



***SETTING UP A
TENANTS AND RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION***

OR

COMMUNITY GROUP

HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Tenants and Residents/ Community Groups**
- 3. Setting up a Group**
- 4. Funding to support Group**
- 5. Equal Opportunities**
- 6. Action Plan**
- 7. Keeping the Group Together**
- 8. Accountability**
- 9. Recognition**
- 10. The Constitution**
- 11. Duties of the Chairperson**
- 12. Duties of the Secretary**
- 13. Duties of the Treasurer**
- 14. Minutes of Meetings**
- 15. The Agenda**
- 16. The Annual General Meeting**
- 17. Finding out what people think**
- 18. Publicity**
- 19. Communication with Members**
- 20. Fundraising**
- 21. Summary**

Appendix A

Suggested Constitution for a Tenant and Residents Association

1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been produced by Mansfield District Council, Housing Department to assist and provide information for people who wish to set up a Tenants and Residents Association or Community Group.

Groups already in existence can use the handbook, to check that they are following the guidelines, which will ensure they will achieve official recognition.

Support will be given to new and established groups by the Housing Department as part of its commitment to consultation with, and participation by tenants.

This booklet is just one part of the Councils strategy in ensuring that they and tenants groups work together to constantly improve the service that is provided.



2. TENANTS AND RESIDENTS/COMMUNITY GROUPS

To be recognised by the Housing Department you do not have to be called a 'Tenants and Residents Association'. Various forms of titles can be used: - 'Community Action Group', 'Village Forum' etc.

What all these groups have though, is a common purpose whereby they consist of people who want a say on local issues (including housing), improving their area and organising events (fundraising, campaigning etc.).

The Housing Department benefits because it has a focal point to gain local views on issues that affect housing and estates. Also other statutory agencies can also access the community through these groups i.e. Police, Youth Services etc.



Residents in the area benefit because they have a forum where their views can be aired, local issues can be discussed and common goals can be agreed. Also groups often form the start of other community-based action such as Neighbourhood Watch and food co-ops. This also promotes Community spirit through people meeting their neighbours, friendships are made and a sense of feeling needed and being useful to other people is generated.

Some of these benefits don't happen over night, however if you start the right way, avoid short cuts which may conflict with the guidelines, your group should enjoy many years of fruitful work.

Obviously there will be, and are, issues that affect the whole of the District. Through the Mansfield District Tenants Forum, groups have the opportunity to meet and feedback issues to the Housing Department. Representatives from all groups are also invited to attend quarterly area consumer panels where performance of the housing department on repair times and collection of rents etc. are presented. Questions can be raised and results of these panels will be available to all tenants through groups.

In Mansfield there is also a Tenant's Federation. The Mansfield Federation of Tenants and Residents, is open for all groups to join, although you do not have to join to become recognised by the Council it is strongly encouraged. The Federation provides a forum independent of the Council, and gives access to a network of tenant organisations, both regional and national, which promote tenant participation.

3. STARTING UP A GROUP

Groups are set up for varying reasons, but are usually in response to a collective interest or concern about an issue in the area. This may be concerning modernisation of properties, vandalism or anti-social behaviour issues. It is usually the case that if an individual feels there is a problem other people in the area do too! Talk to people in your area, ask friends about your worries. By sharing your thoughts and working together a group is formed that is a collective voice.

Once you have decided to 'formalise' a group there are certain issues that need to be decided:

- What are the aims of the group?
- What is the area that you are representing?
- How will you promote, get people to support, the group?

- Do you have people with experience, to chair, act as secretary etc.?
- What assistance do you need to get started?
- What next!



To help with these issues you can contact the Housing Liaison Officer (Tel: 463147). Alternatively you can get help, advice and assistance from Community Development Workers at Nottingham County Council, Mansfield District Council (Leisure Department) and Mansfield CVS. Help in getting started, advice on roles and responsibilities of the committee, constitution and setting up meetings can all be provided. You might also qualify for Community grants and if your aims reflect the criteria for Tenants groups as laid down by the District Tenants Forum then you will be entitled to a start up grant from the Council. Following the guidelines in this handbook would also ensure that you qualify for annual recognition, which will mean continued funding and support.

For a group to be formally recognised by the Housing Department there are certain things that must be done:- adopt a constitution, elect officers (Committee), arrange financial controls (Bank account etc.). All of these issues are covered in greater detail later in the handbook (Section 9 – Recognition).

4. FUNDING TO SUPPORT GROUP

When a group reaches all the criteria set up by Mansfield DC the group will be officially recognised and will be entitled to funding. Each group will get

- **£250 Start up grant – this is towards setting up costs e.g. stationery, holding a public meeting, leaflet distribution, refreshments, room costs etc. The Housing Liaison Officer will deduct costs that have been incurred by the department for setting up the group.**
- **£400.00 for the year to go towards running the group but not for projects, again for running a group and meeting expenses that the committee incur.**
- **Up to £500 towards a Computer. The group should be running for up to six months before they can apply for this. An agreement will be signed when a group purchases a computer**
- **Up to £2000.00 towards an environmental project, this will be to help projects in the community for example a clean up in the park, cleaning up graffiti anything that will help the community. A grant form will be provided to each group with all contact details. The group will liase with their housing officer and housing manager to get the projects completed**
- **Outside funding from Development groups**
- **Expenses for travel, training and childcare can be claimed from the council when attending council business.**



5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

It is important for the credibility and the accountability of the group that ALL people who are entitled to be represented, by the group, have an 'Equal Opportunity' to do so.

Equal Opportunity is not just about language that is racial or sexist it is about every entitled person being able to take an active part and having an equal say.

Things that need to be considered:

- Venue - Pubs or Church halls might exclude some people because of beliefs or views
- Access - Is it accessible to all, do you need transport etc.
- Time - Daytime only meetings will exclude some. Vary time of day and day of the week
- Notice - Adequate notice of meetings. Ensure that everybody knows



Committee members who attend meetings when representing the group, such as area panels, Tenants Federation, District Forum etc. should be reimbursed expenses.

The more people who can get involved, the more you will achieve and you will also get more respect from other organisations and agencies.

6. ACTION PLAN

You have now set up your group you have lots of local interest and have identified the issues that they are unhappy about.

How do you tackle these issues?



YOU NEED A PLAN

An action plan consists of various elements:

- Identify the problem e.g. Too much litter
- What outcome do you require e.g. No Litter
- What assistance is available e.g. Estate Warden, Street Cleansing etc.
- Who is going to co-ordinate (this does not mean do all the work!)?
- How will you stop the problem reoccurring i.e. Regular litterpicking, more bins etc.
- Time span i.e. When do you want to achieve your aim?
- Measuring the outcome i.e. How do you gauge the success of your plan?

Sadly a lot of plans do not have immediate success. This is sometimes due to the fact that they are issues that are not easily rectified, or are complex, or are long term plans. In this case try and have various 'goals' and the plan broken down in stages. Constantly review your plan advertise your successes and re-evaluate if you have failures.

7. KEEPING THE GROUP TOGETHER

It is important to remember that things will not always run smoothly in the beginning. A new group has to learn to work together. At the start people may not know each other, may be shy or unsure of their value to the group or what they can do. The group also has to learn to work together democratically, accepting the majority viewpoint and supporting that view.

At the outset there may be a lot of enthusiasm, but lack of immediate success can put an instant strain on a new group and people will leave. There are some things that you can do to help alleviate these potential problems:

- Make sure that everyone knows what is going on and that aims and objectives are clear and understood**
- Encourage participation by everyone in the group. Do not let it be dominated by a few**
- Respect every ones views, you may not agree, but people have the right to express their opinions**
- Try not to argue amongst yourselves, do not blame each other if things go wrong. Learn from mistakes and move on**
- Be clear about roles and responsibilities, what is expected from individuals**
- Do not allow individuals to take on too much**
- Set REALISTIC goals, there is nothing like success to encourage and motivate people. Also give them the feeling that they are making a difference**



Groups tend to be more successful where everyone takes some sort of responsibility (not a few trying to do everything) and are accountable to the whole group.

Make sure meetings are as interesting as possible to encourage attendance. Keep the agenda about relevant local issues. Invite guest speakers, but make sure meetings do not drag on too long.

Organising events outside of meetings, such as social gatherings, fundraising activities etc. is a good way of attracting interest and support but also maintains interest with established members (All work and no Play!).

8. ACCOUNTABILITY

Groups must be accountable to the people that it represents. Although you can air your personal views you must also air the views of the people who elected you (even if this contradicts your view). As a representative you must bring forward, to the meetings, the feelings, wishes and views of the people in the area.

Representing people means you must:

- Make sure you find out what people think/want
- Report back with the outcome, what decisions have been made
- Make Minutes available for all to see
- Make sure people have all the information to be able to make informed opinions (Do not be selective in what you say/show)
- Make sure they know how/why decisions are made
- Pass on bad news as well as good
- Make sure that everybody who wants to come to a meeting can do (this might mean organising crèches or transport)
- ALWAYS involve as many people as possible



The Housing Department insists that before a group can be officially recognised they must show that they are accountable (See section 9 – Recognition).

These guidelines are for the benefit of the group. Not following these might cause disillusionment and people will stop supporting and attending meetings. If the group is accountable to its members it becomes the voice of those people.

9. RECOGNITION

INTRODUCTION



Councillors, officers, tenants and residents of the Housing Participation Steering Group have agreed the official recognition criteria groups should meet to be involved in the Mansfield District Councils' Tenant Participation Framework. To be eligible for funding Community Groups need to follow the general guidelines as laid down in the handbook (Constitution, Equal Opportunity, Accountability etc.).

AREA OF BENEFIT

Each group must state the boundaries of the area they wish to represent. The Housing Department will only recognise one group within these boundaries. Disputes over group boundaries can be resolved with the Housing Liaison Officer or through the Mediation Service.

INVOLVEMENT OF COUNCIL TENANTS IN GROUPS

Groups must have open membership for all tenants and residents in the area they cover.

INVOLVEMENT OF OFFICERS AND COUNCILLORS IN GROUPS

The role of officers and councillors in tenant participation is different. Whilst encouraging and supporting tenants and residents groups, officers and councillors should not have full membership of groups or be on their committees.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT

Groups will be expected to hold regular open meetings, which must be minuted, and well publicised. Meetings must be run democratically so the views of members can be heard.

Aside from meetings groups should show other ways they involve their wider membership, such as by word of mouth, newsletters, mini surveys, estate walkabouts etc. They should show how they let local people know about the group's existence and what it does and invite local people to join in.

All this will help the group to meet the aims written into their Constitution and show they are active and have support in their area.

CONSTITUTION

Each group should formally adopt a Constitution covering the following areas:

- Aims of the group
- Area of benefit

- **Membership – who can join**
- **Equal opportunities and fairness**
- **Finance**
- **The committee**
- **AGM's and special meetings**
- **Quorum – the number of members required for meetings**
- **Dissolution – how the group can end**
- **When and where the Constitution was adopted**



CODE OF CONDUCT

Resident's representatives will be meeting with Council officers and councillors on a regular basis. In the main everyone will want to help where they can. Shouting or threatening or abusive behaviour of any kind, whether to officers, councillors or other tenants or residents cannot be tolerated. Anyone behaving in such a way should be asked to leave meetings. In extreme circumstances the person or people concerned may be permanently excluded by a vote of those present, or the groups recognition by the Housing Department maybe withdrawn.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND FAIRNESS

In setting these criteria we encourage groups to represent all tenants and residents in their area and take steps to see that particular groups of tenants are not excluded.

Groups should act in a non-discriminatory way by being genuinely open to all tenants and residents in their area, by working with the Housing Liaison Officer in developing equal opportunities and by access to training and information.

If a group behaves in a discriminatory way, this is a ground for non-recognition and withdrawal of support.

WHAT THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT OFFERS TO GROUPS THAT MEET THESE CRITERIA

Recognised groups are entitled to support from officers and members in the work that they do. This support includes:

- Information
- Advice
- Attendance of officers and members at their meetings
- Grants, subject to annual review

INVOLVEMENT WITH THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT

The Housing Department will expect groups recognised by them to take part in their tenant participation meetings and other consultation and involvement exercises. If they do not the support they receive can be withdrawn.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF RECOGNITION

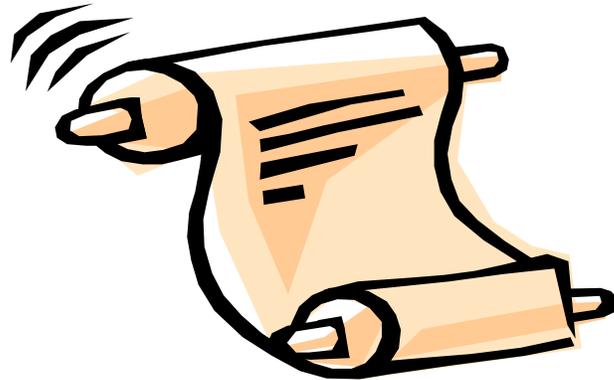
For continued recognition groups should:

- Elect officers and a committee annually at a public meeting
- Have a bank account and independently audited accounts which are openly available
- Have a Constitution which provides for fair and democratic running of the group
- Show that tenants in their area support the group
- Hold at least four public meetings a year and organise special meetings if members request them (as shown in the constitution)
- Produce records of general and committee meetings
- Report to and get feedback from members through newsletters, meetings and other contact

The Housing Liaison Officer will meet representatives from each group annually to review their recognition.

10. THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution is a set of rules concerning what the group is for, what the members are agreeing to do, and how they are going to do it. It is an agreement entered into so that all members know where they stand, and officers (Committee) know what they can and cannot do in the name of the group.



The key issues that a constitution should include:

- **What do we intend to do?**
- **How are we going to do it?**
- **How are we going to organise ourselves?**
- **How will decisions be made?**

Some constitutions are wordy and complicated, but they don't have to be like this! They should be understandable and avoid jargon. It should be available to all members who want to look at it, so it should be a useable document that makes clear what the group is about and how it is run. It needs to be clear, but it also needs to be flexible so that rules and regulations are not so rigid that the group cannot function efficiently.

The easiest way to draw up a constitution is to use a model. The model that the Housing Department uses is at Appendix A to this handbook. To be recognised by the Housing Department your constitution must include the following:

- The name of the group/association
- Area of Benefit (With map if possible)
- The aims of the group
- The Powers of the group (what it can/cannot do!)
- An Equal Opportunities statement
- Membership (who is eligible)
- Ending membership
- Meetings, where/how advertised , how often etc.
- Procedures at meetings, procedure at AGM etc.
- Voting (who can etc.)
- Minutes, records of meetings
- Finance (what funds are for, audit procedure etc.)
- Committee (who, how many etc.)
- Duties of officers (Committee)
- Alterations to the constitution
- Dissolution, closing of the group

Once the constitution has been drawn up it will need to be agreed at a public meeting. All members should be able to have or access a copy.

A good constitution should:

- Help the group work well
- Ensure that it carries out or follows its true purpose and aims
- Help to resolve any conflicts or misunderstandings

11. DUTIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON



Firstly this member of the committee does not have to be called the 'Chairperson' some groups prefer terms such as 'facilitator', 'enabler' or 'co-ordinator'. It is entirely up to you!

This role however is a key one in the group. The Chairperson is seen as the figurehead providing leadership and guidance without dominating

meetings or inhibiting other members. The 'Chair' should ensure that the group follows its aims and objectives.

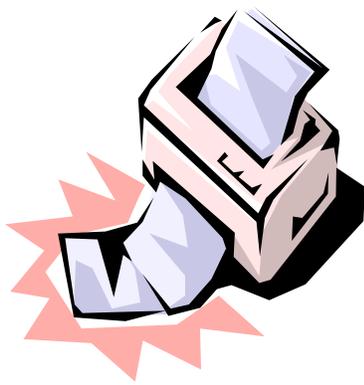
The Chairperson should:

- Be aware of the various activities carried out in the name of the group and be familiar with the constitution
- Consult with other members of the committee to ensure that they carry out their tasks
- Consult with the secretary to organise meetings and produce agenda
- Conduct of the meeting, following the agenda
- Confine discussion in the meeting to the item on the agenda and make sure that there is a suitable conclusion before moving on
- Ensure that there is fair discussion, allow everybody to have their say, that they keep to the point and that they are not abusive or offensive
- Ensure that only one person is speaking at any one time, and there are no other conversations going on
- Make sure that a true record of the meetings is kept, and let members know what is expected before the next meeting
- Clarify the date and time of the next meeting

There can be slight variations to these duties but the basic principles should be the same.

The importance of this role means that the Chairperson traditionally assists discussion rather than leading it. A good Chairperson will use the role not to put forward their own views but to ensure that all views are heard.

Most constitutions allow the Chairperson to have the casting vote in the event of a tie.



12. ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary's role often becomes the key role on the committee. They are the focus of all the paperwork that comes to, and leaves, the group. They have the job of making sure everybody knows what is going on. However they should make sure that they do not try and take everything on, work should be shared by the committee. The Secretary must liaise closely with the Chairperson to ensure that things run smoothly and the group stays focused, even if other members of the committee are not present.

Secretary's duties include:

- to arrange meetings – time, date, place, etc.
- to consult with the Chairperson in selecting items for the agenda and to circulate the agenda
- to prepare all papers for the meeting including minutes of the previous meeting and all correspondence dealt with since the last meeting
- to take a note of all those present at meetings and to note apologies for absence and record proceedings at the meeting
- to prepare formal minutes on the basis of the record taken at the meeting and to circulate them
- to deal with correspondence in connection with the group and report on this at each meeting

The Secretary is normally the first point of contact for the group and for people outside of it. They may be responsible for keeping lists of members, dates of meetings and sub-group meetings, and act as the liaison point for the group with the Council, other groups etc.

13. ROLE OF THE TREASURER

The role of the Treasurer is to make sure that the money belonging to the group is properly managed and



accounted for. However the Treasurer is not just in the group to look after the money but to take an active part in the committee.

The Treasurer looks after the finances and keeps a record of income and expenditure. They need to ensure that the group does not spend money it does not have, and that the committee are aware of the state of the groups finances.

Treasurer's duties include:

- opening a bank account and paying all money received into the account
- keeping a record of all money received and issuing receipts
- paying bills as agreed by the group and keeping a record of expenditure
- maintaining an account book detailing income and expenditure and preparing regular statements to the committee about the financial position of the group
- arranging for the account to be audited yearly, generally for the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The auditor should be somebody independent of the group

Often this is the role that people are reluctant to volunteer for as they see it as being complicated. As long as a record is made every time there is a transaction, receipts are kept then it need not be. The Housing Liaison Officer can give further advice and support if necessary.

Time spent doing the financial duties should not take the Treasurer more than a few minutes a week. There is no reason why they should not be as active as other members of the group are.

14. MINUTES OF MEETINGS



At most meetings, someone can be seen frantically taking notes of proceedings (normally the Secretary) recording what was said, what decisions were made, who was delegated what task and when the next meeting is.

These notes, form the basis of the official minutes of the meeting. Minutes serve various functions:

- they allow people who were not at the meeting to find out what happened
- they remind people who *were* there what happened
- they remind people of what was decided and who is going to do it
- they form the record of decisions made

Meetings and minutes can be very formal, with 'proposers' and 'seconders' to every proposal or they can be very informal. This is entirely up to your group, as long as an accurate record is kept. However, whatever way your group decides to conduct meetings certain rules should be followed:

- it is not acceptable to interrupt another speaker
- it is not acceptable to talk when someone else is speaking
- it is not acceptable to make abusive personal remarks
- it is not acceptable to shout or behave in an aggressive manner
- persons wishing to speak should wait for the Chairpersons permission
- no one persons opinion is more important than any one else's
- everybody is entitled to be heard

- once a decision has been reached (voted on) it should be accepted by all present
- bad language will not be tolerated
- the Chairpersons decision is final!!



If anybody fails to follow these rules they should be asked to leave.

The minutes should be written up following the form of the agenda:

- Apologies
- Minutes of previous meeting
- Matters arising
- AOB etc.

The minutes should be written as soon after the meeting as possible, while everything is still fresh in the mind of the minute taker. They should be circulated to all those who attended, all those that sent apologies, and anyone else that has an interest in the meeting.

A copy should be displayed at your meeting place if possible, and copies should be available to any member who requests them. A copy should always be kept on file as well.

15. THE AGENDA

The agenda is an important tool to the successful running of meetings. It sets out what is to be discussed and in what order.

It should provide a structure for the meeting and ensure that everything that needs to be discussed is discussed.

The Chairperson and the Secretary normally set the agenda, other members of the committee should be allowed to forward items for the agenda. It is also useful to allow general members of the group to forward items, this means that less points are raised under 'Any other Business' and also gives people an opportunity to think about the issue being raised.

The agenda serves a number of purposes:

- **a reminder of when and where the meeting will take place**
- **what is to be discussed**
- **a chance to look up information prior to meeting**
- **it puts things in a logical order**

The agenda normally follows the format of:

- **Apologies**
- **Previous minutes**
- **Points arising**
- **Items for discussion**
- **AOB**



Items for the agenda may be put on for any of the following reasons:

- **to give information (Guest speakers etc.)**
- **to collect information**
- **to create a discussion**
- **to solve a problem/issue**
- **to decide on a course of action**

To maintain control over the time spent at meetings (they should never be too long) time limits may be put on each agenda item. If

you have a number of large projects you may appoint sub-committees to deal with these who give a brief update at the general meetings.

16. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Every group should have in their constitution a requirement for an Annual General Meeting. This is the meeting where members of the group can express their feelings on how things are run, question the committee and to elect the committee for the following year.

A typical agenda for an AGM would be:

- Welcome & Introductions
- Minutes of the last meeting
- Matters arising
- Chairpersons report
- Secretary's report
- Treasurers report
- Election of committee
- AOB

Nominations for posts on the committee should be called for when advertising the AGM. Names of candidates should be received 7 days prior to the meeting to allow time for ballot papers to be prepared if necessary.

How you organise the vote, by a show of hands or by secret ballot is up to your group however the method must be decided in advance of the meeting. Everybody involved should be informed of the decision and how the vote is to be conducted.



The group's accounts should be independently audited for the AGM. The Treasurer should present a statement of the account showing



income and expenditure for the year, and the current balance.

Groups must be accountable to their members, you must be open and be ready to accept criticism as well as praise. The AGM is an opportunity for everybody to have a say on how they feel the group should/has been run.

17. FINDING OUT WHAT PEOPLE THINK



For your group to successfully represent its members it needs to find out what they think. This makes you more accountable and more likely to succeed.

Some suggestions on how you can do this:

- Call a public meeting
- Hold small meetings within the community
- Committee knock on peoples doors and ask
- Carry out a survey
- Distribute leaflets/newsletters with reply strips



Whilst doing this you are also advertising what you are doing. You can also find out why people do not take part or what skills

they might have that could benefit the group for specific projects/tasks.

Involving more people means:

- gaining credibility
- be more democratic
- sharing of the workload
- more people working to improve the area
- bring a feeling of community spirit

18. PUBLICITY

Not all publicity is good publicity, community groups that attract bad publicity can suffer badly as a result. Most local papers however do promote community groups and will publish stories or advertise events. If you have a success make sure you let them know!



If you are asked to do an interview make sure you are prepared. Ask for the questions in advance if possible. Be clear about what is going to be discussed.

Always invite the press to events, send in photographs particularly if it involves children. Try and invite local councillors and County councillors to open/attend events. Remember you will only attract the press if they know about your event.

19. COMMUNICATING WITH MEMBERS



Communication between the committee and members of the group is very important. This is a two way flow which allows you to find out what they want and to allow you to tell them what you are doing/have done!

You can use various ways to achieve this:

- Public meetings – should be held on a regular basis (At least 4 per year).
- Newsletters – are useful to keep people informed on what is going on (especially when there is good news). The Housing Liaison Officer can help with this with both typing and photo copying.
- Posters – put in community buildings, local shops, schools etc. can be a useful way of informing people particularly when advertising an event.
- Word of mouth – it is surprising how many people will be told when you start spreading the word.

Always celebrate your successes with your members, no matter how small. Most groups suffer from the criticism 'that nothing ever gets done!'. Even if you have not achieved everything you set out to do keep people informed, tell them how they can assist in the future. Always tell them how they have helped you to achieve something.

20. FUNDRAISING

You need funds to run a group for stationery, expenses, postage, courses, training and refreshments etc. The list is never ending and this is just normal running costs'. If you want to undertake something in the Community invariably there will be a cost attached to this.

New groups can apply to the Housing Department for help in starting up, and official recognition from the Council will entitle you to apply for funding, but after that the group needs to be self-supporting.

There are three basic ways to raise money:

- Fundraising events like raffles, car boots, jumble sales and social evening's etc. They need to be well advertised and you will need a venue. These events not only raise money but they bring people together.

- Apply for grants, Community Development workers can give assistance, from both the District Council and County Council. CVS will also give assistance and information on grant making bodies. Do not be put off by the application forms as assistance can be given with these as well.
- 'Scrounge' from local businesses, some might give you money others will supply goods that can be sold, used for prizes etc.

21. SUMMARY

In summary the following are the basic steps you need to follow when setting up an effective group:

- Decide what the group is for. What are the aims and objectives
- Make sure you have the support of the membership (those that you are representing) get their views and get them involved
- Plan your opening steps carefully, when setting up a group you are laying the foundations upon which to build
- Organisation – get a constitution, elect a committee arrange a meeting
- Monitor your progress, celebrate and advertise your successes. Re-evaluate and try again when you have failures
- Develop the group. Allow it to grow and thrive

Finally, remember you are not alone. There are people who can help with support and advice. Also you can contact similar groups and see what they have done. The Mansfield District Forum is made up of groups who are interested in improving their communities – Join Them!



GOOD LUCK!

Appendix A

CONSTITUTION OF (Name) TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NAME

The name of the Association is (Name)

AREA OF BENEFIT

The area covered by the Association shall be (state area), in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.

AIMS

The aims of the Association are to:

- *Promote membership to all people eligible to join the Association*
- To build a partnership and improve communication between members, the local authority and other statutory and voluntary organisations
- To represent the majority view of members
- To provide regular information to all members
- To regularly consult all members
- *To improve the housing and other services in the area of benefit*
- To encourage a community spirit
- Be non-party political

- To promote equal opportunities within the community

POWERS

To further these aims, but not otherwise, the Association shall have the power to:

- Arrange meetings, social events and training and publicise these
- Write or publish newsletters and other materials
- Buy or hire equipment
- Properly supervise, control and manage such equipment
- Collect and provide information
- Raise funds, apply for and receive grants, donations and subscriptions
- Support other organisations with similar aims
- Make provision for the proper management of financial assets
- Pay such reasonable expenses to members as voted on and agreed at meetings

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Association, in the conduct of its affairs, prohibits discrimination or harassment on grounds of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability and religion.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all residents in the area of benefit irrespective of whether owner-occupiers or tenants of any landlord.

Any membership fee shall be determined by the Annual General Meeting.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

The committee may accept any person as an Associate member. They shall enjoy all privileges of membership except the right to vote and to be elected as members of the committee.

ENDING MEMBERSHIP

Membership ends when a member stops being a resident in the area of benefit.

Membership can be suspended or ended by a two thirds majority vote of the committee, in the event of unreasonable behaviour, discriminatory behaviour or behaviour which goes against the aims of the Association.

Where a person's membership has been suspended as above they are entitled to have this reviewed at the next general meeting of the Association.

MEETINGS

Notice of meetings shall be displayed at communal points.

GENERAL MEETINGS

General meetings open to all members will be held every (state number) month(s).

General meetings will be publicised at least 5 days in advance and open to all residents to speak and vote.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS (SGM)

The committee can call an SGM at the request of a majority of the committee or (state number) residents. 14 days notice of an SGM shall be given.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM)

An AGM shall be held each year. Not more than 15 months shall pass between one AGM and the next. The AGM will:

- Hear the annual report from the committee
- Present audited accounts of the Association
- Elect the committee
- Vote on any amendments to the constitution
- Deal with any other necessary business

All members will be given 21 days written notice of the AGM; this shall include an agenda, minutes of the last AGM, nominations to the committee and any resolutions to change the constitution

PROCEDURES AT ALL MEETINGS

QUORUM

No general meeting or AGM shall take place if less than (state number) members are present.

VOTING

Each member shall have one vote on any matter put before an AGM, general meeting or SGM.

Results of all votes shall be recorded in the minutes.

MINUTES

Minutes shall be taken of all meetings recording the matters discussed and decisions made. These minutes shall be agreed at the next meeting.

FINANCE

Funds raised by or on behalf of the Association can only be used to achieve the aims of the Association.

A bank or building society account shall be opened in the name of the Association and all cheques signed by 2 nominated officers.

The accounts shall be independently audited each year.

COMMITTEE

Any member over 18 can stand for election to the committee.

The committee shall stand down at each AGM and may be re-elected.

The committee shall be made up of at least a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The committee members shall carry out the business of the Association.

The committee may temporarily fill a vacancy for an officer from members until the next AGM.

The committee may set up sub-committees to carry out activities. Sub-committees will be accountable to the committee and members and must keep records of income, expenditure and their meetings.

The committee shall monitor the work, finances and membership of the Association.

The committee shall meet at least every (state number) months, or as necessary to carry out the business of the Association.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The CHAIRPERSON shall run the meetings of the Association, keep order and see fair debate on matters discussed. The Chair oversees any voting that takes place.

The TREASURER shall maintain the bank account in the name of the Association, keep records of income and expenditure and arrange for accounts to be audited annually.

The SECRETARY shall arrange and notify residents of meetings. They shall see that records are kept of all meetings including a record of those attending.

ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Any proposals to change the constitution must be received by the Secretary in writing 28 days before the AGM or SGM at which they are to be considered.

Any alterations need a majority vote of those present at the meeting.

DISSOLUTION

If the committee or remaining members decide by a simple majority that the Association should formally end, they shall give 14 days notice of a meeting to discuss this. Notice shall be posted at communal points in the area of benefit. The Association can be dissolved by a majority of those present at the meeting. A quorum need not apply for this purpose. Any assets remaining once the Association has met its obligations shall be used for charitable purposes or to benefit the community in the area of benefit.

This constitution was adopted at an (type of) meeting of members held at

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on

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Signed

Chair.....

Secretary.....