

SOUTHERN ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the association shall be **SOUTHERN ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY.**

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the society shall be

- To manage the site known as Southern Allotments, Wintermans Road so that it is a safe & welcoming environment and its communal services are well maintained and available for its members
- To promote the interests of allotment holders and to take joint action for the benefit of members;
- To promote the organic cultivation of vegetables and fruit on the allotment site engaging with the local community, education providers and third sector stakeholders
- To liaise with the Manchester City Council Allotments representative to ensure alignment with the governing rules and regulations set out by the aforementioned Council.

2.2 To that end the society may, among other things:

- Cooperate with any Committee set up by the government, local authorities and other bodies, to further the interest of allotment holders;
- Take whatever steps required by the local authority and agree additional steps to be taken for the good management and cultivation of the allotment gardens;
- Take steps to help protect the member plots from wilful damage, trespass and theft, where possible and provide plot holders/Associate plot holders with the opportunity to acquire adequate insurance through paid Society membership.
- To encourage learning opportunities and skill sharing, including use of scheduled events, competitions and other social events;
- Cooperate with other gardening/allotment associations and local organisations, including schools and community groups, in matters of mutual interest.

3. MEMBERS

The society shall consist of all persons in possession of a current tenancy agreement between them and the Manchester City Council for the occupation of a plot on the Southern Allotments. There shall be at least one member per plot. (See also "General Meetings" below.)

4. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Persons who are not in possession of a current tenancy agreement may become Associate Members of the Society if they:

- regularly work on a plot
- are involved in other activities of the Society

Subject to approval of a general meeting, AGM, the Committee (see below) shall determine which other activities of the society require associate membership.

5. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Every member and Associate member shall pay an annual subscription, the amount of which will be decided by a General Meeting. Subscriptions will be payable in advance **(directly) to the Southern Allotments Society Bank Account and separate from the rent (which is payable to MCC).**

6. OFFICERS

The officers shall be a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, who shall be ex-officio members of the Committee. They shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. Retiring officers shall be eligible for re-election. In the event of an officer retiring before an Annual General Meeting, the Committee shall have the power to appoint an officer. As duly elected Committee members of the Society, Officers & other Committee members act as Agents of the Council in their duties to enter upon, inspect and grade the individual site plots and communal services.

7. COMMITTEE

7.1 The affairs of the Society will be conducted by a Committee of Management of not less than 5 members.

The Committee is charged with the enforcement of the terms of the agreements between tenant and the Council and with Rules of the Society. (See General Meetings, below.) The Committee shall have the power, in appropriate cases, to revoke membership of the society and to recommend the termination of tenancies in accordance with the rules and regulations set out by Manchester City Council Allotments.

7.2 The Committee may appoint sub-Committees charged with carrying out tasks on behalf of the Committee. Any decision of a sub-Committee shall be subject to approval by the Committee.

7.3 The Committee will retire at the Annual General Meeting but will be eligible for re-election. Casual vacancies shall be filled by the Committee which may also co-opt additional members at any time. Members so appointed shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting. A quorum at Committee meetings shall be not less than one half of the membership of the Committee (rounded up where there is an odd number) plus one.

8. GENERAL MEETINGS

8.1 There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the society of which 21 days' notice in writing (whether by site sign, letter or email) shall be given to members.

8.2 The AGM shall receive reports from the officers of the society and shall have submitted to it the Society's accounts.

8.3 The AGM shall elect the Committee of the society for the coming year. The AGM shall also either elect the officers of the society for the coming year or give authority to the Committee to appoint officers from its members.

8.4 The AGM shall approve the Rules of the Society and any amendments to those Rules. The Rules of the Society shall consist of the rules of the City of Manchester Council incorporated in the agreements between tenants and the Council, any clarification of those rules as they apply to the Southern Allotment site and any additional rules agreed by the Society insofar as those rules are consistent with the City Council rules.

8.5 Voting shall be on the basis of one member one vote irrespective of the number of plots cultivated except that there shall be no more than one vote cast per plot and a member may designate a non-member to cast a vote on his or her behalf. Unless specified elsewhere in this constitution, decisions of

the AGM shall be by simple majority with the Chair having an additional, casting vote in the event of equal voting.

8.6 A Special General Meeting of the society may be called by the Committee or by any other five members or a General Meeting of which 21 days' notice in writing (whether by letter or email) shall be given to members. Ten members shall form a quorum at a Special General Meeting and in the case of equal voting the Chair shall have a casting vote.

8.7 All members are entitled to attend Annual and Special Meetings. Other persons who work plots on the Southern Allotments site may also attend. Persons who are neither members nor persons working plots may attend at the invitation of the Committee.

8.8 No party-political or sectarian discussions shall be raised or resolutions proposed at either Committee or General Meetings.

9. FUNDS

The Committee shall open and maintain, an online main bank account in the name of the Society and all monies received from any source on behalf of the Society shall be paid into such account. The Society shall open a second account in the name of the Society for the purposes of a sinking fund that will be used to fund replacement/planned maintenance or repair of large site assets not covered by Manchester City Council expenditure. Both accounts shall have at least two authorised signatories of which shall jointly be required to sign cheques and or authorise electronic bank payments above a pre-defined amount agreed by the society committee.

The committee are authorised to vote upon and to spend available account funds on the following: Site large asset repairs, planned maintenance and or replacements (identified in the Society Sinking fund), audit of the society accounts, Society member insurance, member social events, member learning events, site security, safety, accident prevention measures, site utilities, society membership of relevant allotment-related organisations that in turn, benefit all members, IT services to support hosting, design, security and development of the Society website and provision of a membership database, ancillary items provided to replenish the site toilet, cabin, BBQ or other emergency site repairs that if not remedied, will put plot holders in danger or further damage or destroy aspects of the site or its assets.

10) External Financial review

10.1 The AGM shall appoint an external Financial Reviewer who shall not be a member of the Committee and with recognised professional accreditation where appropriate.

10.2 The external Financial Reviewer shall review the Society's financial activities at the end of the Society's financial year has ended (currently 31st October each year) and provide to the committee in writing, a report that provides a reasonable assurance opinion on whether the financial statements of the Society are true and fair, or free from material misstatement.

11. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE SOCIETY

11.1 Any proposed amendments to this Constitution and to the Rules of the society shall be notified to the members at least 21 days in advance of an Annual or Special General Meeting.

11.2 Amendments to the Constitution shall be approved by at least a two thirds majority of those Society members present, where a single vote shall be registered for one plot leaseholder