



What are Members?

The Members of a charity are the people (or organisations) who will be formally signed up as such. Voting members have a right to vote at a General Meeting of the Group (either AGM or EGM). The standard group constitution allows each group to define its own categories of membership and groups may have defined classes of “Voting Members” and “Non-voting Members”.

It is important that each RDA Member Group is clear who is a member and how they are appointed. It is for each group to organise its own system of membership.

Why are Members important?

The members (at a General Meeting) vote to appoint the trustees, who manage the affairs of the group. If someone disagrees with the actions of the trustees, the matter can be voted on at an EGM – but only “Voting Members” can vote.

How does someone become a Member?

The system should be defined by the group, so there is a clear process for someone to become a member. There should also be a way of recording the relevant details of a member. This should include name, address and date of birth (but could include more information). The RDA Volunteer Application Form could be used if all your volunteers are to become members.

The following points give further guidance on Membership:

1. The Standard RDA Group Constitution provides that “Membership of the Group shall be open to any individual or organisation residing in, or having connections with, the Group Area and interested in promoting the objects”.
2. It also goes on to provide that the Committee/Board “may establish different classes of membership and may set appropriate rates of subscription or levy no subscription at all”.
3. A Member of the Group will not necessarily be a Member of the Committee/Board (Trustee), but a Member of the Committee will certainly be a Member of the Group.
4. RDA UK advises groups to have two classes of Membership (Full Voting and Junior). Groups may also wish to consider having corporate non-voting members. This classification of membership would be ideal for sponsors who want to keep in touch with the group, but do not necessarily wish to attend General Meetings.
 - a. Full Voting Members should:
 - (1) Be aged 18 or over; and
 - (2) Be individuals or organisations residing in or having connections with the group area; and
 - (3) Have a real interest in furthering the Objects of the Group.

A quorum of full voting members is needed at General Meetings; the number will be detailed in your own group constitution. Therefore, do not be tempted to invite individuals, or representatives of organisations, to join the group as full voting members unless they clearly understand that they have an obligation to play a full part in the democratic process of the group by attending the group's AGM.

b. Junior Members should:

- (1) Be under the age of 18;
- (2) May be volunteers or riders/drivers;
- (3) Can attend General Meetings but cannot vote;
- (4) Be kept informed of the group's activities e.g. by a newsletter.
- (5) Could be given a badge or certificate.

RDA UK strongly encourages Junior Members who are the future of RDA.

c. Your group Board of Trustees is empowered to levy different subscriptions (or no subscription) for each classification of membership.

d. Register of Members

- (1) The Standard RDA Group Constitution provides that a group must maintain a Register of Members.
- (2) The Group Secretary should keep the register and allocate a different section for each classification of membership. The register should be fully updated with the following details:
 - (a) The full names of all members indicating their membership classification.
 - (b) Date of birth of any junior member.
 - (c) Date of birth of any full individual member, or a statement that they are aged 18 or over.
 - (d) The full name of any organisation that is a member, with at least one individual representative contact name.
 - (e) Postal addresses (with post codes) and telephone numbers of all members.
 - (f) Any other relevant information about members (e.g. whether a volunteer, a rider, a driver or an instructor).
- (3) You may keep the register in manuscript in a bound notebook; or as individual sheets in a ring binder; or on computer (you must keep back-up floppy discs and a printout).

What do we do if we don't have (or can't find) our list of members?

In this case you should take the following actions URGENTLY:

- a) Check if you have a system for defining membership – this will have been agreed at a previous Trustees Meeting (probably soon after federation in 1999, or when the group was formed, whichever is most recent) and should be shown within the minutes.
- b) If you do have a system, compile a list using these definitions.
- c) If you do not have a system, the trustees of the group should define one as soon as possible and then compile a list according to the system.
- d) If practicable, it would be a good idea to call a General Meeting to explain the system.

Practical considerations

As stated above, a quorum is needed at every General Meeting (please check your own group constitution). You therefore need to make sure that your system makes this achievable. For example, if you are a large group and have 150 volunteers, it may be difficult to achieve a quorum if you make all volunteers voting members.