that copies of the agenda are prepared;
- Circulate in good time to all members any papers to be discussed at the upcoming meeting and a copy of the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting;

- Make sure that any reports or information requested at the last meeting are available or that there is a good reason why not.

### **At the Meeting**

- Arrive in good time before the meeting with the minutes and with all the relevant correspondence for that meeting;
- Record the names of attendees and record apologies received from those who are absent;
- Checking quorum is present at meetings
- Read the minutes of the previous meeting, and if they are approved, obtain the Chairperson's signature on them;
- Report on action or matters arising from the previous minutes
- Take notes of the meeting, recording the key points and making sure that all decisions and proposals are recorded, as well as the name of the person or group responsible for carrying them out.
- Remind the Chairperson if an item has been overlooked.

### **After the Meeting**

- Prepare a draft of the minutes and consult the Chairperson for approval;
- Filing minutes and reports
- Send a reminder notice of each decision requiring action to the relevant person; and
- Promptly send all correspondence to members

## **Minutes**

All committees must keep an accurate record of business discussed at meetings. Taking the minutes is one of the most important aspects of the secretary's job. Actions and decisions made are the key things to record. Minutes should not be a record of everything said at the meeting or the Secretary's personal feelings.

### **Minutes should:**

- State the name of your Committee and date, time and place of the meeting
- Include a list of who was present at the meeting
- Follow the agenda
- Be clear, short, easy to read and understand
- Include all decisions made, and the key arguments leading to them
- Have an "Action" column stating who's responsible for carrying out decisions made
- State the date, time and place of the next meeting
- Be written up and sent out soon after the meeting
- The Secretary should keep a copy of all minutes for future reference

## The role of the Treasurer

The Treasurer has a watchdog role over all aspects of financial management and will include working closely with other members to safeguard the committee's finances.

The Treasurer typically acts as an information and reference point for the Chair and other committee members: clarifying financial implications of proposals; confirming legal requirements; outlining the current financial status; and retrieving relevant documentation.

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that effective financial systems and procedures have been established, are being consistently followed and are in line with best practice and legal requirements. Cairn's Communications and Engagement Team can provide help with templates for financial records.

### **The following outlines what could be the typical responsibilities of a Treasurer:**

- Oversee and present budgets, accounts and financial statements on a regular basis
- Ensure that record-keeping and accounts meet the conditions of any funders
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and required insurances are in place.
- Advise on the committee's fundraising activities
- Ensure use of funds complies with conditions set by funding bodies
- Ensure fundraising and sales complies with relevant legislation
- Ensure effective monitoring and reporting
- Prepare and present budgets for new or ongoing work
- Advise on financial implications of strategic and operational plans
- Present revised financial forecasts based on actual spend.
- Present regular reports on the committee's financial position to committee
- Prepare annual accounts
- Manage bank accounts
- Set up appropriate systems for book-keeping, payments & petty cash
- Ensure everyone handling money keeps proper records and documentation

### **A good treasurer will:**

- be capable of handling figures and cash;
- have an orderly mind and methodical way of thinking;
- have experience in dealing with large sums of money and budgets;
- have experience of financial control and budgeting;
- have an eye for detail;
- be available to be contacted for ad hoc advice;
- good communication and interpersonal skills;
- ability to ensure decisions are taken and followed-up; and
- show good time-keeping.

It is not good practice for all tasks associated with the finance function to be performed by one person without supervision from others. The Committee has a



collective responsibility for the committee's financial management and not just the Treasurer.

## The role of committee members

Committee members should understand their individual and collective roles, responsibilities and accompanying duties. All committee members are individually committing to:

- upholding the values and objectives of the committee
- giving adequate time and energy to the duties of being a member
- acting with integrity and declaring personal conflicts of interest

As committee members will make decisions as a collective group and hold joint responsibility for decisions and actions taken by the committee, even in their absence. Members are responsible for ensuring that all decisions are taken in the best interests of the committee and that their role is carried out effectively. Individual members should demonstrate selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership (known as The Nolan Principles).

## The role of the Sheltered Housing Service Manager or Court Coordinator

The role of the Cairn staff member is one of enabling, to motivate and encourage tenants to participate in social activities.

### **The Cairn staff will:**

- Help inform new residents of the committee, although overall responsibility for promoting the work of the committee lies with committee members
- Be responsible for taking and managing all room bookings for the communal areas from both internal and external hirers
- Help to set up lounge room and any equipment booked in advance
- Carry out any required health and safety checks or risk assessments
- Display any notices or posters as requested by the committee

### **Cairn staff must NOT:**

- Take minutes for the committee
- Handle any committee money
- Do shopping for the committee
- Get directly involved with committee business of the committee or hold the position of Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary.

The Sheltered Housing Service Manager or Court Coordinator must be sent a copy of the minutes by the Secretary so that they can be kept up to date with committee activities and promote these to residents not involved in the committee.

## Equality and diversity

The committee must actively encourage all residents to participate in the committee, ensuring no one is looked upon less favourably than another, especially on any of the grounds of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, illness, age, dependants, class, religious belief, sexual orientation, political persuasion, or financial situation.

Where harassment or discrimination, either real or implied, is brought to the committee's attention, it must work with Cairn staff to take appropriate action.

## The Annual General Meeting

The A.G.M. is the key to your committee's year - it is an opportunity to inform the Court of the work that your committee has been involved in throughout the year while encouraging more community support and drawing in new committee members with fresh ideas.

## Basic criteria of a good social committee

Social committees must be representative of all residents, accountable and democratically elected. **A good social committee will have:**

- A written constitution and Code of Conduct
- Open financial records (with annually accounts)
- Regular elections and minuted meetings
- Membership clearly open to all qualifying residents
- A note on their constitution on equal opportunities and diversity
- Ways to make sure all tenants know about the group and are encouraged to become more active
- A report at the AGM on activities during the course of the year and the plans for the year ahead

## The social committee's constitution

A constitution is a basic set of rules for the daily running of your committee. It details the name, objects, methods of management and other conditions under which your committee operates and generally the reasons for its existence. The constitution:

- Explains to members and non-members what your group is about
- Provides guidelines for the daily running of your group
- Helps to sort out internal problems
- Is a legal necessity if your group wishes to take the additional step of becoming a Registered Tenant Organisation
- Can help in seeking funding from the council or other grant making bodies

An example of a model constitution is attached to the back of this handbook. This is intended as a guideline and you are not expected to adopt it word for word.

## Running effective meetings

Committee meetings are vital to the effective functioning of the committee and its ability to carry out its role. They are the means by which the Committee exercises its collective responsibility for leading the committee. Meetings are necessary for:

- Decision making;
- Reporting;
- Review;
- Problem solving; and
- Discussion

In reality running purposeful and participative meetings can be challenging. Common experiences include:

- Long discussions with no conclusion;
- Decision making on the basis of inadequate information;
- Low attendance;
- Uneven participation; and
- Unwillingness to ask questions.

These issues are not easily addressed, but meetings can become more effective if they are well planned with a clear purpose, effectively chaired and focused on decision-making.

### Planning meetings

Committee meetings are more productive if they are planned beforehand. Responsibility for planning the meeting lies with the Chairperson along with the Secretary. However all Committee members will need to ensure they have read any papers prior to the meeting and have added relevant items to the agenda.

Plan your meetings effectively by:

- Setting dates well in advance to maximise the number of members available to attend (and sending a reminder notice);
- Clarifying the purpose or focus of the meeting;
- Ensuring that staff and financial reports are concise and comprehensible;
- Ensuring that minutes and agreed actions from the previous meetings are circulated prior to the meeting;
- Ensuring that all papers are circulated well in advance; and
- Agreeing the meeting agenda in advance. Identifying which agenda items require a decision and which are for information or discussion

## **Effective chairing**

Chairing is a key factor in the effectiveness of meetings. The Chair must direct discussions ensuring that the objectives of the meeting can be met, and that the Committee effectively fulfils its responsibility in consideration of the items on the agenda. This involves ensuring that you are well briefed about each agenda item and that:-

- Decisions are taken, recorded and carried out;
- The committee's policies are applied;
- There is full participation from all members;
- The agenda is followed; and
- There are time limits for the meeting as a whole and for agenda items.

Productive meetings requires all members of the Committee working as a team and taking joint responsibility for ensuring that issues are given due consideration and decisions taken.

## **Decision making**

In making any decision, a number of steps are involved, including the following:-

- Information - ensuring the committee has read or heard all relevant information;
- The goal - what is your aim and is it consistent with the aim and direction of the committee. Agreement on the goal is a crucial stage in decision making;
- Choices - what choices are available to you and what are the constraints; and
- The plan - how do you achieve your goal - what are the steps and what resources do we need.

Decision making is much more effective if the committee establishes not only what is to be done but also how it will be done, when and by whom. There are two common methods of making decisions: by consensus and by taking a vote. Regardless of how decisions are taken, all committee members should be clear about exactly what has been decided and decisions should be clearly minuted.

Each Committee member has a contribution to make to effective meetings. All members should:

- Prepare for meetings;
- Forward apologies if you are unable to attend;
- Listen to the speakers;
- Learn from other people;
- Speak up when you have something to say;
- Ask questions if you are unclear or unsure;
- Consider all the options and share your views; and
- Abide by decisions which are taken, whether you agree with them or not.

All Committee meeting members should receive the following before a meeting takes place:

- Notice of the meeting – dates for meetings should be set well in advance
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- An Agenda

## A model agenda

An agenda simply lists the topics or issues that will be discussed at the meeting, and should give shape and direction to the meeting.

### **Model Agenda**

1. Title of meeting
2. Date, time, venue
3. Apologies for absence
4. Minutes of previous meeting
5. Actions relating to previous meeting
6. Items to be discussed and decided
7. Reports from sub-groups
8. Any other business
9. Date, time and venue of next meeting
4. Any relevant papers

Written reports and other written materials will often accompany the agenda circulated prior to a Committee meeting.

## Recruiting new members

The most important resource that your group has is people. The biggest task you will face is to get and keep people involved. This doesn't just happen by chance; you need to offer people something to become involved.

Ask yourself the question: Why would they want to get involved? What's in it for them? At the heart of everyone wanting to be involved, there is a personal self interest.

Try asking your neighbours what their particular issues are, what they would like to gain from being involved, and whether your committee will be looking to target this.

Make sure that your group is constantly offering methods of involvement such as trips or activities which are relevant to the community and are interesting and above all else, FUN!!!

There may be barriers which stop people becoming involved. Try and find out what these are, and how you can overcome them, so that your committee, and its meetings are inclusive of everyone in the community.

Make sure that you can involve everyone that wants to be involved. Also, try to remember that people are giving up their free time to be involved, so try and offer them something in return.

If you run a meeting, and find that the numbers are low, do not be disheartened. Celebrate the fact that at least some people have turned up. Maybe ask them to next

time bring someone along. If everyone does that, instantly you have doubled your numbers!!!

## Involving new members

Induction is one of the most practical ways of ensuring new Committee members understand their role, the workings of the committee and their relationship with others in and outside the committee.

An effective induction programme will:

- Provide core information and advice to enable a new member to understand the committee and their role;
- Ensure that new members feel welcome, valued and part of the team.
- Include the group's constitution;
- Include accounts;
- Include minutes of previous three or four Committee meetings; and
- Include code of conduct.

New members will feel comfortable and confident in contributing if they are made to feel welcome, valued and well supported.

It is important to consider how you will facilitate this within your Committee, rather than presuming that relationships will form and settle of their own accord.

This is particularly important when introducing a new member who comes with a very different background or skill set to the current members.

## Appointing new officers

Officers of the Committee are normally drawn from the existing committee membership and elected at Annual General Meetings. Officers can be recruited using the same range of methods as those used for Committee members. Check your constitution for your own specific requirements.

### **Electing a Chairperson**

A more formal approach to recruitment of a Chair allows you to objectively assess whether an individual has the skills and qualities necessary for the role. You may find from your constitution that there are specific rules regarding the appointment of a Chairperson, for example:

- A fixed term of office (e.g. 1-3 years);
- A maximum period of continuous service in office (e.g. 1-5 years);
- A fixed period before a retired Chairperson can be re-elected (e.g. 1-5 years).

These rules help prevent difficult situations such as:

- A committee becoming too reliant on its Chairperson;
- The Chairperson dominating or refusing to stand down;

- The Chairperson being incompetent but well-liked, and no-one wants to hurt her/his feelings.

It is very important to have a skilled and competent Chairperson.

## Dealing with conflict

The responsibility for dealing with conflict situations lies with the Chair. If the Chair is party to the conflict, Committee members may wish to nominate someone from their membership to take responsibility for resolving the situation.

Consider what would be appropriate to the circumstance and what would help address both the causes and the symptoms of conflict which are damaging the committee.

## A Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct provides Committee members with clear guidelines as to their standard of behaviour, responsibilities and best practice in fulfilling their obligations to the committee. A model Code of Conduct is included at the back of this handbook.

Use discussions regarding the Code of Conduct's content to reiterate what is expected from committee members. Ensure you agree procedures for dealing with a breach of the Code and establish who will enforce these. Ask all committee members to sign the agreed Code.

Clarify roles and boundaries. Make sure everyone is aware of their remit and role. Often problems arise where an individual has more than one role within the committee. Clarify 'which hat they are wearing'.

Focus members on their commitment to the committee. Committee members should always act with integrity and in the best interests of the committee. Highlight the actual/potential damage to the committee to help focus and resolve the conflict. Consider using an outside facilitator to manage discussions more constructively or using an external mediation service.

## Publicising the great things the committee does for the Court

Think about the ways in which you would like to publicise your committee. You may think about producing a newsletter. You need to decide who will design, produce and circulate this and what you are trying to achieve with this.

A newsletter is a great way of celebrating your successes. People get involved to make a change, or improve certain things. If this has happened, then people will want to see evidence of this. It is also a great tool to get new people interested.

### **When writing any publicity material, remember the 5 W's:**

- What is happening
- Who is doing it
- Where it is happening
- When it is happening
- Why is it happening

When writing a newsletter, remember to keep your sentences that are short and to the point. Make sure it is eye catching, interesting for people and give it a title to let people know it's yours.

Cairn also produces a quarterly newsletter for all tenants and we appreciate any article submissions (although with limited space we can't guarantee publication).

## The Cairn Community Fund

If your group has a brilliant idea for how you can work together to improve your community then the Cairn Community Fund might help get your project up and running.

You can apply for funding from the Cairn Community Fund provided your project meets at least one of the following objectives.

- A focus on tenancy sustainment or financial inclusion
- Environmental projects
- Enhancing the quality of life in areas where Cairn tenants live.
- Encouraging tenant participation that will positively impact on Cairn tenants and their families
- There may also be additional funds available, allocated at the discretion of Cairn's Executive Team, which in some cases may be targeted towards particular groups or projects, as a result of bequests left to Cairn as a legacy gift

For more information about the Community Fund please visit our website at [www.cairnha.com](http://www.cairnha.com) or contact the Communications & Engagement Team.



# Social Committee Model Constitution

## **1. Name**

The name of the Committee is the **Fictional Court Social Committee**

## **2. Area**

The area covered by the Committee is all properties at Fictional Court, hereby referred to as 'the Court'.

## **3. Aims**

To encourage a community spirit and build good relations amongst residents of the court

To organize social and community activities for residents at the Court

To meet regularly and keep residents informed of the committees activities

## **4. Membership**

Membership of the Committee is open to all current residents of the Court who shall be called full members. Every full member shall have one vote. A person will cease to be a member when they move out of the scheme. All committee members should actively seek to represent the various needs of the area.

Membership is also open to other residents living in the local area who shall be called co-opted member. Co-opted members shall not have the right to vote or to stand as Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary.

The Committees organised activities will be open to all residents of the Court.

## **5. Conduct**

Members shall sign up to the Code of Conduct and at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings. A member may be excluded for behaving unreasonably, or for contravening the aims of the Committee, if the majority of members at a general meeting agree to this. Any member so excluded shall have the Right of Appeal to the Committee.

An Officer of the committee may be removed for not acting in the best interests of the committee, bringing the committee into disrepute, failing to comply with the rules of the committee or for making it difficult for the committee to operate. The committee may remove an officer by means of a resolution in a general meeting and appoint another member. If a member is to be removed, the Chairperson shall inform the member of the motion to have the member removed and the reasons for the removal.

The committee member shall be given the opportunity to submit a written response, giving reasons why he or she should not be removed. The response is sent to all the members of the committee or is read at the general meeting. The resolution is put to the meeting and voted on.

The Committee shall not intervene with personal disputes. These should be discussed by the parties concerned and with the Sheltered Housing Service Manager or Court Coordinator.

## **6. Finance**

The Committee has authority to apply for donations or grants and to organise fund-raising activities. All money raised is to be used to further the aims of the Committee and strictly for no other purpose.

The Treasurer shall open a bank / building society account in the name of the Committee and shall be responsible for the money. The Treasurer shall keep proper account of all income and expenditure and provide regular reports (of intervals not exceeding 3 months) to the Committee and contributing residents.

Ideally this should involve a direct distribution to the individuals' flats with additional copies of statements provided at regular committee meetings and or on the communal notice board.

Money may only be withdrawn from the bank account with the Committee's approval; three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). No signatories shall be related or reside in the same flat.

All money must be checked, agreed and recorded by the treasurer and another member of the social committee. An agreed account sheet **MUST BE USED**. This must be available for the inspection of residents, nominated officers of the Committee and Cairn Housing Association.

Monies collected should be banked regularly by the appropriate authorised person. For security it is suggested that all money collected should be kept in a secure location decided by the committee.

The committees must consult with any of the contributing residents at their scheme prior to making any major purchase using the funds raised by social and fund raising activities etc. Any expenditure over £200 shall be authorised by the committee.

At the AGM the committee will decide how much petty cash the Treasurer may keep at any time, subject to such sum not exceeding £200 in any event. Any amount over such level must be paid into the committee's account. The Treasurer is so authorised to pay from petty cash any expenses incurred by members in carrying out the business of the committee subject to each payment being supported by relevant receipts and recorded in the petty cash records. A list of all petty cash payments and the committee's bank balance to be provided at each committee meeting.

## **7. Committee**

The business of the Committee will be conducted by a Committee. The Committee is to be elected each year by the membership when the Committee holds its Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Committee will consist of no more than 15 members, and will include the posts of Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

If vacancies occur among the officers or in the committee, the committee shall have the power to fill them from among their members at ordinary general meetings. The Committee shall meet 4 times a year but more often if required. At least one of these should be a general meeting open to all full members of the Court. Notices of Committee meetings and agendas shall be sent out 7 days in advance by the Secretary. Any Committee member wanting to discuss an issue should notify the Secretary at least 5 days ahead of the meeting so that the item can be included on the agenda.

Minutes of all Committee meetings shall be taken by the Secretary, for circulation to the entire membership and the Scheme Manager.

### **8. Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

There shall be an AGM held each year, the date and time to be agreed by the Committee. The Secretary will ensure that the entire scheme membership has 28 days notice of the AGM.

The AGM will conduct the following business:

- Minutes of the previous AGM
- A report by the Committee of its work during the previous year
- A statement of the Financial Accounts (audited)
- Resignation of committee
- Election of the new Committee

### **9. Other general meetings**

The Committee may call general meetings periodically (subject to a minimum of 4 general meetings a year (one being the AGM)) to keep the entire membership informed about the business of the Committee. The Secretary will ensure that at least 14 days notice is provided for these meetings.

### **10. Quorum**

The quorum for Committee meetings shall be one third of all members. No committee meetings shall take place if fewer than 3 members are present. All decisions made at a quorate meeting shall be carried by majority vote.

### **11. Changes to the constitution**

The Constitution can only be altered at the next AGM. Any suggested changes must be given in writing to the Secretary 28 days before the AGM. Changes must be agreed by 75% of members present, provided that the number of members present at the meeting also exceeds 75% of the entire committee at that time.

### **12. Dissolution**

The Committee may be dissolved at a Special General Meeting, called for the purpose, which must be advertised 10 days in advance. Proposals to dissolve the Committee can only take effect if 75% of those present at the meeting agree, provided that the number of members present at the meeting also exceeds 75% of the entire committee at that time. The Committee membership must then decide on the disposal of funds, possessions etc.

Upon dissolution all records relevant to the committee shall pass to Cairn Housing Association for safekeeping.

**13. Standing orders**

Any member of the Committee can make a proposal. In order for it to be voted on by other members it must be seconded/supported by another member. If anyone has a personal interest in a proposal, they must state this before a vote is taken, and that person cannot then vote.

**14. Equal opportunities**

The committee will at all times operate within and actively promote Cairn Housing Association’s Single Equalities Scheme and seek to represent the needs of the whole community. The Committee shall work towards good relations within the local community and encourage participation from all cultural groups, prohibiting conduct, which discriminates or harasses on grounds of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, age, sexuality, marital status, disability, religion, or political viewpoint.

**Adoption**

This constitution was adopted at the Inaugural/Annual General Meeting.

Signed..... (Chair)

..... Print Name

.....(Secretary)

..... Print Name

.....(Date)

## Social Committee Code of Conduct

A Social Committee member's role is to encourage a community spirit within the scheme and to help plan and organise social activities. To ensure the committee and its members conduct business in a fair and inclusive way the following Code of Conduct should apply:

### **Conduct of meetings**

- Members of the committee should follow the guidance of the Chair in the conduct of the meeting.
- Members must be courteous to each other and allow each others to speak.
- Members should be particularly sensitive towards other members who may not be used to public speaking and speakers of other languages.
- Members must remember that the purpose of the committee is to benefit resident's generally and not specific individuals.
- Members must abide by the equal opportunities policy of Cairn Housing Association

### **Conduct of the committee**

- Members should not bring the committee into disrepute
- Members should not speak or write on behalf of the committee without prior agreement. Any correspondence sent on behalf of the committee should be made available to all members.
- Members of the committee should at all times work within the rules of the Constitution.
- Members should observe collective responsibility for committee decisions

### **Conflicts of Interest**

- Members should disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, that they consider affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion.

### **Confidentiality**

- Members should respect all individual residents' confidentiality. Information about individual residents will not be discussed at public meetings.

### **Breach of the Code of Conduct**

- If a member of the Committee or those attending the meeting does not abide by the code of conduct they will be warned by the Chair that if they break the code again they may be asked to leave the meeting.
- The Chair with advice from the Resident Involvement Team may give the person concerned two further warnings (a maximum of three warnings in any one meeting and / or three consecutive meetings).
- If the person continues to ignore these Rules and refuses to leave the meeting after being warned by the Chair then the Chair has the power to close the meeting.
- A complaint that a Committee member has failed to abide by the Code of Conduct despite receiving three warnings, or has committed an act that is

considered to be gross misconduct, should be tabled at a committee meeting called for this purpose only. All parties must be notified in writing in advance and care must be taken to ensure that all concerned parties are given a fair hearing. On the findings of this hearing, the Committee can suspend a member subject to notification to the Sheltered Housing Service Manager or Court Coordinator and thereafter ratification of the committee's next General Meeting. If the General Meeting do ratify the suspension then the member may be excluded from applying for a committee position for one year.

- Cairn Housing Association shall also have power to instigate the removal by the committee at a committee meeting of a committee member for failure to abide by the Code of Conduct or the committing of an act considered to be gross misconduct.
- Members who fail to attend three consecutive general or committee meetings without a written apology or good reason will automatically be removed as a member of the committee.

**Committee members must observe this Code of Conduct whenever they:**

- Are acting in their role as a Committee member
- Are representing the Committee
- Are carrying out the work of the Committee or acting on its behalf

## Contact Details

0800 990 3405

[enquiries@cairnha.com](mailto:enquiries@cairnha.com)

[www.cairnha.com](http://www.cairnha.com)



### **Head Office**

Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4GH

### **North Office**

Caroline MacAskill House, 30 Waterloo Place, Inverness IV1 1NB

### **South Office**

Murdostoun House, 5 Linnet Way, Strathclyde Business Park, Bellshill ML4 3RA

### **Agencies that provide independent advice and support:**

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS Scotland)

74-78 Saltmarket, Glasgow G1 5LD

0141 552 3633

[www.tpasscotland.org.uk](http://www.tpasscotland.org.uk)

Tenants Information Service (TIS)

Suite 124-128 Baltic Chambers, 50 Wellington Street, Glasgow G2 6HJ

0141 248 1242

[www.tis.org.uk](http://www.tis.org.uk)

This document is available on CD, Braille, large print and community languages from Cairn, Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4GH from [enquiries@cairnha.com](mailto:enquiries@cairnha.com) or 0800 990 3405.