

# Membership and tenant involvement policy

**Version 1.0**

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**Date of next review** February 2024

## About this policy

This policy sets out the benefits and obligations of membership of Stourbridge Community Land Trust (SCLT) for resident members.

## Becoming a member

Membership of SCLT is available in three forms:

1. **Resident Members**, where an individual has or wishes to take up a tenancy to live in the housing provided by SCLT
2. **Individual Members**, where a local person who is not a tenant of SCLT nor wishes to become one, supports the aims of the Trust
3. **Organisational Members**, where community organisations who support the aims of the Trust may become members of the Trust and appoint named representatives to act with the same rights as Individual Members.

To become a member, a Membership Application Form must be completed. The application will be considered and approved or denied in line with this policy, our Allocations & Lettings Policy, and our Community Living Policy. Successful members will be required to purchase a £1 non-withdrawable share in SCLT. All individual or residential members must be aged 16 years or older in line with the Trust Rules.

Prospective members are required to attend two general meetings, at the second of which their membership can be ratified as in line with policy and procedure by the Board and approved by the membership by a straight majority.

# Being a member

## General Meetings

SCLT is run by a Board of Directors who are accountable to General Meetings of the membership.

Members are required to attend quarterly General Meetings or submit apologies if they are unable to attend. An approved nominee, as set out in the registered rules of the society (Rule 39), can attend on behalf of the members attached to them without the requirement for apologies.

If a member fails to attend or send apologies to two general meetings within an annual period the Board or Membership Engagement Working Group will contact the member to encourage and facilitate participation. Persistent absence over two years is cause for cancellation of membership.

The dates of General Meetings will be set annually with no less than six weeks notice from date setting to the first meeting of the period.

General Meetings require that there are three or more user members present; and there are two members present from any class in which there are more than ten members; and there are five members present from any class in which there are more than fifty members in order to be quorate. Video link is acceptable as attendance to a General Meeting.

Any member can submit a proposal for consideration and discussion at a general meeting to the Secretary. Proposals should be submitted one month before the date of the general meeting.

Proposals can also be tabled during the meeting providing they fall under the general standing orders on the meeting agenda.

Members will be notified two weeks in advance of General Meeting by

- email;
- post if no email is provided; or finally
- phone call if no email or postal address is provided.

Members unable to attend a General Meeting can submit a proxy vote, this can is only available if apologies have been sent to the Secretary and an attending member is carrying the proxy on the unavailable member's behalf.

## Extraordinary General Meetings

A member can call an EGM if there is quorate support for an additional meeting, proven by signatures on a proposed agenda. Quoracy to call an EGM is at least 15% of the membership (rounded up), or 30% of the membership in any one class (rounded up).

An EGM will also be called:

- in the event of the number of elected directors falling below three, or in the event that more than 25% of the directors are not user members;
- in the event that the Board fails to secure the appointment of a Secretary and a Treasurer;
- at any other time deemed appropriate by the Board.

An EGM can be called with fourteen days notice.

## Annual General Meetings

The AGM takes place within six months of the end of SCLT's financial year (31st March).

Annual accounts are presented for approval at the AGM.

The Board of Directors is elected at the AGM.

## Board of Directors

The general membership of SCLT is represented by an elected Board of Directors made up of 3-15 members.

Up to 11 directors may be elected from the membership. Up to 2 Directors are representative(s) appointed/nominated by Stourbridge Community Development Trust (or any body that succeeds to its function).

A further two external independent Directors may be co-opted for a fixed term, subject to review after 12 months. They need not be Members and are selected for their particular skills and/or experience.

Any member can nominate themselves or another member for election to the AGM. Nominations should be made to the Secretary one month before the AGM. Current Board members who wish to continue serving must be re-nominated every year.

Casual vacancies may be filled by co-option. Any directors that have been co-opted to the Board will resign or stand for election at the next annual general meeting.

If at any time the number of members falls below ten, unless a general meeting resolves to hold elections all user members will be automatically appointed to the Board (though they may decline to accept the appointment).

At the first annual general meeting all elected Directors shall stand down. At every subsequent annual general meeting one-third of the elected Directors, or if their number is not a multiple of three then the number nearest to one-third, shall retire from office. The Directors to retire shall be the Directors who have been longest in office since their last election. Where Directors have held office for the same amount of time the Directors to retire shall be decided by lot. A retiring Director shall be eligible for re-election.

A quorum is present at a Board meeting if half of the directors are present.

## **Member Involvement**

SCLT is run for and by its members, as such, attendance at general meetings is expected of all members.

There is also the opportunity for members to be involved in Working Groups which carry out specific work on behalf of the SCLT.

Working Groups must be proposed and approved at a Board Meeting and may be assigned a budget. Working groups will report to Board Meetings on their activities to an agreed schedule.

## **Training, Information and Development**

SCLT is committed to ensuring that all members have access to the information they need to be properly engaged, in a suitable format.

## **Equality and Diversity**

SCLT is committed to equality and diversity in all aspects of its recruitment, membership procedures and service provision.

SCLT is committed to proactively recruiting members to reflect the diversity of Stourbridge and the West Midlands, to recruiting a Board that reflects the diversity of its membership.

## **Cancellation of Membership**

Membership of the SCLT will be cancelled under the following circumstances:

1. At the discretion of the Board, if a Resident Member is unable to provide evidence that they conduct (or intend to conduct within a reasonable timeframe) the transactions with the SCLT that originally qualified them for membership, i.e. take up a tenancy;
2. On receipt of a written request to resign to the Secretary;
3. If, over a period of two years, reasonable attempts to communicate with the member (including a written warning that membership may be cancelled if no response is received) elicit no response;
4. If the member is an Organisational Member, and has been wound up, has gone into liquidation or has otherwise ceased to function according to its own rules; or
5. If the member dies.

# Expulsion of Members

To expel a member, the member in question must be given written warning, and sufficient time to prepare an appeal to a general meeting, including the option to send an individual to represent them who need not be a member of SCLT.

An expulsion requires a 75% vote at a general meeting, in which neither the member in question nor any member of their family may vote. Following such a vote, the expelled member may not be readmitted to any class of membership without a further resolution at a general meeting.

If the Member fails to attend the meeting, the meeting may proceed in their absence.