

## **1. SCOPE**

This document defines the organisation of the Chase Tenants and Residents Federation (CTRF) and describes the procedures by which it shall pursue its objectives in consultation with Cannock Chase Council (CCC).

## **2. ORGANISATION**

The CTRF was inaugurated by a meeting at the Cardinal Griffin School, Cannock, on Wednesday 22 June 1995. It's role is to unite tenants and\ or residents groups throughout the Chase District and provide assistance and representation on common issues.

### **2.1 OFFICERS (Appendix A)**

The officers are elected at the A.G.M. in accordance with the CTRF constitution and will remain in office until the next A.G.M. or a Special Meeting. The Officers shall be responsible for governing the affairs of CTRF and deciding the implementing its policies in accordance with the wishes of the member groups. They shall also ensure that the aims and objectives of the organisations set out in the constitution, are actively pursued.

The Officers shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

#### **2.1.a. Chairperson.**

The chairperson shall normally take the chair at CTRF meetings except where, under the CTRF tenant participation policy, other affiliated members have been invited to do so. The Chairperson shall be expected to be familiar with all CTRF procedures and conduct meetings accordingly.

#### **2.1.b. Vice Chairperson**

The Vice chairperson will consult with the Secretary on all CTRF matters and jointly decide which matters shall be referred to the Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson shall also assist the Chairperson by sharing the workload and substituting where necessary.

The Chairperson and or Vice\ Chairperson shall also represent CTRF at official functions and shall be the main ambassadors for CTRF. Together they shall be responsible for ensuring that all groups, and their CTRF representatives, are aware of CTRF procedures and comply with them at all times. The Chairperson and \ or Vice Chairperson shall be the voice of CTRF unless by prior arrangement through pre-meetings, by declaring an open discussion or by acknowledging group members request for views comments.

#### **2.1.c Secretary.**

The Secretary shall take minutes of all CTRF Meetings and shall be the initial point of contact for any group requiring advice and\ or services from CTRF. The Secretary shall also be responsible for seeing that all groups are informed of salient information regarding CTRF business and that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are kept up to date with all correspondence.

**2.1.d. Treasurer.**

The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping proper account of CTRF funds and operating the bank account. At all times the treasurer shall maintain a “petty cash” float no less than £50 sterling. All expenses claims submitted must be approved by the Chairperson. The Chairperson shall also authorise all visits to outside bodies and\ or functions. The officers of CTRF shall not be denied the opportunity to express their personal views but shall ensure these are not allowed to take precedence over the democratic process of open debate.

**2.2 Main Committee.**

The Main Committee are elected at the Annual General Meeting and are comprised of two representatives from each affiliated group in accordance with the conditions laid out in the Constitution.

They shall be responsible for carrying out the business of CTRF in pursuance of the aims and objectives as set out in the constitution.

**2.3. Sub-committees.**

The implementation of CTRF policies will be facilitated by subcommittees set up for addressing particular issues common to the Chase District and pertinent to the objectives of CTRF. It is one of the aims of CTRF that every affiliated group shall have a representative on at least one subcommittee.

Chairpersons for all subcommittees shall be appointed by the Officers and subcommittee members shall be selected from groups by the Officers in association with the appointed chairperson.

Any decisions made by subcommittees, which require a CTRF ruling, shall be presented to the Secretary for ratification by the CTRF Officers or Main Committee.

The subcommittee chairperson shall be fully aware of CTRF procedures and shall ensure all meetings are conducted accordingly all times. As chairperson of a subcommittee, they shall be allowed to express their personal point of view but must at all times observe the wishes of the subcommittee in the spirit of the democratic process.

The subcommittee chairperson may appoint a member to make notes or take minutes, as appropriate, and ensure a copy is sent to the CTRF Secretary.

The Officers of CTRF shall have the option of being ex-officio members of all subcommittees. With the approval of the subcommittee chairperson such an ex-officio member(s) shall attend any or all subcommittee meetings taking an observatory role only.

If an issue related CTRF policy is raised at such a meeting, the subcommittee chairperson may pass temporary ‘Chair’ status to the ex-officio member.

The subcommittees currently in operation are:-

- \* Energy Conservation Act..Appendix?
- \* Training Process .....Appendix?
- \* New Groups.....Appendix?

- \* Youth Groups .....Appendix?
- \* CCT Sub-Committee .....Appendix?
- \* Tenancy Conditions.....Appendix?
- \* Housing Bill.....Appendix?
- \* Rent Differential.....Appendix?
- \* Smokeless Fuel .....Appendix?

### **3. GENERAL TERMS**

The CTRF is an umbrella organisation which encompasses all affiliated tenants and/or residents associations in the Chase District. CTRF through its information dissemination network will endeavour to consult with affiliated groups on common issues throughout the district. Non-affiliated groups recognised by CCC will be advised of any housing issues affecting their particular community.

CTRF will set up and maintain a register of all groups, affiliated or not, for mailing and advisory purposes.

CTRF recognises that the day to day running of all groups shall be in accordance with each group's own constitution. CTRF shall only become involved with a group in an advisory capacity upon request from that group except under the circumstances laid out in Para 4.1. "Group Consultation" below. This gives all groups freedom to choose the level of their involvement with CTRF on any issues whether local or common.

CTRF shall hold no less than four General Meetings per year plus an Annual General Meeting. The CTRF Committee shall meet no less than six times per year and the Officers no less than four.

Point of contact for all affiliated groups shall be in order as follows;

- a) in the first instance the Secretary shall be contacted.
- b) in consultation with the Secretary and Vice Chairperson, the Chairperson may, at their discretion, be contacted.

#### **Points of Order**

All subcommittee chairpersons will be expected to be fully familiar with CTRF procedures and to conduct meetings accordingly. The 'Chair shall also be responsible for ensuring these points of order are adhered to and shall be the voice of the subcommittee unless by prior arrangement. The 'Chair shall be free to express his/her own personal views but must at all times respect the democratic process of open debate.

Subcommittee members shall acknowledge and respect the status of their Chairperson at all times. All CTRF representatives being in the presence of CCC Officers or elected members shall similarly acknowledge and respect their title and status.

#### **4. PROCEDURES.**

##### **4.1. GROUP CONSULTATION**

###### **4.1.a. Aims & Objectives**

To involve all tenants in addressing common issues, throughout the Chase district, with regards to all housing and environmental service delivered. To advise all 7,500 tenants, where necessary, through “Hometalk” or the local press, in consultation with CCC, of public meetings requiring tenant input on any common issues.

###### **4.1.b. Method**

It is the objective of the CTRF to pursue group consultation on an ongoing basis. This shall be achieved by keeping groups informed of developments through the CTRF information dissemination network and responding to enquiries from groups.

###### **4.1.b.i Communication**

The CTRF Secretary is the focal point for all contact by affiliated groups.

Contact with groups will be maintained through the quarterly “CTRF NEWS” which will be used to keep groups informed of such things as public meeting, training sessions, conferences, Federation successes, social events and involvement in working parties. The CTRF Officers will also seek to establish an arrangement for conveying information through the “Hometalk”.

It is intended that a pigeon hole service may be provided at the Tenants Resource Centre when it is established later this year, for mail from both CTRF and CCC for groups to collect on a weekly basis after being advised by telephone. If deemed necessary because of content, CTRF shall forward all mail. Until this facility can be established or if it proves to be not possible the CTRF Secretary is responsible for such distribution and for keeping a register of what information is sent and to whom it is sent.

The Officers are committed to visiting, on request, one to three groups per quarter with a view to ensuring all affiliated groups receive at least one visit per year. A register of groups and their interaction with CTRF will be kept as part of the group involvement monitoring process.

Meeting will also provide a forum for exchange of information. The CTRF Officers shall call not less than six meetings of the Main Committee per year. In addition at least four General Meetings open to all group members will be held per year. The Officers shall meet as deemed necessary.

Attendance of meetings by groups is completely at their own discretion. CTRF shall not seek to force groups to attend as it is up to each individual group to decide on their level of involvement, but any group consistently failing to attend meetings will prompt a courtesy call.

#### **4.1.b.ii Information**

Additional to issues that are currently the subject of working parties, it is envisaged that issues may arise in a number of ways.

Any group or individual can, at a General or Committee meeting, bring an issue to attention of the Meeting or alternatively write to the Officers. The Officers shall then decide whether this is an issue that must be tackled locally by the group or an issue that the Federation should address and whether it is currently able to do so.

The group will be advised accordingly and if necessary the CTRF Secretary shall contact CCC either in writing specifying what information is requested, or if deemed appropriate by raising it at a Housing Liaison Group meeting.

From time to time, issues may come to CTRF attention through the media, the grapevine or other informal channels. Where they feel the issue may be important the Officers shall write to CCC for clarification or raise the matter at the Housing Liaison Group.

Information may also be received by the Officers directly from the Council. This may include issues of a statutory nature or other initiatives where the Council are seeking consultation. It will be for the CTRF Officers to decide whether such information is of general interest to all groups, whether it is relevant only to administration or to a specific subcommittee addressing a particular issue, and in the case of requests for comment, whether it is an issue upon which the Federation has resources to provide consultation within its current infrastructure.

#### **4.1.b.iii Consultation**

The officers will be responsible for deciding whether it is appropriate for information to be sent to groups in its raw form or whether it requires some clarification. This may be done via a special or public meeting as befits the circumstances.

It is the Secretary who is responsible for distribution of all written material to groups, including where there is a need for comment from groups on proposals put forward by working parties or any other issues that the Council have requested comment on. This will be sent to all affiliated groups as appropriate, with a covering letter indicating the time after which a response is requested.

The Secretary shall keep a record of any such material and how it has been despatched in the group consultation register. Such records shall be deemed satisfactory evidence of dispatch. Where a response is required the date of receipt of such response shall also be entered in the register.

#### **4.1.b.iv Response**

All responses shall be addressed back to the CTRF Secretary and passed on to the Officers or the relevant subcommittee as appropriate. Comments shall be passed on to the Council via working parties, by post or by raising the issues as an agenda item for the Housing Liaison Group.

All groups are requested, as a matter of courtesy, to forward a copy of the minutes of any meetings held where discussions of consultation issues have taken place. This

will enable the interchange of information between groups having similar issues at a local level.

**4.1.c. General**

Any individual groups making written comments under consultation will be notified in writing by the CTRF Secretary of the inclusion or rejection of their comments.

A “Tenants Information Pack” will be available to all affiliated groups. It will include guidelines on setting up a group, committee role, negotiating skills and other aspects of running a group successfully.

**4.2. HOUSING LIAISON GROUP**

**4.2.a Aims & Objectives**

To provide a forum for debating housing policy issues common to the district in order to improve housing standards wherever possible.

**4.2.b Method**

The CTRF Housing Liaison Group Committee will be comprised of three Officers or their substitutes/nominees plus one appointed group representative. This group will meet with CCC representatives in accordance with the Housing Liaison Group terms of reference.

**4.2.b.i. Appointment**

Nominations for the position of appointed group representative must be submitted in writing to the CTRF Secretary, prior to the AGM, for consideration and selection by the meeting, in accordance with CTRF AGM procedure. Should the position become vacant for any reason a representative may be appointed at a special, committee or general meeting.

The appointed representative will be expected to conduct him/herself in accordance with the CTRF procedures and within the spirit of the CTRF constitution, at all times.

**4.2.b.ii Meeting**

The CTRF Housing Liaison Group Committee will attend liaison group pre-meetings as and when necessary but not less than four times a year. The committee will meet with the CCC appointed members on a quarterly basis. Other meetings may be called by either side if this is deemed necessary.

**4.2.b.iii. Quorum**

The quorum for Housing Liaison Group Meetings shall be a minimum of four being comprised of two representatives each from CTRF and CCC.

### **4.3. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

#### **4.3.a. Aims & Objectives**

To provide the vehicle for anyone having an internal grievance to have their grievance aired and resolved if at all possible. This procedure shall apply where anyone has a grievance against a CTRF Main Committee member or affiliated group member but is not intended for resolving inter-group conflict or other grievances with outside bodies other than written or oral complaints from an outside body against a CTRF Main Committee member or affiliated group member.

#### **4.3.b Method**

Anyone with an internal grievance shall, in the first instance, formalise the grievance by putting it in writing to an Officer. The details shall be entered into a register of grievances, to be maintained by the Secretary. The chairperson shall then send a written acknowledgement to the complainant and, if applicable, a copy shall be forwarded to the person against whom the complaint has been made, giving them the right to reply.

The complainant will then be given the choice whether to have a private interview or attend an appeal committee.

##### **4.3.b.i. Private Interview**

The private interview, at both parties choice of acceptance, shall be between an Officer of the complainant's own choice, along with their chosen representative, and the person against whom the complaint has been made, and their representatives, if applicable.

If either party does not wish to meet with the other party in this manner the interview will be arranged so that each party represent their case separately with a view to either a joint meeting to be convened thereafter or a resolution being offered to each party separately by the investigating officers.

If the grievance is satisfied by this interview, the complainant will have 2 days to consult with their representative before the details shall be entered into the register with the complainant signing to signify acceptance of satisfaction and the Chairperson countersigning. The case shall then be closed.

##### **4.3.b.ii. Appeal committee**

If a informal hearing is preferred or if a private interview fails to resolve the issue the complainant and their representative, shall be invited, with the date, time and venue to be advised in writing, to have the grievance considered by an appeal committee. The Secretary shall attend in a impartial capacity in order to take the minutes.

The appeal committee shall consist of members from non-participating groups connected with grievance.

## CTRF

This committee to be selected by the chairperson or in the case of the grievance being against the chairperson, the Vice-chairperson will preside over the selection by random selection by group numbered discs.

The selection will be in the presence of the claimant and the respondent.

If the grievance is satisfied by the appeal committee the details shall be entered into the register.

The appeal committee's decision is final, and binding by both parties and the complainant signing to signify acceptance of satisfaction and the chairperson countersigning. Written notification of the outcome shall be sent to all relevant parties by the chairperson and the case shall then be closed.

If the complainant is not satisfied he/she have the right to have the grievance raised under Any Other Business at the next CTRF General Meeting where the Officers and affiliated groups shall decide whether a conclusion can be found there and then or whether the matter should be subject of a Special General Meeting specifically called for the purpose, for open discussion prior to a full democratic ballot.

The result of such a ballot shall be final and binding on all parties and entered into the register. All groups will be notified of the out come through the CTRF information dissemination network and the case shall then be closed.

### **4.4. NEWSLETTER**

#### **4.4.a. Aims & Objectives**

To distribute four CTRF Newsletters per year to all affiliated groups and in consultation with CCC to either incorporate a CTRF article in "Hometalk" or include a separate newsletter "Hometalk" funded by CCC.

#### **4.4.b Method**

The newsletter shall be printed on a predefined page layout and shall include news of general progress on common issues and other work carried out by CTRF on behalf of groups.

Subject to be highlighted shall include, but not be limited to;-

- Public Meetings
- Training session
- CTRF successes
- Conferences
- Social Events
- Working parties.

The newsletter shall be based on information submitted from any affiliated group wishing to highlight a particular issue, for example, group events where the group wishes to invite a CTRF wide audience. It shall be available for exchange of information on an inter-group basis such as where a groups in a distinct area wish to hold joint meetings on local issues.

#### **4.5. FUND RAISING**

##### **4.5.a. Aims & Objectives**

To enhance the image of CTRF through public awareness, fund raising events shall be staged through the year.

##### **4.5. Method**

CTRF will distribute a fund raising pack to all affiliated groups incorporating various ideas for fund-raising events.

Various events will be arranged with press coverage invited as applicable, and the CTRF newsletter and CCC's "Hometalk" used to highlight these events as appropriate.

In consultation with CCC, CTRF will invite elected members of CCC to public appearances.

#### **4.6. TRAINING**

##### **4.6.a. Aims & Objectives**

To ensure that an ongoing training programme through consultation with CCC is implemented for all groups and CTRF.

##### **4.6.b Method**

The CTRF fully supports the CCC training programme and will work towards ensuring that relevant training reaches all parties that are in need including members of CTRF committees and other recognised groups whether affiliated or not. The training programme will be carefully monitored to ensure training is received by those in need but also that time and effort is not wasted in training those who do not need it.

All training will be facilitated through discussions with the Tenant Participation Officer. If it is felt to be necessary, outside agencies may be called upon by CTRF in consultation with CCC. Ideas will be proposed for discussion at regular meetings between CTRF members and representatives of CCC.

All proposed new groups will offered training in starting up a group. There shall also be general training for all groups in the following areas.

##### **4.6.b.i Basic Skills**

- \*committee skills
- \*writing skills
- \*assertiveness and dealing with conflict
- \*how the council works

##### **4.6.b.ii General in depth**

To include deeper understanding of the following areas:-

- \*the structure of the Directorates and Departments
- \*Housing Benefit
- \*Council Committees
- \*Council Finance
- \*Advanced writing Skills
- \*Negotiation and team working skills
- \*Assertiveness/Conflict interpersonal skills

##### **4.6.iii Specialised Training**

- \*CCT Contract Monitoring
- \*Housing Bill
- \*Home Energy Conservation Act 1995

This frame work forms the basis for further consultation enabling the incorporation of training programmes for tenants on issues affecting the housing services provided by CCC

#### **4.7 NEW GROUPS**

##### **4.7.a. Aims & Objectives**

In consultation with CCC, the CTRF Officers will work to assist in the setting up of a minimum of four groups in the year.

##### **4.7.b. Method**

The CTRF will advise CCC of any approach which is made by any action group or concerned tenants. In conjunction with CCC ,CTRF representatives will prepare a flyer that can be used in consultation by both parties when first approaching tenants and residents in the district.

Following this, a public meeting will be arranged to gauge the interest and if it is substantial enough a steering committee will be formed. A convenient date will then be set to convene a second public meeting for the purpose of democratically electing a committee and formally adopting a constitution agreeable to the meeting.

On request, CTRF shall attend these meetings and assist in drawing up a constitution. The steering group shall be made aware of the training available to them and of CTRF involvement with CCC. CTRF may also convey the benefits of affiliating but shall be duty bound to make it clear that affiliation is voluntary.

#### **4.8 CCT**

##### **4.8.a Aims & Objectives**

To ensure ongoing consultation with CCC in providing a housing service in accordance with the CCT contract and the agreed monitoring process as set out in the contract.

##### **4.8.b Method**

The CTRF will ensure that on completion of the drafting of the CCT specification, the CCT liaison process will continue by agreeing with CCC on a consultation process in order to assist in contractor selection (?) and subsequently participate in a Housing Contract Monitoring process. This is to be achieved by agreed meetings with CCC representatives and the contractor or contractors representatives, at group and CTRF levels. Each individual group shall be free to choose their level of involvement in the monitoring process.

The ongoing training open to all groups will be encompassed within the Training method statement. Ongoing training will be necessary for all who choose to be involved in tender evaluation, appointment of contractor and the monitoring panel process enabling monitoring of the successful CCT contractor.

**4.9 TENANCY CONDITIONS**

**4.9.a Aims & Objectives**

To liaise with CCC on the revision of the tenancy conditions to ensure the best possible scenario is obtained for all parties.

**4.9.b Method**

The CTRF have appointed a Tenancy Conditions Sub-Committee Chairperson who will head a committee consisting of a representative from a group in each of the three areas, Rugeley, Hednesford and Cannock plus a substitute representative. The committee is to meet with the Council's sub-committee consisting of a chairperson to be the Rugeley Area Housing Manager and the Tenant Participation Officer.

In accordance with CTRF policy, the Sub-committee chairperson shall be responsible for passing information to the CTRF Secretary for dissemination back to those groups that submitted comments.