

Aldgate Estate Residents' Association

Constitution

To be presented for adoption at the
Inaugural General Meeting, 23rd March 2010

This document sets out the aims and rules by which the Aldgate Estate Residents' Association will be run

NAME:

1. The Association shall be known as ***the Aldgate Estate Residents' Association*** (Hereafter "Association") and shall be a non-party political group.

PRINCIPLES

2. The Association shall be the recognised representative of residents of the Aldgate Estate, Mansell Street, London E1 (Hereafter "The Estate") for liaison with the Guinness Trust \ Guinness Partnership (Hereafter "GP") and other statutory bodies.

This section sets out the aims of the Association.

AIMS

3. The Association will
 - work for the benefit of all who live on the Estate
 - work to improve the cultural, social and material environment on The Estate for its members
 - work for the provision of facilities for education, training, social welfare, recreation and leisure for residents of The Estate
 - take positive action to improve the wellbeing of the community and environment by making residents aware of their rights and responsibilities.
 - raise funds for community projects
 - represent the views of residents of The Estate in consultation with The Guinness Partnership, local authority and other bodies
 - seek to achieve an equal partnership with GP in the decision making process, specifically in the management of the Estate

- encourage support from other interested people and organisations
- affiliate to any body whose aims may be of benefit to our members
- work for good relationships amongst all members of the community.
- promote equality and diversity within the community and to work towards the elimination of discrimination within it.
- actively encourage all members of the community to become involved.

This section sets out the role of the Association in agreeing an Estates Service Agreement with the GT.

ESTATE SERVICE AGREEMENT (ESA)

4. The Association shall agree an Estate Service Agreement (ESA) with the GP.
5. The Association shall represent the residents as clients to the agreement.
6. The particulars of the ESA and the involvement of the Association in respect of the management and governance of the estate will be detailed in a separate document.

This section sets out who is a member and who can vote.

MEMBERSHIP

7. Membership is automatic for all residents in the area commonly known as the GP Housing Estate subject to paragraphs 13 – 17 below.
8. An individual will not be a member where they express their wish, in writing, not be a member.
9. Members will not have voting rights until their 16th birthday.
10. All members with voting rights are eligible to vote at any Association meeting, in accord with the conventions more fully described in sections 21, 30 and 43 below
11. When members are at meetings or in premises used by the organisation, they must at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner. All members shall agree to abide by the group's code of conduct and failure to do so may result in the member being asked to resign.
12. Any member may have their membership revoked for breach of the code of conduct or for any other conduct contravening the objects of the Association by a majority of those present and voting at any General Meeting. Any member so excluded shall have the right to appeal to the following General Meeting by majority vote.
13. Any member can be delegated to represent the Association at meetings with GP or the local authority.

DEFINITIONS

14. **Community:** A group of people that share a common bond or aspirations (e.g. neighbourhood, faith, culture)
15. **Customer** (of a housing association): anyone who receives a service (from a housing association)
16. **Resident:** Any person that lives in an association's home whether they have a contractual relationship or not (e.g. tenants, partners who are not on the tenancy agreement, children, lodgers, young adults staying with their family).
17. **Tenant:** A person with a contractual relationship with a housing association (e.g. tenant, leaseholder, shared owner).

MONIES RAISED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION

18. Any subscriptions, donations, grants of other monies raised by or on behalf of the Association shall only be used to further the aims of the Association.

The following sections say that the Association is run by a committee of volunteer members. The committee does not make decisions but it does carry out decisions made by the Association. It has no more than 15 members who are elected at an AGM or other General meeting. There are two committee posts filled by named individuals – the Treasurer and the Correspondence Secretary. Any member of the committee can carry out any of the other work of the committee or share it with other committee members.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS:

19. Conduct of the business of the Association will be the responsibility of the Volunteers' Committee.
20. The business of the Association may be delegated to any member(s) of the Association to be discharged in accord with the decisions of the Association recorded at any full Association meeting.
21. Any Member must declare any relevant personal interests in agenda items at any Association meeting. The members attending shall have the right to determine whether that Member should withdraw, or be allowed to speak but not vote, or be allowed to speak and vote.
22. The association may use external help or expertise to service the Association: See appendix I.

VOLUNTEERS COMMITTEE

23. The role of the Volunteers Committee shall be to organise Association meetings and handle the general business, administration and correspondence of the Association.
24. The Volunteers Committee is NOT a policy making body: Association policy and decisions will be decided at General or Special meetings of the Association.
25. At an Annual General Meeting a Volunteers Committee of no more than 15 people shall be elected. Only one member per household will be permitted to stand for election to the Volunteers Committee.
26. Anyone wishing to stand for the Volunteers Committee should be nominated by a member and seconded by another member.
27. If less than 15 people are appointed, the Volunteers Committee may co-opt new members who must be endorsed by majority vote at a subsequent General or Special meeting. No more than one member per household is permitted to serve on the Volunteer Committee at any one time.
28. The Volunteers Committee shall meet as often as necessary to manage the business of the Association.
29. The Volunteers Committee is explicitly responsible for
 - the organisation of meetings
 - the running of meetings
 - the recording of meetings
 - the management of Association funds
 - managing external help or expertise as set out in Appendix I
 - Two Roles will have specifically nominated volunteers, these roles are

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall open and maintain a bank account in the name of the Association. All cheques shall be signed by the Treasurer and one other Committee member nominated by the Committee as signatories (the signatories should not be from the same household or family). The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of income and expenditure and have them checked by an independent person, with adequate financial experience, at the end of each financial year. The Treasurer shall report on the accounts at quarterly meetings.

Correspondence Secretary

To handle all official correspondence of the Association, and to distribute correspondence to the appropriate volunteers or members.

30. At its first meeting following the AGM, the Volunteers' Committee shall elect named volunteers to the posts of Treasurer and Correspondence Secretary. A quorum of over half the elected volunteers is required for these elections to be valid.
31. It is acceptable for any role other than the designated roles of Treasurer and Correspondence Secretary to be shared among the members of the volunteer committee, including all the following roles:
- Agenda Secretary
 - Catering crew
 - Clean up crew
 - Key holders
 - Membership Secretary
 - Minutes Secretary
 - Pool of Chairs
 - Social Secretary
32. Any Member or Volunteer delegated to represent the Association in consultation with any other body shall act on the instructions of the Association and shall report back to the following Committee or General Meeting, whichever is sooner.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY FORUM

33. An Equality & Diversity Forum will be set up by the volunteer committee. Membership of the Forum will be drawn from the general members and should ideally consist of at least 5 members.
34. The purpose of the Forum will be to reflect the views of the diverse groups and interests on the estate.

There will be at least four General meetings a year and Special meetings can be called at any time. Special meetings can vote on changes to the constitution and there will be an Annual General Meeting about once a year.

GENERAL MEETINGS

35. The Volunteers Committee will organise not less than 4 General meetings in any year.
36. Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of members present and voting, subject to the conventions more fully described in sections 21, 30 and 43.
- Notification of not less than fourteen days shall be given to all members of any meeting.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

37. It may be decided at a General meeting by majority vote to call a Special meeting to deal with specific subjects or to consider amendment to this constitution.
38. Where a period in excess of 3 calendar months elapses between general meetings, residents may petition the Correspondence Secretary for a Special or General meeting to take place within one calendar month. Such petitions require the signature of 10 residents to be binding on the Association. On receipt of such a petition, the Association must organise a meeting within one calendar month.

ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

39. Any alteration to this constitution shall require the approval of two thirds of those present and voting at the Special meeting called for that purpose.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

40. The Volunteers shall arrange the AGM for the purpose of:
- Receiving an annual report from the Volunteers.
 - Presenting audited accounts to its members.
 - Appointing an independent auditor.
 - Electing the Volunteers Committee
41. AGMs shall normally take place every 12 months, although in exceptional circumstances flexibility up to a period of 14 months will be permissible.
42. Not less than 28 days notice shall be given to all members and GP staff.

To make decisions which affect members financially or may change members' quality of life adversely in a major way a ballot of the estate is necessary, for moderate changes a meeting must have at least 30 members present. For other decisions 10 is enough.

43. QUORUM

General Principals

A Discrete Services

Definition: Discrete Services are those where a discrete section of the estate use and pay for that service (e.g. Car Park, Warden Service).

Only those who pay for the service have a vote on issues regarding that service, unless the issue has Category 2 or 3 consequences for the estate as a whole.

B Chargeable Services

On matters of chargeable services (e.g. service charge): One vote per household

C Quorums needed for issues, by Categories of impact.

Category 1:

Issues that cause no significant lasting change in the quality of life of residents or services on the estate and have minimal financial impact.

A simple quorum of 10 residents at a public meeting may vote.

Examples:

Social and Cultural events

Dates of meetings

Minor maintenance issues (e.g. TV reception)

Category 2:

- i) Issues, not in category 3, that may cause change in the quality of life of residents, services on the estate and moderate financial impact.
- ii) AGM & changes to the Associations' constitution.

A simple quorum of 30 residents at a public meeting may vote, or in the case of "discrete services", at least 30% of those affected.

Examples:

Proposals for changes in office opening hours

Proposals for changes in car parking arrangements

Proposals for requests to the local authorities for issues of moderate change (Police, City of London)

Proposals for Interim changes in service delivery (e.g. change of emphasis in caretakers duties)

Proposals for Restrictions on use of areas (e.g. banning cycles use in areas of the estate)

Category 3:

Major investment issues and issues which may have long term financial consequences

A ballot paper to be distributed to all households (one per household), or in the case of “discrete services”, all those households affected.

Examples:

Agreement of significant changes to the yearly service charge

Major capital projects (e.g. security doors, double glazing etc)

Planning permission issues that affect the whole estate

Whether charges for items will be “discrete” or “common”

Proposals for requests to the local authorities for issues of major change (Police, City of London)

VOTING

44. Any member may make a proposal. In order for it to be voted on by other members it must be seconded or supported by someone else.

45. Only members present at the meeting may vote.

46. Before voting any member may propose an amendment, which must also be seconded.

47. No member shall exercise more than one vote.

48. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

49. 10 Working days prior to the meeting a notice will be displayed on the official Association notice board. and will include the date, time and place of the Meeting

50. Notice of all Association meetings will be sent to each member’s home address and will include the date, time and place of the Meeting

51. Notice of meetings will also be displayed in public areas on the estate.

52. All official meetings will keep records in the form of minutes. The Minutes Secretary shall produce records of all meetings and make these available to members on request.

DISSOLUTION:

53. If a majority of members present and voting decides at a General Meeting to dissolve the Association then notice must be given to all members of the Association, with at least 21 clear days notice, and stating the motion, of a Special Meeting at which the resolution must be passed by a two thirds majority of those present and voting.
54. Such a resolution may give instructions as to the disposal of any assets held by or in the name of the Association, provided that, if any property remains after the satisfaction of debts and liabilities, such property shall be given or transferred to such other institutions which have objectives similar to those of this Association and which will benefit GP tenants and residents. Recognition Grant or other grants money from GP must be repaid to GP on dissolution of the Association.
55. If due to lack of interest, the Association is no longer able to function according to its Constitution, the remaining Committee Members will pass all assets to GP on the condition that, if and when Residents of the Aldgate Estate subsequently elect a new Committee to represent their views in accordance with the aims of this Constitution, the assets will be returned to the Committee.

Appendix I

Use of External Help, Expertise or Volunteers

The association will be empowered to use external human resources to help meet its aims and objectives.

The association may define person specifications and job descriptions for various posts.

The Association may manage and utilise external expertise in the following ways:

- a) Accepting placement or secondment of staff from Voluntary sector bodies, Public Sector bodies or Businesses operating a Corporate Social Responsibility policy
- b) Accepting Volunteers arriving via a recognised agency (such as a local Council for Voluntary Service)
- c) Staff employed on the Associations' behalf by an appropriate agency, e.g. Voluntary sector body, Public Sector body or Business operating a Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

ACCEPTANCE:

This Constitution was adopted at The Inaugural General Meeting of the Aldgate Estate Residents' Association, 23rd March 2010

Signed and Dated by the elected members of the Volunteers Committee:

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Aldgate Estate Residents Association believes in equal opportunities. We want to make sure that everyone is fully involved, whatever their race, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, illness, age, dependants, class, religious belief, sexual orientation, political persuasion, or financial situation. All members of our community can, if given the opportunity, make a positive contribution to it and we will welcome and encourage these contributions.

We believe that any form of discrimination is wrong and we will not tolerate harassment. We believe that such behaviour is counter productive and harmful, not only to the Association, but to our community. Where discrimination or harassment is brought to our attention, we will offer our support to the victim and act in accordance with their wishes.

We will actively encourage all residents to participate in our activities, ensuring no one is looked upon less favourably than another. We will take up training opportunities to make sure we understand the issues and have positive ways to encourage wider involvement.

ACCEPTANCE:

This Equalities And Diversity Statement was adopted at The Inaugural General Meeting of the Aldgate Estate Residents' Association, 23rd March 2010

Signed and Dated by the elected members of the Volunteers Committee: