



A GUIDE TO SETTING UP A RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

“A residents association is a group of people living in an area, street or block who have come together to take up issues of common concern in relation to their housing, community and general environment”

TPAS Definition

Why set up a Residents Association?

There are many reasons why people decide to get together to form an Association. For example:

- ✓ To campaign for something (e.g.: better services, play facilities, a meeting place etc.);
- ✓ To campaign against something (e.g.; the closure of local facilities, the effect of any new housing;
- ✓ To arrange outings and social events (such as a coach trip, bingo, fun days, BBQ's, etc.);
- ✓ To keep people in the area informed of all the issues that affect them;
- ✓ To get involved with what other groups may be doing;
- ✓ To have a representative voice with your landlord and to use the group to talk through ideas and plans from and to your landlord;
- ✓ To obtain funding in the form of grants.

What are the benefits of a Residents Association?

- ⇒ To give a greater voice than you would have as an individual, when talking to your landlord, the council To access grants, e.g.
Start-up grants- given by the landlord to promote resident participation.
- ⇒ To access a no interest loan from landlord to help your association to buy something which will benefit all your members.
- ⇒ To access training (on many different subjects.) Such as computers, the Internet, running meetings, setting goals for your group, etc.
- ⇒ To become a member of the Wirral Tenants and Residents federation and get involved in the wider community and find out about new initiatives and opportunities which may affect you in some way.
- ⇒ To keep you informed and to give you a voice.

The Residents Association

The Residents Association will consist of a committee.

The officers of the committee will be made up of a:

- A Chairperson who guides the association to achieve its aims and chairs the meetings of the association.
- A secretary, who prepares agendas, keeps records and keeps members informed.
- A treasurer who has overall responsibility for the association's finances.

Is there a limit to the number of members a group can have?

No. A group can be as small or large as you want it to be. It could be all residents in a sheltered housing scheme or even a whole estate. It is up to the residents to decide the area they want to cover.

Should we invite the warden or the landlord to the meetings?

That should be your choice. Some residents are uneasy about inviting housing staff to the meetings because they think they might tend to steer things their own way. If you think this might happen –don't invite them.

- ⇒ If you do decide to invite them (because they are giving you support and advice) make sure they know they have been invited for that purpose only or some other organisation about things you would like to see changed.

All Resident Groups should:

- ! Distribute copies of the minutes to everyone who attended the meeting. This should be within 2 weeks and clearly show the outcome of the meeting and the action needed.

Grants to Constituted Residents Groups

We will

- Pay for reasonable set up costs including hall hire and publicity;

- Give an annual grant of £100 for groups with 50 residents or less living in an area, plus a further £2 per resident where there are more than 50 residents. The maximum grant is £400;
- Reimburse residents reasonable expenses;
- Offer and promote residents sponsorship fund for funding local community projects organised by residents;
- Provide training to encourage tenants to get involved;
- Run free tenant training programmes;
- Run courses which receive good feedback from residents.

Help to informal groups

Wirral Methodist will provide advice and non-financial assistance to informal groups and individuals'. The views of these residents are equally important and will feed into the wider resident involvement process through local meetings.

Wirral Methodist will:

- ✓ Attend meetings when requested;
- ✓ Help with the designing, photocopying and distributing publicity;
- ✓ Promote Tenant & Resident Associations, Joint Management Boards, Local Links and other ways of getting involved to residents;
- ✓ Consult with Resident Groups on any significant issues relating to the management of estate/area and major works;
- ✓ Respond to issues raised by the group on behalf of residents;
- ✓ Produce Minutes of meetings (if requested.)
- ✓ Ongoing advice and support is always available from staff.

Resources for Resident Involvement

Wirral Methodist will actively promote different options for getting involved and support involved residents in the following ways:

Meetings and Groups

Wirral Methodist will support resident groups whether they are formally recognised or operate on an informal basis. All groups will, however need to show that they are

accessible and are run democratically. Wirral Methodist will not support any group that restricts access or membership unless a group has been set up to address a specific issue and has the agreement of the association.

Resident's associations will need to meet the published criteria in order to access a start-up grant and ongoing funding from the Association. These groups will require a constitution, Equal opportunities statement and a code of conduct. Further information regarding constitutions etc. is available from Wirral Methodist Housing Association.

If you would like assistance setting up a residents group contact: Jill
Carter Tel: 0151 647 5471.



WIRRAL METHODIST HOUSING ASSOCIATION
42 HAMILTON STREET
BIRKENHEAD
WIRRAL
CH41 5AE