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| **RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION** |

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**Constitution of the**

**(insert name of Association)**

**An unincorporated association (voluntary group/not for profit organisation)**

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**Name and Area of Benefit**

The name of the association shall be (insert name of Association), which benefits

residents of (insert estate / area / address). The (insert name of Association) will now be referred to as ‘the RA’, ‘the Association’ and/or ‘the area of benefit’ for the remainder of this document.

**Aims**

To promote wellbeing and quality of life and represent the interests of the residents living in the ‘area of benefit’ by acting as a collective voice in matters which affect their rights regarding the management, maintenance and improvements of their homes and their block, local amenities and the local environment in consultation with Notting Hill Genesis (hereinafter referred to as ‘NHG’) and other bodies.

**Objectives**

* To gather as an organised and collective group to build a constructive working relationship and improve communications with NHG.
* To liaise with NHG, the local authority, the local Safer Neighbourhood Team and other statutory or voluntary bodies or individuals whose business interests, directly or indirectly, affect the members of the Association.
* To advocate for vulnerable and marginalised residents to ensure that they have a voice.

**Equal Opportunities Policy and Code of Conduct**

The Association is committed to placing equal opportunities at the core of its practices and to promoting equality of opportunity to its members.. Everyone, irrespective of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (or lack of it), sex and sexual orientation, will be given every opportunity to participate at management committee level and at general or open meetings and other organised events.

By adopting this Constitution, the Association shall agree to adopt and abide by an equal opportunities policy and a code of conduct, and The Association agrees with and supports NHG’s Equal Opportunities Policy.

RA relationship agreement with staff:

In becoming a constituted association, the RA should refer to the RA/Staff working agreement included in the appendices (appendix 1).

**Membership**

Membership is open to all residents of the ‘area of benefit’ regardless of the type of their home or their residential status. This includes private and shared ownership leaseholders, rented tenants of Notting Hill Genesis, lodgers and any tenants of leaseholders. Membership should be over 50% after the first year. Without this, the RA will no longer be able to operate.

All Members may participate in meetings of the Residents’ Association, events or other initiatives undertaken by the Association. However, no residents will be obliged to participate. All residents must opt in to being members of the RA. Residents will cease being Members of the Residents’ Association if they are no longer residents of the ‘area of benefit’, or if they are found in breach the Code of Conduct (see Appendix 3). Members can also choose to leave the RA voluntarily and must notify a member of the elected committee.

**The Committee**

An elected committee will be responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the Association and are elected annually at an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Committee will consist of: a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson (optional), Treasurer, Secretary and other Committee Members. Other Committee Members can be appointed as deputies as needed.

Duties of these members are:

**Chair**

* Chairs meetings
* Guides the Association to achieve its aims
* Ensures that Management Committee members carry out their allotted tasks
* Informs members of meetings with NHG and other bodies or organisations and may be asked to represent at these meetings.
* Ensures that minutes of meetings are an accurate record
* Ensures that meetings are properly convened.

**Vice-Chair**

* Deputises for the Chair in his or her absence
* Shares the workload with the Chair
* Can be an optional role if difficult to recruit for.

**Secretary**

* Arranges the venue for meetings
* Informs members of date, time and place of meeting
* Takes minutes of meetings and distributes them to members
* Keeps an updated register of members in line with GDPR regulations and guidance
* Writes and receives correspondence

**Treasurer**

* Opens bank account and shares responsibility for signing cheques
* Keeps all documents relating to the finances of the Association
* Keeps account books and receipts
* Prepares an annual income and expenditure account for approval by the auditor / examiner and AGM
* Lead on the application for the annual grant if needed.
* Deals with petty cash expenditure

**Other Committee Members**

* Provide support to the Committee as agreed at Committee meetings

**Elections**

The Committee will be elected annually by open vote and will meet as a Committee at least three times per year.

**The Annual General Meeting**

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within 15 months of the previous meeting, and the Committee will report on the activities of the previous year, then stand down. Committee members may stand again if they wish but will need to be voted in again. Committee members will be elected at this meeting and committee members will hold office for one year from the date they are elected.

**Quorum –** As a guide, over 50% of members must be present or vote by proxy at the AGM to elect new committee members. Over 50% of members must be present to vote on decisions made at meetings. In meetings where the quorum is not achieved, no decisions can be made the vote should be reconvened

**Decision making and voting**

The Association’s decision making should always be as open and inclusive as possible. All members should be given the opportunity to take part in decisions which affect the Association; a majority vote to pass decisions must be won on the basis of Half +1 (half of the members plus one). In the case of an equal number of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote. In the case of voting in a new committee, voting can be carried out remotely by post or online providing all eligible residents are given the opportunity to vote.

**Meetings**

**Annual General Meetings** will be held once a year and are used to round up the year’s activities; plan the year ahead; vote the new committee in and; approve and sign off any financial statement or accounts.

**General meetings** will be held at least three times annually and are used to conduct the business of the Association. General meetings may be combined with social events or activities.

**Special Meetings (SGM)** for exceptional matters may be held at the discretion of the Committee, to which all members will be sent an invitation.

**Voting by proxy -** If notified in advance, the Secretary can make arrangement for those members who areunable to exercise their vote personally to vote by proxy. Proxies may not speak onbehalf of the person at the meeting.

**Minutes**

Notes or record of discussions and decisions shall be taken at all the Association’s meetings. These will be kept by the Secretary, who will make it available to all members.

**Finance**

The main committee member responsible for the finances of the Residents’ Association is the Treasurer, who will have to account for the finances at the AGM. Although all committee members share responsibility for overseeing that proper financial planning takes place.

The Association may raise funds by obtaining grants from other bodies or fund-raising schemes. All monies raised must be used only to further its aims. All funds shall be kept in a bank account in the name of the Association. All expenditure must be agreed and controlled by the committee.

* Signatories should include the Secretary, Treasurer, Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. All cheques are required to have two signatures. No officer may sign a blank cheque.
* Audited accounts must be presented at the AGM and a statement of account at all general meetings.
* The financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March.
* All financial statements must be provided to NHG following every AGM.

**Information and communication**

The Association will provide information to all members of the association on matters that affect them.

Every member of the Association shall be given or afforded access to a copy of the Constitution, Equal Opportunities Policy and Code of Conduct when they join. Any changes to the Constitution will be distributed for discussion at the relevant meeting.

Copies of the amended Constitution will be distributed once changes have been ratified.

All the Association's business will be open to challenge by members. To make these effective, copies of minutes for all meetings will be made available by the Secretary on request.

Following each meeting, the Association will provide minutes from meetings to Notting Hill Genesis. Following each AGM, the Association will complete an annual form showing committee details and membership numbers.

**Changes to the Constitution**

A SGM shall be called to consider changes to the Constitution. Any changes to the Constitution must be handed to the Secretary 14 days before a SGM or with the request for a SGM at which the proposal will be discussed.

Changes to the Constitution will only be effective if agreed by two-thirds of the members voting in favour of the change. Changes must also be provided to the Involvement Team for approval – this is so your RA continues to be formally recognised.

**Dissolution**

Dissolution of the Residents’ Associationmay be done when the Association is no longer deemed to be functional, has no further need to exist or does not have the required membership to be recognised.

The following procedure will need to take place: A two-thirds vote for the dissolution of the Association is required OR all Committee members can sign a declaration explaining the reason for dissolution and provide it to the Resident Involvement Team at NHG.

The Resident Involvement Team may also reserve the right to dissolve the Association in the instance they have not received any communication from the Association for 12 months; they will always make several attempts to contact committee members before dissolving.

Any money or equipment must be handed back to the funding bodies.

This constitution was adopted at the Inaugural General Meeting of (Insert name)

Residents’ Association on:-

Date: …………………………………………...

Signed: …………………………………………

Name and position in group ………………………………………………………..

Signed: ………………………………………….

Name and position in group ……………………………………………………….



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| **Appendix 1: Working relationship between RA and NHG** |

RAs will:

* Foster and maintain a productive and respectful working relationship with housing staff
* Ensure at least 2 weeks’ notice is given when inviting staff to meetings.
* Ensure meetings requiring staff attendance finish by 8pm.
* Ensure there is a single point of contact on issues to avoid confusion, particularly if the RA has an email address with multiple users.
* Allow NHG staff to respond to queries within the usual service standards
* Provide staff with timely updates on relevant issues being discussed and communicate minutes from meetings and AGM minutes

NHG Staff will:

* Foster and maintain a productive and respectful working relationship with RA’s
* Work alongside the RA acting as representative voice to resolve issues locally
* Attend meetings where required and where possible and ensure any additional staff can attend if needed.
* Support the running of the RA by responding to queries within the usual service standards
* Communicate and consult effectively with the RA on any changes to services or local issues.

Please ensure all members and staff you are working with are aware of these principles.



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| **Appendix 2: Equal Opportunities Policy** |

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

**Providing an Equal Opportunity for All to Participate**

The (insert name of RA) Residents’ Association (RA) recognise that some groups and individuals experience disadvantage and discrimination. The RA will work to redress discrimination based in particular on gender, sexuality, race, national origin, religion, culture, disability, age, health status, marital status and responsibility for dependants.

In particular we will:

* Work to ensure that the RA reflects the make-up of the wider community in terms of tenure, gender, ethnicity and age.
* Try to hold meetings at times, dates and in venues, which encourage the maximum attendance, as well as providing sufficient notice of meetings.
* Challenge discriminatory or abusive comments and behaviour at our meetings.
* Carefully consider whether decisions made by the RA at general meetings might unfairly disadvantage members of our community. We will try to find solutions, which are fair for all.
* Listen to the views of our whole community and provide opportunities for people to tell us what they want and how they would like the RA to represent them. We acknowledge that not all people come to meetings and that, at times, we must actively seek people’s views in other ways.

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| **Appendix 3: Code of Conduct** |

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

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**Working Together with a Positive Attitude**

**Introduction**

The (insert name of RA) Residents Association (RA) is committed to the fullest possible participation of all its members in the meetings and activities of the association.

The following guide has been drawn up to help members meet the commitment with the fullest participation, in a practical and constructive way.

**Working Together**

Everyone has an equal right to benefit from, contribute to, and enjoy the meeting. This means that, among other things, unacceptable language and behaviour must be avoided, be it sexist, racist,homophobic, or offensive to people with physical disability and mental illness.

Members of the association must adhere to these principles, and these guidelines will assist with its implementation.

A key feature of the (insert name of RA)commitment toparticipation is the value it places upon the knowledge, experience, and skills that each member brings with them to share with others at the meeting; in particular their commitment, and experiences from their everyday lives. Therefore, it is important that everyone is made to feel safe, equal, and able to make a positive contribution to the group.

**Code of Conduct**

**General governance arrangements**

* All relevant personal and financial interests must be declared to the Secretary
* Members should not use their position or role within their RA for personal gain or leverage.
* Read agenda papers (if any) of a meeting beforehand
* If members are unable to attend a meeting, send apologies to the Secretary beforehand
* Committee members accept collective responsibility for the decisions taken at a meeting
* Support the Chair at all times to ensure that members meet the above standards
* Ensure the RA is compliant with GDPR guidelines and handles personal data of members correctly.
* Understand and work with the principles of the working relationship agreement (Appendix 1) between staff and residents.

**During a meeting**

* Listen to what other people have to say, and avoid being dismissive of their contribution
* Speak in a polite and respectful manner; avoid using rude, obscene or abusive language
* Do not use racist, sexist or other discriminatory language
* Wait until a speaker has finished, and allow people to speak without interruption
* Any criticism should be constructive so as to help members develop confidence, new skills and knowledge
* Ensure that everyone who wishes to speak is given the encouragement and the opportunity to do so
* Make your own contribution by responding to the matter at hand or by way of a question
* Ensure that personal or sensitive information is restricted to the meeting and members’ confidentiality is always respected
* Keep to the agenda and explore the merits of each question
* The Chair should be impartial and neutral. If there is a ‘deadlock’ or stalemate situation, the Chair will cast the deciding vote
* Respect the authority of the Chair
* Mobile phones must be put on silent or turned off during meetings

**If the Code of Conduct has been ignored**

* A member who feels that the Code of Conduct has been ignored by another should raise this concern with the Chair either at the time or immediately after the meeting. If the Chair agrees that the Code of Conduct has been ignored, he or she should advise the member accordingly and state that such behaviour is unacceptable
* If the member in question continues to ignore the Code of Conduct, the Chair will put to the meeting a motion that the member be asked to leave the meeting immediately, with the possibility of no longer participating in the Association if their behaviour continues.
* Any persistent breaches of the code of conduct, the equal opportunities policy or the RA/staff working agreement, the Resident Involvement team has the right to dissolve the Association following an investigation.

**Next review: June 2024**