

LUXBOROUGH TOWER

Residents Association Standing Orders

Revised September 2019

The aims of the Luxborough Tower Residents Association (LTRA) are stated in the Constitution, which is the authoritative document and needs to be read in conjunction with these Standing Orders. They offer guidance to members of the Association and particularly to the committee on how to conduct its business.

The Association shall conduct its meetings and other communications in a professional manner to represent fairly and honestly the views of all its members.

COMMUNICATIONS

- 1 The committee and Association will use the following methods to communicate information and discuss ideas (see paragraph 32 for note about non-resident lessees)
 - a. **Meetings** formal (Committee, General & AGM) and informal
 - b. **Noticeboard** in the foyer
 - c. **Website** as a public place for minutes of meetings, notices, the Constitution, Standing Orders, AGM paperwork, etc, plus occasional news pieces and photos. Go to the website at <http://www.luxboroughtower.uk/>. See the “sitemap” for an outline of how the site is “moderated”. The site includes details of “contacts”
 - d. A section of the LTRA website, a **Residents Handbook** with information about how the block works, particularly for new residents. In light of this the Association has now taken out Public Liability Insurance
 - e. Informal **electronic contact**, through personal e-mail, through a Luxborough Tower gmail address or through a Luxborough Tower Twitter account (see end of document)
 - f. Westminster Housing send out other information: eg. notices of building work to the block
- 2 Consultation is as important as issuing information:
 - a. On major projects there are drop in sessions and open evenings when experts present their plans in the foyer, followed by discussion and the opportunity for residents to send in written feedback. This may be followed by a vote
 - b. All LTRA members can attend any committee meetings as observers, and are encouraged to raise matters with the committee at the Annual General Meeting and other general meetings

THE PROCESS OF MEETINGS

- 3 Any member of the Association may attend a committee meeting as an observer. The committee may co-opt members of the Association onto the committee (however, co-optees may not vote). In this way we encourage transparency of process and access to other views and opinions in the wider Association.
- 4 Confidentiality. Members should respect all individual residents confidentiality. Information about individual residents will not be discussed at public meetings.
- 5 An Agenda should be circulated 7 days before a meeting.

- 6 During a meeting, decisions are only valid if they have been through the process:
Proposal / Vote / Decision / Minute
- 7 Every committee Member should be asked by the Chair whether they wish to speak. It is desirable that any person raising a new problem, criticism or observation should offer at the same time a means of improving the matter. Even if the suggested improvement is not accepted, it moves the meeting forward in a positive manner, stops time being wasted and creates the circumstances which lead to a decision.
- 8 No member will discriminate on any ground against any other member of the group or public. Discriminatory language will not be used: all those who attend meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their individual circumstances.
- 9 If a member of the Association, or committee member, or member of the public does use discriminatory or abusive language or behaviour, the Chair will explain that this is unacceptable and warn them that they may be asked to leave. If the person continues then the Chair will ask them to leave the meeting, or will suspend the meeting. See paragraphs 45) – 50) for serious or continuing poor behaviour.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS shall:

- 10 be elected annually at the AGM. The constitution suggests that a third of the committee stand down each year. In practice the whole committee will stand down and be elected/re-elected
- 11 understand the **aims** of the committee, as outlined in the Constitution
- 12 **represent** the members of the Association, and to convey both to and from the residents and the committee the concerns, reasons and decisions of both parties
- 13 maintain a sense of **loyalty** and teamwork and not share proceedings or disagreements with those outside the committee
- 14 may not represent a political party in their role as a committee member, although they may be affiliated to or be a member of a political party
- 15 should disclose any possible **conflict of interest**, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, which may influence their approach to the matter under discussion
- 16 Between meetings, members shall:
 - a follow up on issues within their delegated area
 - b notify the Chair and other members, as necessary, of any issues or developments
 - c use e-mail sparingly and politely. Not speak or write on behalf of the Association without prior agreement and share appropriately any correspondence sent on behalf of the group
 - d discuss issues and topics with other members of the Association so as to be ready to represent their views at the next meeting
 - e read distributed documents in advance so as to be ready to discuss them relevantly at the next meeting
- 17 Those attending meetings shall:
 - a be punctual and switch off mobile phones
 - b stay with the agenda
 - c listen without interruption and avoid putting people down
 - d value ideas and lateral thinking
 - e develop trust: be comfortable about disagreeing and accepting disagreement without arguments or rows
 - f not allow disagreements to become personal

The CHAIR shall:

- 18 efficiently administer the meeting, ensuring that everyone has a chance to contribute fairly but that discussion of side issues is curtailed
- 19 lead discussions and decisions at meetings and summarise them into Proposals, making clear who is responsible for the action
- 20 defer any item which cannot be progressed without further information or outside discussion
- 21 have one extra "casting" vote to resolve voting issues
- 22 liaise with committee members and outside bodies, providing the committee with brief notes of relevant meetings and ensuring that the Secretary has a copy of relevant communications
- 23 produce a report for the Annual General Meeting on the activities of the committee
- 24 be an authorised signatory for the Association accounts, as second signature and as reserve should the Treasurer be unavailable
- 25 ensure that the Association's documents (eg. Constitution, Standing Orders) are drafted and maintained, either personally or by helping another member of the Association

The SECRETARY shall:

- 26 prepare an Agenda for all meetings containing items known or submitted to the Secretary at least one week before the meeting and post a Notice of all meetings on the Notice Board together with the appropriate Agenda and Draft Minutes of the preceding meeting
- 27 support the Chair in ensuring that meetings are quorate and conducted in accordance with Standing Orders and that any discussion leads to a Proposal, a Vote Decision and a Resolution stating who is the responsible person, which is recorded in the Minutes
- 28 send Draft Minutes first to the Chair then to the committee for approval and possible amendment, any such amendments being notified to the Secretary within a week of issue. If no amendments are received, the Minutes will be deemed to be accurate. Any later amendments will also be circulated
- 29 keep documents and correspondence publicly accessible (including electronically) and report on actions taken between meetings
- 30 be responsible for membership, either personally or by assisting the Membership Coordinator as per the section below, and report on membership numbers to the Annual General Meeting
- 31 be responsible for ensuring that occasional and AGM documentation is distributed in a correct and timely manner as per the current LTRA Constitution
- 32 communicate with non-residents by post through the Westminster Housing office. Limited to:
 - every three years, to join / renew their membership
 - advance notice of the GM and the AGM
 - papers for the GM and the AGMfor other information and contact non-resident members are expected to check the Luxborough Tower website, or to opt-in to any e-mail group or equivalent that is set up
- 33 produce a report for the Annual General Meeting on the number of meetings held, in line with the requirements of the Constitution

The TREASURER shall:

- 34 observe the guidelines and detail laid down for the Treasurer in the Constitution
- 35 submit applications for grants, based on up-to-date membership lists
- 36 as and when, be audited by independent auditors on behalf of Westminster Housing:
 - be empowered to pay out, in line with the Association's policy on **Expenses**. Payment by cheque will require two signatures

- if online payments are made, the authorised payee (normally the Treasurer) will ask for authorisation by email from one of the other signatories. The email to be stored with the receipt
- 37 obtain consent for any payment between £100 & £750 at a committee or General meeting (paid on two signatures).
- 38 refer any expenditure over £750 to a General meeting of the Association (paid on two signatures)
- 39 members should bring expenses claims to the next meeting after the expenditure. If they match the expenses policy they will be paid and receipted immediately and recorded later. Records to be shown at each committee meeting. Hard copies of receipts kept until end of year and reconciled against records. Presented to Westminster Housing with the Annual Grant application process in October
- 40 produce a report for the Annual General Meeting on the accounts, in line with the requirements of the Constitution

VICE CHAIR

- 41 at times the Association will, at a General Meeting or the Annual General Meeting, choose a Vice Chair. This will recognise the outstanding contribution of an individual to the work of the Association. The title ensures that the individual has the status to continue their representation of the Association in meetings and discussions with outside bodies

The MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR (a role but not an Officer) shall:

- 42 maintain a membership list from applications or information received. Individual Membership to last for three years. Application forms shall be retained for future audit
- 43 encourage (new) residents to join:
- check that the Luxborough Tower website carries an invitation to join the Association and a membership form
 - keep a stock of membership forms and put one through the door of people who are known to have moved in
 - run a regular item “Join Now” in any Newsletter or e-mail group that the committee establishes
 - check all attendees at the AGM and ask them to join if not members
 - help to run a regular membership “sign-up” event with forms in in the foyer
 - help to organise door to door contacts
- 44 annually:
- check the membership list at a committee meeting to remove people known to have left the block
 - report to the Treasurer on the total number of properties with membership to be entered on the Westminster Housing Grant Application
 - assist the Secretary in reporting membership numbers to the Annual General Meeting
 - every three years, run a full membership campaign, both for new members and so that existing members re-join
- 45 comment on the requirement in the Constitution that the membership of the Association and of the committee should reflect the overall ratio of tenants to lessees in the block (see clause 38 in the LTRA Constitution)
- 46 as and when, be audited by independent auditors on behalf of Westminster Housing

All COMMITTEE MEMBERS shall:

- 47 Agree at the first committee meeting of the year a shared responsibility covering areas of the block. Sample list below:
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| car parking / garages / sheds | cleaning & maintenance | estate inspection |
| gardens | heating | major works |
| membership | security | service charges |
- 48 When committee members e-mail Westminster Housing with any comments / complaints about poor service or other issues they should cc in the responsible committee member

Breach of Conduct

- 49 Poor behaviour in meetings is discussed in paragraphs 8) & 9) above.
- 50 Gross misconduct is identified in the Constitution (as below), listing behaviours that might lead to someone being suspended from or required to leave the association or committee:
- a) Knowingly contravenes association guidelines, or
 - b) May prevent the proper functioning of the committee, or
 - c) May harm the good reputation of the association, or
 - d) Involves any illegal activity
- 51 Examples of such misconduct might also include:
- Consistent discriminatory or bullying language or behaviour
 - Misusing confidential information
 - Not declaring a conflict of interest, or a political affiliation that was relevant to the Association’s business
 - Financial irregularities
- 52 A complaint that a committee or Association member has failed to behave appropriately will require careful handling:
- If possible, an oral warning, either when it occurs in a meeting, as in paragraph 9) above, or separately, outside of the meeting
 - A member of the committee not directly involved in the complaint, or a member of the Westminster Housing Resident Engagement team, may be asked to investigate the complaint and report back. This may clarify the position such that the matter is closed without further process
 - If a substantive complaint remains, the process in paragraphs 52 & 53 below must be followed. We are a voluntary, democratic Association and so the process must be performed in a consultative, transparent way
- 53 A complaint that any member has failed to behave appropriately, despite receiving warnings, or has committed an act that is considered to be a serious breach of conduct, 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 a two-thirds majority the committee can suspend or exclude a member and / or exclude them from applying for a committee position for one year.
- 54 The constitution (clause 9) allows that a member whose association or committee membership has been suspended or ended shall be entitled to have that reviewed at a General Meeting of the association.

POLICY on Expenses

- 55 Westminster Housing allow our Association a modest annual grant, based on membership, mainly to allow us to meet the costs of running the Association. This helps us to run the

Association well. It helps Westminster Housing in having a recognised, representative group they can work with. We should therefore reimburse proper expenses.

- 56 The Association will not pay members for the supply of service. The concept of unpaid membership is one of our defining characteristics, contributing greatly to public confidence in charities and membership organisations.
- 57 Members are entitled to have appropriate expenses met from the funds of the Association – see detail below. This applies to all Association and committee members carrying out functions authorised by the Chairman and committee. These may be paid in advance for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. However, it is also within the tradition of an Association like ours that many expenses will not be claimed.
- 58 A refund of properly incurred expenses is not a payment, nor does it count as any kind of personal benefit, and so is not taxable.

Examples of expenses

- 59 The Association will only reimburse expenses under these limited headings:
- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| postage | photocopying for relevant meetings |
| printer ink / toner | relevant stationery |
| AGM hospitality | web site: domain name & rental |
| Professional Indemnity insurance | |
| low value computer hardware, such as a printer or scanner, below £100 | |
| repairs as relevant and agreed in advance by the committee | |
- 60 All requests for expenditure over £250 must include a written quotation, and all quotations or estimates must always be explicit about whether VAT is included or not.
- 61 If there are cases where members of the association are unable to attend meetings or deal with paperwork for reasons of disability or social disadvantage, the committee will discuss specific reimbursement. These might include
- the reasonable cost of childcare, or care of other dependants (for example, an elderly parent) whilst attending Association meetings
 - communication support: translating documents into Braille for a blind member, special aids for people with hearing impairment
 - providing transport, equipment or facilities for a member with a disability
- In most cases these will be one-off payments and must be agreed in principle by the committee in advance.

Process

Expenses should be supported by bills or receipts, except where it is impractical to expect this, for example, where very small amounts are claimed.

- 62 Claims should clearly state:
- purpose of the expenditure, which should relate to activity on behalf of the Association
 - the date of expenditure
- 63 Expenses should be submitted within 3 months. They must be resolved within the relevant financial year, except claims for running the AGM which can be paid later, depending on how the dates fall.
- 64 If expense claims are submitted which the Treasurer had no advance notice of from discussion at committee, or which significantly exceed the estimate given, the Treasurer reserves the right to hold off payment until the claim has been discussed at committee.
- 65 All claims will be reimbursed by cheque.
- 66 All payments will be signed for and recorded appropriately

POLICY on Data Protection

67 Members and committee members of the Association should be aware that data about their membership will be stored electronically, will be available to members of the committee and will be shared with Westminster Housing as part of our Annual Grant return. Data will not be shared with any other individuals or organisations.

CHANGES to the Standing Orders

68 Standing Orders may be revised by the Committee, provided any changes are consistent with the terms of the constitution. Such revision to become effective after receiving the membership's approval at a General Meeting. It is good practice, each year, as a new committee takes over, for the Standing Orders to be reviewed.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

- Point 41) added – the role of Vice Chair. 11th Sept 2019. Therefore all the subsequent bullet points increment
- Changes agreed at General Meeting 30th April 2019
- CityWest Homes & CWH changed to Westminster Housing, April 2019
- Various small edits and changes. Most importantly, the sections on Breach of Conduct added and expanded to align it with the Constitution AH June 2018, with help from CWH/Westminster Housing & JG
- Section on Communications, paragraphs 1 & 2, discussed and confirmed without changes at General Meeting Sept 2015
- Minor proofing changes Sept 2015 AH
- Changes agreed by committee Oct 2014 – a rewritten first page with more emphasis on communications and a reference to the website. Small typos fixed and re-dated to Feb 2015
- Additional changes to drafting after comments from JG Sept 2014
- Other changes made by A Hughes to match current practice and changes to the Constitution May 2014 – eg. the detail of the Treasurer's process
- Presented to committee meeting 24th Oct 2013 for approval before going to AGM in Nov 2013. Approved with no changes
- Additions following model of a Leeds **Model Code of Conduct for Tenants and Residents Associations** AH
- Minor changes after committee meeting Sept 2013: reduction in categories allowable for expenses; additions to preamble about behaviour and e-mail conduct
- Policy on Expenses & Policy on Data Protection added Aug 2013 AH
- Re-sequenced and amended 15th Aug 2013 AH:
 - Moved some detail around to avoid duplication between this and the Constitution
 - moved some Treasurer details from Constitution into here
 - changed amounts and levels Treasurer can deal with independently
- Constitution & Standing Orders re-drafted July 2013 JG