



Cochrane Street Residents Association

Email: enquiries@cochranera.co.uk

Constitution

Item

1) Name of the Organisation:

The name of the group shall be: Cochrane Residents Association also known as Cochrane RA.

2) Area of Operation:

Cochrane Street including Richard's House, O'Neill House, Lebus, George Eyre, Cicely House and Henry House

3) Aims:

- 3.1 To promote the interests of all residents in the area of operation and to assist in maintaining good relations between all members of the community and with the landlord.
- 3.2 To promote the rights of residents in the area of operation with regards to the maintenance and improvement of housing, conditions and/or their environment.
- 3.3 To consult with the community on matters of concern and provide information.
- 3.4 To act as a point of contact for the landlord, the local authority and other organisations.
- 3.5 To encourage a sense of community.
- 3.6 To raise funds to meet the aims of the group.
- 3.7 To work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination within the community including by encouraging all members of usually excluded groups to participate in the Association/group.
- 3.8 The Association shall be non-political and non-profitmaking and shall be a charitable work organisation.

4) Promoting Equalities

- 4.1 The Association shall actively seek to represent the views of residents in the area and shall not discriminate. People shall be treated fairly including on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, age, or religion.

- 4.2 The Association will demonstrate at their Annual General Meeting how they have proactively tried to include all residents of the associations area of operations in their activities.
- 4.3 In the event of any act of discrimination under this item, the Association person in charge may tell the offender to leave and the matter will be referred to the Management Committee who may decide to take further action including rescinding membership of the Association.

5) Membership

- 5.1. Membership has two categories
- 5.2. Members are full Members who have all the advantages of membership including voting. Each household can have only one Member who shall be selected and can be changed by the household.
- 5.3. Members shall be aged 18 years or over.
- 5.4. Associate Membership is available for all non-Members of households, for organisations, and for others who are involved or interested in the work of the Association. The Associate Members cannot vote except under 8.5 but can attend and speak at meetings.
- 5.5. Membership shall be open to all residents who support the aims of the Association.
- 5.6. All members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at a meeting or activity of the Association. Any member may be suspended or expelled from the Association for failure to observe this, or for any other conduct not in line with the aims of the Association.
- 5.7. Any action which is taken against a member by the Association shall be confirmed in writing. If a member appeals, the appeal shall be considered and replied to within 21 days by members of the Management Committee who did not participate in the action. If the complainant is not satisfied, the appeal shall be considered by the Hon. Officers whose decision shall be final.
- 5.8. The Secretary shall maintain a membership list.

6) Committees

A Management Committee shall be elected to carry out the business of the group. The Committee shall meet not less than 5 times a year.

- 6.1. Membership of the Management Committee shall comprise a maximum of 12 and a minimum of 6 adults over the age of 18 with full voting rights of whom 4 members will be elected at the AGM to fill the positions of chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.
- 6.2. The quorum of members needed to hold a meeting is 5 of which 2 shall be Hon. Officers.
- 6.3. The Committee will be elected at the Annual General Meetings.
- 6.4. Committee members may serve 3 terms of 3 years, subject to re-election after each term.
- 6.5. After serving for 3 terms the Member must step down for a year and can then stand again for election.
- 6.6. The Committee shall keep accurate minutes of its meetings. Minutes of Committee meetings will be available to all members and shall be approved at the next available meeting.
- 6.8. Vacancies on the Committee and of Hon Officers arising during the year can be filled by co-option. The co-opted members may stand for election at the AGM.
- 6.9. Sub-Committees may be appointed by the Committee subject to approval by the next General Meeting.
- 6.10. The Committee and Sub – Committees shall receive Terms of Reference which shall be approved at the next General Meeting.
- 6.11. If a meeting is held as a zoom or an equivalent meeting, then notification of attendance can be by acceptance of agreement to the proceedings and decisions delivered in writing or by email.

7) Finance

- 7.1. A bank account will be opened in the name of the Association and details including of signatories will be included in minutes of the Committee.
- 7.2. There will be at least three cheque signatories.
- 7.3. Each cheque will require a minimum of two signatures that must not be from The same household.
- 7.4. All income including grants received will be paid into the bank account.
- 7.5. The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the Association, including for itemised petty cash.
- 7.6. Accounts will be assessed annually by Octavia Housing, or by an independent examiner with adequate financial experience, for example a representative of a community organisation, law centre or council for voluntary service at the end of each financial year.
- 7.7. The annual accounts shall be submitted each year to the AGM.
- 7.8. If an independent examination is carried out, a copy of the examination must be given to Octavia Housing.

8) Annual General Meeting

- 8.1 There will be an Annual General Meeting held at which the Committee shall report on its work, its plans for the future, present a statement of accounts, and committee members who have completed their terms will resign.
- 8.2 The Members present at the AGM shall elect committee members to fill any vacancies.
- 8.3 The Members present at the AGM shall elect the chairperson, the deputy- chair, secretary, and treasurer (and any other officer) for the next year.
- 8.4 The Members present at the AGM shall vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution.
- 8.5 The members present at the AGM shall vote on any other issues raised during the preceding year.
- 8.6 The secretary or named officer will notify all members of the date of the meeting and of the election of the Hon. Officers not less than twenty-one days before the AGM or General Meeting.
- 8.7 An officer of Octavia Housing or an independent person must be present by prior agreement of the Committee and Octavia Housing.
- 8.8 A Special General Meeting open to all members will be held if at least 6 Members submit a request for such a meeting to the secretary. The secretary shall arrange for the meeting to take place within 21 days.
- 8.9 The secretary will publicise all general meetings at least five days in advance.

9) Other General/Open Meetings

- 9.1. There will be at least 3 General Meetings a year including the AGM.
- 9.2. All notices for meetings and other business can be sent by letter, or on line.

10) Changes to the Constitution

- 10.1 The constitution can only be altered at an AGM or at a special general meeting called for that purpose.
- 10.2 Any suggested changes to the constitution must be handed to the Hon. Secretary 28 days before the AGM or Special General Meeting.
- 10.3 Proposed changes to the constitution must be agreed by two thirds of the Members present at the meeting.

11) Voting

- 11.1 Any Member may propose a resolution. In order for it to be voted on by other Members, it must be seconded by someone else.
- 11.2 Only Members present at the meeting can vote, either by the raising of

hands or a paper ballot except under clause 8..

- 11.3 Before voting any Member may propose an amendment, which must also be seconded by another person who agrees with and supports the resolution. The amendment shall then be voted on before the vote on the proposal.
- 11.4 In the event of an equal vote, there shall be a recount, and if the vote is still equal, the chairperson for the meeting shall cast a second vote. This must be recorded in the minutes.

12) Dissolution

- 12.1 The Association can be dissolved at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose and must be advertised 21 days before the meeting.
- 12.2 A proposal to dissolve the group shall take effect only if agreed by two thirds of members present at the meeting.
- 12.3 All assets (financial or otherwise) remaining after the payment of all debts, liabilities and repayment of any grants shall be given to charitable purposes according to the wishes of the members of the meeting.

13) Recognition by Octavia Housing

- 13.1 If more than 20% of the households in the catchment area attend each AGM Octavia Housing will fully recognise the Association. This entitles the group to support from Octavia Housing in terms of officer time and grants. However, it is on the condition that the group operates in line with the promoting equalities clause.
- 13.2 If less than 20% of the households in the catchment area attend each AGM, Octavia Housing will recognise the group as an informal group. The distinction Is designed to act as an indicator to all parties that action is required to assess why residents are not attending meetings and look at alternative methods of resident involvement such as focus groups etc. or devising methods to increase membership of the residents' group. Any changes agreed to the Constitution must be given to Octavia Housing within 14 days of the decision, in case the proposed changes affect Octavia Housing's recognition of the group.

14) De-recognition

- 14.1 Any group that fails to meet the recognition requirements will be offered support by Octavia Housing. Reasonable time will be given to enable the group to meet the requirements. Should the group continue to fail to meet requirements then they may be de-recognized by Octavia Housing.

Constitution adopted by Cochrane Residents Association

Definitions and explanations for this document

“Cochrane Residents Association” shall be “Association”

Management Committee shall be “Committee”

“Annual General Meeting” shall be AGM

“Member” is a full. Member, “Associate members” cannot vote, “member” and “membership” covers both full Members and Associate members

“Quorum” is the minimum number of members required for a committee and so for committee work to begin

“Seconding” is for a second person, in addition to the Member proposing a resolution at a meeting, agreeing with and supporting the resolution.

“Terms of Reference” list the committee details (such as who are members, how often it meets, how often it reports) and what job it will do