

Oaklee Housing Association
Board of Management
31 January 2008

Shareholding Member Policy

The primary purpose of the Association is:

To deliver quality housing and appropriate support to people in need, promoting equality and opportunity for all.

Policy Overview

Oaklee Housing Association was founded in 1992 as a non-profit making organisation, and is registered both under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 and the Department for Social Development.

The Association has a set of Registered Rules, which constitutes the organisation and provides for shareholding members. These rules are legal instrument by which the Association is bound and this policy is consistent with and does not undermine the Rules. The Rules cover such matters, as the name, the objects and registered office of the Association, matters to do with membership of the organisation, Board membership, borrowing powers, procedures of meetings appointment of the auditor etc. These rules are available to anyone who is interested. In 2007 the Association adopted a change to the Rules to permit an extension to the organisation's borrowing powers.

The Rules provide that there shall be at least one General Meeting of all members (the Annual General Meeting) in each year, to receive the Accounts, elect Board Members and appoint Auditor.

Being registered with the Department qualifies the Association to receive Government funding for capital development and it is regularly monitored to ensure it complies with all legislation and regulatory guidance and that it manages its affairs in accordance with best practice.

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The Board members retire by rota on a three yearly cycle, as set out in the Rules. They elect their own Chairman who acts as the Chairman of the Association. They are required to declare an interest if any subject matter under discussion is appropriate and may not vote on this issue.

They are subject to a Code of Conduct to which they must individually subscribe they receive no remuneration for their time but are allowed to claim expenses incurred when acting on behalf of the organisation.

The Board of Management has been delegated responsibility by the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting. Its members meet every month, apart from July and August, and attend Strategy Review Days. Individual Board Members serve on at least one of four committees, which meet every second alternating month (apart from Finance and Resources which meets monthly), to consider the work of the Association in detail, taking decisions within their terms of reference and formulating policy recommendations, which are made to the Board for possible adoption. These committees are:

1. **Finance and Resources Committee:** responsible for financial, staffing, remuneration, corporate and general administration issues.
2. **Operations Committee:** responsible for the development and housing management activities.
3. **Audit and Governance Committee:** responsible for the internal and external audit process and governance matters.
4. **Care and Support Committee:** responsible for the supported housing provision and joint management agreements with partner organisations.

Membership Policy

The Association will encourage membership to:

- Allow people to express support for and a commitment to the Association without necessarily playing an active role in the affairs of the organisation;
- To provide an active resource of people who have the relevant skills and knowledge/experience from whom new voluntary Board or Committee members may be drawn;
- To enhance the Association's accountability to the community in which it operates and to reflect its diversity

Selection Criteria for Membership

- The Board of Management will consider all applications for membership. Persons making application to become a member should be able to demonstrate that they fall into one of the categories outlined in the Membership Policy Statement. A personal specification (available with application form) outlines in more detail the skills and knowledge/experience required.
- Membership will be balanced to reflect the diversity of the community and to ensure that no single group could attain a level of membership where they would be capable of imposing changes unilaterally in the constitution.
- Membership of the Association will be bound by the Association's Rules and all applicants should be able to demonstrate that their membership will not result in an unacceptable conflict of interest.
- Membership can consist of Corporate Members also.

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Membership can consist of:

- **Individual Shareholder:** Any individual who can demonstrate that they have an interest in the work of the Association and subscribe to the values of the organisation.

Not Eligible for Membership

- No application may be accepted if its acceptance would mean that a particular grouping would attain a level of membership representing more than 20% of the total number of members at the time of application
- No person who has been expelled from, or withdrawn from, the organisation can be re-admitted without two-thirds of the members present in person or by proxy and voting on a poll at a General Meeting of which proper notice has been given;
- No person who is a minor will be considered for membership;
- Nor any applicant who is a current member of staff.

Refusal to accept an application for membership

The Board has the right to refuse membership to an individual or a corporate body. Should an application be refused the Board will give a full written explanation of the reasons for their decision.

Appeals

The Audit and Governance Committee will hear any appeal that is made and the decision shall be final.

Responsibilities of a Shareholding member:

- a) To attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting, to elect the Board of Management and attend any Special General Meetings.

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- b) To receive copies of the Association's Annual Report and Audited Accounts.
- c) To receive copies of the Association's Newsletters.
- d) To be eligible for election on to the Association's Board of Management subject to having the relevant skills and knowledge required of a serving member of the Board.
- e) A shareholder may nominate other persons to stand for election to the Board of Management.
- f) To vote on any proposed changes to the Rules of the Association.
- g) Each will receive a Share Certificate upon being accepted as a member and having paid £1 for their share. No financial benefit is gained from being a shareholder and no member may hold more than one share in the Association.

Maximum Size of membership

The Association currently has no limit to its member number.

Withdrawal from Membership

Any member may withdraw from the Association by giving a month's notice of their intention to do so, by letter to the Secretary

Members may be expelled by a resolution carried by votes of two-thirds of members if a complaint in writing, of conduct detrimental to the interest of the Association, has been received.

Policy Review

The Board will review this policy within the Association's 3 year Corporate Plan Review strategy.

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How to becoming a Shareholding Member

To become a member, you need to make application to the Company Secretary. (Application Form attached). Shares cannot be jointly owned, but corporate membership is permitted by the Rules in particular circumstances. Please complete and return this form to, or seek further guidance from:

Mr Leslie Morrell OBE JP
Company Secretary
Oaklee Housing Association
Leslie Morrell House
37-41 May Street
Belfast
BT1 4DN

Policy approved by the Board on Thursday 31 January 2008

Version One