

Guidance for Residents' Setting up a Social Committee



Setting up the Social Committee What is a social committee? Support from Housing 21 Do your research Decide upon a leader Agenda Advertise your meeting The First Meeting, role of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary Agree on the constitution Open a bank account Be inclusive	<u>Page 3</u>
Appendix 1 Model Constitution	<u>Page 7</u>
Appendix 2 Setting up a bank account	<u>Page 11</u>
Appendix 3 Money Handling Guidance	<u>Page 12</u>

Setting up a successful Social Committee

This document is intended for guidance on what to do if you would like to set up a Social Committee rather than a Residents Association. A Residents Association is a group of residents who come together to represent the shared interests of those living in the scheme.

Primary functions of a Residents Association:

- Advocating for residents' concerns and needs
- Providing a platform for residents to voice their opinions and collaborate on issues on a scheme
- Keeping residents informed about local happenings
- Addressing community issues
- Can also arrange social events and activities

In order for the Residents Association (RA) to be recognised by Housing 21 as being the collective voice of the residents on the scheme, the RA needs to have a constitution that satisfies specific criteria. These criteria can be found in the RA Handbook.

What is a social committee?

Unlike a Residents Association, a social committee's primary focus is on enhancing social connections and creating a positive community atmosphere. They are more informal (there is no legal format for setting up a social committee), and the resources in this document could be useful in ensuring the smooth operation of your social committee.

Examples of social committee activities

- Community parties
- Holiday celebrations
- Sports events
- Cultural programs
- Visiting entertainers
- Fundraising
- Coffee mornings
- Fish and chip supper

Support from Housing 21

Your Scheme Manager and their line manager will be available to support you in setting up your committee. It is part of the manager's role to create a 'lively court', encouraging the use of the communal facilities and ensuring there is an active and vibrant environment in which to participate in shared activities and reduce social isolation among residents. Your

Scheme Manager can also help with organising and facilitating events and activities, just ask them.

Do your research

Get all interested parties together to start thinking about what the group wishes to achieve. You could take a survey of your fellow residents to find out how many would want to regularly take part in social events and what type of activities they would be interested in. Would they be interested in helping to organise events, joining the committee?

Decide what the purpose of the social committee is and what tasks the committee will be responsible for.

Decide upon a leader

For a meeting to be productive it is useful to have someone take notes and for someone to take the lead in keeping people to the point. These notes can then be used as the basis for the General Residents' Meeting

At this stage you should already have decided on who will take the lead in the first meeting. That person can then introduce the reason why the meeting is being held and the purpose of the meeting.

Agenda

Decide upon an agenda for your first meeting.

An Agenda should include:

- Name of committee
- Date, time and place of meeting
- Minutes of last meeting/matters arising
- List of items to be discussed
- Any other business
- Date and time of next meeting.

Something to consider...

Ideally, you want as many residents to attend as possible so hold the meeting at a time when most residents are available to attend. At a scheme where a lot of residents' work, this might be in the evening. If there are a few residents who are unable to attend the meeting but are interested, then consider sending a ballot paper to those people ahead of the meeting.

Advertise your meeting

Send a reminder to all residents a week before the meeting along with details of the agenda. This could be by putting leaflets through letterboxes, posters and reminders on Scheme Notice Boards. You could also ask your Scheme Manager to remind people via the daily call and include it in the Court Newsletter.

The First Meeting

Build a strong committee to ensure it runs smoothly and remains focused on its objectives. Decide how often you will meet and discuss the roles and responsibilities of each committee member. As a rule, most committees will have:

Chairperson

Main duties include:

- To ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and efficiently.
- All business is discussed.
- Everyone's views are heard.
- Clear decisions are reached.
- The meeting starts and finishes on time.

Secretary

Main duties include:

- Taking the minutes of meetings
- Letting people know when and where the next meeting is.
- Preparing agendas for meetings, with help from the Chair
- Writing and receiving letters on behalf of the social committee
- Keeping members informed of what correspondence has been sent out and received.
- Keeping a record of membership important phone numbers etc.

Treasurer

The person with overall responsibility for the Social Committee's finances, (although the bank account must have three signatories) their duties include:

- Opening the bank account
- Paying money received into the bank account and keeping a record of money received and issuing receipts.
- Paying bill and keeping a record of money spent
- Keeping petty cash and a petty cash account book for the day-to-day expenditure
- Keeping an account book of all money going in and out of the organisation
- Prepare statements to the committee for the Annual General Meeting.

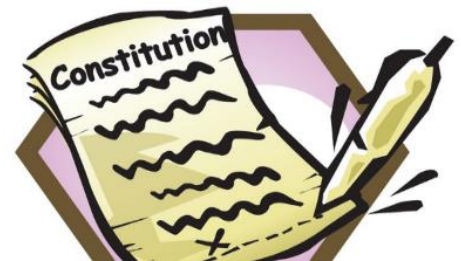
Something to consider...

You may decide to have a more informal committee and have someone who facilitates, and residents take it in turn to lead the meeting. You may wish to share the responsibilities of the roles of Treasurer and Secretary.

Whatever you decide upon, having strong leadership, listening to all voices not just “those who shout loudest,” and taking minutes at the meeting will help ensure that the committee operates smoothly and is inclusive.

Agree on the constitution

This helps set out the aims and rules for your committee and its members, a handy template can be found at Appendix one. There is no legal requirement for you to have a constitution, but it will help to set the rules and remind you of the committee’s purpose. Having a constitution can also be useful to use as some of your documentation required to set up a bank account for your committee.



Open a bank account

You will need to open a bank account for the association funds and a guide on how to do this can be found at [Appendix two](#).

You can generate income for the committee and your activities by fund raising. A bank account is also needed if you intend to apply for grants and lottery funding for any projects you may wish to start on scheme. See also [Appendix Three](#) on safe handling of cash.

Be Inclusive

It is recommended that you avoid membership charges to be more inclusive. If you have residents from different cultures, for example, you could look to organising events to learn more about their cultures by celebrating Diwali, Chinese New Year or Eid. Be part of your local community. When planning your big events such as garden parties or summer fairs, think about whether you could open events up to the wider community. Inviting along other community groups can help your members integrate and meet new people.

Appendix 1

CONSTITUTION OF

Social Committee/Group

1. TITLE

The Association shall be known as “.....Social Committee/Group.”

2. OBJECTIVE

To promote the wellbeing of Residents at the Scheme known as.....by the following means:

- Agreeing and arranging Social Activities and events for the benefit of residents on the scheme.
- Enhancing social connections and creating a positive community atmosphere.
- To work in partnership with the Scheme Manager and Housing 21 to improve the well-being of residents.
- To provide a means of distributing information to the residents regarding social activities and events.
- To engage in other activities which the committee may from time to time consider to be in the best interest of its members.

3. ELIGIBILITY

- The Social Committee will comply with Housing 21’s equal opportunities policy and the Respect and Inclusion Charter. Membership is open to all residents of the Scheme regardless of racial origin, colour, religion, gender, marital status, sexuality, age, or disability.
- Each member of the Social Committee is entitled to a vote.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- Membership of the Social Committee shall be open to all residents of the scheme.
- Each member of the Social Committee is entitled to a vote.

5. THE COMMITTEE

- A committee shall be elected to carry out the business of the Social Committee.
- The Committee shall be made up of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and general members.
- The Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. Vacancies arising through the year can be filled by elections.
- Committee members shall carry out duties given to them at general meetings.
- The Committee shall meet once a month / quarter and no less thantimes a year.
- Minutes of Committee meetings should be available to all members.
-Members of the Committee present at the meetings shall constitute a quorum.

6. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETING

- All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.
- If a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken, and a decision will be made by a simple majority of members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the chair of the meeting will have additional casting vote.

7. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

- There shall be an Annual General Meeting held every 12 months, in the month of... at which the committee will report on its work and present a statement of accounts.
- The powers and duties of existing committee members and officers shall terminate at the AGM unless they are elected for a further year.
- The AGM shall elect a new committee, vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution.
- The Secretary shall notify all members of the date, time, and place not less than 14 days before the AGM.

8. OTHER GENERAL MEETINGS

- General meetings are open to all members and will be held at least once everymonths or more often if necessary.
- A Special (Extraordinary) General Meeting (SGM) open to all members will be held if more than 50% of members submit in writing a request for such a meeting to the Secretary or it can be called at the instigation of the Committee.
- The Secretary shall publicise all General Meetings at least 5 days in advance.
- At the AGM or Special General Meeting one third of members shall constitute a quorum.
- Voting at all meetings shall be by ballot and a majority decision shall prevail.
- The Chairperson shall have a second, or casting vote to be exercised only in the event of a tie.

9. SUBSCRIPTIONS

- It is optional as to whether Residents' Associations have subscriptions. Where it is agreed to have them, they should be set at a level low and be optional.
- Subscriptions should be modest and should be fixed at such levels as the Committee from time to time determine. Should it be required, fundraising activities should supplement this income.

10. ACCOUNTS

- The finances of the social committee shall be properly managed, and the treasurer shall keep adequate records of transactions.
- A bank account will be opened in the name of the committee.
- The account will require two signatures on any cheque or other bank document. There will be signatories available to the treasurer for signing cheques.
- The treasurer and an independent person (who is not a Committee Member) should check and verify accounts each year and these shall be presented by the treasurer at AGM and posted on the scheme notice board.

11. CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

- The Constitution can only be altered at an AGM or at a Special (Extraordinary) General Meeting (SGM)
- Any suggested changes must be handed to the Secretary 14 days before the AGM or SGM.
- Changes must be agreed by 66% of the members present at the AGM or SGM

DISSOLUTION

- If the committee, by a simple majority, deem it advisable to dissolve the group, it shall call a meeting of all the members of the group, giving not less than 14 days' notice.
- If such a decision is confirmed by a majority of those present, then all the assets of the group shall be disposed of according to the wishes at the meeting, subject to a vote.

12. OTHER EXPECTATIONS

- Housing 21 and its officers support and encourage the creation and continuation of the Social Committee, however the responsibility for running the committee is entirely the residents'.

.....Date.....

Chairperson of Social Committee

..... Date:.....

Secretary of Social Committee

..... Date:.....

Treasurer of Social Committee

Appendix two

Setting Up a Bank Account for a Residents Association or Social Club

It is important that your Social Committee has a bank account for your activities. As well as being good practice it gives you the freedom to financially manage your projects and events. Please see **Appendix Three** for Advice on Money Handling. **Scheme Managers** must follow the Cash Handling Policy and Procedure which can be found here: [Cash handling Policy](#).

Major grant awarding organisations such as the National Lottery will accept “Residents’ Associations” bank accounts and pay the grant into them if your bid is successful, so that’s another good reason for your residents’ association or social club to have their own account.

Most high street banks offer a basic account for clubs, residents associations and social groups.

High street banks have online applications, and you can open some of them in your local branch. They will require a copy of the Residents’ Association or Club’s constitution and usually need a treasurer, and two signatories (who must be residents, not Housing 21 employees). This should be straightforward to do once the Residents’ Association is set up.

For example, Metro Bank will set up a bank account once you have a constitution in place. They also offer to visit your site and do all the paperwork with you if they have a branch nearby and you are unable to travel to it.

Make sure you don’t open a business account. Banks usually charge for this. Confusingly, community/club accounts and business accounts are usually managed by the same team and will be listed on bank websites under “Business” rather than “Personal”. So, you will need to go to the Business section of the website and choose a Community or Club and Society account.

It is worth checking which banks have branches in your area. Here are some of the high street banks that offer community and club accounts.

Metro Bank [Community and Charity Bank Account | Metro Bank](#)

Lloyds Bank [Treasurer’s Account | Business | Lloyds Bank](#)

Barclays Bank [Your Community Account](#)

For more banks that may help

[Bank accounts for community groups | Resource Centre](#)

Appendix Three

Money Handling Guidance

Here are some tips and points to consider when handling money on behalf of your Social Committee.

Guidelines

- All cash handling must be carried out in a safe and secure environment.
- Cash should be collected, counted, transported, banked and recorded by two unrelated individuals.
- All cash received should be stored securely (ideally locked) until banked.
- Cash should be bagged and banked in suitable bags, and transported in bags that help disguise the cash (such as a shopper or carrier bag).
- Ideally cash and cheques should be counted and banked the same day they are collected, or at least within two working days.

Counting and storing cash

- At events there should always be two unrelated volunteers present to take care of finances. They should count the money together and once money is counted it should be agreed by signature by both parties.
- You should organise in advance a secure place to be used for the finance/counting area that is away from any public area.
- Unsecured cash should NEVER be left unattended.
- If you take cash home with you make sure it is stored within a locked cupboard.

Banking money safely

Please take time to consider how you are going to pay your money in before you collect cash, and always bear in mind your safety when handling and carrying cash.

- Cash should be banked as soon as is practical, and ideally within two working days.
- Cash not banked immediately must be placed in a safe or other secure location, such as a locked drawer, safe, cupboard or filing cabinet.
- Cash should ideally be bagged by denomination and banked in suitable bags, cash bags are available for free from banks and post offices.
- Cash should be transported in bags that help disguise the cash (such as a shopper or carrier bag).
- Remember to keep the paying in receipt for the Treasurers records.