

STA MEETING 22/9/20 TO DISCUSS CODE OF CONDUCT

Present & Apologies

Apologies – Anna, Mags, Alan, Kathy, Duncan, Delia, and Alex

Present – Hugh, Philomena, Moira, Willie, Robert, Leza (Independent Tenant Participation Officer)

What are the reasons for the STA having a code of conduct?

Robert stated the code of conduct should be an understanding of where we all stand and clearly explains what is expected of everyone. It should also highlight respect for others.

Leza said especially for new people joining, a code of conduct is required to show how the meetings work and how people are expected to behave during a meeting.

Hugh highlighted it was to show procedural arrangements and heighten the expectations of others.

It was agreed that what Leza had drafted in her Code of Conduct with regards to why we have a Code of Conduct would be used in the STA code of conduct. Using the first sentence and 'removing tenant of Stirling Council' and 'replace with member of STA '

What outcomes would we like to see?

Moira highlighted that she does want a code of conduct, but she does not want it to be too formal. It should explain where people have an opportunity to speak without being shut down. There is no point in having a meeting then people do not speak up until after the meeting. People should be encouraged to speak up and participate at the meetings.

Robert added that the STA should be nurturing people to make them confident in speaking up – not everyone is going to know about Housing procedures and policies if they are just new.

Robert also highlighted that people who had additional support needs should be considered when they are unable to attend meetings. Just now the constitution states that if someone fails to attend 3 meetings without giving apologies then they are deemed to have resigned. Hugh stated that STA carry out further investigations of why they cannot attend before making any decisions and usually they do take health issues and other issues into account. So maybe the wording can be changed here.

Moira confirmed that the constitution cannot be changed out with the AGM and the current STA constitution has not been reviewed since 2016 so this does need to be looked at.

Robert's comments about 'additional needs and health reasons for non-attendance' should be noted and remembered to be considered when reviewing the STA constitution.

The STA would like to see meetings running smoothly and everyone's roles and responsibilities being clear.

Willie said he would like to see tenants being allowed to finish what they were saying before someone else speaks up or gives their argument/point of view.

What is already in the Constitution regarding Standing Orders, Confidentiality and conduct when representing the STA

Philomena said she wanted to look at the confidentiality section as visitors should not be present whilst confidential matters were being discussed. Therefore, the group agreed that they would leave any confidential matters to the end and ask any visitors to leave so they could discuss these matters.

Willie said he would like the voting to happen at the AGM and the results to be confirmed at the AGM. This can be discussed at the review of the constitution.

Moira stated that how the meetings are run is already in the constitution – and any changes could not be made until the constitution was reviewed. Again, this is something that can be reviewed whilst changing the constitution.

Outline the Code of Conduct

Hugh said he would like to rephrase the why there is a code of conduct – there to set standards in how people behave towards each other at meetings and events.

Also remove the breaches of code of conduct as this is already mentioned at the end and we do not want to put people off.

Moira said we should not have ‘when attending as a tenant of Stirling Council’ because the code of conduct is only applicable for when attending as a STA member and not as a tenant. If attending as a tenant or individual, then this would be covered by the organiser’s code of conduct.

Hugh said he thinks that there needs to be an induction introduced for new members – everyone agreed with this.

Check with other Codes of Conduct

Moira said she liked the Code of Conduct from Highland Council and we should base ours on this one but use our own wording. Take bits out and add in bits from the one that Leza had produced.

Some wording required changed and some wording could be removed completely.

Finalise wording

Remove statements 1, 2 and 3 and reword 4, 5 and 6.

Statement 8 – regarding confidentiality – this did cover Philomena’s point but thought we needed to add visitors and guest would be asked to leave the meeting or leave confidential matters to the end.

Statement 10 – remove the wording ‘confrontational and change to inappropriate or disrespectful.

Statement 7 – regarding personal calls – after discussion leave this as it is – as required, and it does state put phones on silent and leave room if need to take/ make an urgent call.

Robert stated he thought we need to add something about tenants joining digitally and how they should do this effectively. Leza suggested we refer them ‘How to get the best out of your video conference guide’ as this covers best practice – for example, looking at the screen when talking, using the mute, hands up etc.

Moira asked if we should include the need for the sentence that refers to personal gain – Philomena said we do need this, but we could refer people to the standing orders and constitution as this cover this.

With regards to the breaches – it was agreed that a warning would be given via the Chairperson and if the person still behaved badly despite the warning they would be asked to leave and if appropriate advised that membership could be removed.

The tenant/member will always have the right to appeal which would be conducted by the Executive Committee. If still not satisfied, then an appeal could be made to the whole management committee.

Hugh suggested the following wording

If a STA member or visitor fails to abide by this Code of Conduct, the Chair may warn them about their behaviour, and advise if it continues they may be asked to leave the meeting/event as applicable.

If, despite a warning, a STA member or visitor continues to breach this code, then this individual can be removed from the meeting/event and for members, their membership may be suspended or removed following a decision by the Executive Committee.

Appeals Process

If an individual is not satisfied by the decision made by the Executive Committee, then they will have the right of appeal to the whole Management Committee.

It was agreed that the first sentence [with changes outlined in the first paragraph] ‘Why do we have a code of conduct’ section will remain, and the statement of acceptance will remain and that everyone will sign this once finalised.

Leza confirmed she will draft up the minutes but due to interruptions in Teams if she has missed anything please let me know.

I will then go back and redraft a new version of the code of conduct based on today’s meeting