

CONSTITUTION of the TVHA Residents' Consultative Committee

Aims and Purpose:

1. To represent and promote the interests of all Thames Valley Housing's residents
2. To encourage participation from all Thames Valley Housing's residents.
3. To represent the diversity of the TVH community by encouraging participation from socially excluded groups.
4. To provide a link between residents and the Thames Valley Housing Association Board of Management by selecting a panel to nominate residents to the Board when a vacancy occurs.
5. To contribute to and agree standards for Thames Valley Housing in service delivery, scrutinizing customer feedback information, recommendations from other service improvement groups, and policy development papers.
6. To monitor performance against these standards.
7. To contribute to and agree the content of service and maintenance contracts and to monitor the performance of these.
8. To comment on the annual rent review and service charges and feed this through to the board.
9. To comment on proposals for any major changes in structure, policy or service delivery at Thames Valley Housing and feed through to the board.
10. The RCC shall seek recognition from the Thames Valley Housing and Thames Valley Charitable Housing Boards of Management as a constituted residents' group

Membership:

1. Membership shall be open to all Thames Valley Housing tenants, leaseholders, free-holders, shared owners, and keyworkers and their households.
2. Membership shall be obtained by application through the Chair of the RCC and through TVHA's Resident Involvement Manager.
3. All members shall have an equal vote. The chairperson, however, will only have a casting vote.

The Committee:

1. A committee shall be elected to carry out the business of the RCC.
2. The committee shall have a minimum of 5 people and a maximum of 15 people in addition to the three resident board members who qualify for automatic membership.
3. The committee should include a secretary, chair, vice-chair, and treasurer and one other non-portfolio officer.
4. Ideally, the proportion of tenants, leaseholders, freeholders, shared owners, key workers represented on the committee should reflect the TVHA customer population as a whole.
5. The officers will be elected by ballot of all residents every 3 years and at the Annual General Meeting each year. Officers shall carry out duties given to them by General Meetings.
6. The RCC as a whole shall meet every 2 months and the officers of the committee shall meet in alternate months.
7. Minutes of all meetings shall be available to all members on request.
8. Vacancies arising during the year can be filled by an election at a general meeting.
9. The Resident Involvement Manager shall facilitate all meetings, invite TVHA officers and managers, and other sources and agencies on behalf of the Committee
10. At the Chair's discretion other residents, staff, board members, and other interested parties can attend and be involved in discussions, but without voting rights
11. All officers once elected will have an approved Criminal Record Bureau Check

Finance:

1. All committee members shall be appointed on an honorary basis.
2. All money raised on or on behalf of the RCC's is to be used only to further the aims of the committee.
3. TVH will hold funds which the treasurer will access on behalf of the RCC.
4. Two committee officers must sign the requisition for funds, preferably the chair person and the treasurer.
5. The Treasurer will keep accounts which will be checked by TVH finance department every four months.
6. The accounts shall be made available to members at the AGM and also the Boards and Executive team, upon request.

Annual General Meetings:

1. The secretary will notify, through TVH's newsletter, all TVH residents and the Boards of TVHA and TVCHA of the date of the meeting not less than 2 months before the AGM.
2. There shall be an Annual General Meeting held every Spring at which the committee shall report on its work, present a statement of accounts and resign.
3. Resignations will become effective at the end of the meeting, unless re-elected.
4. Newly elected officers will take up their posts on the day following the AGM.
5. Officers are eligible to stand for re-election twice in any one post and three posts in total and may hold office for a maximum of 10 years.
6. The AGM shall elect the officers for the next year and every third year a ballot of all residents will take place.
7. Candidates for election to the committee must submit a brief statement (maximum of 80 words) for distribution to all residents with the ballot papers
8. The AGM shall vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution.

Special General Meetings:

1. A Special General Meeting open to all residents will be held if eight or more RCC members submit a request for such a meeting to the secretary. The secretary shall arrange for the meeting to take place within one calendar month.

2. The secretary will publicise all special general meetings at least fourteen days in advance to all residents.
3. The secretary will publicise all regular RCC meetings to members at least 10 days in advance.
4. If the secretary fails to convene the meeting, the chair or vice chair must convene it.

Quorum:

1. No General Meeting, Special General Meeting or Annual General Meeting shall take place if less than five members are present.
2. Where the Quorum for a General Meeting is not met, the meeting may be reconvened within 28 days at which time the meeting will proceed regardless of whether the Quorum has been met.
3. No RCC meeting shall take place if less than three elected committee members are present.

Changes to the constitution:

1. The constitution can only be altered at an AGM or at a special general meeting called for that purpose.
2. Any suggested changes to the constitution must be handed to the secretary no later than 28 days before the AGM.
3. Changes to the constitution must be agreed by two thirds of the members present at the meeting.

Dissolution:

1. The Committee may only be dissolved at an AGM or a Special General Meeting called for that purpose. The proposal for dissolution must be advertised at least twenty-one days before the meeting.
2. A proposal to dissolve the Committee shall take effect only if agreed by two thirds of the members present at the meeting.

Equal Opportunities Statement:

All people in the TVH community should be able to participate in and/or be represented by the RCC. No person should suffer disadvantage or discrimination by reason of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, or because of their religion, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, age, disability or marital status or financial status.

In order to achieve these aims:

1. The Group will actively seek to recruit members that reflect the diversity of the community we represent.
2. We will endeavour to make our choice of dates, times and venues for meetings as inclusive as possible so as not to exclude any particular section of the community.
3. Newsletters, promotional material and other information provided by the RCC to residents will be made accessible to all by providing translations into other languages, Braille, large print, and audio cassette upon request.
4. Behaviour and language that is discriminatory will not be tolerated in RCC meetings or at any time where members are representing the RCC

Standing Orders

Decision making:

1. The chair shall allow issues to be properly debated which are on the agenda, but should seek the agreement of the meeting for lengthy discussion on items that have not been allowed, for example, a matter arising from a minute, or an item of any other business. The chair has the right to cut short contributions which unnecessarily prolong debate or because the meeting will not have enough time for other items on the agenda.
2. Any member may make a proposal. In order for it to be voted on by other members it must be seconded by someone else.
3. Only members present at the meeting may vote (except for election of officers by ballot every three years).
4. Before voting any member may propose an amendment which must also be seconded.
5. No member shall exercise more than one vote.
6. When there is no clear consensus on a proposal, the chair shall take a vote at the end of the discussion. Any voting member may call for a vote on a proposal if the chair fails to do so.
7. Votes take place by a show of hands and the chair gives the result. Any voting member may query the result, and if this happens, the chair shall take the vote again and ask another member to recount.
8. Proposals will be passed by a simple majority.
9. In the event of an equal vote, the Chair shall have the casting vote.
10. The result of the vote shall be recorded in the minutes.

Conduct during meetings

1. Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner. The RCC will not tolerate behaviour that is aggressive, threatening, insulting or discriminating on the grounds of race, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation. The Chair may exclude members behaving in this way.
2. Members may only speak through the chair.
3. Members may only interrupt another speaker to raise a point of order or information through the chair.
4. Any member may ask for the minutes to be read back to clarify the record of the meeting on a particular point. If the record is disputed, the chair may direct the record to be amended by agreement with the meeting.

Conduct of officers and committee members

1. Officers and committee members shall, at all times, abide by decisions that have been properly made at committee and general meetings.
2. When dealing on behalf of the RCC with the landlord, other groups, agencies or individuals, officers and committee members shall ensure that any views put forward are those that have been agreed at properly convened meetings. Officers and committee members expressing personal opinions outside of the meetings must ensure that they do so strictly in a personal capacity and not in situations where they are representing the RCC.
3. Officers and committee members shall ensure that at all times when they are representing the RCC their conduct is reasonable, honest, and in accordance with the constitution, standing orders and policy decisions of the RCC.
4. Members of the group and officers of the committee should abide by the rules of conduct and are subject to the group's disciplinary procedures. (Appendix)

Appendix

Disciplinary procedures

1. Any member of the RCC who has reason to believe that another member has acted against the constitution, standing orders or policy decisions, of the RCC may make a written complaint to the secretary.
2. Within 21 days of receiving a complaint the committee should inform, in writing, the member about whom a complaint has been made about the nature of the complaint, and the date of the disciplinary sub-committee meeting at which it will be considered.
3. The committee shall elect a disciplinary sub-committee of 3 people , one of whom should be an officer of the committee (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer etc)
4. In considering a complaint, the sub-committee may ask any other RCC member(s), or any person(s) who has relevant knowledge of the complaint, to attend the committee meeting to put their case and answer questions. The sub-committee may consider correspondence and any other relevant material pertaining to the complaint.
5. Anyone who has been asked to attend the meeting to give information and who is not a committee member shall leave the meeting after putting forward his or her case and answering questions.
6. If the member who has complained or the member about whom a complaint has been made is an officer of the committee he/she shall leave the meeting after putting his/her case and answering questions and will not take part in making the decision about whether the complaint is upheld.
7. The sub-committee shall take a vote to decide by a simple majority, whether or not the complaint is upheld.

8. The sub-committee shall decide on further action from the following options which will be ratified by the RCC as a whole:
 - Written reprimand to the member concerned.
 - Member concerned to be suspended from membership of the RCC for a period of time specified by the committee; the suspension to take effect as soon as the member is informed in writing, and to run for not more than six months.
 - Member concerned to be suspended from holding an officer or committee position until the AGM; at which time he or she will be entitled to stand for re-election in the usual way. The member must not carry out officer or committee duties whilst suspended but retains ordinary membership of the RCC.
 - Member concerned to be expelled from membership of the RCC. Membership to be terminated with effect from the day that the member concerned is informed in writing of the expulsion. A member who has been expelled from the RCC may apply to the committee for new membership after a two-year period has elapsed from the date of expulsion. The committee shall take a vote and shall decide, by a simple majority, whether or not the expelled member shall be allowed to rejoin.
9. A member about whom a complaint has been made shall be informed in writing of the decision of the sub-committee, and the reasons for that decision within 14 days.
10. A member who has been suspended or expelled under the above procedure has 14 days from receipt of notification of the decision to lodge an appeal with the secretary who must then organise a Members Appeal Meeting within 28 days. All members must be given at least 14 days notice for such a meeting.
11. The quorum for a Member's Appeal Meeting should be 3 members, including one officer, but no members of the disciplinary sub committee may sit on the appeal Board. If the meeting is inquorate, the committee decision stands. (It is hoped that the TVH Human Resources Manager would be present as an independent advisor.
12. A committee member shall explain to the Members Appeal meeting the disciplinary action taken and the reason for it. The member who has been disciplined shall explain his/her case. Both parties may call upon any other person who has relevant knowledge of the circumstances to speak to the meeting and answer questions. A vote shall be taken to decide, by a simple majority of those present at the meeting, whether the decision of the committee is upheld. The decision of the Members Appeal Meeting, as ratified by the RCC, is final.
13. If an officer or committee member is suspended or expelled through these disciplinary procedures, the committee may appoint a replacement to hold the position until the AGM.
14. If an expulsion should occur, this will not affect the rights of the resident or his/her household with regard to tenure.