



DDC Community Housing Grants Scheme FACT SHEET

What is an adequate constitution?

This Fact Sheet outlines what the DDC Community Housing Grants Scheme consider as the minimum requirements for a Constitution. You can use this Fact Sheet to make sure your constitution meets the criteria or to help write a new one (if you are a new group).

What is a constitution and why is it needed?

A constitution is simply the aims and rules that your group will use. It is your statement of what your group is going to do and how it is going to do it.

It should be set up properly and agreed at the first formal meeting when officers/committees are elected. It needs to be signed and dated by those present at this meeting. It should only be changed in accordance with the rules it outlines (see below for further details).

It is important because:

- It will help people understand what the group is trying to do and will prevent confusion and/or conflict and will help to ensure that your aims and activities have a clear focus (and are therefore more likely to succeed)
- It will serve as a reference, and this will help to resolve any problems that may arise regarding which activities group members should be prioritising
- Others especially potential funders should be able to see by your constitution that your group is democratic and accountable. Your constitution should provide everyone a clear procedure by which decisions are made.

How do we know our constitution is adequate?

The table on the next page sets out what the DDC Community Housing Grants Scheme would expect to see clearly covered by your constitution.

You could also use this list of headings to help you improve or write a new constitution.

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Heading	Contents	Tips
Group/Organisation Name	This should be the name of group.	Try to keep it short and relevant to what you are trying to achieve.
Group/Organisation Aims	What is your main aim?	Try and keep this focused. Aim for 2-4 bullet point sentences
Group/Organisation Membership	Who your membership is open to? What are the membership fees (free or not)? When will membership fees be agreed (Annual General Meeting?) How can someone stop being a member? What will your basic code of conduct for members be? (What kinds of behaviour will or will not be tolerated)	It is strongly recommended that this is inclusive, as you may struggle to meet the DDC Equality and Diversity requirements for grants if not.
Equal Opportunities	For example a statement that your groups will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, disability, religious or political belief, marital status or age.	As above. Without this your group will not be eligible.
Officers and Committee	How big will your management committee be? What will the roles of the Officers be? How will they be elected? How can they stand down? How can they be removed if it is not working?	Keep it simple. Don't create lots and lots of roles to fill!
Meetings, Rules & Procedures	When will you hold your Annual General Meeting? How will members be notified of the meetings? How much notice will they be given? Where will they be held? Who will set the agenda? How can a member suggest an item for discussion? How will the voting system work? What will be the quorum? What will the main business of the AGM be (Committee elections; accounts; annual summary & review of activities . . .)	AGMs usually occur no more than 15 months after the previous AGM. They should be held in a place accessible to the public and well-advertised.

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Special General Meetings	<p>Under what circumstances can these be called?</p> <p>What will be the notice period for alerting members?</p> <p>Where can they be held?</p> <p>What will be the voting system?</p> <p>What will be quorum?</p>	<p>These are in addition to any normal meetings you may have, and are not often required unless you have to deal with an emergency, but your constitution needs to show you are prepared for this eventuality.</p>
Finances	<p>What will your account be?</p> <p>How many signatories will be set up?</p> <p>Who will be responsible for regularly updating the members on the financial situation of the group?</p>	<p>A bank account in the name of the group with a minimum of 2 signatories are required for the DDC Community Housing Grants Scheme</p>
Changing the Constitution	<p>Agree what the process will be for changing the constitution as this will need to be a clear and formal process if it is to be valid.</p> <p>When can this be done?</p> <p>How many members must agree for it to be adopted?</p>	<p>Usually done only at the AGM and only using proposals that have been received in writing. Proposals should be circulated with any AGM notification & agenda to give your members time to consider them before the meeting.</p>
Dissolution	<p>How can the group agree to dissolve itself?</p> <p>When can this happen?</p> <p>Make sure this includes a declaration as to how the assets will be disposed of in a suitable way.</p>	<p>For example, "all remaining money and other assets, once outstanding debts have been paid, will be donated to a local charitable organisation. The organisation to be agreed at the meeting which agrees the dissolution."</p>
Declaration	<p>This needs to be filled in by at least 2 of the elected officers, signed and dated with their positions</p>	<p>The constitution then needs to be reviewed and agreed at each AGM.</p>

If you are still unsure about whether your constitution meets our requirements, please contact us using the contact details provided on the web page.

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