

Appendix 1: CODE OF CONDUCT

WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT?

A commonsense list of guidelines describing the ways Tenants/Residents are expected to carry out their duties as Members of the Committee.

WHY HAVE ONE?

Outlines how Members are expected to behave, not only in Meetings, but also in other situations when they might be representing their community. It can also be a useful tool when holding Open or General Meetings to which all Tenants, Residents or the General Public are invited to attend.

DO THEY NEED TO BE FORMAL?

Not necessarily, as long as they have been agreed by a majority of those present in order that they can be enforced if necessary, e.g. “ground rules” agreed at a Public Meeting:

- no cross talking;
- keep to time and stick to Agenda;
- be open;
- listen to others;
- stay relevant – keep to the point;
- respect others views; and
- no abusive or racist language.

If the Group has a written Constitution; a written Code of Conduct should be agreed along with the Constitution. The Constitution should also make reference to the Code of Conduct, e.g. “All Members shall agree to abide by the Group’s Code of Conduct and failure to do so will result in the Members being asked to resign”.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR

The aim of the Code is to promote the standard of behaviour expected of SBTO Committee Members and that expected of Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) associated with SBTO. The Code will ensure:

- that all Members, whether SBTO Committee members or Committee Members of an RTO, conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that of a professional person;
- that one Member does not gain unfair advantage either over another Committee Member or over another Tenant; and
- accepting membership of the SBTO Committee or an RTO implies that the Member agrees to abide by this Code of Conduct. New Members should be given a copy of this Code at their first Meeting and asked to familiarise themselves with it. All Members of SBTO and RTO’s will be expected to signify their agreement. This will be kept on file at SBHA.

Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation Constitution

GENERAL

- All Committee Members and visitors are to be treated with respect.
- Committee Members will not attend or hold Meetings in the name of the Committee without approval from the Committee.
- No Committee Member shall issue correspondence or public statements in the name of the Committee without Committee approval.
- Committee Members must respect confidentiality of others at all times.
- No Committee Member will record electronically any part of the Meeting without prior consent of all present.
- Committee Members attending Meetings on behalf of the Committee must represent the interests of the Committee and report back to the Committee.
- No Committee Member shall use their position on the Committee to gain more advantageous treatment than that received by other Tenants.
- ***No Committee Member will conduct themselves in any way which could bring SBTO or SBHA into disrepute or cause fear or alarm to SBTO Tenant members, SBTO Committee members, SBHA Team members, contractors and Board of Management, Customer Board and Committee Sub Group members. This includes while using personal social media and online.***

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Members should at all times observe the following accepted practice during Meetings:

- the Chair should welcome Members and others to all Meetings;
- the Chair should avoid getting involved in debates at Meetings, their main task is to chair the Meeting;
- speakers should go through the Chair and keep to the subject being discussed;
- only one Member should speak at a time and there should be no cross talking;
- Meetings should start at the stated time and abide by the Agenda;
- late arrivals should enter quietly and not disrupt the Meeting;
- mobile phones should be switched off during the Meeting;
- at the discretion of the Chair, a five-minute time out can be called for if things are getting heated;
- at the discretion of the Office Bearers, a time limit should be placed on Agenda items;
- jargon should be avoided, but if used, a full explanation given; and
- each Member is responsible for ensuring that they are prepared for the Meeting by reading all relevant papers and bringing them to the Meeting.

CONSTITUTION

All Members should familiarise themselves with the Constitution of the Group to ensure that they continue to meet the aims and objectives.

DISCRIMINATION

No Member will discriminate on any ground against any other Member of SBHA/SBTO, Group and the Public. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Individual Members:

- should disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any Group they represent, that they consider may affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion;
- must not expect to receive more or less favourable treatment by SBHA team members because of their membership of the Group; and
- must use the normal procedures for reporting repairs, complaints, etc.;

GIFTS

Individual Members of SBTO and RTO's should not accept gifts (material goods, hospitality etc.) which may be offered due to their position on the Committee.

However, if such gifts are accepted, they should be declared and Members should recognise that accepting gifts in these circumstances may lead to a conflict of interest, which should be declared.

SBTO can award gifts up to the value of £100 (SBTO have the right to review this at any time).

CONFIDENTIALITY

Members should respect all individual Tenants/Residents, SBHA and SBTO confidentiality, whether present or not, and refrain from mentioning specific individual cases which may cause embarrassment or identification of an individual.

Any information or items shared with the Landlord that is of confidential nature must not be disclosed to anyone else apart from Members of the Group in order to allow the business of the Meeting to take place.

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

Individual Members may be affiliated to/or be Members of a Political Party, but they may not represent a Political Party in their role as a Member of the Group.

BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT

During Meetings, if a Committee Member or Member of the Public does not abide by the Code of Conduct, the Chair will warn that if they break the Code again, they may be asked to leave the Meeting.

The Chair may give the Member of the Committee or Member of the Public two further warnings (a maximum of three warnings in any one Meeting, and/or consecutive Meetings).

If the Committee Member or Member of the Public continues to ignore the Code, then the Chair will ask the Meeting to vote on whether the Member should be asked to leave.

In breach of conduct by an RTO Committee or Member which may bring the SBTO into disrepute or which is seriously out of line with SBTO practice the Committee of SBTO will consider the matter and will inform the RTO/Member in writing that their conduct is not acceptable.

Frequent or serious breaches by RTO's may result in funding being withdrawn and deregistration of the Group in accordance with SBHA's Procedure, Registration of Tenant Organisations.

If a member of SBTO brings the SBTO into disrepute or causes fear and alarm to others this can be raised by any SBTO member, SBHA team member, contractor member and Committee/Board members whether they are personally involved or not.

The issue will be investigated and discussed by SBTO Chair and a senior team member of SBHA, as well as the Member in question. It is appreciated that SBHA may be aware of facts that they cannot share with SBTO. In such cases, SBTO will accept SBHA's view. If it is considered a genuine concern the member will be advised jointly in writing by SBHA and SBTO that they cannot become or continue to participate in SBTO activities for a specified period, or in serious circumstances they will be required to stand down from the Committee.

There will be no appeal against this. At the end of the period (if appropriate), the individual can apply in writing to the SBTO Chair to enable them to participate in SBTO activities. This will be discussed with the SBHA senior team member by the SBTO Chair and their joint decision provided in writing. To protect those reporting their concerns and fears no details will be discussed with the individual being restricted from SBTO activities.

I have read the Code of Conduct and I agreed to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Name:

Signed:

RTO Group:

Date:

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