

Membership of Citizens UK Letter of Understanding

Citizens UK is the nation's largest and most diverse alliance of active citizens and leaders from local institutions who are committed to working together for the common good. We are a growing organisation. Currently, there are over 350 local institutions in dues-paying membership.

Community organising starts with the recognition that real change can only come when community- rooted organisations pool resources and learn the art of public action – building enough power to oblige the State and the Market to consider and respond to the real needs of ordinary people whilst also leading the way ourselves on the issues and good practices which are the responsibility of Civil Society.

In the last 30 years, since our Founding, Citizens UK has trained more than 7,000 community leaders in community organising and leadership techniques and built strong and permanent relationships of trust between diverse organisations. Through this training and by putting it into public action, Citizens UK has given citizens the confidence to participate in public life for the good of their institution and communities as well as to enhance the safe and peaceful governance of the UK, their nation, region, city, town and neighbourhood.

The charitable aim of Citizens UK is 'to develop the capacity of the citizens of Britain and Ireland to participate more fully in society and to strengthen their institutions and groups in the process'.

Our Vision is 'A healthy democracy with Civil Society at its heart'.

The Citizens UK Board of Trustees is elected in part from the membership and is accountable to all Members through an Annual General Meeting and Special General Meetings. The Board of Trustees holds ultimate liability and governance responsibility for the legal, financial and operational management of the charity according to the law of England and Wales. The Board is the final arbiter of disputes, membership requests and determining the strategic direction and decisions of the organisation.

Within the Charity there shall be local Chapters set up to further these objects at a more local level. Each Chapter shall have a local Leadership Group which shall consist of not less than eight and not more than 16 persons elected by local Member Institutions at a Chapter Annual Meeting. The local Leadership Group may co-opt up to three additional members. Member Institutions are the dues-paying organisations in each local area where a Chapter is active. The Trustee Board, in association with the local Leadership Groups, is responsible for the governance of Citizens UK, resources, policy and good practice. There is also a Citizens UK Council made up of five to eight delegates from each Chapter that is responsible for the external politics/actions and concerns of the organisation at UK level. This is particularly vital at General Election times or on other issues or challenges where Citizens UK's members seek a UK-wide voice.

This *Letter of Understanding* sets out what a Member Institution can expect to gain from membership of a Citizens UK Chapter and what they are expected to commit on their side. Citizens UK's Articles of Association is the primary constitution document and takes precedence over all subsidiary documents.

1. Citizens UK will provide for each local institution in membership:

1.1 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Membership of Citizens UK gives institutions access to our community leadership training. Member institutions are entitled to unlimited free places on local training and can request bespoke training delivered in their locality. Our training develops the skills and confidence of individuals to put their values and beliefs into action in an effective way in their community – helping them to change it for the better and strengthen their institution in the process. Member institutions are also able to nominate individuals for our flagship *Citizens UK National Community Leadership Training*, which is accredited as a Certificate in Community Leadership by Newman University. This consists of i) a six-day residential training course; ii) a supervised 50-hour community organising placement working on your own campaign in your institution or local area with mentoring from an experienced Citizens UK Community Organiser; and iii) an evaluation and learning day after 6, 9 or 12 months. Your local Citizens UK Chapter pays the bulk of the training, food and accommodation costs, with nominees or their organisation paying a registration fee of £200. New Member Institutions get priority access to places on Citizens UK National Community Leadership Training and we encourage them to nominate someone in their first year. Citizens UK's unique, yet universal curriculum has been developed and refined over many years and is regularly tested in action.

1.2 PARTICIPATION IN NEIGHBOURHOOD, CITY-WIDE AND UK-WIDE CAMPAIGNS

Citizens UK will never dictate to a local Chapter the 'actions' or campaigns it should pursue. Our interest is in developing leaders and their institutions through the issues and concerns that they share, including strengthening the governance of our neighbourhoods. However, Citizens UK already runs a number of significant projects and campaigns which have been voted on by the members over the years and have a UK-wide reach. Campaigns like the Living Wage are improving life for local communities in the UK and are giving the trained leaders from Member Institutions opportunities to have an impact on their area. As a learning organisation these experiences and stories can be shared. Citizens UK nationally and at Chapter level has a multi-issue agenda of challenges and campaigns chosen democratically by the Member Institutions. We are a non-partisan civic movement. As a member, your institution has at least one institutional vote at strategy meetings and local Delegates' Assemblies where decisions are taken on campaigns and actions, as well as the right to propose actions and campaigns. Citizens UK works on issues that are for the common good and cannot support partisan political campaigns, either nationally or internationally.

1.3 CONNECTIONS TO OTHER LOCAL INSTITUTIONS WITH SIMILAR VALUES

Citizens UK's unique network of local Member Institutions includes diverse faith congregations, schools, student organisations, trade union branches, health centres, diaspora groups and community associations. Citizens UK brings people together across ethnic, religious, and economic lines, and will create opportunities to build good relationships with neighbours from different backgrounds working together for the common good. CUK is also part of the only international network of similar Citizens alliances; including DICO in Germany; Medborgerne in Denmark; Hong Kong Citizens; IAF in the USA and Canada, and the Sydney and Queensland Alliances in Australia.

1.4 PROFESSIONAL CITIZENS UK COMMUNITY ORGANISERS WORKING WITH AND FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

Citizens UK's staff of community organisers are dedicated to working with, and supporting, the Member Institutions. They help them to identify and develop new leaders and organise actions to address problems affecting local people, institutions and the wider community. Organisers are available for consultations, local training, and workshops on institutional development and will review your institution's membership, role and relevance in the local community and overall mission. Citizens UK supports, recruits and employs the community organisers, and mentors and trains them through the Citizens UK Guild of Community Organisers.

2. As a member of a Citizens UK Chapter, each member institution will:

2.1 ENCOURAGE PEOPLE IN YOUR INSTITUTION TO BE ACTIVE IN THE CITIZENS UK NETWORK

Citizens UK is only as strong as the local people and institutions who participate and take action together to bring about change. Ideally each member of a Chapter includes an identified team of at least ten people who have attended Citizens UK training, and are taking action regularly alongside people from other local institutions. In order to encourage more depth in the engagement between Member Institutions and Citizens UK, each Member Institution with a turnout of at least five individuals at Delegates Assemblies will receive one vote in the internal democratic decision-making process. Member Institutions with less than five individuals will be allowed to participate in debates but not to vote. Members Institutions are expected to use their vote(s) in a considered way and to contribute to debate inside the organisation.

2.2 CONDUCT

It is expected that Member Institutions will park divisive issues at the door, so that beliefs held by other Member Institutions can be respected. Whilst acting in the name of Citizens UK no member should use their membership as a vehicle to promote views and opinions which are outside the charitable remit of Citizens UK or its core values of mutual respect, democracy, and the pursuit of the common good. We are committed to celebrating and respecting diversity and promoting tolerance and solidarity between communities. As such we require that our members engaging in Citizens UK organising work do so in the spirit of the common good. All CUK Member Institutions are required to safeguard against hatred and all forms of terrorism or support for violence and take care that their delegates speaking or participating at a CUK event honour and respect our shared values. Where advised (for example, your delegate could be viewed as representing Citizens UK) you may be asked for more information and your delegate/speaker to sign Citizens UK's Speakers' Form.

Any past or present substantial or continuing breach of this requirement by a delegate from a Member Institution, which the organisation fails to act on, will lead the relevant Leadership Group to call upon the Board of Trustees to consider the expulsion of the organisation in question. The Trustees' decision is final.

2.3 PAY DUES

Fundamental to a strong community organisation is ownership, independence, and accountability. By far the best way of achieving this is by raising membership dues. Currently Citizens UK has different levels of membership dues for institutions and also a 'dues plus' arrangement for some members that want extra time from the Organiser. The level of dues is set by the local Leadership Groups each year, who reserve the right to increase dues in line with inflation and financial pressures. Citizens UK Chapters have a policy of not taking public funding for core organising work.

2.4 HELP CITIZENS UK TO GROW MEMBERSHIP

To be an effective and authentic voice in as many neighbourhoods as possible, Citizens UK should be adding new and more diverse Member Institutions to its membership all the time. Your local knowledge and connections can help make this happen. Members should help make introductions, identify potential new members and seek to build relationships with neighbouring institutions so that they can act together on common challenges.

2.5 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF YOUR OWN WIDER COMMUNITY

Each Citizens UK member should operate within the law and the spirit of the law; to promote equal opportunities (including eliminating discrimination, non-harassment and non-victimisation); to train and develop leadership; to develop good relations with neighbouring institutions; and to act together on our members' interests and concerns.

2.6 TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WELLBEING OF THE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Each Citizens UK Member Institution should be relational in all that they do and stand out as friendly and inclusive in their neighbourhood. We are judged by what we do, not what we say. Member Institutions should feel responsible for the wellbeing of their local community by reaching out to their neighbours in pursuit of the common good. This should include moving towards being accredited as a real Living Wage employer and taking concrete action to seek the wellbeing of the neighbourhoods around the institution.

2.7 MEMBERSHIP CANCELLATION AND SUSPENSION

If an institution disagrees with the direction of the work being taken by Citizens UK it is free to cancel its membership at any time. Membership is renewed annually. Membership runs from 1st April to 31st March. If an institution joins in the middle of the year, the dues will be calculated on a monthly basis. It is important that all payments made by BACS or cheque are made within 30 days of the invoice date. Standing Order payments will need to start within 30 days of the invoice date. Failure to pay the membership fee within three months of the invoice date will result in the membership being terminated with Citizens UK.

If there are any concerns that omissions, actions or statements of a Member Institution, or an individual(s) who is part of a Member Institution, conflict with the constitution and values of Citizens UK and/or brings Citizens UK into disrepute, the Trustees, advised by the local Leadership Group, reserve the right to suspend that Member Institution for up to six months, during which a review shall take place to decide whether membership should be reinstated. The review shall be conducted by a sub-committee of Trustees who shall feed back to the full Board in order for a decision to be made. In extraordinary circumstances, Trustees, advised by the local Leadership Group, also reserve the right to remove Member Institutions from membership of a Citizens UK Chapter with immediate effect. In either case, where a Member Institution is to be removed from membership, it shall have the right to appeal the decision by making written representations to the Trustees. Such representations should be received by the Trustees within 30 days of the Member Institution receiving notice of their withdrawal. The sub-committee shall consider the appeal and then the Board will issue a final decision. (See Appendix in Management Manual for more details).

3.1 WELCOME TO CITIZENS UK

On behalf of the Trustees, Council and Membership of Citizens UK we welcome you into our growing Citizens Alliance of diverse, active and effective institutional members. We believe that our thirty year track record of developing and promoting broad based community organising across the UK speaks for itself. We are keen to learn from you, your tradition and know your concerns. We hope that by working together we can not only strengthen Civil Society and the governance of areas where we are organising but also enhance your institution's mission and vision of a better world.

Citizens UK Trustees.

Citizens UK Council

Citizens UK Guild of Organisers

MEMBERSHIP FORM

This Letter of Understanding has been read and agreed upon by members of:

Name of Institution: _____

Is this institution re-joining Citizens UK?

No

Yes

Signed (on behalf of Member Institution)

Signed (on behalf of Citizens UK)

Name

Position

Address 1

Address 2

City

Postcode

Phone

Email

Name

Position

Address 1

Address 2

City

Postcode

Phone

Email

Tom Bulman

Community Organiser

c/o Acorn House

381 Midsummer Boulevard, CMK

Milton Keynes

MK9 3HP

07962 838685

tom.bulman@citizensuk.org

Date Signed: _____

Is the billing address and details the same as the above address and details?

No

Yes

If "No", please fill in the billing address and details below:

Name

Position

Address 1

Address 2

City

Postcode

Phone

Email

DUES

Annual Dues

£

PREFERRED METHOD OF PAYMENT:

BACS

Cheque

Standing Order

DUE DATE OF PAYMENT:

Within 30 days of the invoice date if paying by BACS or Cheque

Standing Order payments should start within 30 days of the invoice date

Purchase Order Information

Is a Purchase Order (PO) required for the payment of the membership dues?

No

Yes

If "Yes", we will contact the primary leader or the person stated in the billing address to obtain the purchase order number.

Please make cheque payable to "CITIZENS UK"

Or by Standing Order to:

Bank

The Co-Operative Bank

Sort Code

08-90-01

Account Number

50359293