

## **Membership Policy for Northern Area Community Network (NACN)**

### **1. Purpose of the Policy**

This policy outlines the criteria, responsibilities, and processes related to membership of NACN. It is intended to ensure that membership is inclusive, consistent and aligned with NACN's mission to support and strengthen grassroots community and voluntary organisations in our region.

### **2. Who Can Become a Member?**

Membership is open to organisations that meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Are non-profit-taking and operate on a voluntary or community basis.
- Are based in or primarily operate within the following areas:
  - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council
  - Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
  - Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Deliver activities or services that support community development, social inclusion, or local wellbeing.
- Are not affiliated to or acting on behalf of a political party.
- Do not engage in or promote discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
- Regional or national organisations may be considered for membership only where they have a clear, ongoing, and demonstrable presence or delivery of services within the NACN catchment area (Causeway Coast & Glens, Mid & East Antrim, or Antrim & Newtownabbey).

Such organisations must:

- Operate non-profit and in line with NACN values,
- Show evidence of active community work in the area,
- Acknowledge that NACN's priority is to support grassroots, community-led initiatives.

### **3. Membership Categories**

NACN offers a single standard membership for eligible groups. There is currently no tiered or paid membership structure.

### **4. Application Process**

- Groups complete a membership application form, confirming eligibility and agreement with NACN's values.
- NACN staff may request additional information or clarification if required.
- Applications will be reviewed and approved by NACN's team.
- NACN reserves the right to refuse membership if the criteria are not met.

## 5. Member Responsibilities

By becoming a member, organisations agree to:

- Uphold the values and ethos of NACN.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date contact information.
- Respond to NACN communications and consultations where relevant.
- Not bring NACN into disrepute through their conduct or activities.
- We ask members to use NACN resources responsibly and not to copy or distribute them outside the network without agreement. We share new ideas, approaches and resources with our members, they are designed to strengthen local groups and support innovation.

## 6. Termination or Suspension of Membership

NACN reserves the right to suspend or remove membership where:

- An organisation no longer meets the eligibility criteria.
- There is evidence of discriminatory or harmful practices.
- The organisation breaches the values or principles of NACN.

Any concerns will be raised in writing and the organisation will be given an opportunity to respond before any final decision.

## 7. Appeals Process

If NACN decides to suspend or terminate an organisation's membership, the organisation will be notified in writing and provided with the reasons for the decision. The organisation may submit a written appeal within **21 days** of receiving this notification. All appeals will be reviewed by an appeals panel made up of NACN Board representatives and staff who were not involved in the original decision. The panel will consider the information provided and may request further clarification where necessary. A final decision will be issued in writing within **28 days** of the appeal being received. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

## 8. Review and Renewal

Membership will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure records are up to date. Members may be asked to confirm their continued eligibility and commitment to the network's principles.

## **Our Values – Northern Area Community Network**

At NACN, we are committed to a vision of inclusive, community-led development. Our values guide everything we do and set the standard for our members.

### **We believe in:**

Grassroots empowerment – Supporting local people to lead change in their own communities.

Inclusivity – Welcoming and respecting all, regardless of background, identity, or ability.

Collaboration – Working together to share resources, ideas and solutions.

Integrity – Being transparent, fair and accountable in all that we do.

Respect – Valuing diversity and treating everyone with dignity and fairness.

Non-partisanship – Remaining independent from political parties and focusing on community good.

By joining NACN, members agree to uphold these values and promote them in their own work.

***This policy was adopted on 24th November 2025 and will be reviewed every two years.***