



1. Name

- 1.1 The name of the organisation shall be the “Empty Homes Network”, (hereinafter called “the Network”). The model of the organisation shall be that of an Unincorporated Association.

2. Aims

- 2.1 To promote unity and understanding amongst Empty Property Practitioners.
- 2.2 To raise the status and profile of Empty Property Practitioners.
- 2.3 To promote the role of Empty Property Practitioners.
- 2.4 To promote the development of professional standards through training and dissemination of good practice.
- 2.5 To promote policies and practices which offer effective responses to the challenges presented by Empty Property.
- 2.6 To share information, skills and experience with other organisations and individuals in the furtherance of the foregoing aims.

3. Powers

- 3.1 In furtherance of these aims, but not otherwise, the Network may:
- publish and distribute relevant material
 - promote or carry out research
 - raise funds
 - arrange and promote training and conferences
 - seek to influence the actions and policies of others

4. Membership

General

4.1 The following categories of membership are recognised:

- a) Full Membership, which may be:
- Corporate Membership
 - Collective Membership
 - Individual Membership
 - Honorary Membership

b) Associate Membership

c) Student Membership

4.2 The normal criterion for any membership of the Network is that the member must bear a measure of responsibility for helping bring empty property back into residential use. Specific eligibility criteria also apply to the various categories of membership as described further below. The Executive may establish and publish separately further criteria; or agree exceptions either on an individual or general basis.

4.3 Members of the Network must subscribe to its aims.

4.4 Full Membership is subject to the payment of the appropriate fee. Membership may be lapsed or be downgraded to Associate status if fees are more than one month overdue.

4.5 Membership shall be open to all eligible individuals, regardless of nationality, political party or belief, race, disability, religious opinion or sexuality or any other personal characteristic.

4.6 The Executive may refuse the application of or terminate the membership of any individual whose membership, in the view of the Executive, would, be inconsistent with the aims of the Network, or bring the Network into disrepute, or not meet the eligibility criteria. The member or applicant concerned will be notified in writing.

4.7 An existing member affected by the exercise of powers under 4.6 may appeal in writing within 28 days. Any such appeal will be considered by the Executive which will make a final decision.

4.8 All members shall be required to confirm, on application for membership, their agreement to be bound by this Constitution.

4.9 A register of members including names and email addresses shall be maintained by the Secretary.

Corporate Membership

- 4.10 Employees, principals or partners of any local authority or other eligible organisation (“the Sponsoring Organisation”) may apply for Corporate Membership of the Network. Provided the appropriate fee is paid by the Sponsoring Organisation any number of its employees, principals or partners may become Corporate Members and may enjoy the rights of Corporate Membership (subject to any limitations set out elsewhere).
- 4.11 All Corporate Members must apply to the Network individually for their membership in the normal way and are subject to the normal obligations and requirements of membership.
- 4.12 Corporate Membership will cease in the event that the member concerned is no longer an employee, principal or partner of the Sponsoring Organisation.
- 4.13 A Sponsoring Organisation has the unconditional right to request that the Corporate Membership of one its employees shall be terminated. This shall not however prevent the individual concerned maintaining any other form of membership.

Collective Membership

- 4.14 The Executive may agree arrangements whereby a number of Sponsoring Organisations, joining as a group of at least five, may do so for a discounted fee. Corporate Members joining through such arrangements are referred to as Collective Members.

Individual Membership

- 4.15 A sole trader may apply for Individual Membership of the Network. Applications for individual membership will not normally be accepted as alternatives to Corporate Membership. This criterion would normally debar employees, partners or principals of local authorities, registered social landlords, regeneration organisations or other entities where empty property work forms a part of the normal activity of the employing organisation.

Honorary Membership

- 4.16 The Executive may bestow Honorary Membership on an individual or representatives of an organisation where that individual or organisation has made an exceptional contribution to furthering the aims of the Network. Such Honorary Members shall receive the benefits of Full Membership without being required to pay a membership fee.
- 4.17 Honorary Membership shall last for a time specified by the Executive or indefinitely, subject to the right of the Executive to withdraw Honorary Membership at its discretion at any time.
- 4.18 In the event that Honorary Membership is withdrawn, the decision of the Executive shall be final and no appeal under clause 4.7 shall be accepted.

Associate Membership

- 4.19 The Executive may make rules governing eligibility for Associate Membership. Such membership is free but brings restricted rights of participation as determined by the Executive.

Student Membership

- 4.20 Any student whose study involves a special focus on the work of empty homes practitioners may apply for Student Membership of the Network. The rights of such Students shall be determined by the Executive.

5. Voting Rights of Members

- 5.1 In all democratic processes of the Network, only Full Members may vote and one vote may be cast for each paid-up membership. Where there is more than one Full Member belonging to a single Sponsoring Organisation (see 4.10 above) only one vote may be counted.
- 5.2 If more than one vote is cast by Full Members from a single Sponsoring Organisation the votes from that Sponsoring Organisation will be totalled and the majority view will be expressed as one vote. Should votes for and against cancel one another out, then this will be recorded as a no-vote.
- 5.3 Votes may be cast by registering votes on the Network's website (if available), letter, email or facsimile sent to the Secretary or another teller appointed by the Executive. These methods of voting shall be termed "Distance Voting".
- 5.4 Members may cast votes at meetings via proxies duly appointed by them in accordance with such procedures as the Executive may specify.
- 5.5 The procedures for distance voting and for voting by proxy shall be clearly notified to the Membership.
- 5.6 Voting records will be maintained and made available to Members on request.
- 5.7 Decisions shall be made by simple majority of the votes cast unless otherwise determined and notified in advance by the Executive.

6. Power to Conduct Business Remotely

- 6.1 Any business of the Network, including the business of the Executive and of General Meetings, may at the discretion of the Executive be conducted "Remotely" using the procedures outlined below and employing the methods defined for Distance Voting (see 5.3 above).
- 6.2 Where business is conducted Remotely, the Executive must make reasonable endeavours to ensure:
- that the procedures to be used throughout, including time-scales, are clearly defined

- that at least 90% of the membership is able to participate in any debate either by automatic distribution of emails or by access to an on-line forum
- that the issues are clearly presented.

6.3 Where business is conducted Remotely, the number of individuals casting votes (or indicating they are abstaining or expressing indifference as to outcome) will be counted and will be treated as though the same number of people had attended the meeting in question to establish whether the required quorum for the meeting has been achieved. This will apply for each individual issue that is subject to a vote.

7. Contact between Members and the Executive

7.1 The business of the Network shall be conducted on the basis that all members are contactable by email and have access to any website run by the Network. It is incumbent upon members to provide a valid email address to the Executive.

8. General Meetings

8.1 A General Meeting shall be organised by the Executive or its appointed representatives.

8.2 The business of General Meetings shall be conducted in conformance with the Standard Processes for Organising Meetings specified in Section 12 of this Constitution along with any further guidelines provided by the Executive.

9. Biennial General Meeting

9.1 A General Meeting of the Network shall be held at intervals of approximately 24 months and not exceeding 28 months and not less than 20 months and shall be known as a Biennial General Meeting or "BGM" for short.

9.2 All decisions will be via majority vote unless otherwise determined in advance by the Executive Committee.

9.3 The BGM shall transact the following business:

- elect up to seven Officers to include as a minimum Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and optionally one or more Vice-Chairpersons and Assistant Secretaries)
- elect up to five Ordinary Executive Members
- such other business as may be put forward by at least 10 Full Members of the Network or by the Executive.

9.4 All previously-elected Officers and Ordinary Executive Members shall automatically stand down from the Executive on completion of the election of new Officers and Ordinary Members as described at 9.3.

9.5 An outgoing Chairperson of the Empty Homes Network shall qualify by right for the Officer role of Past Chair until such time as the role passes to the next outgoing Chairperson.

9.6 Voting at a BGM shall be subject to Section 5 above (*Voting Rights of Members*).

10. Special General Meeting

10.1 A Special General Meeting of the Network shall be organised by the Secretary:

a) at the discretion of the Chairperson

b) on written request, giving reasons for the request, to the Chairperson or Secretary from 4 Executive Members with Voting Rights (see 11.4) or from not less than 15% of the Full Members of the Network PROVIDED THAT to qualify under this clause 10.1.b the written requests should be received within a single period of two weeks.

10.2 On receipt of requests meeting the criteria laid out in 10.1, the Secretary shall organise a Special General Meeting to be held within 28 days.

10.3 The Executive shall at its sole discretion decide whether or not the business of a Special General Meeting shall be conducted Remotely.

11. Executive Committee

11.1 An Executive Committee (“the Executive”) shall be formed to ensure the Network works towards its aims and to carry out the business of the Network.

11.2 Between General Meetings, the Executive shall exercise the sovereign power of the Network except as otherwise specified in this Constitution.

11.3 The Executive shall consist of the following (“Executive Members”):

a) the elected Officers

b) the Past Chair

c) subject to 11.5, representatives nominated by or invited by the Executive from each recognised regional or area forum (“Forum”) of empty property practitioners

d) such other persons as may be agreed by majority vote of the Executive

e) up to five Ordinary Executive Members elected at General Meetings

11.4 Only Executive Members who are Full Members of the Network may vote on business coming before the Executive and shall be known as “Executive Members with Voting Rights”.

- 11.5 Depending on the size of the forum, the number of representatives eligible to attend the Executive may be one or two as determined by the Executive.
- 11.6 In the event that a Forum has not had the opportunity to nominate a representative or that representative is not available to attend a meeting the recognised Chairperson of the Forum may appoint a representative (including themselves), failing which the Executive may invite any Member of the Forum to attend as the Executive Member for that Forum. In all these cases, the individual attending the Executive will be treated as a full Executive Member.
- 11.7 In the event of an Officer leaving their position for whatever reason, the Executive may appoint a replacement pending election at the next General Meeting.
- 11.8 The Executive may delegate any of its functions to sub-committees.
- 11.9 Such sub-committees may include people who are not Executive Members but where sub-committees hold delegated powers to make decisions such decisions must be endorsed by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Members with Voting Rights on the sub-committee. Where no such majority is forthcoming, issues must be referred back to the Executive.
- 11.10 The vote cast by an Executive Member in a sub-Committee in respect of a proposal referred to the full Executive will be carried forward automatically to the full Executive unless that Executive Member chooses otherwise. In the voting record, votes in sub-Committee may thus also be recorded as votes in the full Executive.
- 11.11 The Executive may invite to attend its meetings such persons as it sees fit. Such invitees shall not exercise votes at Committee Meetings.
- 11.12 The Secretary shall maintain and provide on request a list of Forums recognised by the Executive as eligible to have representatives attending the Executive.
- 11.13 The Executive shall meet in a Face-to-face Meeting twice a year and otherwise as deemed appropriate by the Executive.
- 11.14 The quorum for votes on Executive business shall be five Executive Members with Voting Rights or three Officers.
- 11.15 Each Executive Member and Officer must abide by the terms of any Job Description that the Executive may from time to time agree. An Executive Member or Officer failing to abide by those terms may be deselected by majority vote of the Executive.
- 11.16 Minutes of Executive Meetings will be made available to Members via email or published via the internet.
- 11.17 Only Full Members of the Network may stand for election to the Executive.
- 11.18 Full Members of the Network wishing to become Executive Members of the Executive and committing to meeting the terms of any Job Description for Ordinary

Members are encouraged to come forward and shall normally be co-opted onto the Executive if the number of Ordinary Members is less than specified at clause 113.

11.19 The Members may at a General Meeting:

- a) require that any Elected Executive Member including an Officer should stand down;
- b) require that elections are held to elect a replacement for a an Elected Executive Member or to fill a vacant Officer post or to bring the number of Ordinary Elected Members up to the maximum of five.

11.20 If the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer is required to stand down then the election of a replacement shall take place as a matter of course.

12. Processes for Organising Meetings and Transacting Business

12.1 This Section 12 applies equally to General Meetings and to Executive Meetings.

12.2 Meetings may be held at a specified time and place, where those eligible to attend have the opportunity to attend in person ("Face-to-face Meeting"), or business may be conducted Remotely ("Virtual Meeting").

12.3 The following rules apply to Face-to-face Meetings:

- a) Those eligible to attend must be given at least 28 days' notice of the date, time, place and purpose of the Meeting.
- b) A draft Agenda for the meeting and any proposed resolutions must be published at least 21 days before the Meeting.
- c) Subsequent amendments to resolutions or counter-resolutions must be submitted at least 7 days before the Meeting.
- d) Nominations for elections must be invited at least 21 days before the Meeting and the period for submitting nominations must last at least 10 days.
- e) The final papers for the meeting including resolutions, agenda and nominations must be published at least 7 days before the meeting.
- f) Face-to-face Meetings may always consider and vote upon business introduced during the course of the Face-to-face Meeting.

12.4 The following rules apply to the transaction of business at Virtual Meetings (other than elections):

- a) The nature of the business of the meeting shall be notified to those eligible to participate. This may take the form of the publication of a draft resolution or of a draft agenda of business to be transacted.
- b) No other business may be transacted at the Virtual Meeting beyond that first notified but more than one Virtual Meeting may be conducted at the same time.
- c) A period of 10 days shall be allowed for the discussion of any individual resolution and for the submission of any amendments to any draft resolution or any counter-resolution.
- d) If at the end of the period specified at 12.4.(c) there remain competing or incompatible resolutions; or if in the interests of transparency the Secretary and Chairperson shall so decide then a further period of 10 days shall be allowed to discuss the business in hand.
- e) At the end of the period of discussion whether occurring under 12.4(c) or 12.4(d) a final period of 10 days shall be allowed for voting on the resolutions.

12.5 Where the Virtual Meeting is of the nature of an election:

- a) 10 days shall be allowed for the receipt of nominations
- b) 10 days shall be allowed for voting if there is contention for positions or otherwise the Secretary shall declare those nominated to be returned unopposed.

12.6 At a Virtual Meeting the number of those participating shall be calculated at the end of the meeting and used for the purpose of establishing whether a quorum was present. If it transpires that there was no quorum, then none of the business of the Virtual Meeting shall be deemed to have been validly transacted and no decisions of that Virtual Meeting shall be implemented.

12.7 The quorum for a General Meeting shall be 10% of the voting rights held (i.e. 10% of the total number of Sponsoring Organisations and Individual Members belonging to the Network).

12.8 The Members participating in a General Meeting or the Executive Members attending an Executive Meeting may by majority vote waive or alter these rules in the case of that particular meeting.

13. Finance

13.1 Membership fees and the charging basis for part-years are to be set by the Executive and are payable annually in advance.

13.2 All monies raised by or on behalf of the Network shall be used to further the aims of the Network and for no other purpose.

- 13.3 A proper record of the finances of the Network shall be kept.
- 13.4 A report of income and expenditure shall be made available to Full Members within 6 months of the end of each Financial year.

14. Alterations to the Constitution

- 14.1 Subject only to the powers delegated to the Executive under 14.2 this Constitution can only be changed by a General Meeting.
- 14.2 The Executive shall be empowered to make such changes to the Constitution as
- a) do not diminish the voting rights of Full Members and
 - b) do not adversely affect the ability of Full Members to call and participate in General Meetings and
 - c) do not limit the powers vested in General Meetings.

15. Dissolution

- 15.1 The Network may be dissolved by majority vote at a General Meeting called for that purpose. Notification must be given to members at least two months prior to the date for that meeting.
- 15.2 A quorum of 20% of the Full Members is required at the General Meeting to dissolve the Network.
- 15.3 A proposal to dissolve the Network shall take effect only if agreed by two thirds of those members voting.
- 15.4 Any assets remaining after the payment of proper debts shall be disposed of as the said meeting shall determine.

Notes on Revisions

May 2010 version

1. A number of typographical errors have been corrected.
2. More consistent use is made of capitals, with capitalisation used to indicate all defined terms.
3. Sections have been re-arranged - old Section 14 "Power to Conduct Business at a Distance" become new Section 6 "Power to Conduct Business Remotely". Other sections renumbered accordingly.
4. Membership definitions have been amended to include "Collective Membership".
5. Arrangements for conducting business Remotely have been expanded and clarified and distinguished from Face-to-face Meetings.
6. The structure, role, arrangements for voting etc associated with the Executive have been clarified, including arrangements for sub-committees.
7. Some text has been simplified or wording changed for clarification.

August 2010 version

8. The name has been changed from National Association of Empty Property Practitioners to Empty Homes Network. References to "Association" are replaced by "Network" throughout.

July 2011 version

9. Provision is made for biennial Regular General Meetings to replace Annual General Meetings
10. The Executive is given authority to change aspects of the Constitution provided the changes do not impair the democratic processes of the Network (see section 14).
11. Specific encouragement is given to people to apply to join the Executive as Ordinary Executive Members if there are fewer than five such Ordinary Members.
12. A new section 12 is added to describe more coherently and in more detail the process for organising meetings and transacting business. Various individual provision scattered around the document have been deleted and all the relevant provisions concentrated in this section.
13. The Executive is to meet twice a year instead of three times a year.

July 2012 version

14. Minor changes of wording to remove redundancy, improve clarity etc. Corrections to spelling mistakes, punctuation and other typographical errors.
15. EHN may publish "relevant material" not just "information"
16. Allow Members to be lapsed or downgraded to Associate status within one month of non-payment of subscriptions rather than 3 months; but removed requirement that this should be done in all cases.
17. Replace reference to Regular General Meeting with reference to Biennial General Meeting.
18. Make it clear that all existing Officers and elected Executive Members stand down after the election of replacements at a General Meeting.
19. Add the post of Past Chair to the list of Officers, to be filled by right by the outgoing Chair.
20. Clarify that requests for Special General Meeting must be received within a single 2-week period.
21. Increases the period of time given to organise a Special General Meeting to 28 days from 21 days.

22. Clarifies that Forum Representatives can be invited by the Executive as well as nominated by the Forum; and indicates that Forums may have 1 or 2 representatives as determined by the Executive.
23. Only Full Members can stand for election to the Executive.
24. Frequency of Executive Meetings to be determined by the Executive, not the Officers.
25. Establishes a quorum for General Meetings of 10% of the Members.
26. Establishes that a quorum at a Virtual Meeting is calculated at the end of the meeting according to the number of votes cast and clarifies that if there is no quorum then no decisions of the meeting should be implemented.
27. Gives Members the right to recall elected Executive Members and to call for the election of new Executive Members, whether to replace those recalled or otherwise.

July 2014

28. Corrections made to references to paragraph numbers in Section 12 by David Gibbens as Secretary.
29. NAEPP green changed to EHN blue in footer line.