



CONSTITUTION

February 2009

Contact: The S.R.F. Secretary,

**38 The Avenue
Ashbrooke
Sunderland
Tyne & Wear
SR2 7HA**

Website: www.sunderlandresidentsfederation.org

1. Name

The name of the organisation shall be the **Sunderland Residents' Federation**. It shall operate within the City of Sunderland.

2. Aims

- 2.1 To promote and represent residents' rights and the maintenance and improvement of their housing conditions, amenities and environment.
- 2.2 To assist and encourage the setting up of residents' groups throughout the City of Sunderland.
- 2.3 To assist, where necessary, the activities of member organisations and help them achieve their aims.
- 2.4 To co-operate with organisations other than member organisations on matters of common concern.
- 2.5 To distribute information to members.
- 2.6 To meet, liaise, and consult with Gentoo Housing Group, the Council and appropriate relevant agencies to represent the interests of residents.
- 2.7 To identify training needs and co-ordinate the provision of training to meet the needs of member groups.
- 2.8 To actively encourage initiatives pertaining to the prevention of crime, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour within the community, to encourage safe, harmonious, and cohesive communities.
- 2.9 To uphold the principles of equality and diversity and work for good relations amongst all members of the community.
- 2.10 To work with National Tenants' and Residents' Organisations to promote participation in housing issues in furtherance of all the above aims.

3. Membership

3.1 Full Membership

3.1.1 Membership of the Federation shall be open to all constituted residents' groups within the City of Sunderland and to individual residents of Gentoo Group.

3.1.2 Each resident's group shall appoint two delegates to represent it and vote on its behalf at meetings of the Federation. Both delegates are entitled to vote.

3.1.3 Individual residents, known as independent members have one vote each.

3.2 Associate Membership

Other voluntary or statutory organisations, supporting the aims of the Federation, may join and become associate members. Associate membership is subject to the approval of the Executive Committee and is without voting rights.

3.3 Co – opted Members

The Executive Committee may co-opt individuals who have special knowledge or expertise. Co-opted members may attend meetings in an advisory capacity but have no voting rights.

3.4 All Organisations

Member and associate member organisations must actively seek to represent the various needs of their own members. No individual or group shall be admitted or continue as a member if they pursue any discrimination, either overtly or otherwise, on the grounds of nationality, colour or religious opinion, sex or sexual orientation, age or disability.

3.5 Cessation of Membership

A group or individual shall cease to be a member immediately they:

3.5.1 Cease to fulfil any of the qualifications for membership. If the Executive Committee decides that this condition is met a member may appeal to a General Meeting as in clause 3.5.3 below.

3.5.2 Resigns in writing to the Secretary.

3.5.3 Are expelled by the General Meeting called to consider the matter, provided that any member to be expelled shall be given the opportunity to state their case to the meeting called to consider the matter.

3.5.4 An Association is wound up or goes into liquidation.

4. General Meetings

4.1 The Federation shall hold an Annual General Meeting not more than fifteen months after the holding of the last preceding Annual General Meeting.

The business of an Annual General Meeting shall include:

4.1.1 Receiving the annual report of the Federation.

4.1.2 Receiving the accounts of the Federation for the preceding year.

4.1.3 The election of members of the Officers for the Executive Committee (see section 7).

4.1.4 Such other business as may be specified in the notices calling the meeting.

4.2 In addition to the Annual General Meeting the Executive Committee shall call an Ordinary General Meeting open to all members of the Federation no less than four times a year.

4.3 Ten or more members of the Federation may demand an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting to discuss specific business. Within seven days of receiving such a request the Executive Committee shall give the requisite 28 days notice of such a meeting to all members.

4.4 Decisions at General Meetings shall be made by passing resolutions:

4.4.1 A resolution to amend the constitution must be carried by two thirds of those voting at a General Meeting.

4.4.2 All other decisions shall be made by ordinary resolutions requiring a simple majority of the members present and voting.

5. Notices

5.1 Any meeting which is to consider a resolution to amend the constitution or a resolution to remove a member of the Executive Committee shall be called by at least 28 clear days notice. Any other Ordinary General Meeting shall be called by at least 14 clear days notice.

5.2 Notice of every Meeting shall be given in writing to every full, co-opted and associate member of the Federation.

5.3 A resolution to amend the Constitution or to remove a member of the Executive Committee shall be specified in the notices calling that meeting and in the case of all other General Meetings, the general nature of the business to be raised there shall be specified.

5.4 Where notice is sent by post, the notice shall be deemed to have been served by properly addressing, prepaying and posting the notice and to have been served 48 hours after the notice has been posted. The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or non-receipt of notice of a meeting by any person entitled to receive notice, shall not invalidate proceedings at that meeting.

6. Proceedings at General Meetings

6.1 Every full member present at a Meeting shall have one vote. Votes may only be given personally; proxy voting is not permitted.

- 6.2 Subject to the following, no business shall be transacted at a General Meeting unless a quorum is present. Unless otherwise directed by a General Meeting, 10 voting members shall be a quorum, to be revised annually at the Annual General Meeting.
- 6.3 If, within fifteen minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, a quorum is not present, the meeting, if called following a demand by members, shall be dissolved. In any other case, it shall stand adjourned until rearranged by the Executive Committee. If, within fifteen minutes of the time appointed for an adjourned meeting, a quorum is not present, then the members present shall be deemed a quorum.
- 6.4 At any General Meeting where the Chairperson is not present within five minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside, and in the case of her/his absence, the members shall choose one of their number to be Chairperson of that meeting, whose function shall be to conduct the business of the meeting in an orderly manner.
- 6.5 At any General Meeting, a resolution put to the vote of the meeting shall be declared on a show of hands unless a secret ballot is demanded by at least two eligible voting members present before the vote is taken.
- 6.6 If a secret ballot is duly demanded it shall be taken, provided that each eligible voting member shall have only one vote.
- 6.7 The demand for a secret ballot shall not prevent the continuance of a meeting for the transaction of any business other than the question upon which a ballot has been demanded.
- 6.8 In the case of an equality of votes, whether on a show of hands or on a ballot, the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote.
- 6.9 The Federation may, at its discretion, invite other persons to attend its meetings, with or without speaking rights, and without voting rights.

6.10 The Treasurer will produce a statement of account activity at every General Meeting.

6.11 Minutes will be distributed to the membership with notices of next meeting.

6.12 Venues for meetings will be agreed by the Executive Committee.

7. Executive Committee

The business of the Federation shall be managed by the Executive Committee made up as follows:

7.1 The six officers (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer, Vice-Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary) and up to six other members. Sixty percent of these positions must be filled by Gentoo Group tenants to comply with the conditions for funding from Gentoo Group.

7.2 The Executive Committee shall be elected each year at the Annual General Meeting by the delegates present.

7.3 Persons who are the authorised delegates of member organisations, or individual full members, may serve as Officers on the Executive Committee.

7.4 A member of the Executive Committee shall continue to serve until the Annual General Meeting following her/his appointment, after which she/he shall be eligible for re-election if not otherwise barred by this Constitution.

7.5 The Executive Committee will meet regularly and report back to the General Meetings.

7.6 A quorum will consist of four voting members of the Executive Committee.

7.7 Elected Councillors or officers employed by Gentoo Group shall not be eligible for election to the Committee.

- 7.8 At Executive Committee meetings each member of the Executive Committee shall have one vote.
- 7.9 Members shall declare an interest in, and shall not vote in respect of, any contract in which she/he has a direct or indirect financial interest or any matter arising therefrom.
- 7.10 There shall be no remuneration payable to Executive Committee members.
- 7.11 Officers may be paid all reasonable expenses incurred by them in connection with the business of the Federation.
- 7.12 The office of an Executive Committee member shall be immediately vacated if she/he:
- 7.12.1 Resigns her/his office in writing to the Federation; or
 - 7.12.2 Is the delegate of an organisation which ceases to be a member; or
 - 7.12.3 Fails to declare her/his interesting any contract as referred to in 7.9 above.
- 7.13 Associate Members can be involved in discussions, but without voting rights.
- 7.14 Individuals who may have special knowledge or expertise may be co-opted members of the Executive Committee. Co-opted members will act in an advisory capacity only, with no voting rights.

8. Equal and Diversity

The Federation shall have an Equality and Diversity policy which will be adopted at a general meeting and shall be binding on all members of the Federation. Any changes must be ratified at a general meeting. Amended A.G.M. 6th May 2006.

9. Affiliations and Associations

The Federation shall have the power to affiliate and/or associate to local and national organisations who may be of benefit to its membership.

10. Finance

10.1 All monies raised by, or on behalf of the Federation shall be applied to further the aims of the Federation.

10.2 The Treasurer shall maintain a bank account in the name of the Federation.

10.3 All cheques, promissory notes and instructions to the Federation bankers shall require two of the three agreed signatories.

10.4 The Treasurer shall submit the statements of accounts for audit or independent examination at the end of each financial year. The accounting records will also be available for examination at any time.

11. Dissolution

11.1 The Federation may be voluntarily dissolved only by a two-thirds majority vote at a General Meeting called specifically for that purpose, or an Annual General Meeting. At least 35 days notice shall be given of the intention to dissolve.

11.2 In the event of the dissolution of the Federation, any remaining assets, following the settlement of any liabilities, shall be given to one or more charities for the benefit of any organisations that share common objectives with the Federation and operate within the area defined in section 2 of this document.

12. Conduct of Business and Standing Orders

12.1 At all meetings, members may speak only through the Chair.

12.2 Meetings will end on a time agreed by the Executive Committee.

- 12.3 Members may only interrupt a speaker with a point of order or a point of information.
- 12.4 Any offensive behaviour, including racist, sexist or inflammatory remarks, will not be permitted.
- 12.5 Any member of a group affiliated to the Federation, or individual member, who consistently infringes the Constitution, shall be expelled on the majority vote of an Expulsion Committee, comprising seven members, its decision to be ratified by a General Meeting.

Any such delegate or associate member or co-opted member will have the right to appeal within 21 days of the expulsion. The appeal shall be heard by an Appeals Committee, comprising seven members, none of which must be a member of the Expulsion Committee. Its decision will require ratification by the membership of the Federation at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose. Notice of the result of the appeal will be forwarded not less than 14 days after the meeting. An Association whose first or second delegate has been expelled will have the right to nominate a replacement.

Any expelled member will not be eligible for re-admittance for a period of 12 months, after which their application will be heard by the Executive Committee.

- 12.6 All correspondence shall be dealt with by the Secretary or Assistant Secretary.
- 12.7 Representation of Sunderland Residents' Federation will be delegated, when deemed necessary, by the Executive Committee.

13. Delegation of Authority

Members of the Executive Committee will act in the best interests of the Federation and will, as and when occasions arise, take decisions which relate to the day to day running of the Federation.

14. Election Procedures

No later than eight weeks prior to the AGM, appropriate forms will be sent to members requesting nominations for the posts of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, these to be returned by a specified day, no later than four weeks prior to the AGM.

If no postal nominations are received, nominations will be taken from the floor on the day of the meeting.

Should nominations exceed vacancies, candidates will be invited to write a brief summary of their work and experience which will be circulated to all members for consideration prior to the AGM, where a secret ballot will be held with the use of ballot papers.

Following the selection of the senior officers, nominations will be taken from the floor for the remaining elected posts and, where nominations exceed vacancies, a further secret ballot will take place.

Signed:.....
Chairperson

Signed:.....
Vice-Chairperson

Signed:.....
Treasurer

Signed:.....
Secretary