

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION - POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 ARK Housing Association Ltd. is a membership-based organisation. We will seek to recruit as members individuals who have an interest in our work, and also to make effective use of their skills, views and experience.
- 1.2 We recognise that our membership is an important means of enhancing and demonstrating our accountability to the local communities in which we operate. We will promote membership through all appropriate channels as a way of providing opportunities for those interested to play an active part in our affairs.
- 1.3 We will seek to ensure that we have a broad-based membership which reflects our constitution and the communities we serve. In particular we will welcome applications for membership from tenants, service users, community groups and other residents of the towns and villages in which we are active.
- 1.4 This policy complies with sections 7 – 14 of our Rules, which cover membership of the Association, and with Performance Standards GS2.1 on Equal Opportunities and GS2.2 on Tenant Participation.

2.0 DEFINITION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 A member of the Association is an individual or an organisation holding a share in the Association and whose names are entered in the Register of Members.
- 2.2 Anyone who is 18 years or older may apply to become a member. A current tenant of the Association who is 16 years or older may apply to become a member.
- 2.3 No member can hold more than one share in the Association.
- 2.4 An organisation which is a member is free to appoint any person it considers suitable to act as its representative. A representative of an organisation cannot also be an individual member of the Association. For further details see Section 14 of our Rules.
- 2.5 Members are entitled to:
 - attend and vote at Annual or Special General Meetings of the Association;
 - seek election to the Board of Management;
 - vote in any elections to the Board.

3.0 PROMOTING MEMBERSHIP

3.1 We will seek to ensure that all sections of the community are represented in our membership, particularly those which are currently under represented. We will therefore welcome applications from:

- tenants and service users,
- individuals with direct or indirect experience of disability,
- members of ethnic minority communities.

3.2 We will promote membership, with particular reference to the priority groups referred to in paragraph 3.1 by:

- providing information on membership to tenants and service users through our Newsletter;
- providing information on membership on our website;
- promoting membership through public meetings in which we are involved;
- making information available within our office to all those who enquire about membership;
- making reference to membership when re-letting a vacant property (although we will make it clear that membership is not a condition of receiving a tenancy).

3.3 We will not only encourage wide membership but also an active, informed and participative membership. We will seek to achieve this by:

- publicising general meetings at least 14 days before the day of the meeting;
- circulating information in advance to members so they can make informed decisions at general meetings;
- making every effort to hold general meetings at times and at locations suitable for the membership;
- keeping members informed on all major developments affecting our business and our services;
- making a copy of our Annual Report and our audited accounts available to all our members;
- providing information, support and training to tenant members who are interested in becoming more actively involved in decision making, in accordance with our Tenant Participation policy;
- promoting opportunities for members to seek election to our Board of Management, in accordance with our policy and procedure on Recruitment of Board Members.

4.0 PROCEDURE

Applying for membership

- 4.1 Any enquiry about membership of the Association, whether in response to the promotions referred to in paragraph 3.3 above or otherwise, will be passed to the Chief Executive's Personal Assistant who will issue an application form (Appendix 1) together with a covering letter giving details of how an application should be submitted and how it will be processed.
- 4.2 The Board will normally consider each application at their first meeting following receipt of the form, or as soon as possible thereafter. However, an application will not be considered within a 14-day period preceding the date of an Annual or Special General Meeting.
- 4.3 If the application is approved membership will take effect immediately, and within 7 working days the Chief Executive's PA will:
- enter the applicant's name in the Register of Members;
 - write to the applicant to advise them of the decision, and request that they send £1 to our office;
 - arrange for two Board Members and the Secretary to sign a Share Certificate which will then be sent to the new member.
- 4.4 If the application is refused the Chief Executive's PA will, within 7 working days of the meeting at which the decision was made, write to the applicant with the reasons for refusal, advise them of their right to appeal against the decision, and the process to follow if they wish to appeal.

An appeal will be heard by the Board of Management, whose decision will be final.

Maintaining and updating the Register

- 4.5 Information on members will be held in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation.
- 4.6 Any member who changes his or her main residence should advise us of their new address in writing as soon as possible thereafter. This requirement does not apply to an Association tenant who has moved home as a result of a transfer of tenancy or a mutual exchange.
- 4.7 A public copy of the Register, containing the required information only, will be made available for inspection by any member and any other person with an interest in the Association.

Ending membership

- 4.8 A member may end his or her membership by writing to the Secretary at our office, giving one month's notice.

4.9 If a member:

- fails to advise us of a change of address as detailed in paragraph 4.6 above, or
- fails to attend five Annual General Meetings in a row and has not submitted apologies for absence,

the Board may decide to end their membership and cancel their share.

4.10 From the date of the Board's decision to cancel the membership, the value of the individual's share will belong to the Association. The ending of the membership will be recorded in the Register of Members.

4.11 If a complaint about the behaviour of a member is serious enough, a Special General Meeting may be called to consider the circumstances. If two-thirds of those present or voting by proxy agree, the membership may be ended from the date of that meeting.

For further details of this process see section 13 of our Rules.

4.12 If a membership is ended as the result of a vote at a Special General Meeting, any future application for membership by the person concerned will need to be approved by two-thirds of the members voting in favour at another Special General Meeting.

Representing an organisation

4.13 To confirm the identity of their representative, an organisation which is a member will require to send to the Secretary a copy of the authorisation or appointment of the individual appointed for this purpose, signed by the Director, Secretary or other Authorised Signatory and witnessed, or in the case of a local authority, signed by the Chief Executive or another properly authorised Officer of the authority.

4.14 An organisation may change the identity of the person entitled to represent them at any time by confirming the identity of the new person, as detailed in paragraph 4.13 above, and withdrawing the authority of the previous representative.

Monitoring

4.15 We will monitor our membership according to the following categories:

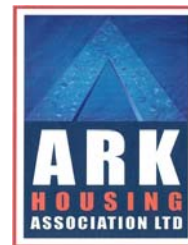
- Membership type (i.e. individual or organisation)
- Tenant, resident, other connection with the Association
- Place of residence
- Age, gender, ethnicity, disability
- Equal opportunities

4.16 We will use this information to assess the extent to which our membership is representative of the communities we serve. The information will be reported on annually to the Board of Management, with any recommendations for action.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 5.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented when required.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive will ensure that an annual report on our current membership is submitted to the first meeting of the Board following each Annual General Meeting.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every three years.

Approved by the SMT in:	July 2006
First approved by the Board of Management in:	August 2006
Reviewed by the Board of Management in:	August 2009
Review of policy due by:	August 2012
Complies with:	Performance Standards GS2.1 & GS2.2



Telephone: 0131 447 9027

APPLICATION FOR INDIVIDUAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Title:	
First Name(s):	
Surname:	
Address:	
Post Code:	
Contact Details:	Telephone no: Email address:
Date of Birth:	
Occupation:	Occupation: Employer:
Are you a tenant, or are you related to a tenant, employee or Board member of ARK Housing Association? Please provide details.	

I enclose the sum of One Pound (£1) and apply for membership of, and one share in, ARK Housing Association Ltd. I understand the Association's Board of Management has the sole right to determine membership. In the event my application is not approved, my One Pound (£1) will be returned to me.

Signed: **Date:**

Any information received will be treated as confidential

AHA USE ONLY:			
<i>£1 fee received</i>	<i>To Board Meeting (date)</i>	<i>Approved/Rejected</i>	<i>Cert Sent (date)</i>