

Residents' Association Handbook

A Guide to Running Your Association



January 2007

THE BRIGHTER BOROUGH
Wandsworth

Introduction

Welcome to the first handbook designed specifically to help you to run an effective Residents' Association.

Residents' associations are vital in shaping the services the council provides to residents in Wandsworth and we think it is important that running one is made as simple as possible.

All of the sections in this handbook have been written to help you through just about any problem you may encounter and draw on the many years of experience of residents and officers in dealing with these problems.

If we have missed anything then please contact your Resident Participation Officer who will be happy to assist you through whatever problem you may have.

We haven't dealt with establishing an association as you will be able to draw on the services of your Resident Participation Officer throughout this process and they should be able to deal with any problems that may occur.

Wandsworth has a long history of involving residents in decisions that affect the way they live and this is another example of our continued support for you. We hope you find it useful.

Councillor Martin Johnson, Cabinet Member for Housing

Roy Evans, Director of Housing

Marlene Price, Vice-chairman, Borough Residents' Forum

Constitutions

This is probably the most vital piece of paper your association possesses and yet it is often the most overlooked and ignored as well. A well written constitution will give you the means to address nearly any problem you may encounter in the day to day running of the association.

It is important because:

- Without one you may find members of your association working at crossed purposes and things won't get done.
- It is a good reference point to assist you in resolving any problems that may occur from time to time.
- The council (or any other body you work with) must be satisfied that you are democratic and accountable. This means laying out clear procedures by which decisions can be made.

What is a constitution?

"A constitution is a formal document adopted by your association that states the aims and objectives of the organisation and how it will be run". (Tenant Participation Advisory Service - TPAS)¹.

The constitution will detail:

- The name of the association.
- What the association will do (aims and objectives).
- Who can be members of the association.
- Ending membership.
- Who will be on the committee (numbers and officers).
- Code of conduct (usually a reference to a separate document).
- Number of meetings per year (committee and general).
- Voting rights.
- Subscription levels.
- What the funds raised will be used for.
- Who will open the bank account.
- Who can sign cheques.
- Who will manage the accounts.
- Procedure at Annual General Meetings.
- Procedure at general meetings.
- Quorum.
- The role of the Secretary.
- Amending the constitution.
- Dissolution.

Footnote ¹ Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) - constitutions for Tenants' and Residents' Associations information sheet.

Constitutions

There is a lot to be covered in what is usually a very brief document but by including all of the overleaf, and being aware of the detail of the constitution you will ensure your association always runs smoothly.

Before you set out to draft your association's constitution, or to revise it, you should set out in your own mind what you want to achieve and ask yourself some basic questions. The constitution needs to be agreed by the members of the association and you should seek to include as many members as possible in the drafting of it. Once completed it will need to be adopted at the Inaugural General Meeting.

Attached is the council's model constitution which incorporates sections on all of the above (Appendix 1). It is your responsibility to ensure that the sections reflect the particular circumstances of your association and that members adhere to the constitution.

The role of officers

The Chairperson

A common misconception is that the Chairperson does everything. They do not, they ensure that everything gets done!

The main responsibilities for the Chairperson are:

- Ensuring that the meeting gets through all of its business in the allocated time available.
- Making sure everyone is clear what decisions have been taken.
- Ensuring that everyone knows who is going to do what tasks.
- Keeping the meeting in order - ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to be heard and stopping inappropriate interruptions and irrelevancies.
- Setting agendas in partnership with the Secretary.

It is particularly important to note that the Chairperson does not have any special powers in the committee. In fact, some committees are set up so that the Chairperson can not vote.

Chairing requires a particular skill to ensure that the resources and skills of all committee members are utilised to the full. In this way the association will be much more effective. The post of Chairperson should not be used as a platform from which the holder expounds their own views.

It can be difficult at times to keep meetings in order, given this, it is useful for everyone to sign up to a Code of Conduct when they join the committee (make it a requirement) so that everyone knows the rules and parameters.

Depending on the size of your committee it may be useful for people to “speak through the Chairperson”. What this means is that people should put their hand up when they have something to say and the chairperson controls who is able to speak. It is very important that everyone is given an opportunity. Be aware that some people, often new to the committee, find it difficult to talk at meetings and you should look to make sure they are included and make it as easy as possible for them. However, the chairperson also needs to be aware that some people have a lot to say and may need firmer control to allow time for others.

It can be helpful to ask “is there anyone who hasn’t spoken yet who would like to say something on this?” or “Mr X has spoken several times on this already so I think we should hear from...”

The role of officers

The chairperson may want to go round the committee briefly to check everyone is happy with their opportunity to speak and that the meeting is ready to make a decision. Then make sure the meeting makes a formal decision (even if it is to defer until further information is obtained) and that this is recorded.

It is very important that the chairperson does not let one person interrupt too frequently! This will delay proceedings, may lead to indecision, frustrate other members, lead to frayed tempers and to people resigning from the committee, if unchecked.

An effective Chairperson

An effective Chairperson needs to:

- Set a time limit for the meeting and make sure members know at the start when the meeting will finish - no-one likes meetings which go on for hours
- Ensure the meeting keeps moving and does not run on too much on any one subject. If it looks like doing so, check with everyone that they are happy with this and advise that it will mean that the meeting will go on longer than planned if they want to keep discussing this subject (sometimes this can be a valuable discussion that people are happy to keep on with).
- If it looks likely that the meeting will over-run suggest that some items are postponed until the next meeting.
- Be clear and concise. Vague suggestions and proposals are an invitation for an endless discussion.
- Draw the item to a close by summarising the main points, what has been decided and who is going to carry it out.
- Ensure the minute taker has time to record the decisions and who is going to carry them out.

Remember!

A Chairperson should not:

- Use their position to impose their views on the meeting.
- Talk too much themselves.
- Ignore people who want to speak.
- Allow one or two people to do all the talking, meetings should be as inclusive as possible.

Finally, there is a common misconception about the power of the chairperson outside of the committee meeting. Many organisations have something called "Chairs Action" whereby the chairperson makes certain decisions outside of the committee meeting. **Essentially the chairperson has no authority or power other than that delegated by the committee.** If you wish the chairperson to act for the association outside of the committee then this must be formally

The role of officers

delegated by the committee. This is known as a 'Standing Order' and should clearly state what the chairperson is allowed to do. This will give the chairperson the necessary power to act on behalf of the association in the areas delegated. All action taken by the chairperson must then be formally reported to the committee at their next meeting.

The Secretary

The role of Secretary is not as defined as that of chairperson and will vary from one group to another. Your association should state and set down (at the outset) what it expects the Secretary to do.

However, there are some basic tasks that can be carried out by the Secretary; these include:

- Take the minutes in meetings.
- Keep the records of past minutes and meetings.
- Set the agenda in partnership with the chairperson.
- Let the committee/members know when and where the next meeting will be held.
- Keep the membership records.
- Keep a log of all correspondence in and out.
- Send and receive letters on behalf of the association.

Minute taking

Only the main points of the discussion and who is to carry out any agreed action need to be recorded. Minutes are not meant to be a verbatim record of what was said at a meeting.

Some tips to remember are:

- Take rough notes in the meeting - they can be written up later (but don't leave it too long).
- Know everyone at the meeting and where they are from (send a sheet of paper around and ask everyone to write their name and organisation).
- Sit where you can see who is speaking.
- If it is not clear on what is being said or agreed ask for clarification (perhaps speak to the person presenting the item before the meeting for a better understanding of what is being discussed).
- Record the names of those who propose and second motions.
- Do not try to record everything but make sure there is a note of what has been proposed, who will carry it out and the completion date or deadline.

The role of officers

After the meeting ensure that members get the minutes in good time and that copies are kept of all past minutes (it can be worthwhile getting someone else who was at the meeting to check the draft before it is sent out).

Organisation

- File records, such as minutes! It is important to be able to find records easily.
- Do not let paperwork build up - it's more manageable to sort out papers regularly.
- Get a book to record correspondence received and when they were answered.
- Get a diary to record future meeting dates.
- Make a "to do" list - don't rely on your memory.

Share information

Make sure that any information received is forward to the relevant person. The Secretary often receives paperwork on behalf of the group and this must be shared. Ensure that the other committee members work closely with the Secretary.

Do not do everything!

Make sure that the workload is shared amongst other members. Do not let the secretary get overloaded, others can take the minutes or take on any one of the duties. This helps to maintain a reasonable workload and gets others more involved.

If there is too much to do raise it with the committee and see if other volunteers will assist.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer is the person who has day-to-day responsibility for the association's money and for keeping accurate financial records. However, it is the Committee who has responsibility for deciding how the money is used. This is an important distinction to remember.

It is also important to note that whilst the Treasurer has day-to-day responsibility, the committee is the body with overall responsibility for ensuring that the finances are managed properly.

The role of officers

If you are acting as Treasurer, there are a few simple rules which will assist in carrying out this role:

- Be methodical and keep clear records of money received or paid out. Do not rely on memory!
- Ensure your paperwork is accurate - do not keep scraps of paper as records, these are easily mislaid or lost.
- Record everything in and out - do not offset (i.e. if you have collected membership fees and paid for some stationery with some of these fees, record both transactions and not just the remaining sum) one against the other when entering in the accounts.
- Keep the association's money separate from your own.
- Do not keep large amounts of cash - put it in the bank.
- For petty cash, ensure that the amount held equals the figure in the cash book.
- Ensure that the bank account requires two signatures for cheques or withdrawal forms.
- Check the bank statements carefully and regularly.

When receiving money ensure that you:

- Issue a receipt. You can buy small numbered duplicate books from most newsagents/stationers. Record the total, the date, the name of the person from whom the cash is received and a description of what it is for (e.g. memberships fees). Hand over the top copy and keep your copy in the book.
- If you receive a cheque, file any accompanying paperwork and write the date and amount received.

When making payments ensure that you:

- Make payments are made by cheque - this provides a clear record of who has been paid, how much they were paid and this can be verified by bank statements.
- Always get an invoice or receipt whether you pay by cash or cheque.
- Fill out a Petty Cash voucher and ask the person receiving the money to sign for it. Staple any receipts to the voucher, number it and keep them in order.
- Write the date and number of the cheque on the bill/invoice, if you have requested the building society to raise a cheque from your account.

The role of officers

Filing systems

As previously stated you should be methodical in the way you act as treasurer, having a good filing system will assist in this function.

An effective filing system should have four files:

- **Invoices (waiting to be paid)** - these should be kept in date order as they arrive.
- **Invoices (which have been paid)** - these should be filed in date order as they are paid, and numbered so that you can easily trace them. It often helps to use file dividers and have a section for each month, so you can quickly find them at a later date.
- **Petty cash slips and receipts** - these should be kept in date order, with monthly dividers. The petty cash slips should be numbered.
- **Bank statements** - filed in date order

The cash book

You should keep separate books for your Petty Cash and your Bank/Building Society account. See Fig.1 for what a cash book should look like.

Always complete the cash book in pen - do not use a pencil!

Fig 1.

Money In					Money Out				
Date	Rec from	Ref	Total	B/F	Date	Paid To	Cheque #	Invoice #	Total
21/7/05	Council	-	£250.00	-	22/7/05	Sainsburys	3507	1	£26.57
					27/7/05	BT	3508	2	£37.92
					6/8/05	London Electric	3509	3	£43.55

The section to the left of the centre line records all payments into the bank. There are columns for the date money was paid in, where it came from and how much it was for.

The section to the right shows the payments which have been made. There are columns for the date on which the cheque was drawn, who it was made out to, the amount and cheque number. There is also a column for the invoice number. This is for your own numbering system - write the invoice number on each invoice as it is paid, as well as in the cash book. This will make it easier to check the invoices against the books. Depending on the size of your association and how many invoices are paid out, you could have additional columns for payment descriptions.

The role of officers

Using the cash book

Example.

You have received a bill for the telephone service of £55.00 then you should follow the steps below:

1. Remove the invoice from the "to be paid file".
2. Write the cheque and enter the detail in the cheque book.
3. Enter the date, who the cheque is made out to, the amount and cheque number in the correct columns.
4. Enter your own sequential invoice reference number.
5. Write a note on the invoice to say that it has been paid, initial it, write the date of payment and your own reference number.
6. File the paid invoice under the month in which it was paid in the "invoices paid" file.

It is usually a good idea to file at the same time as payments, this avoids the possibility of invoices being mislaid or lost.

Balancing the cash book

This needs to be done on a regular basis (monthly) in order to ensure that you know how much money the association has available.

To balance the cash book simply rule off the pages and cross through any blank entries (there will always be blanks either in the money in or money out columns unless you have had exactly the same number of transactions on each side) and total the columns. In the example (FIG 1.), this will give a total income of £250.00 with out-goings totalling £108.04 giving a total of £141.96 in the bank. You should carry out this exercise every month and whenever you do a bank reconciliation.

Remember to carry forward the remaining balance in the cash book as this is effectively the first "income" in the next period.

Bank reconciliation

This is simply checking the entries in your cash book against your bank statements. The bank balance should be the same as the balance showing in your cash book on the same date. If it is, then there is nothing to do. If it is not the same, then you will need to check the entries on the bank statement against those in the cash book to locate where the difference has occurred. It may be that a cheque has not been presented or cleared yet or there is an error which should be corrected. If you find any errors make a note of them and amend the books/statement. If there is an error on the bank statement then this should be followed up with the bank immediately.

The role of officers

Remember: It is your cash book that tells you how much money is currently available not the bank statement.

The form in Appendix 2 may assist in carrying out a reconciliation.

Reports to committee

Your report should be a summary of the current financial position of the association taken from the cash book. It may be either written or verbal depending on the size of your association and the requirements of the committee.

You should always be in a position to state how much money the association has available and whilst this may be sufficient for small associations it is best to report:

- Money available in bank/building society.
- Amount received and paid out in the year so far.
- Expected income and bills due over the next month or quarter.

For an example of a written report see Appendix 3.

Report to the AGM

This must be a written report available to all members of the association and should show:

- Total income broken down into sections (grants, membership fees etc)
- Total expenditure again broken down in sections (stationery, electricity etc.)
- How much money is left and where is it held. You should name the bank(s) used by the association and state how much is in each account. You should also state how much is held in petty cash, including the date.

For an example of a report to an AGM see Appendix 4.

Auditing of accounts

In Wandsworth we do not insist that the association's accounts are audited professionally, but you should get a person who is independent from your association to check/audit your accounts. We encourage associations to look at each others accounts to provide this degree of independence.

The reasons why you would want to do this are:

- Provides an itemised written account to present to the AGM.
- Helps and reassures new treasurers.
- Identifies and deals with any problems with the accounts.
- Demonstrates to your members that the finances are in order.

Meetings

How long, how often?

This is for your association to decide but we would suggest that you do not meet too frequently unless there is an absolute necessity or for a special event. Your constitution will dictate the minimum number of meetings that you must hold per year. If this proves to be inadequate for your association then use the correct procedure in the constitution to amend the minimum amount.

When deciding whether or not to hold a meeting consider the following:

- Do you need the meeting!
- Do you need to hold it now?
- What subject(s) will be discussed?
- Who needs to be invited?

If it is necessary to hold a meeting, set a convenient time and date for members to attend. It is worth checking with committee members, on at least an annual basis, which times/dates are most convenient.

Set a fixed meeting duration (e.g. 1½ hours). People lose interest in meeting that last too long. This will need an effective chairperson to ensure that any business is conducted within the allotted time, which means that residents and other interested groups will be much happier to attend.

Always start on time!

Why have an agenda?

It gives you a structure around which to base the meeting. It is useful because:

- It helps you plan the meeting.
- It helps you to get through the business of the meeting efficiently.
- It helps those members attending follow what is going on.
- It gives members the opportunity to think about the meeting in advance.

Generally it is the chairperson's job to draft the agenda, however the Secretary often collaborates and it can be worthwhile to get input from other committee members in advance by using one of the following methods:

- A suggestion sheet on a noticeboard.
- At the current meeting ask for items for the next meeting.
- When you send out invitations to the meeting ask for items for the agenda.

Meetings

What should be on the agenda? *Figure 2* gives an example of what should be included. In addition, you could set a time limit for each item to ensure that discussions do not take too long, although you may want to be flexible on this if the discussion is particularly useful.

Do not put too much on an agenda. This will lead to either very long meetings or too brief item discussions, both of which will be unsatisfactory for participants.

Fig.2 Model Agenda

Anywhere R.A
(Date, Time & Place of meeting)
Agenda
1. Welcome & introductions
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of last meeting
4. Matters arising
5. Item 1
6. Item 2
7. Any other business
8. Date, time & place of next meeting

Remember:

- Most of the agenda will be items you need to discuss. Make each important matter a separate item.
- Look through the minutes of your last meeting. Are there things to report back on? Are there items to be discussed again?
- Have you received information you need to tell others about?
- Look at the minutes of the last meeting and agree their accuracy (or correct any discrepancies) and get the chairperson to sign them.

Any other business should not be used to discuss the majority of the business. It should be for important issues/information that have come up since the agendas were circulated. Meeting items should have been included on the main agenda or should be put back to the next meeting when it can be included formally.

Try and end on a positive note.

If you have anyone specially invited to the meeting, it is usually customary for them to be placed at the top of the agenda so that they can leave once their matter has been dealt with.

Meetings

Meetings, for some people are seen as a waste of time and they may leave a meeting dissatisfied. In order to avoid this, conduct a quick check with each member to ensure that they are happy with the meeting so far. Leaving it to the end will be too late. In this way, if members have concerns about the meeting they can be addressed immediately.

Always end the meeting on time and agree the next date and time of the meeting.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

This is the residents' association yearly general meeting and subject to the same rules regarding quorum levels, notice given to call the meeting etc. Where it differs, however, is that there are specific items of business that must be conducted at the meeting.

These are usually defined in your constitution and include the passing of the annual accounts, appointment of an auditor (sometimes) and electing the committee. Some constitutions state that the officers (chairperson, secretary, treasurer etc) are elected directly by members at the AGM while others state that it is the committee that are elected and at the first subsequent committee meeting they elect the officers. See figure 3.

Fig.3 Model Agenda

Anywhere R.A. AGM
(Date, Time & Place of meeting)
Agenda
Welcome & introductions
Apologies
Minutes of last AGM
Matters arising
Chairperson's report
Treasurer's report
Election of committee/officers
Any other business (of which due notice has been received)
- REVIEW
- PLAN
- SET OBJECTIVES
- IMPLEMENT

It is also an opportunity for the committee to inform members of the residents' association's achievements.

Meetings

Whatever the constitution states there are some basic requirements that you must meet:

- Ensure you give your members sufficient notice of the meeting.
- How long does the constitution require?
- Where should notification be sent?
- Can it be posted or must it be delivered by hand?
- Do you only need to notify members or all estate residents?
- How can members add items to the agenda and have you allowed them sufficient time?

If nominations are required for the committee/officers make sure these are invited in the correct format and that they are received at the correct address and within the specified time frame. Depending on what your constitution states, this will be in advance of the meeting or may allow you to accept nominations in the meeting.

The notice calling the AGM should state the date, time and venue for the meeting, all business to be discussed and also how the elections will be conducted.

Electing the committee

How will this be done?

Plan in advance how you want this to be undertaken. If your constitution requires nominations to be submitted in advance of the meeting, you will have a clear idea of how many people are interested and whether there is sufficient space on the committee to allow them all to join, or if you will need to have a vote.

The downside is that most people forget to submit nominations in advance of the AGM. It is useful to give the opportunity to those attending the AGM to join the committee.

If, however, you need to have a vote or think you will, you should decide in advance how this will be conducted. Will it be sufficient for a show of hands or will you require a 'secret ballot'. If the latter, make sure you have voting forms drawn up (allowing extra space for nominations at the meeting), a "ballot box" and someone ready to count the votes - perhaps schedule this for a break for refreshments.

Consider who is going to count the votes, it helps to have a neutral or independent vote counter to avoid problems or concerns over any election results.

Meetings

One way to ensure that there is continuity from year to year is to elect committee members for a period of three years. One third of the committee members would then be required to stand down each year to seek re-election (if they want). For the first two years draw lots amongst the committee (all in the first year, the longest serving two-thirds in the second) to see who has to stand down and seek re-election.

You may also want to insert a clause in the constitution stating that after three elections a committee member must stand down for a year (and not be co-opted back on). This will ensure that there is an opportunity for all members to stand and sit on the association's committee.

Take time to plan

All this may seem very involved and time consuming and it is easy to skip some bits and not bother with others and, for the majority of the time there will not be a problem. However, if a problem does arise, you must be able to demonstrate that you have followed the constitution.

Therefore you should put a little extra time aside each year in advance of the AGM to plan what needs to be done, and who needs to do it. This will ensure that you are able to demonstrate that you have conducted the business of the association properly.

Prepare a brief plan, sharing out the workload, which will ensure a smooth meeting that deals with AGM business quickly and efficiently. There is truth in the old maxim "if you fail to plan, plan to fail"!

Code of conduct

To ensure your group functions as well as it can it is advisable to put in place a set of ground rules to which all members of the association, particularly the committee, have to abide.

Although this is touched upon in the constitution, a formal Code of Conduct is usually a separate document. A template is attached see Appendix 6. There is also another guide from Tenant Participation Advisory Services (TPAS) which is available from your Resident Participation Officer.

Such codes can operate on different levels of formality. You may wish to adopt some rules for meetings such as:

- No cross talking.
- Listen to the speaker.
- Stick to the agenda.
- No abusive or racist language.
- No personal comments.

Or you may want to make them more formal along the lines of standing orders. Whatever route you choose it is important that you tailor them to suit your association and ensure that they cover the areas that are important to you.

Make sure that your members are aware of the clause in your constitution that refers to the Code of Conduct and the fact that any breach could lead to their expulsion from the association.

Fundraising

Many groups wish to undertake fundraising to support the community activities that they organise and it can be a great way to involve local businesses, build links in the community and to raise the profile of your association in your estate or area. The organisation that you approach for funding will largely fall into one of two categories depending on how much money you are seeking.

- 1) Local businesses and agencies
- 2) Major/larger funding bodies and agencies

The most basic question to ask yourselves before embarking on a fundraising event is “Why do we need to raise money?” Closely followed by “How much do we need to raise?”. In asking yourself why, remember to take into account the views of the membership and not just one or two people.

The answers to these questions will help you decide on the most appropriate way to approach the issue of raising funds.

However, before you start trying to raise money for an event, undertake some basic research into very practical issues which may cause the whole idea to fail if not considered at the outset.

- Do you need any permission/or a licence for your event?
- If so, contact the relevant body to gauge how likely you are to obtain the permission/licence.
- Does your constitution allow you to undertake this type of event/project.

If you are looking to support a small local event then businesses (large and small) would be the most appropriate source. If however, you are looking for longer term or ongoing funding for events or projects, then you will need to consider larger funding bodies, such as the National Lottery. The latter will require a much more detailed analysis of your proposals and you should be prepared to put in much more effort to obtain the required funding - of course if you are successful then the rewards are that much greater.

This chapter will look at raising funds from both sources and give you a few ideas to ensure that your applications are successful.

When you are seeking to raise funds from outside agencies or businesses, there are a number of important steps to follow:

- Plan what you need funding for.
- Show how you will use the funding.
- Choose appropriate funders.
- Persuade them to fund your project.
- Write a letter or complete an application form.
- Know what to do if you are successful.

Fundraising

Fundraising from local businesses

Local businesses and shops are more likely to give to people they know, so make use of all your local connections. If a member of your association is employed by a local business their recommendation will be valuable - do not be shy about using any connection you have!

Similarly, if you are approaching local shops go in person, especially if they know you but do not forget to take a letter on your associations headed paper to back up your request.

Often businesses like to support organisations in their local area, although some will concentrate on national charities and have established donation programmes, so have a look through your local businesses telephone directory and pick out businesses in your area.

When you apply:

- Write on your association headed paper.
- Keep the letter to one side of A4 if possible, but make sure you specify what you want the money for and who will benefit.
- Ensure you credit the donors in any publicity you produce.
- Always say thank you afterwards and provide some information on how the event went (include any local press cuttings or photos of the day).

See Appendix 6 for a sample letter to write to local businesses. This can be adapted according to your needs.

Fundraising applications

Funders will usually have a set of established criteria against which they will judge your application for funds so make sure you know what they are before you apply! For example Marks and Spencer plc state that they will only fund applications for programmes concerned with improving employability - not much use for a 'Fun Day'. Many funders will not donate towards capital costs (i.e. building or equipment purchase).

They will expect you to be clear about why you need the money, how you will use it and how it matches their criteria.

If you are hoping to apply to an external funding body remember to plan ahead! There are often quite tight deadlines to be met and the funding application forms are often quite complex. You will need to have worked through your proposal carefully and be clear about your aims. You may need to start planning at least 6-9 months before you require the grant.

Fundraising

You should consider:

- What do we need the money for?

Funding bodies will normally only provide funds for specific projects rather than giving money for general running costs. Therefore you should look to produce a brief written outline of the project for potential funders. This is worth doing whatever the project and whatever type of fundraising the association pursues. The written outline should always flow from aims agreed with the member.

For example:

Your residents' association wishes to establish an after school club for children age 8-15 on your estate based in the association's rooms. Education and social services have identified a number of improvements required to the facilities and you need funds to implement these. Parents will provide the supervision on a rotational basis but you also want to employ a paid worker to facilitate the club and ensure that there is an educational content to the service.

You may wish to consider:

- Staff wage costs.
- Building adaptation costs.
- Equipment purchase.
- External advice.
- Legal costs (employment law etc).
- What is permissible under the terms of the associations clubroom lease (licences/landlords permission etc).
- Why is your project important?

Funders are more likely to donate funds, where there are clear aims and have a clear need that they wish to fulfil. For example, do not aim to set up an after school club if there are already sufficient numbers in the area. They will focus on outputs, they are interested in who will benefit from your project (the children) rather than the needs of your association.

Fundraising

To show this you can make use of:

- Census data or other statistics held by the council/health authority etc. to show the need exists.
- Any surveys that have been carried out in the area, which show that people will use the facilities you seek to provide.
- Most of all explain how the project will impact on the lives of those who use it - not that “the kids need somewhere to go” more about how it would improve their educational achievement, self-confidence, skills, employability etc.

How will we use the money to achieve our aims?

You will need to demonstrate that you have the skills and ability in your association to make the project work. For example, have you done something like this before (or managed a project successfully), which will demonstrate that the money will achieve the projects aims? Funders want to be associated with success, so the more you can assure them that yours will succeed, the more likely you are to get the money.

It may help if you formulate a plan to show:

- How you will run the project (e.g. paid staff or volunteers, where will these be drawn from, who will manage them, who will attend, where from, advertising etc?).
- Why have you chosen the methods supplied? Have they worked elsewhere?
- Publicity - how will you advertise of your project?
- What do you need to buy before running the project? How much will you need and what will it cost?
- Use of staff - who will do what, detail what your volunteers/paid staff will be doing and what hours they will work.
- Where will you stage/hold your project/event? Have you covered issues around accessibility, insurance etc?
- Are you allowed to do this under the aims of your association’s constitution? This is often overlooked but can result in successful challenges from members.

Fundraising

Budgets

When you apply for a grant you will almost certainly be asked about the cost of the project, so it is worth considering your possible income and budget position.

Do not just look at costs but consider potential income e.g. if you plan to sell refreshments include this income in the budget.

Be as accurate as possible. If you need to buy or hire equipment get quotes so you can justify your figures. Guessing or estimating may be inaccurate and may lead to applying for insufficient funds.

Do not underestimate what the project will cost! Funders usually have a pretty accurate idea of costs. By putting down an unrealistically low figure it is going to make them think that you do not understand the full cost implications and will create a poor impression. You need to have enough funding to carry out the project. If you do not apply for enough then the project will not complete. Funders may query the delay or failure to complete.

- Do not over estimate either! Do not go for the expensive option if there is a more practical option available.
- Remember to include all the “hidden” extras such as maintenance, insurance, travel etc.
- Are these costs for capital (one-off purchases) or revenue (on-going costs such as rent, salaries etc).

Monitoring and evaluation

For many this is the boring part after the excitement of developing and carrying out a project but it is, nonetheless, a very important part of the overall programme. You will also need to state on your application form how you will know if your project is successful - so think about monitoring the project in the planning stage.

Monitoring is simply the process by which you record information about the project - numbers attending, feedback from those attending etc.

Evaluating means looking at the information you need to collect in order to assess how well the aims of the project are met.

For example, you may have set up an adult literacy project and have monitored the numbers of attendees and possibly the exam results achieved at the end of the course. The evaluation would look at whether or not the attendees were from the group you had targeted and possibly the increase in employability of those who had attended. This could be undertaken by means of a survey or by talking to those who have attended the course.

Fundraising

Other information

In order to establish that you are a competent association with sufficient legal standing you will also be expected to provide most of the following:

- Details of your bank account.
- A copy of your constitution and your legal status (i.e. Limited Company, Industrial & Provident Society etc).
- A copy of your most recent accounts.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Risk assessment for the project (health & safety).
- Details of what you have achieved as an association so far and how long you have been operating.
- Membership numbers and details of volunteers, (without giving personal information).
- Details of other funding received (it is a fact that attracting one source of funding often leads to other funders donating money).
- Evidence of your competence both financial and managerial.

Looking at this checklist you may reasonably assume that you will not get funding if you are a new association aiming to run a major project unless you can show that individuals have skills and experience in previous associations or organisations.

Who will fund?

There are far too many funding organisations to be listed in this document and their aims and objectives vary.

To find suitable organisations try these websites of:

- The Directory of Social Change: www.dsc.org.uk (which provides details of over 7,000 organisations nationally who provide funding for charitable and voluntary projects).
- Government Funding: www.governmentfunding.org.uk (which has details of all grants available from government departments).
- www.access-funds.co.uk
- Community Information Bureau: www.cibfunding.org.uk
- www.grantsnet.co.uk
- www.institute-of-funding.org.uk

Fundraising

There are a host of organisations with funding but you must make sure you apply to the right group or groups. You can apply to more than one funder for different parts of the projects. Many funders will want to see “matched funding” - this is where their contribution is matched by the resident’s association’s own funds or resources. If you choose to approach more than one funder, be careful that the project will meet the demands of all those you seek contributions from or there may be conflict within the project as to the aims and objectives.

Why will we get funding instead of others?

Whilst there are thousands of funders, there are similarly thousands of applications made to them each year. What will make your application stand out from the others?

You will need to show that you have the belief and confidence in your project to make it succeed. You need to have a detailed plan showing how you will make the project work and you may also need a fair bit of stamina to get through the process!

You can achieve the funding you desire by practising what you want to say to each other. Take a critical view of the project - would you give money to it? If possible talk to the funders about your project before applying. A brief conversation may save the time and effort of making a full application if you do not meet their aims or their funds have been exhausted for the year. Equally, it might provide information which helps you target your application.

Applying

- Do not send a standard letter - it is likely to be binned!
- Use headed paper and tailor your application to meet the aims of the funder.
- Keep it short and focused on who you are, what your project is and why it is worth funding (two sides of A4 is sufficient).
- Do not use jargon or abbreviations - you may know what it means but the funder will not.
- Keep it factual - back up any statements you make.
- Give contact details for someone in your association who can be contacted for further information.

Fundraising

Some funders will tell you exactly what they want. If they do then supply what is asked for - do not send everything you have. The funder will not have time to read through all your documents. If they do not request specific information then supply a brief statement of your project - this should include:

- The name of the project.
- Something about your association - who you are, what you are aiming to do etc.
- A brief summary of your aims and objectives.
- A description of the project - what it is, how you will run it, who it is aimed at and what benefits it will provide.
- Details of how you will monitor it to ensure you meet your stated aims.
- Who else is involved - other groups or funders.

Also enclose:

- A budget summary
- Your most recent accounts
- A copy of your constitution

Finally, if you are successful in getting funding, always write and say thank you, it's good manners and you might want to apply again in the future.

Monitoring

If you are successful then you will need to start monitoring the project straight away, your resident participation officer can assist you with setting up an appropriate system if the funders do not have a specific requirement.

Getting people involved

There are several reasons for people not wanting to get involved. One is due to a feeling of disenfranchisement, that residents' views are not listened to and the general feeling of apathy that this engenders. The second is lack of communication from the residents' association itself. Thirdly, your estate maybe well managed and residents may not feel the need to get involved as there are no "issues" around which they can unite.

There are no easy remedies for either of these issues. However there are things that you can do to change people's views and make it easier for them to become involved and thereby address these issues. Over time these will make a difference to the way in which your association is perceived by residents and lead to a self-sustaining organisation.

Success!

Nothing generates interest more than success, so set yourself some small but achievable goals that will make a difference to your block/estate.

In Wandsworth we will listen to you and are interested to learn of any concerns and/or difficulties being experienced by residents. If we can we will help you address these issues. Initially, we would suggest that you address the smaller issues that can be resolved quickly and easily but that are high on the list of residents' concerns.

The Small Improvement Grant available through Wandsworth housing department may be the ideal way of funding small works on your estate.

Getting people involved

Publicity

In order to keep people involved and aware of what you are doing you need to make sure regular newsletters or bulletins are delivered to all residents. These do not need be too long but make them as eye-catching as possible (see the section on producing newsletters).

There are lots of basic software packages which will enable you to produce quite professional looking documents quickly and cheaply. Your resident participation officer will be able to assist in both the production and the design of newsletters (how you have to produce the written copy!). Use colour and try to establish a recognisable format and stick to it. You may also wish to develop a logo for your association that you can include on all letterheads and newsletters.

Removing barriers

A criticism that is often levelled at residents' associations is that they only represent one section of the community. This may be because they are seen as coming from only one community. By broadening the membership, particularly that of the committee, you can begin to overcome this barrier and become more inclusive.

There are a number of steps you can take to ensure you are attracting members from all sections of the community:

- Hold your meetings at a time and place convenient to all residents.
- If you can not find a convenient time consider holding alternate meetings at different times.
- Accessibility - is your chosen meeting place accessible to all? This does not just concern physical disabilities and sensory impairment but also moral and religious concerns (pubs are not a good idea).
- Offer to accompany people to and from meetings - many people do not feel comfortable attending evening meetings after dark.
- Can you offer crèche facilities to encourage parents with small children to attend?
- Finally advertise the facilities you are able to offer - if people are not aware they will not be able to use them!

Monitoring the ethnicity of your members is also a good start. A brief questionnaire distributed to all members when they renew their yearly membership should produce the information you need. Your resident participation officer will then be able to let you know if this matches the profile for the area you represent.

Getting people involved

Personal contact

One of the most effective ways to involve people is through face to face contact. It is too easy to throw away or ignore a newsletter or leaflet put through the door. Face to face contact is harder to ignore and easier to establish communication with residents. It also enables you to:

- Canvass views more effectively
- Explain issues in a more accessible way
- Improve the “community spirit” on the estate
- Make people feel that their views matter and that you are serious about wanting to get them involved
- When calling on people always have information ready that you can leave with residents. A brief piece about the aims of the group, contact details and activities that you are involved in is appropriate
- If you do not get a reply make a note and arrange to call back later

If you plan to go from door to door to speak to people, please make sure that you take appropriate measures to protect your personal safety.

- Never go alone,
- Don't go into the flat/house of anyone you do not know (a good excuse is always the number of people you have to call on)
- Make sure someone knows where you are going and what time you will be back

You should also make a note of anyone who appears to be hostile or have aggressive pets to share with others of your group who may canvass in the future.

Existing groups

Are there any existing voluntary groups in your area that you can link into? What about play groups, lunch clubs etc. It may be worth speaking to those who attend the groups and find out who attends and give out information about your association.

The links you establish with these groups may also be useful in terms of local campaigning as you may share common concerns.

Getting people involved

Keeping in touch

Having established contact with others and signed them up as new members, remember to keep in touch. Make sure everyone gets invited to meetings. Do not restrict meetings to members as you may be able to sign up new people on the night (although make sure you know who is entitled to vote).

Maybe hold some social events to enable people to get to know each other informally. It's surprising how quickly bonds can be established, which can benefit your association.

Don't scare people off by giving them too much to do too soon. Give everyone (or as many as possible) small tasks to do.

Most importantly, maintain personal contact. This is far more effective than issuing newsletters or calling meetings. Make sure you tell people what you have achieved and what you are trying to do. Many people join groups, such as residents' associations, because they want to achieve something, so try to assist with as far as possible.

Campaigns

This is often a vital part of the work of residents' associations - campaigns to achieve change or improvement to your estates and surrounding areas to benefit everyone's living environment.

There are a number of stages to any successful campaign which you should always keep in mind. Firstly, make sure that there is enough support from within the community. You'll need to make sure that your neighbours and others in the area support your proposed campaign.

Then decide what are the key areas of the campaign. This may seem obvious but you'd be surprised how many campaigns flounder because the key participants all have slightly different ideas as to what the campaign is about. It may help to write down exactly what the campaign is about once you have decided upon it.

The best way to decide upon what to campaign about and ensure there is sufficient support is through good communication. You may have knowledge of concerns or incidents in your community - your own home - do your neighbours have similar views? This can be established through regular meetings of your group and the wider community - perhaps a questionnaire in the area. Depending on the nature of the campaign you may also want to enlist the support of other groups, schools and local businesses.

Make your campaign SWEAT!

- **Specific** - make sure your campaign is clear and does not have a vague aim such as "improvements".
- **Winnable** - choose targets you can achieve, if they are impossible this will lead to disenchantment and lose credibility.
- **Easy to understand** - use plain English in your communications and make it easy to follow.
- **Agreed democratically** within your group. Let everyone have their say and contribute - it will make the group stronger.
- **Targeted at the right people** - find out who has the power to address your concerns and approach them.

Linked into this is determining the size of the problem. If, for example, you wish to tackle a concern with the maintenance of your estate, then ask who else is concerned. How widespread does it appear to be - is it just one or two outstanding items or a more serious concern?

Campaigns

To find this out you could:

- Call a meeting and ask people.
- Distribute a leaflet.
- Organise a petition.
- Carry out a survey.
- Call in some expert help.
- Check out sources of information such as libraries, community centres etc.

Remember, communication is a two-way thing. Not only will you need information from other people but you must keep them informed as to what you are doing or their support may ebb away. You will also need to support others to enable them to support you. By this we mean that not everyone who supports your aims will come forward and you may have to seek them out.

There may be reasons for residents not becoming involved:

- They may be housebound.
- Language difficulties.
- Hearing or visual impairment.
- May find it difficult to initiate contact.
- May find it difficult to attend meetings.

If you feel this is the case then plan to address the problems, but initially you will need to make contact to find out the difficulties (back to door-knocking).

Each of the methods for gathering support and information has its upsides and downsides.

A public meeting is good to gauge levels of support but not very useful for gathering detailed information. It is particularly useful later on if you want to demonstrate to someone else (e.g. the council etc.) how much support your campaign has.

Door knocking, enables you to get to know people and their concerns. However, always make sure that you carry some form of identification or, initially only door knock on those properties where you are known (this is OK at first but make sure you expand your contacts to cover the whole community). Remember to take a pen and paper!

Campaigns

Leaflets, - if well produced these can give out information and publicise your campaign but it will not give you any information. Make sure it looks good, uses pictures if possible and is to the point. They also cost money to produce.

Petitions are useful to publicise a campaign and demonstrate support but on their own are not enough to achieve change. What they can do however, is provide you with an opportunity to talk to people and make useful contacts.

Surveys are excellent ways to provide and receive information but may take a little longer. Therefore make sure that it is focused on what information you want to receive. Remember, someone is going to have to collate all the information received into a easily read and digested format.

Expert advice is great for receiving specialised information but they will not know everything - your knowledge of the local situation is just as important. Although there are some groups which will provide expert advice free, you may have to pay money to receive it.

Libraries etc. are very useful places to research information and also have a range of other facilities - I.T., photocopying and room hire for meetings.

Internet is a useful tool to research information, but because of the amount of information available it is not always easy to get what you need.

Other Residents' Associations can be a valuable means of getting help, advice and assistance. The TPAS website has a discussion area open to all.
(www.tpas.org.uk)

Campaigns

Organising your campaign

To run a successful campaign you need to make it attractive, persuasive and factually accurate. A briefing sheet may be of use to everyone and can be distributed to councillors, officers etc., outlining your position. It should contain supporting facts and information to back your proposal. Alongside the briefing sheet it is useful to draw up an action plan showing what needs to be done, who in your group will do what, by when and how. It can also be used to show your concerns and how you are going to pursue them, e.g. a petition, direct action, meetings etc.

If you do produce a briefing sheet for distribution, do not make it too long. Two sides of A4 paper with at least 1.5 lines spacing and a minimum font size of 14 point is sufficient.

- Organise your information clearly and guide the reader through with a series of headings.
- It should set out your proposal/concern, what you would like to achieve and by what date. Make it specific.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Avoid jargon and technical terms (what are the HRA and the DCLG's?)*
- Check your briefing sheet for accuracy - get someone else to read through the document.
- Do not be too detailed - the details can be provided at a later stage.
- Always include a contact name, number and address - if someone wants to support you they need to know who to contact.

Make sure you send it to everyone who might be or become involved.

* HRA – Housing Revenue Account.
DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government.

Campaigns

Pursuing your concerns

When you submit your request/demand make sure you get a response indicating who will respond and by when. If you are told something will be done, ask what. With this information work out how you will take the matter forward and build it into your action plan. The response you receive will also affect your plans, so incorporate any new points.

If you were given a date for a response and do not receive it, make sure you follow it up.

If the reply is unsatisfactory or you receive no response at all then you need to work out the best way forward. Do you move to a more senior person in the organisation? If your action so far has failed then you may need to re-evaluate what you have done. Did you include enough information? Did you demonstrate enough support? Look at the reasons for a lack of response and address them. You may want to involve someone with specific expert knowledge at this point.

If however, you were successful and someone has agreed to take action, then make sure they do. Ask to be kept up to date on the progress of the action. If writing a letter fails then telephone or make an appointment to see the person. If you are unhappy with the lack of response then you may want to use the complaints procedure.

All large organisations have a complaints procedure in place. Generally, the customer services department will be able to assist with complaints in the first instance. If you are not satisfied with the complaint procedure (having followed each step) then there are further independent agencies such as the Ombudsman or industry watchdogs which you can approach.

Remember campaigns can take time. Most campaigns do not achieve overnight success or change. Many organisations such as the council are large and must follow set procedures such as democratic processes and committees. For major changes, organisations are required to look at the wider impact of change. Even relatively small matters can take time due to the legal requirements they have to abide by, particularly where there is any financial cost involved.

Running events

For many associations running an event can provide valuable financial support and/or an informal way to meet a wider range of residents. However, in order to get them right, achieve what you want to achieve and, most importantly, for everyone to remain safe, you need to follow certain steps.

The 5 Ws checklist

Whatever type of event you are planning to hold this checklist holds true. The answers may differ depending on the type of event but you still need to answer these five questions.

1. **Why** do you want to hold the event?
2. **Who** is doing it? Who are your partners in the event? Who are you seeking to influence (if anyone)? Who is going to come? Who is going to do the work?
3. **What** kind of event do you want to run? Outdoor? Indoor? Meeting?
4. **Where** do you want to do it (venue, site)?
5. **When** do you want to do it? Is time critical? Is there an external agenda driving the event? Is it weather dependent? Have you got the time? Do you have the funds? What's it going to cost and where is this money going to come from?

Key planning stages

Whatever event you aim to run planning is vital to its success.

For an event such as a fete or fun day you will probably need to start planning 4-6 months in advance of the day. Before you start anything however check your constitution! Does the event you want to hold fit in with the aims of your association? Or does it impose restrictions on the type of thing you can do, then you must abide by what the constitution says - even if it means you can not hold the type of event you want.

Stage 1:

- Set up a project group to organise the event and identify roles and responsibilities.
- Agree what you want to do. Prepare an outline plan and draft budget.
- Agree rough estimates of the time commitment required from each member.
- Agree rough timeline and proposed date for the event.
- Look to identify people who can be called upon to help the group.

Running events

Stage 2:

- Work out a detailed timeline for the event showing the sequence of events and tasks to be completed.
- Prepare venue checklist - what you require from the venue.
- Check out possible sites for the event (this may be limited by the necessity of having it locally).
- Finalise date.
- If you want anyone to speak at the event or open it, check their availability and agree topic with them.
- Check with emergency services - you may need to notify them, (better still if it's a Fun Day or similar invite them along).
- Draft publicity flyers and posters.
- Decide how you are going to publicise the event.
- Decide on equipment required and research possible suppliers.
- Will people need a ticket to attend - how will these be distributed or sold?
- Do you need any type of licence, insurance or permission?
- Are there any by-laws you need to comply with? (eg. something prohibiting the use of your location for this type of event).

Stage 3:

- Work out stalls and seek volunteers to run them.
- Prepare letters for volunteers detailing what will be required of them.
- Will you offer a crèche facility? (check with social services for rules governing this).
- Catering facilities - will there be any? If so check with environmental services for any regulations that will apply.
- Is seating required?
- Access arrangements - will everyone who wants to attend be able to?
- Signage. Are signs required for stalls etc?
- First Aid - will there be a first aid kit and a trained first aider present?
- In an emergency how will people be able to get out. Are volunteers aware of emergency exits?
- Toilet facilities, where are they?
- Prepare a risk assessment and health & safety checklist for the event.

Running events

Stage 4

- Prepare any press release advertising the event
- Book a photographer (for events organised by RA's the council may be able to provide a photographer for publication in Homelife)
- Prepare a schedule of what needs to be done on the day (ensure you have a second copy)
- Brief all volunteers (in writing?) on what they need to do.
- Confirm details of the event with police, council etc.
- Ensure appropriate licences are in place.
- If you have a speaker make sure you have a copy of their speech and check its content.

Stage 5 (on the day):

- Get there early
- Take duplicates of all lists, signs etc.
- Run through the event with the volunteers to make sure everyone knows what they are doing.
- Make sure first aid is addressed and everyone is aware of emergency procedures.
- Storage of cash - do you have somewhere safe?
- Photography - get permission from any adult before taking their picture at the event. Particularly ensure you get the permission of any parent or guardian if you wish to take pictures of children.

Stage 6 (after the event):

- Run through the day with the organising committee.
- What went right?
- What could be improved upon?
- Write down all the feedback for next time.

Running events

Considerations

Licences - there are all types of licences which may be required but the most common ones are:

- **Public Entertainment Licence** - available from the council, this licence is required if you are planning to hold an event of any kind where there will be dancing, music, film/theatre or sporting event.
- **Alcohol Licence** - under the Licensing Act 2003 responsibility for issuing licences for alcohol is now the responsibility of the council and there have been changes to the way in which applications for small occasional events are dealt with. The 'Occasional Use licence' has been replaced with the 'Temporary Event Notice'. The following is an excerpt from the councils' Statement of Licensing Policy adopted in December 2004.²

13 Temporary Event Notices.

13.1 Licences will not be required where the scale of the event is below 500 people and lasts for no longer than 96 hours at a time. However, advance notice must be given to Wandsworth Council and to the Metropolitan Police, using the Temporary Event Notice procedure.

13.2 Holders of a personal licence will be able to hold up to 50 temporary events in any 12-month period at premises that are not licensed. Non-personal licence holders can (subject to other conditions) hold up to 5 temporary events in any 12-month period. Individual premises may be used for temporary events on a maximum of 12 occasions in any 12-month period but there must be a minimum of at least 24 hours between events at the same premises. In any other circumstance, a full premises licence or club premises certificate will be required for the period of the event involved.

13.3 Although the statutory procedure requires only ten working days notice of a temporary event, the Council considers that a longer period is generally necessary to enable any risk of harm to the licensing objectives to be considered and reduced. Organisers of temporary events are therefore urged to give at least 2 months notice of an event. This will allow time for the Council to check that the request is within the legislative provisions, for the Metropolitan Police to investigate whether there are any issues relating to crime and disorder in plenty of time for the organisers to advertise the event with confidence. In addition, advance notification will allow officers the time to assist organisers to plan their event safely and without an unreasonable impact on the environment.

Footnote ² Wandsworth Council - Statement of Licensing Policy 2004

Running events

Further advice on this subject can be obtained from the environmental services division of the council on (020) 8871 6160 or www.wandsworth.gov.uk

- **Film/Theatre** - the following extract is from the council's Statement of Licensing Policy and assistance can be obtained from the environmental services division. Details can also be found on the council's website at www.wandsworth.gov.uk³

14 Live music, dance and theatre.

14.1 In its role implementing local authority cultural strategies, the Authority recognises the need to encourage and promote all types of entertainment including live music, dance and theatre for the wider cultural benefit of communities, particularly for children.

14.2 When considering applications for such events and the imposition of conditions on licences or certificates, the Council will carefully balance the community benefit with the necessity for promoting the licensing objectives and will, as far as possible, avoid measures that deter live music, dancing and theatre for example by imposing indirect costs of a disproportionate nature.

14.3 Consideration will be given to the particular characteristics of any event, including the type, scale and duration of the proposed entertainment, especially where limited disturbance only may be caused to a neighbourhood if the event was to proceed. The views of vocal minorities will not be allowed to predominate over the general interests of the community.

14.4 The Council will monitor the impact of licensing on regulated entertainment in the Borough, particularly on live music and dancing. If there is any evidence that licensing requirements deter such activities then consideration will be given on how to prevent this from happening, including, if necessary, changes to this policy.

- **Music** - you will need to obtain a licence from the Performing Rights Society (telephone 0800 068 48 28). www.prs.co.uk
- **Gambling/Gaming** - you will need to consider these laws if you are planning to hold a raffle or lottery (a raffle is considered to be a type of lottery, a game of chance in which buying a ticket qualifies you for a chance of winning a prize). For either you must check if you need to register it. Generally, you will not, but check the following rules to see which applies to your event.

Footnote ³ Wandsworth Council - Statement of Licensing Policy 2004

Running events

There are three types of lottery:

- **Private Lotteries.**

Held solely within a workplace or club. There is no need to obtain a licence for a raffle of this nature and no limits on the size. It must however be promoted by someone from within your association and only advertised within the associations' premises. The tickets must state the name and address of the promoter, who is eligible to participate and the price of the ticket.

- **Small Lotteries.**

This is the most likely type of lottery/raffle you would hold. A small lottery is where the raffle is not the main focus, but part of a larger event. No licence is required. There must be no cash prizes (store vouchers are permitted) and the sale of tickets and the announcement of the results must be carried out during the event (you can advertise the raffle before the event). You cannot spend more than £250 on buying prizes, but there is no limit on the value of prizes donated to the raffle.

- **Public Lotteries.**

This is a larger lottery which is open to members of the public and must be registered with the council. A named promoter should be nominated to take responsibility for the raffle. If over £20,000 of ticket sales are achieved it must be registered with the Gaming Board.

Insurance

All residents' associations should have insurance, however some do not take out cover.

Why is this? Mainly because of the cost associated with buying a suitable policy. This can often be prohibitive for small groups. This section looks at what are the various types of insurance, which ones you may need and how the council is assisting accredited associations.

Why do you need insurance cover?

Because people are increasingly likely to take legal action if they think your association has been negligent. For example, imagine organising a day trip for residents on your estate and a child is injured crossing the road whilst on the trip or holding a jumble sale and someone trips over items stored on the floor of the hall. In either case there is a possibility that someone will claim your association has been negligent.

Associations should consider the type and cost of insurance they buy, as policies and prices vary.

When taking out any type of insurance make sure that the insurance company knows exactly what your volunteers do, because if they consider any of the duties high risk then they may need to adapt their policies to your specific needs.

Types of insurance

- **Employers liability**

This insurance generally applies when the association employs someone directly, in which case it is compulsory, but it may also cover volunteers (in some circumstances). If you wish to take out this type of insurance you must declare to the insurance company that volunteers are expressly referred to in the policy.

- **Public liability insurance**

This insurance is sometimes referred to as third party insurance and gives protection to your association against claims of negligence from members of the public (including residents) for acts that lead to death, illness, loss, injury or accident. Any policy should indemnify volunteers against actions against them personally if they were acting for your association at the time of the incident. So, always mention volunteers.

- **Professional liability**

Unlikely to apply to residents' associations as it usually covers being sued for incorrect/inaccurate information or advice given to third parties where the organisation professes to a degree of expertise, but could be considered for inadvertent breach of copyright.

Insurance

- **Fidelity bond insurance**

This would be required if your association handles any large sums of money as it would be protected if a member was to steal funds from the association.

- **Buildings insurance**

Protects against damage to property owned by the association. This is usually covered by the landlord under the terms of a lease.

- **Contents insurance**

Another familiar insurance which covers against damage or theft of office equipment etc.

The council's role

Where an accredited residents' association occupies a building owned by the council under a lease, the council will insure the building and provide public liability insurance for any activity, which contributes to the council's role as landlord. This means your association will be covered if it holds committee or general meetings but not for social events. **If you let out community halls for private functions or social events you will need to ensure your association has taken out the appropriate insurance as detailed above.**

The property of the association **is not** covered by the council's insurance policies (files, computers etc.).

Taking out insurance

Shop around for the best deal. There are a number of companies which provide insurance specifically for voluntary groups. Details, can be found on the Volunteering England website (www.volunteering.org.uk).

Always take time to consider the pros and cons of taking out any type of insurance, the council will be happy to provide advice on these matters.

If you decide to take out a policy make sure you consider the following points:

- Is the insurance a compulsory requirement for the activities you hold?
- What risks are covered by the policy?
- What risks are excluded?
- Does the quotation cover everything?
- Does it cover too much? If so, you may pay higher premiums.
- Have you obtained at least two quotations?
- If using a broker, are they independent or tied to a particular company?
- Are there any conditions attached (e.g. types or standards of door/window locks)?

Insurance

If you are renewing a policy then:

- Start looking at alternative options in advance of the expiration of the current policy.
- Renew the policy on time.
- Check that the level of cover is still appropriate.
- Confirm the risks that are covered are still appropriate.

Remember to advise your insurers of any changes that may affect the policy promptly.

Clubrooms

Clubrooms/community centres

A Clubroom is one of the most important assets your association has so keep it well maintained.

It provides a meeting place for your association and can, for larger venues, provide an invaluable resource, which can bring the community together. However, managing larger community rooms can be very time consuming so try to get members involved in the day-to-day running and upkeep of your clubroom.

The key to managing a clubroom successfully, as with many other things, is good planning. If you have a large venue and want to use it for a wide range of community events then you may wish to consider writing a business plan (see chapter on business plans). This can save a lot of time and trouble in the long run.

Before looking at these issues however some basic information about clubrooms in Wandsworth.

Leases

Residents' associations may decide to take out a lease for a clubroom as they cannot legally hold an interest in land or property. The lease agreement, (and there must be one) should be signed by a designated individual. This may require an amendment/addition to your constitution to include a paragraph allowing for the appointment of trustees⁴ to enter into a lease agreement on behalf of the association. In return the council will prepare a standard lease agreement and will also indemnify all trustees against incurring any cost to themselves on behalf of the association.

The lease will require the association to maintain the interior decorations but the council will carry out all repairs to the structure and external decorations. The issue of internal repairs will be dealt with on an individual basis depending on the use of the room. Essentially, if it is a meeting place for the association the council will usually carry out internal repairs, if however, it is being used for social events (hiring for parties etc) then the association is usually expected to meet the cost of internal repairs.

The lease will also state what the premises can and cannot be used for and will state any restrictions, such as opening times.

As long as the building is used mainly for community purposes then the rent charged will be a peppercorn rent. **Make sure you read the lease carefully and understand it before signing it.**

Footnote ⁴ The word trustee is a legal term that refers to a member of a trust, which can be set up for a variety of purposes and is entrusted with the administration of property on behalf of others. With respect to most private trusts, the trustee holds legal title to the trust property, is the representative of the trust and has the capacity to sue and be sued on behalf of the trust. (Wikipedia - <http://en.wikipedia.org>)

Clubrooms

Insurance

The previous chapter explains what insurance cover the council provides for residents' associations.

Looking specifically at those associations with larger clubrooms research⁵ has shown that the major problem faced is that of raising sufficient income to maintain the building and keep it in a good state of decoration and repair. The main income source for many is that received from hiring the hall for social functions. Many associations are keen to let the rooms for wedding receptions and private parties but please be sure what this entails.

You will need to have in place appropriate insurance and letting agreements.

Questions to ask yourselves could be:

- Whether you require any form of licence?
- Who is going to arrange to lock up the hall at the end of the night?
- What to do if people refuse to leave the premises? Put in place rules regarding opening times and 'use of building'. As well as what you will do if others breach these rules.
- Who pays for any damage caused?
- Who cleans up?
- Will the noise levels be too loud?
- Will the event cause a disturbance to neighbouring properties?
- How will parking be accommodated?
- Catering/bar arrangements?

How you address these key issues may be the key as to how successful you are in providing a resource for the whole community.

Footnote ⁵ Forgotten Resources? The role of community buildings in ... local communities (Paul Mariott for Community matters).

Clubrooms

Managing the building

This is dependant on the size of the cludroom and activities taking place. Generally, larger cludrooms will be managed by the residents' association's committee. However, a well used cludroom may require more time and staff, so you may wish to develop a sub-committee specifically for this role or you may want to develop a structure with more independence (e.g. a seperate committee to run and maintain the hall).

There is already a lot of information available on the various types of legal models available so this is just a brief list of social enterprise legal structures:⁶

- Unincorporated association.
- Trust.
- Limited Company.
- Community Interest Company.
- Industrial and Provident Society (co-operative).
- Industrial and Provident Society (Community Benefit Society).

Whatever route you choose the basic need to involve the wider community in the management of the hall is very important (user groups, general meetings etc). In order to ensure that you meet the needs of the community you will need to carry out some research into what is required. Develop services to meet these requirements and then market them to the community. The benefit of doing this properly is that you are likely to pull in more volunteers to help with the running of the centre.

Footnote ⁶ See the Small Business Service website (www.sbc.gov.uk) section on Social Enterprise.

Networking

What is networking?

- “The action or process of making use of a network of people for the exchange of information, etc., or for professional or other advantage.” (OED)⁷
- “Networking consists of exchanging information and establishing personal connections. People network in many different settings: on the telephone, in hallways, in company lunchrooms, at professional conferences, at trade shows, company meetings, classrooms, lounges, hallways, elevators, airplanes, trains, busses, hotel lobbies and waiting rooms. Some networking is carefully planned and some just happens. Networking is friendly, low-key and essential in our complex society.” (Wikipedia)⁸

As you will note from the definitions above networking is something which can be informal but is a good method of establishing contacts and sharing information and getting support.

Within Wandsworth the council encourages networking both within the borough and with groups outside of Wandsworth. Within the borough the Area Panels are a good means of finding out from other associations how they have overcome problems/ dealt with issues, which are similar to those you may be experiencing.

Outside of the borough, training courses and conferences are as important for their networking value and the ability to see how other boroughs and landlords approach various issues as they are for the formal sessions.

One of the rules for networking is “greet each new acquaintance with an openness to learn more about that person, a willingness to help, and an offer to stay in touch”⁹. This approach is equally applicable to every form of networking, whether in business or social contexts, and whether the encounter takes place in person or online.

Questions, questions, questions is the secret to gathering knowledge and only open questions will do i.e. questions that start with who, what, why, when, how, where and which. Networking is about knowledge.

Networking is about opening and gathering information. From the information gathered you will be able to contribute more within Wandsworth, and benefit from new ideas and working practices.

Footnote ⁷ OED - Oxford English Dictionary

Footnote ⁸ Wikipedia (online encyclopedia) <http://en.wikipedia.com>

Footnote ⁹ Buzzy Gordon WealthQuoteoftheDay.com

Jargon

To someone new to representing their community jargon can often seem unintelligible and even confusing. It is often used in documents and reports, so this chapter aims to explain the most common terms. It is by no means exhaustive but covers the main terms used in Wandsworth.

- **ABC - Acceptable Behaviour Contract.** An undertaking (usually) signed by young persons, the council and the police to correct behaviour which is seen as anti-social. They are not legally binding unlike an ASBO.
- **AGM - Annual General Meeting.** The General Meeting held annually to approve the residents' associations accounts and elect committee members
- **AHM - Area Housing Manager.** Council Officer with management responsibility for one of the four area housing teams.
- **AHP - Area Housing Panel.** Open to all accredited residents' associations, within a defined geographic area.
- **ALMO - Arms Length Management Organisation.** An organisation set up to fulfil management functions for housing stock. The council retains ownership of properties (thus 'landlords'), but does not have management responsibilities.
- **ASBO - Anti-Social Behaviour Order.** An injunction order given to perpetrators of serious forms of anti-social behaviour. Although a civil order, any breach is a criminal offence and may result in imprisonment of the offender.
- **Audit Commission.** The independent public body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent efficiently, economically and effectively. Carries out periodic inspections of the housing service of all local authorities and **RSLs**.
- **Best Value.** "Best Value is a duty requiring councils to review all the services which they provide for local people, including housing and improve them by the best means available. The aim of Best Value is to bring about continuous improvement in local services." (DCLG definition)¹⁰
- **BRF - Borough Residents' Forum.** The senior residents' panel in the borough, the Borough Residents' Forum, has representatives from all the Area Housing Panels and the Co-op/RMO Forum. It considers wider strategic and policy issues and reports its findings to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Footnote ¹⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) definition from www.communities.gov.uk

Jargon

- **Co-op (Co-operative).** Forerunner of Tenant Management Organisations. Established prior to the introduction of the Right to Manage regulations in 1994.
- **DCLG - Department of Communities and Local Government.** Government department with responsibility for housing issues. Formerly, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).
- **HOSC - Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.** The council committee with responsibility for housing issues. Decisions taken by this group need to be approved by the Executive.
- **Housing Corporation.** “The Housing Corporation is a Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by ODPM¹¹. Its role is to fund and regulate **RSLs** in England.” (DCLG definition)
- **MMA - Modular Management Agreement.** The agreement between a **TMO** and the council to manage part of the housing stock. The agreement is comprised of a series of modules giving differing levels of control and different parts of the housing service allowing the **TMO** to choose the appropriate levels of responsibility.
- **NFTMO - National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations.** National body representing the interests of Tenant Management Organisations.
- **ODPM - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.** Now Department for Communities and Local Government (**DCLG**).
- **PEP - Priority Estates Project.** An approved organisation under s.16 of the Housing Act 1985. PEP provides training for residents as part of the Tenant Empowerment Programme (**TEP**) administered by the Housing Corporation.
- **PFI - Private Finance Initiative.** The use of money from the private sector to improve housing stock. In return for investment, the private company may own the capital assets (your homes) as well as delivering services (repairs, management etc).
- **RMO - See TMO.**
- **RPO - Resident Participation Officer.** Council Officer responsible for working directly with residents to increase levels of participation in the housing service. Based within the area housing teams.
- **RSL - Registered Social Landlord.** Formerly known as housing associations. **RSL** is a not-for-profit organisation that provides **Social Housing** and is registered with the **Housing Corporation**.

Footnote ¹¹ Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) definition from www.communities.gov.uk

Jargon

- **Social Housing.** “Social housing is housing of an adequate standard which is provided to rent (or on a shared ownership basis) at below market cost for households in need by Local Authorities or Registered Social Landlords operating on a basis of accepted and regulated standards of good practice in relation to physical conditions, management, allocation, equal opportunities and accountability to tenants and other stakeholders”. (DCLG definition)¹²
- **SWOT Analysis.** A part of the business planning process, which looks at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to your group.
- **TAROE - Tenants and Residents of England.** National representative body of all tenants and leaseholders of local authority and **RSL** owned housing stock.
- **TEP - Tenant Empowerment Programme.** “The Tenant Empowerment Programme enables local authority tenants to access independent advice, training and information directly. This helps them to challenge, influence or control how housing services are delivered to their communities.” (Housing Corporation definition)¹³.
- **TMO - Tenant Management Organisation.** Established under the 1994 Right to Manage regulations TMOs are resident led organisations which take over the management of parts of the housing stock. The services delivered are detailed in the **MMA**.
- **TPAS - Tenant Participation Advisory Service.** “TPAS is a not for profit membership organisation that provides information, advice, consultancy, training and conferences on all aspects of involving tenants in their housing management.” (TPAS definition)¹⁴.

For further information in this area please check the TPAS information sheet “Jargon Buster: A Guide to Housing Jargon for Tenants”.

Footnote ¹² DCLG www.communities.gov.uk

Footnote ¹³ Housing Corporation definition www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Footnote ¹⁴ Tenant Participation Advisory Service definition (TPAS)

Newsletters

The production of a newsletter for your association is an important means of keeping your members and other estate residents informed of what's happening and what your association has been doing.

This section is broken down into three parts, all of which are important in producing a newsletter.

- Production planning
- Content
- Design

Production planning

It's often useful to give responsibility for the production of the newsletter to one person. Although the whole committee should be involved in issues such as design and content approval.

There are a range of computer packages that makes it quicker and easier to produce a newsletter. However, you should set deadlines for articles which are to be included in the newsletter.

In their keynote on producing newsletters TPAS have suggested the following plan:

1. Collecting the information.

Keep a file for articles, ideas/suggestions that you might want to use in the newsletter.

- Set regular times for publishing.
- Set deadlines for contributions, which allow enough time to put them together and meet your publication deadlines.
- Brief contributors.

2. Designing and writing the text.

If the layout is to be done by someone not directly involved in the group, then you must give them clear instructions and you will need to agree the timescales and deadlines.

- A small editorial group can help the person preparing the text by agreeing the basic layout and checking the text before printing.

3. Printing.

Check that the printing can be done on time.

- If the printing is done by someone else make sure that you also have clear agreements about costs, supply of materials (e.g. paper) and delivery.

Newsletters

4. Distributing.

The more people prepared to distribute the better.

- If you need the newsletter out by a certain date e.g. in time for members to receive notices of an AGM, make sure your distributors know.
- Check with your readers and distributors from time to time to make sure everyone is getting a copy when they should.

If you are asking other people for an article or two then they should be properly briefed as to the subject, length of article and the deadline for submission.

TPAS have produced a generic briefing sheet which can be found on their website at www.tpas.org.uk under the information and resources section. See Appendix 8.

Content

The most important thing, whatever the actual content, is to get your facts right. If you are responsible for a story make sure you get the names, dates, times and quotes right.

If you're making a statement of opinion then try to back it up with a reason for the opinion. For example, if something was successful or unsuccessful state why/or provide an explanation.

Whilst articles about people are interesting try not to emphasise the role of specific individuals in a large event unless there is a good reason to.

Think of other things that can grab peoples attention, quizzes, recipes and gardening tips are often valued by readers. But be careful where you get this information from, as previously published material is subject to copyright (i.e. it belongs to the author). Personal or family recipes can be a good way to involve those from different communities and can have wider interest. Do you have any residents who have wide experiences that would be of interest to others? Small personal histories can be a good way to bring the community together and be used as a tool to involve people.

Newsletters

Design

The basic rule is to keep the design clear and simple. A design that uses too many fonts, pictures and colours can look messy and obscure the main message or information. Have a look at other newsletters and magazines, this will help you work out what you like and dislike, then use similar formats and ideas.

If your group has a logo, this should be placed prominently on the front page to create an identity for the newsletter.

Make your headlines as big as possible to grab the readers attention and use columns for the articles, as using the full width of the paper can create a dense block of text which is difficult to read.

Other tips:

- Try and avoid using fancy fonts as they can often be difficult to read (especially for people with visual impairment).
- Put some text in boxes to make them stand out.
- Ration your use of pictures, make them relevant to the story. Black and white photos with strong contrasts tend to work best particularly if you are photocopying them.

Tips for designing newsletters can be found on the following websites:

- TPAS (www.tpas.org.uk)
- The Resource Centre (www.resourcecentre.org.uk)
- Voluntary Arts Network (www.voluntaryarts.org)

Equal opportunities

One of the purposes for a Equal Opportunities policy is to ensure that a message is sent to the community that your group is aware of discrimination and will take action to address it if it occurs. It also means that you will be monitoring your own activity to ensure that it is non-discriminatory and provides equal opportunities.

Another reason to adopt such a policy is if your group is thinking about applying for funding from an external source. Many funders will require your group to have an Equal Opportunities Policy and it is better to be prepared in advance rather than have to draw one up in haste just to meet someone else's requirements.

It is also possible that discrimination can occur quite unintentionally and the adoption of an equal opportunities policy gives everyone the chance to think about the practical things you can do to ensure that your group is open to all.

It is important to remember that equal opportunities is not about treating everyone the same but making sure that differences are recognised and taken into account. Equal opportunities are not about 'special treatment' but about ensuring everyone has the same opportunity to take part.

Discrimination exists in our society and the following are those most likely reasons for people to have suffered some form of discrimination:

- Age.
- Ethnicity.
- Gender.
- Disability.
- Sexuality.
- Religion.

If people have suffered from discrimination in the past they are more likely to assume that it will happen again and for this reason if none other, your group should make a positive statement about the fact that all of the people you represent will have access to your group and that their views will be heard and taken account of.

You should also challenge discrimination if it does occur and avoid stereotyping people because of any of the above reasons.

A draft Equal Opportunities Policy is attached see Appendix 9. Don't just adopt this draft though. It's important that your group thinks about the statement it makes and is committed to it. Adapt it to the needs and requirements of your group and make sure people are aware of it and read it!

Some good advice on drawing up a policy can be found at:
www.resourcecentre.org.uk

Business plans

What is a business plan?

A business plan is a document drawn up by an organisation to state what its aims and objectives are, what it is setting out to achieve and how it aims to achieve them. It is often described like planning a journey. If you don't know where you are going, how will you know how to get there or whether you've arrived?

Are business plans appropriate for residents' associations?

Yes, if you want to address the needs of your community to any real effect. A business plan does not have to be a long, detailed statement and it is not something only a commercial business needs to undertake. Most voluntary organisations have them and use them effectively. They are particularly useful if your association plans to make an application for funding.

In order to draw one up, your group will need to decide what its overall aims and objectives are, and what you hope to achieve as a residents' association. For example, you may have formed to increase the social nature of the community by organising outings and other events. You may have wanted to become more involved in how your estate/block is managed by the council or to try and improve transport or other services in the area. Whatever the reason it makes sense to set down what it is you want to achieve and then work out how you intend to achieve it.

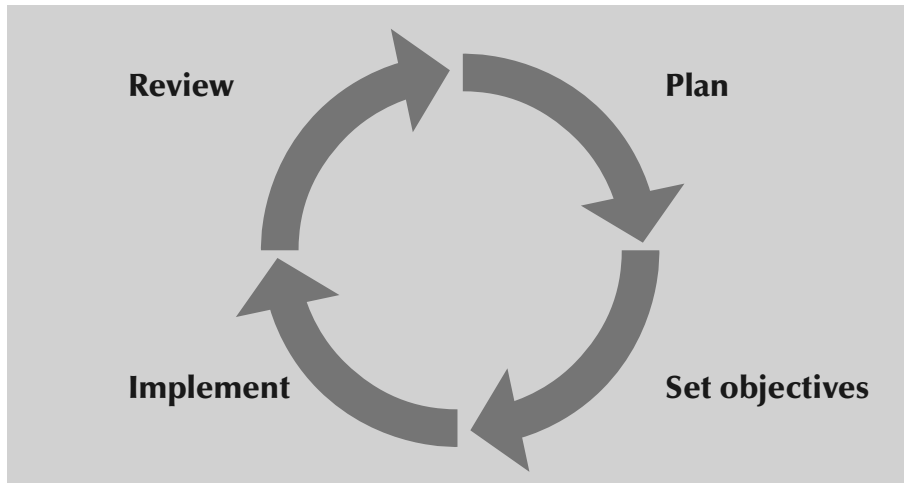
There may be some costs involved in your plan and you should try and estimate what these will be and how you will meet them, do you need to get sponsorship or raise funds?

Generally, you should write a plan of all your aims for your community and how you intend to implement them. It helps because everyone involved in your group will then know what you are trying to achieve and how. It will minimise misunderstandings and help develop the association as a group working towards defined objectives. This will be more effective than holding meetings because it's a routine or because it's expected. It ensures that you remain focused and will assist you in achieving more for the community.

Once you have established a plan it's important to review it periodically to ensure that it still represents the objectives of the association. Business plans are fluid and they should be adapted to take into account new ideas and situations that may arise. Just because your association started out to do one thing does not mean that it cannot change direction, as long as this is properly discussed and agreed.

Business plans

The whole process is cyclical.



Depending on how thoroughly you wish to go into the business planning process (and for most associations it probably will not be very extensive) you can move on to looking at the Strengths and Weaknesses of your group through a process known as a **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis.

This can be a useful exercise as it encourages you to look at your group critically and assess, firstly, Strengths then Weaknesses, then Opportunities and, finally, Threats.

This process will assist in setting targets at how you aim to achieve them. In simple terms, you should utilise your strengths, address any weaknesses, exploit the opportunities and counter any threats. It allows you to plan effectively.

Objectives/targets should be **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed).

This seems to be common sense but many groups forget the principle and set targets that are vague, cannot be measured to see if they are achievable because, for example, they rely on other groups too much, are unrealistic in that they are beyond the capabilities of the group, and are open ended. Don't fall into that trap.

Finally, utilise the **KISS** principle 'Keep It Short and Simple'.

Business plans need to be used to have any meaning. A short and simple targeted document has more chance of being referred to and used by the group than a long in depth document. If you do not use the business plan regularly to assess how your association is doing then you will have failed to write a good plan.

Negotiation skills

This chapter looks at therefore is how best to reach what is called a 'win-win' situation, where both parties end up gaining from the negotiated agreement.

This approach is about avoiding or changing from the traditional confrontational approach to one where both sides can gain from the decisions made and the agreements reached. It is a very different approach, which can and will alter the course of communication between the parties involved.

Negotiation is about reaching a position where both parties are happy with the agreement reached. This is particularly important if there is a long term relationship between the negotiating parties (e.g. your association and the council). It is not about confrontation.

It does not necessarily require both parties to approach the negotiation with this attitude, you can be the one to make the difference and change the process. What you will be saying is :

I want to win and I want you to win too.

What you need to establish are the underlying needs of both parties to the negotiation. Make this an early part of the discussion and you may find that your needs are complementary rather than conflicting. Even when needs do conflict, by approaching the negotiation in this manner, both sides can feel quite differently about the outcome.

Therefore, before you start negotiating it is important to work out what it is that you are seeking and the desired outcome. Set the limits as to how much you are prepared to concede and do not go beyond this limit. Such clarity will be useful in the negotiation process. Similarly, you need to try to work out what it is that the other side are looking for and what you think they will agree to. Preparation is the key.

Listening is a key skill in the negotiation process. Listen to what the other party has to say and their reasons for adopting this position. Try to understand their position. It may not be one you agree with but understanding the pressures and constraints faced by the other parties can help you to work out a strategy to address these issues.

However, there are times in a negotiation when there is an apparent stalemate. Neither side seems to be able to offer anything else, yet both are short of their desired result. In these circumstances it can be useful to start examining the positives. You should seek to ask open-ended questions (those to which they cannot answer yes or no).

Negotiation skills

There are some examples below:

Explore and clarify details:

- It's too expensive → Compared to what?
- I want the best → What would be best for you?

Find options:

- You can't do that → What would happen if we did?
- S/he would never → How can we find ways for it to happen?
- They always → Are there any times they don't?

Redirect and move to the positive:

- It will never work → What would it take to make it work
- I won't. → What would make you willing?
- It's a failure → How could it work?
- It's disastrous → What would make it better?
- S/he's useless → What is s/he doing that is acceptable?
- It's impossible → What would make it possible?

Go back to legitimate needs and concerns:

- S/he's a hopeless case → It's hard to see how to work with him/her
- You fool (and other insults)! → What do we need to do to sort this out
- How dare you say such a thing! → What do you dislike about it?
- It should be done my way → What makes that seem the best option?

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Negotiation skills

Negotiation tips

- **Always be prepared to walk away.** If you enter a negotiation in a position where you **must** achieve a certain result you will be at a disadvantage. You are stronger if you can afford not to achieve a result from the negotiation. However, if you need to achieve something what is the 'bottom line'? Never go beyond this point.
- **Be prepared.** Do your homework beforehand. The more you know about your subject, the background of the other party, their needs and your own position, the better outcome you will achieve.
- **Listen.** By listening to what the other parties are saying you can learn a lot to enhance your own position. This does not necessarily conflict with the win/win approach as you may learn what the other party needs to achieve in order to satisfy them. However, you may not be happy with this.
- **Satisfaction (of others).** Try to help the other parties to achieve satisfaction, where possible. This will help your future negotiations with them and be beneficial to you in the longer term.
- **Aim high.** Start with high aims and expectations. Be optimistic, a high starting point will not harm the process and discussions. You will always have the ability to reduce your demands to a predetermined level which you are happy with.
- **Be assertive (not aggressive) in your statements.** Do not take things at face value. Challenge assumptions and statements from the other parties. Use statements as in 'I don't feel comfortable with that' rather than 'You shouldn't do that'. Throughout the process look after your interests whilst respecting the interests of the other parties.
- **Build trust.** Honour your commitments, tell the truth in negotiations and respect any confidences.
- **Let the other side go first.** Wherever possible try to avoid going first in negotiations. Let the other party set out what it is they are prepared to offer. You may find it much better than you expected and you can respond accordingly by revising your opening position.
- **Don't give anything away.** Never concede something without getting something in return.
- **Keep notes and summarise.** Take notes during the process and frequently summarise the current position. This will prevent misunderstandings from occurring and prevent convenient 'forgetfulness'.

Useful websites:

- Conflict Resolution Network (www.crnhq.org)
- Businessballs (www.businessballs.com)

Presentations

Planning and preparation

The key to making a successful presentation lies in the planning and preparation of it. The worst type of presentation is that which is rushed, poorly thought out and poorly put together. Take your time over each stage and thoroughly check and review each piece of the presentation. Take the process step by step and in doing so you will become more confident in your presentation and therefore be more effective.

Practice really does make perfect with presentations, so take every opportunity to practice what you plan to say. If possible get a friend to listen to your delivery and give some constructive criticism.

Planning

- What is the presentation about?
- What are the objectives you hope to achieve with it?
- What knowledge do you hope to impart or what question are you seeking to answer (or have answered)?
- How long will you have?

If you are unclear on any of the points above, check with the person who has asked you do the presentation. Do not assume that anything is automatically understood.

Structure

Once you are clear about what you are planning to present, prepare a clear structure:

- What is the context of the presentation?
- Who will be the audience, do they all have the same level of understanding?
- Where is it being held, large room or small room etc?
- What are the seating arrangements, will everyone be able to hear you?

All of these issues will affect how you carry out the presentation and help you structure your presentation clearly.

Introduction

Start with the introduction and give a general overview of who you are and what you are going to be talking about. Keep it brief and, if using a slide, only use one. Remember that when introducing the presentation you should only give a general outline of the presentation, save the details for the presentation itself.

Presentations

Main body of the presentation

Think about the points you wish to make. If using slides keep it to one point per slide and think about how you can illustrate the point you are making with a good example. Do not just read from the slide, make the point and talk about it from your notes. If you need to give more detail, use handouts.

Handouts

If you are using them try to give them out at the start of the presentation, if you do so during the presentation, it may interrupt the flow and can cause delays.

Structure

There are two schools of thought about how to structure a presentation. It can be either:

- **Linear** - linear structures have each point leading to the next one (A to B to C). This is probably the best option for shorter presentations as it allows you to move through issues in sequence.
- **Segmented** - If you have to make a long in-depth presentation then you may wish to consider breaking it down into self-contained segments. This enables you to deal with issues arising from each part and move on without leaving increasingly long strands of an argument floating around.

At the end of the presentation draw the main points together in your conclusions. Do not use more than one slide for this as it will weaken the impact.

How long is your presentation going to last? Is it a brief 5-10 minute presentation for a job interview or a longer one (up to an hour) as part of a conference presentation?

Tips on long presentations can be found at:
www.perl.plover/yak/presentation/samples/notes).

Using slides

One of the most common ways of conducting a presentation is by using a computer package, such as MS Powerpoint. Below are some tips for creating interesting slide presentations:

- Do not try and put too much information on a slide.
- If possible, use pictures (a picture paints a thousand words).
- Keep slide titles short.
- Keep information on slides relevant.
- Do not use too many colours. Some colour is interesting, too many distract from the content.
- Check for spellings and for other errors on slides.
- If using a picture of someone, place it on the slide so that they're looking at the text, it reinforces what the audience should be looking at.

Presentations

In short, presentations get to the point, illustrate the point you are making and move to the conclusions. You do not need many slides for this so make them interesting and not too fussy.

Giving the presentation

Arrive early and test all equipment. Carry spares of anything that could go wrong (your presentation, batteries for remote controllers, bulb for projector etc.)

There are some very obvious points to be made here such as:

- Remember to face the audience.
- Use correct grammar.
- Make eye contact with the audience.
- Do not use slang or swear.
- Smile!
- Sound enthusiastic!
- Vary the pitch of your voice.
- Do not use unfamiliar jargon.
- Do not talk too quietly.
- Do not talk down to the audience (i.e. do not appear patronising).

Some other issues to consider are to dress comfortably and to dress appropriate to the occasion. For example, in addressing a meeting of business people your dress should be more formal.

A sense of humour can be useful but do not overdo it. Self-deprecating remarks work best as the most innocuous of jokes can offend some people. Try to make any humour relevant to the issue you're discussing and do not feel you have to be funny. If you do not feel comfortable with it then do not do it.

Speak slowly - vary the pace and remember to pause and take a breath occasionally. This will allow the audience to catch up with any notes they are making and make the occasion a little more enjoyable for them as well.

If you want to draw attention to the slides stop moving. If you're speaking and want the attention on you then move again.

Have a glass of water to hand (especially, if you intend to speak for long).

Presentations

Make sure you know your subject and can address any other issues that arise during the presentation. It's suggested that you know 10 times more than you put into your presentation.

Do not panic if you dry up, take a breath, smile at the audience and re-gather your thoughts.

If you stutter or stumble over your words, do not apologise just pause and smile, then continue.

You may also be expected to take some questions from the audience in which case make sure you have heard the question clearly (you can repeat it back) and answer the question asked.

Finally, probably the most important thing is to keep to your allotted time, especially if there is a break scheduled just after you finish. The audience always wants to get to the break no matter who's talking so, if necessary, skip some slides and finish on your last one (for some reason skipping slides 15, 16, 17 and 18 but showing 19 & 20 is seen as less of a problem than missing out slides 17-20).

And enjoy yourself! Your audience wants you to do well and wants to hear what you have to say.

Compacts

What are they?

You may have heard of Tenant Participation Compacts, but not be sure what they are all about. They are part of the Government's longer term agenda to improve local services, increase local democracy and strengthen and sustain local communities.

The Government want council residents to have a proper say in how their homes are managed and to have a real choice in the extent and nature of their involvement. The Government states that resident empowerment leads to better decision making that properly reflects local needs and that in turn leads to sustainable communities.

Wadsworth Council is committed to supporting residents participation at the level residents desire in the management of their homes and decision-making processes. There are a range of discussion forums, committee, panel and review groups in operation, such as Borough Residents' forum, Housing Panel, Housing Link Panel, Tenant Surveys and the Residents' Working Group 2006.

Compacts were first introduced from 1 April 2000. Since then the council has negotiated a 'borough-wide' compact and four 'local' compacts. The process of negotiating Compacts has helped residents decide how they wish to be involved in influencing and shaping decisions on housing issues in ways which meet their needs and priorities. Since the resident participation structure was fully reviewed in Wadsworth in 1999, it has become more integrated into the mainstream housing service delivery. Resident Involvement has also started to reach across all aspects of the services delivered by the council.

A national framework¹⁵ incorporating core standards as a 'toolkit' was introduced to help councils and their residents develop, implement and monitor their local Compacts. This national framework was designed not to be prescriptive but allow residents and local authorities to develop compacts in keeping with local needs.

Compacts are a tool designed to:

- Help ensure councils become more efficient, transparent and accountable so that people know who exactly will be responsible for decisions and who will be actively involved in helping councils reach those decisions;
- Implement Best Value by enabling tenants to make an informed view on their housing services, be involved in planning them, improving them, monitoring and reporting on performance, and identifying weaknesses and taking remedial action;
- Help tenants to identify issues of concern and ways of improving their quality of life as part of a wider strategy to tackle poor neighbourhoods.

(TPAS Information Sheet)¹⁶

Footnote ¹⁵ The National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts - DCLG (2005)

Footnote ¹⁶ TPAS Information Sheet 'compacts', www.tpas.org.uk

Compacts

Borough-wide compacts

Within the National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts there are core standards with which borough-wide resident participation compacts are expected to conform. These standards are a framework of minimum standards expected to be contained in the Compact. It is very important that the Compact reflects the needs of residents in Wandsworth, giving all residents an opportunity to get involved if they so wish.

Residents are only able to make this choice if they are aware of the opportunities to participate and the benefits that participating will bring. The council therefore feels it extremely important to raise awareness of the benefits of participation to all residents and ensuring that such participation brings tangible benefits to residents.

Local or estate based compacts

Many residents may see themselves more as members of their community than as residents of a council. Therefore, local compacts have been developed to deal with issues of particular interest to residents of a locality or estate. Local compacts in some areas of Wandsworth go beyond housing to other matters that affect tenants' lives such as planning, the environment and crime. In some areas this has meant the input of different council services and also the police.

Local Compacts should aim to include as many of the core standards of borough-wide Compacts as is necessary and these will include standards that resident groups must meet, in terms of accountability to the area or community, as well as the council.

Issue based compacts

Issue Based Compacts aim to address specific services or issues which are not confined to a locality but are more narrowly focused than the borough-wide compact. Particular service areas such as sheltered or supported housing may be addressed using this type of compact, or particular groups of people such as young people and black and minority ethnic groups may benefit from a compact addressing the particular services provided for them.

Issue Based Compacts should also aim to include as many of the core standards of borough-wide Compacts as is deemed necessary and again there may be additional standards that will need to be defined and negotiated.

Compacts

What next?

Compacts are designed to be an evolving process. As residents become aware of the opportunities, the likely benefits and outcomes of participation, they should further define their role and become more involved in all stages of the decision-making process including setting the policy agenda.

Compacts sets the minimum standards that residents can expect and their local council is constantly seeking new and innovative ways to meet residents wishes to become involved in housing services at the level they wish.

Generally, compacts are more successful on a local basis, meeting the needs of residents locally and addressing issues other than just housing.

In addition, Residents' Working Groups were established in 2004 (as part of the stock options appraisal process) and 2006 to review the opportunities for participation and the future direction of the housing service.

Reviewing compacts

Compact reviews need to be timetabled at the outset to provide an opportunity to all parties involved to look again at how effectively their compacts and procedures are improving resident involvement.

For more information on compacts see the TPAS website (www.tpas.org.uk)

Managing your homes...

...the next step?

What is tenant management?

Tenant Management is a form of participation in which the tenants and lessees in an area take on the responsibility for day-to-day management and repairs. The council still owns the property and residents keep their secure tenancies or existing leases.

The right to manage

The legislation to give this right was included in the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 and came into force on 1 April 1994. It gives a legal framework for resident organisations that wish to manage their homes by setting up a Tenant (or Resident) Management Organisation (TMO or RMO). This is known as the 'Right to Manage'.

Who does it apply to?

The Right To Manage applies to all tenants and lessees (as long as the block or estate is not too small). To start the process, a properly constituted residents' association with a membership of at least 20% of the estate must first be set up. Any residents' organisation with a constitution which demonstrates that it is representative and accountable can exercise the 'Right to Manage' (if you are already an Accredited Residents' Association you will meet the criteria). This right only applies to council tenants and leaseholders.

It can take two to three years to set up a Resident Management Organisation (RMO), from the initial idea to taking over responsibility for managing the area¹⁷. During this time the residents group will have to make a lot of decisions and get involved in a wide range of activities. If you are interested contact your resident participation officer.

Wandsworth and tenant management

In Wandsworth, residents have already taken over management on 12 estates covering over 3,000 homes. The smallest RMO in Wandsworth looks after 18 homes, the largest looks after over 850 homes. Approximately one-tenth of all council owned properties are now managed by RMOs. The latest went 'live' on 1st July 2005.

Footnote ¹⁷ The government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities published in October 2006 states that this time period will be reduced as part of a review of the Right to Manage regulations.

Managing your homes...

What services can you manage?

What you take on is up to you, the residents. RMOs can decide to take over only a few responsibilities at first and increase them later once they are more experienced and established.

The kind of services taken on by RMOs in Wandsworth so far include:

- Day-to-day repairs and maintenance.
- Cleaning and caretaking.
- Dealing with neighbour disputes.
- Allocating homes to new tenants.
- Cyclical redecoration and maintenance.
- Collecting rents and service charges and chasing arrears.
- Ensuring the residents are informed and listened to.
- Employing staff to carry out these functions.
- Managing and controlling the budget for management and maintenance.

To take over management, the tenants must set up a properly constituted organisation - a RMO. The responsibilities of the council and the RMO are negotiated and set out in a Management Agreement signed by the council and the residents.

RMOs can take different forms. They all have to be incorporated, either as an Industrial and Provident Society, a Community Interest Company (CIC) or a limited company. They each have a committee or board (elected by members of the RMO), which oversees the management of the estate. People with specialist skills may be co-opted onto the committee or board to offer particular knowledge or experience.

Tenant Management Co-operatives

Some RMOs, and all of the existing RMOs in Wandsworth are co-operatives. All residents in the area can be members of the co-operative, upon payment of a small fee for a 'Share', and are entitled to vote at General Meetings. The Management Committee is usually made up just of residents.

Managing your homes...

Estate Management Boards

Other RMOs prefer more of a partnership with the council. Here there is more emphasis on residents and council representatives working together.

These organisations are often called Estate Management Boards. The board is made up of resident representatives, councillors, and other co-opted board members, although residents are always in the majority.

Some RMOs decide to take over most of the day-to-day management of their area, while others concentrate on particular functions.

Who pays?

The RMO will negotiate an allowance from the council for the management and maintenance of the properties. The number of properties to be managed, the services that the RMO provides and the historical cost of these services determine the size of the budget. It is based on the council's own costs of providing the services that the RMO wish to manage.

History of tenant management organisations

The first Resident Management Organisations were set up over 30 years ago after legislation changed to allow councils to hand over management of estates to Tenant Management Co-operatives. The first RMO in Wandsworth went live in 1979.

Initially, this form of management grew slowly, but in the mid 1980's, the Government introduced grants to pay for training and support. Following a review of funding arrangements in 1988, a Government report 'Tenants in the Lead' (DoE, 1989) recommended increased funding.

At the beginning of 2006 there were over 250 established Resident Management Organisations nationally and a further 50 tenants groups were well in the process of taking over management.

Why are RMOs set up?

The idea of setting up a RMO can come about in a number of ways. In some areas, the local authority may suggest the idea, in others, residents may hear about RMOs and decide to explore the idea further. There are a wide range of reasons why councils and residents are interested in tenant management. Wandsworth supports tenant participation and management because it creates wider involvement in decision-making process and housing services.

Managing your homes...

What's in it for the tenants?

Tenant management gives residents more of a say in running their homes while still benefiting from the council being the freeholder (still owning the property).

Resident management may (in some cases) lead to high quality services and well run estates. RMOs may be able to deliver a faster repairs service with reduced costs. This can result in, savings which can then be used to carry out improvements which otherwise might not have happened.

Residents may feel more satisfied with their homes/community because they have or feel they have greater involvement in decision-making and service delivery.

However, service improvements and cost and delivery is dependent on the abilities of the RMO or geographic area to manage an estate.

Getting started

The first step is to contact your resident participation officer who will explain the process in more detail. The general stages are explained below:

Stage 1: The promotion stage

This is when you and your neighbours are first thinking about the idea. The key steps are:

- Getting information about the options for control and involvement.
- Finding out more about how the housing service works.
- Finding out which issues or concerns exist in your community.
- Setting up a residents' organisation.
- Defining the boundary of the area you wish to manage.
- Adopting a constitution.
- Getting support from members.
- Serving a 'Right To Manage Notice' on the council.

The resident participation officers can help you through this initial stage. We can also give you a list of independent agencies (known as Section 16 Agencies), which specialise in helping residents who are interested in managing their homes.

Managing your homes...

Stage 2: The feasibility stage

At this stage you will select an independent Section 16 agent to work with you. Resident participation officers can provide advice and assistance in finding and selecting an agent. But it will be your decision.

The aim of this stage is to explore whether it is going to be possible to increase tenant involvement on your estate. It looks at setting up a RMO, options for more involvement (whether through more involvement in decision-making or taking on management of the estate).

A feasibility study includes:

- Assessing the demand for tenant involvement.
- Exploring management options.
- Understanding housing management and finance.
- Preparing for a management role.
- Assessing competence.
- The feasibility study (writing).
- Communication.
- A 'test of opinion' (ballot).

If the 'test of opinion' results in a majority of those voting saying 'yes' to the idea of tenant management for your estate/or community, and your agency reports that your organisation has the ability to succeed, you can go to the next stage.

Stage 3: The development stage

The development stage is designed to bring you to the point when you can be a fully functioning RMO, in charge of an agreed range of management functions for your estate.

The main steps are:

- Agreeing the RMO's role and responsibilities.
- Becoming an incorporated body (like a limited company).
- Introducing the Modular Management Agreement.
- Deciding what management options you want to choose.
- Training.
- Preparing to run the RMO.
- Negotiating the management agreement.
- Assessing competence.
- The development report.
- Assessing residents' support.
- Setting up the RMO.

Managing your homes...

You must satisfy the agency and the council that your group has passed the 'tests of competence' to take on management. The proposal will be put to a ballot of all tenants and lessees. The majority of those entitled to vote (including a majority of secure tenants) must be in favour, if the RMO is to take over management.

Competence to manage

If the residents are to take on the management of their homes it is essential that they can demonstrate to the council and residents of the proposed area which will be managed by the RMO that they can provide management services both effectively and efficiently. This is why they must show that they have passed the 'tests of competence' in the areas they will manage.

The RMO competencies look at three criteria:

- Whether individual members of the RMO have the skills and abilities needed.
- Whether the group, as a whole, has the range of abilities needed.
- Whether systems and procedures (which the RMO must have) are in place.

What do I do now?

Contact your resident participation officer in the first instance. Wandsworth's resident participation officers have experience of working with residents in establishing tenant management organisations. In addition, they can provide both useful contacts locally and with other agencies. They can also put you in touch with other residents who already manage their estates communities.

Funding

The cost of the promotion, feasibility and development of RMOs is mainly met by the government's Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), although the council will contribute 25% of the cost of the development stage.

The council will also meet costs associated with the RMO going 'live', such as the provision of office accommodation and equipment as well as staff recruitment costs.

Appendix 1

Model constitution

The name of the association is:

and it will represent the residents of

Estate/Block

Aims

The aims of the association are to:

- Promote membership to all people eligible to join the association.
- Promote equal opportunities within the community.
- Improve the housing and other services in the area of the association.
- Be non-party political.
- Promote social, welfare, recreational and training activities for the benefit of members of the association.
- Represent the view of the majority of members affected by issues relating to their local environment.
- Build a partnership and improve communication between landlord and the membership.
- Provide regular information to all members.
- Regularly consult all members.
- Monitor the association, it's work, finances and membership.

Equal opportunities

- The association shall uphold equal opportunities and work for good relations among the community, specifically prohibiting any conduct which discriminates or harasses on the grounds of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability or religion.

Membership

- Membership is open, irrespective of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, marital status, age sexuality, religion, disability, political or religious belief, to all persons 16 years or over living in the area of the Association, (including all tenants, leaseholders and freeholders). As far as possible, the membership should reflect the local population.
- A record of all members in the current year shall be kept by the Secretary of the association. Every member shall sign an annual written consent to become a member.
- Any membership fee will be determined by the Annual General Meeting. All payments will be recorded in an appropriate manner and a receipt given.

Appendix 1

Ending membership

- Membership will end when a member moves out from the area.
- In the event of a breach of the association's Code of Conduct membership can be suspended or ended by a two-thirds majority vote of the committee.
- A member whose membership has been suspended in accordance with clause 5.1 shall be entitled to have that suspension reviewed at the next Annual/General Meeting.

Annual General Meeting

The association will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) once each calendar year, and not more than 15 months shall pass between the date of one AGM and the next.

The AGM will:

- Receive an annual report from the committee.
- Present audited accounts to members.
- Appoint an independent auditor.
- Elect the committee.
- Agree the annual rate of subscription.
- Consider any resolutions put forward by members.
- Vote on any amendments to the constitution.
- All members shall be given 21 days written notice of the AGM.
- Any proposed changes to the constitution or nominations to the committee must be notified and sent to the secretary in writing at least 14 days before the AGM.
- The agenda, minutes of the last AGM, details of nominations to the committee and any resolutions to be considered (which includes any proposed changes to the constitution) must be sent to all members at least 7 days prior to the AGM.

Appendix 1

General meetings

Each year the association shall hold at least four general meetings (including the AGM) which shall be open to the general membership.

- All members of the association shall receive 14 days notice of Annual/General Meetings.
- The general meetings shall be minuted.
- The quorum for all General Meetings shall be five members or 10% of the membership, whichever is the most.

Special general meetings

A Special General Meeting may be called by the committee and must be called by the committee if requested by at least 5 members or 10% of the membership, whichever is the most, at least 14 days before the date on which those members request the meeting to be held. The secretary must send to each member written notice of a special general meeting seven days in advance of the meeting which shall take place within 21 days of the request.

Voting

- Each member shall have one vote on any resolution put before an AGM, General Meeting or Special General Meeting.
- All voting that takes place at an AGM, Special General Meeting, General Meeting and Committee Meetings, shall be counted and included in the minutes.

Minutes

- All formal meetings such as Committee Meetings, Special general Meetings and Annual General Meetings must be minuted and the minutes formally approved by the next meeting of the Committee or General Meeting.
- All minutes shall be available for inspection by members of the association.

Appendix 1

The committee

- Any member over the age of 18 shall be entitled to stand for election to the committee.
- The committee shall stand down at each Annual General Meeting and may be re-elected.
- There shall be at least **** committee members.
- There shall be at least **** committee meetings each year. The quorum for committee meetings is **** members.
- All members shall be given not less than 7 days notice of each Committee Meeting, at which any member of the association shall be entitled to attend (but not to vote).
- The committee may from time to time as necessary create any sub-committees and/or working parties on a permanent or temporary basis. The members of any such sub-committee or working party shall be selected by the committee and shall include at least one committee member. Any such sub-committees or working parties shall report to the committee for decision-making.
- The committee shall monitor the work, finances and membership of the association.
- The committee shall report to each General Meeting on the work done by the Committee since the last General Meeting.

Officers of the committee

- The association shall have a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.
- The Chairperson shall chair General Meetings and Committee Meetings. The duties of the officers shall be defined in the Standing Orders of the association.
- The officers shall report to each Committee Meeting and General Meeting on their work.
- There shall be no more than two committee members from the same household.

Co-optees

The Committee may co-opt members onto the committee in order to fill vacancies that occur during the year to ensure appropriate representation of all people in the community.

Appendix 1

Finance

The Treasurer shall open a bank or building society account in the name of the association and keep records of the association's income and expenditure. The Treasurer shall report the balance in the account to the committee at each committee meeting.

The Committee shall appoint three authorised signatories for any cheques and cheques shall be signed by at least two signatories. The signatories should be from different households and not related to each other.

The association's accounts shall be kept up to date and annual accounts for each year shall be independently audited and shall be presented to the Annual General Meeting.

The accounts of the association shall be available for inspection by any member of the association who requires to see them, within 14 days. The request for inspection must be made in writing to the Treasurer. The accounts shall be made available to an officer of the council, upon written request, within 48 hours or such other time as is deemed reasonable by both parties.

The Treasurer is authorised to pay from petty cash, travel and other expenses to representatives of the association undertaking the association's work providing that each payment is supported by a receipt, ticket or voucher. Each such payment of petty cash shall be signed by the receiver. The Treasurer shall provide a list of petty cash payments to Committee, at each Committee Meeting.

If the association is in receipt of a Residents' Association Grant from Wandsworth Council's housing department, it will comply with the requirements set out in the 'Grant Application Form' for the relevant year.

Information

- The association shall provide information to all its members on things that effect the association and it's members.
- Every member of the association shall be given a copy of the constitution when they join. Members shall be given copies of any changes to the constitution.
- Minutes of all general Meetings and Committee Meetings shall be available from the Secretary for all members.

Appendix 1

Dissolution of the association

- The association can only be dissolved by a Special General Meeting called specifically to consider a motion to dissolve the association.
- All members shall be given 21 days written notice of such a meeting, which shall contain the wording of the resolution.
- The association can only be dissolved if two-thirds of members present at a Special General meeting vote for a motion to 'dissolve the association'.
- The Special General Meeting shall decide on disposal of assets, funds and equipment.
- Any assets which have been donated or loaned by the council should be returned to the council, if the council so wishes.

Appendix 2

The bank reconciliation

Month of: _____

Bank balance

Actual Balance at the beginning of the month: £ _____

Total money paid into the bank for the month: £ _____

Total money paid out of the bank for the month: £ _____

Actual Balance at the end of the month: £ _____

Agreement of bank balance to bank statement:

Balance shown on the bank statement at the end of the month: £ _____

Money paid into the bank not yet shown on bank statement:

Date	Received From	Amount

Money paid out of the bank not yet shown on bank statement:

Date	Cheque No.	Paid to	Amount

Actual balance at the end of the month: £ _____

Appendix 3

Monthly finance report to committee

Balance of funds held by Residents Association at end of

At the end of, _____ we had £ _____

Since then we have received _____ £ _____

And spent _____ £ _____

So our current total is _____ £ _____

The balance of our bank account is _____ £ _____

And the amount of petty cash we have is _____ £ _____

Total balance _____ £ _____

Appendix 4

Sample accounts to the AGM

Residents' Association		
Income & Expenditure Account 2005		
	£	£
Grants Receivable	547.00	
Add Interest Received	2.57	
Membership fees	32.00	
Jumble Sale	355.00	
	936.57	
Less: Expenditure		
Newsletters - copying		110.00
Postage		25.43
Stationery		62.00
Travel		24.00
Refreshments		55.00
Fun Day		357.00
Other		2.79
		636.22
Surplus for 2004/5	300.35	
Add surplus from 2003/4	120.98	
Balance carried forward	421.33	

Appendix 4

Residents' Association Balance Sheet

31st March 2005

Current Assets	£
Cash at bank and in hand	457.33
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year*	36.00
Net Assets	421.33
Accumulated surplus	421.33

Approved on behalf of the Residents' Association

(Secretary)

(Chair)

June 2005

* Invoices approved for payment but funds still in account.

Appendix 5

Code of Conduct – Residents’ Association

This Code of Conduct explains how members of ***** residents’ association are expected to carry out their duties whilst representing the association. All members agree to abide by the Code of Conduct laid out below. Any breaches of the code will result in the suspension of membership until such time as the matter can be heard, in full, by a General Meeting of the association.

Confidentiality

The business of the association may involve members in dealing with issues that are sensitive. Members must exercise discretion and care in performing their duties and responsibilities. If confidential information is provided, it may only be used for the business of the meeting and it must not be passed on to anyone outside of that meeting. Such information will not in any case include any personal information about individuals, except at that individual’s written request.

Conduct at meetings

Members will at all times observe points detailed below while attending or taking part in any meeting.

- To be courteous to each other and support and assist other members in seeking the best possible solution to problems being discussed.
- To allow each other the opportunity to speak and comment.
- To follow the guidance of the chairperson conducting the meeting.
- To remember that you are representing the views of the community and are accountable to the association.
- To remember that the purpose of any meeting is to benefit the residents generally and not specific individuals.
- To bear in mind the rights of individual residents and the duties of council employees when proposing solutions to problems.
- Not to speak or write on behalf of the association without the prior agreement of the association. Any correspondence sent on behalf of the association should be made available to any member that requests it.
- To operate within the rules laid down in the constitution.

Appendix 5

Conflicts of interest

Members:

- Must not expect favourable treatment from council officers or from the association itself, nor should they be treated any less favourably: e.g. reporting a repair or allocation of a property.
- Must use the agreed procedures for reporting a repair or pursuing any other matter relating to their own property, or on behalf of another individual resident. When dealing with council officers, members must make clear whether they are acting as an individual resident or in their capacity as a representative of the association.
- Must disclose any personal, financial or material interest in any matter being considered by the association, e.g. If a member or member's relation work for a repairs contractor

Appendix 6

Dear Sir or Madam,

Fun Day for the _____ Estate

I am writing to ask for your support for our Fun Day which we are holding for the first time this year to help bring all sections of our community together.

Our Fun Day will cater for all ages and tastes and will involve all sections of our community in activities such as face painting, bouncy castle, rides, dancing, music and much more. There will also be stalls and a car boot sale.

We are working with the local primary school, church and mosque to provide the entertainment with dancing displays from the children.

The Fun Day would not happen without the energy and enthusiasm of the local people who organise it. Unfortunately, the Fun day costs a considerable amount to stage. We need to raise approximately £*****, to cover the cost of the event which includes, publicity, insurance and equipment hire.

The Fun Day could not be held without the support of the residents association, local businesses and individuals who have contributed to the event. I am writing to ask if you would be able to make a donation towards the Fun Day (state money or prizes). Your contribution will be very much appreciated, and acknowledged in our publicity and the Fun Day programme.

If you would like to talk more about the Fun Day and how you could help, please feel free to give me a ring on *****.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 7

Busyroads Estate Residents' Association Traffic Calming Campaign

Briefing Sheet January 2006

The Estate

Busyroad Estate is eight streets of houses and two blocks of low rise sheltered housing; approximately 700 dwellings in all. Housing on the estate is a mixture of council rented and owner-occupier/leasehold.

The area which includes the estate has a higher proportion of children in the population (22.4%) than in the borough as a whole (16.3%). (Figures from the 2001 census).

Five hundred children under 16 live on the Busyroad Estate. 100 of these live in Speedy Hill and Deathtrap Road, the two busiest roads in the area. (BETA survey, November 2005)

Although census figures show a relatively high level of car ownership in the local area, our own survey has revealed that on the estate itself, most households (55%) do not have access to a car. (BETA Survey , November 2005)

Traffic and traffic calming

The estate is bordered on two sides by major roads, which are busy throughout the day.

Several of the residential streets are regularly used as rat runs by commuter traffic and by commercial vehicles travelling to and from the nearby industrial estate.

Our survey showed that 80% of children aged eight to twelve who live on the estate are not allowed to play outside on their own, mainly because of concern about traffic levels. By contrast, 75% of adults recalled playing out at that age. (BETA survey, November 2005)

Of those households who do have access to a car, 70% drive children to and from school. There is a noticeable increase in traffic levels on the estate at the time of the school run. This makes walking or cycling to school more dangerous.

In other areas of the borough, where traffic calming measures have been introduced, residents report a clear reduction in the use of residential streets as rat runs, and a general feeling of increased freedom and safety for pedestrians, especially children. (Correspondence with Hanover Community Association, 2005)

Appendix 7

Our proposals:

The Busyroad Tenants' Association Traffic Calming Campaign calls on the borough to:

- Work with local schools to develop safer routes to school for children who walk or cycle, and to encourage parents not to increase traffic levels by driving their children to and from school
- Work with the Tenants' Association to draw up a joint plan for traffic calming measures which will alleviate the main problems caused by traffic in the area. Such measures could include road entry treatments, speed humps, lower speed limits and additional pedestrian crossings on the roads surrounding the estate.
- Consult fully with all residents of the estate and take their views into account in the final development of the traffic calming plan by January 2007.

How to find out more

To find out more information, for a copy of our survey results, or to support the campaign, contact:

Busyroad Estate Residents' Association

Secretary: Mary Jones

43 Backgarden Street

SWXX XXX

Tel. 020 XXXX XXXX

Appendix 8

Contributors' Brief

Thank you for agreeing to provide something for our newsletter. Here is some information which you may find useful.

Deadline for contributions	
Publication date	
How to contact the editor	Name: Address: Phone: Email:
Format for text	
Format for photographs and illustrations	

Guidance Notes

- Our newsletter is produced for the benefit of our members and its content aims to reflect the diverse cultures and priorities of our community. Please bear this in mind when preparing your information. The Committee will not accept information, illustrations or cartoons that do not meet the requirements of our Equal Opportunities policy.
- Complete text is very welcome but if you prefer, you can simply give us any information which we can then use to prepare the text ourselves. Whichever you choose, please make sure that it gives answers, in the order given, to all the following:
 1. What
 2. Who
 3. Where
 4. When
 5. Why
 6. How
- Always use plain English.
- Try and keep your sentences and paragraphs short.
- Please give us full contact details which we can publish.

If you have any queries or problems meeting the deadline, please contact the editor immediately.

Thank you.

On behalf of

Appendix 9

******* Residents' Association Equal Opportunities Policy**

***** Residents' Association believes that any form of discrimination is wrong and aims to become an equal opportunities organisation.

Therefore we will not discriminate on any grounds. This includes race, colour, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, class, political beliefs or any other grounds.

We encourage all members to become involved in the work of the association including membership of committees, sub-committees, general meetings and in the election of the officers of the association.

The association will challenge all forms of direct and indirect discrimination and/or harassment and will not tolerate such behaviour from its members or any other person attending its meetings or with who they are in contact. Harassment and discrimination are serious breaches of the associations Code of Conduct and are grounds for expulsion from the association.

The needs of all sections of the community will be considered when setting meeting times and agreeing venues.

All members of the committee will attend a training session on the importance of equality of opportunity.

Membership and attendance at meetings will be monitored to ensure that all sections of the committee are represented and will take action to address any under representation from any section of the community.

Translations

If you have difficulty understanding this in English, please contact: Wandsworth Interpreting Service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	English
যদি আপনার এটি ইংরেজিতে বুঝতে অসুবিধা হয় তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	Bengali
Si vous avez des difficultés à comprendre ce texte en anglais, veuillez contacter: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	French
અગર તે અંગ્રેજીમાં સમજવી મુશ્કેલ લાગે તો મહેરબાની કરીને Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649 પર સંપર્ક કરો.	Gujarati
यदि इसे अंग्रेजी में समझने में समस्या हो तो कृपया Wandsworth Interpreting service का (020) 8672 1043/3649 पर संपर्क करें।	Hindi
W razie problemów ze zrozumieniem tekstu w języku angielskim prosimy o kontakt z: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	Polish
Se tem dificuldades em compreender isto em Inglês, por favor, contacte: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	Portuguese
ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	Punjabi
Hadday kugu adag tahay inaad ku fahamto Ingriis fadlan la xiriir: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	Somali
Si tiene dificultad para entenderlo en inglés favor contactar a: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	Spanish
இதை ஆங்கிலத்தில் புரிந்துகொள்வதில் சிரமம் இருந்தால் நீங்கள் தொடர்புகொள்ள வேண்டியது: Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	Tamil
اگر آپ کو انگریزی میں اسے سمجھنے میں دشواری کا سامنا ہو تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں: Urdu Wandsworth Interpreting service: (020) 8672 1043/3649	

If you are visually impaired, we can provide you with a large print or audio tape version of the booklet. Phone (020) 8871 6800.