



A guide to setting up a

Tenants and Residents Association or Community Group

How to
get one
started



Why set up a Tenants/Residents Association or Community Group?

This guide tells you all you need to know about setting up a Tenants/Residents Association or Community Group, and why they are important.

By setting up a group with other local people, to discuss common concerns or local issues, you can work together to make a difference to where you live.

How can we make things better?

- By creating a group you can foster community spirit in your neighbourhood.
- You can find out about issues and local interests which matter to local people.
- You can collectively raise issues that matter to you, with local organisations that make decisions about where you live such as the council, police, etc
- You can bring about changes for the better and get things done collectively.
- You can plan local events and programmes with residents which bring about change, create a sense of pride and have fun!



What is the difference between a Tenant / Resident Association and Community Group

It's important that you set up a group that meets your neighbourhood's needs and level of commitment.

For the purpose of this guide a Tenant / Residents Association:

- Is a group of residents (either renting, or homeowners including shared ownership) who want to discuss and make changes in their neighbourhood.
- Usually signs a constitution and elects a committee.
- A treasurer is appointed and the tenant and residents association holds a bank account

For the purpose of this guide a Community Group:

- Is a group of residents (either renting, or homeowners including shared ownership) who want to discuss and make changes in their neighbourhood.
- Who want to work together to improve their neighbourhood and community without being formally constituted.
- Can range from well-established formal groups, or regular working groups to small and informal discussion groups.
- Can deal with a specific issue or project eg: parking problems, or a fundraising event.

Setting up your group

Groups are set up for lots of reasons but usually because of shared interests or concerns about a particular issue in the area.

It's often the case that if one local resident is worried about something, or wants to organise a community activity, or an event there will be other people in the area probably thinking the same thing. Talk to people you know, your friends and neighbours about your concerns.

By sharing your thoughts and by working together, a group can be formed that is a collective voice to put forward important views.

It's important to remember that the responsibility of the group is the group's aims and not personal issues of individual members.

Once you have started forming your group it has to decide how it is going to progress. You will have to decide on things such as;

- What is the group going to do
- What issues will it try to tackle
- What area or street will it cover

People will have different ideas about what the group will do, and how it will run. Discuss the following ideas;

- How are you going to get more people involved in the group?
- What skills do the people in the group have?
- Are there people with experience of working in groups?
- Has anybody been a Chairperson or Secretary?
- What help will you need in setting up the group and advertising it in the area?
- What happens next?

Resident engagement at Kingston can support you through these first meetings and advise on any issues.



I'm thinking about setting up a Tenant / Resident Association or Community Group

The next step if you are interested in setting up either an association or a group would be to:

- Talk to your neighbours and other people living in your neighbourhood first to see whether or not they would be interested and willing to get involved.
- Speak to your Housing Officer or email Involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk for support

At this stage you would need to know;

- The area the group would cover, either street name or the name of the estate
- The number of people who are interested in getting involved.
- Why you would like to set up the association or group, eg: to look at a specific issue, or to generally improve things in your area

Work collectively to;

- Invite people in your community to an initial meeting
- Develop your group, and advise on electing committee members (if you are setting up a Tenant and Residents Group) and holding meetings
- Develop an action plan to identify your main priorities, whether it's a fun event you are planning to bring communities together or tackling a local issue that people are unhappy about and want to change (you can develop an action plan if you are a Community Group or a Tenant and Resident Group)
- Make local people aware your group exists and encourage more people to become involved

You (and the group) must be willing to;

- Make sure you find out what people think/ want
- Always involve as many people from your community as possible
- Remember you are working together as a group, not an individual

How to run a meeting

It is important to make people feel comfortable. Knowing everyone's name helps, so ask people to introduce themselves and try to keep an informal atmosphere. Set chairs out in a circle rather than rows, and a cup of tea and a chat before you begin can make people feel at ease.

When you are holding a meeting it is important that you think about it beforehand and be clear about what you hope to achieve.

You may want to keep your group quite informal, but if you want to get things done, you must have some sort of structure when you meet.

Here are a few simple guidelines to follow:

- Have a clear agenda
- Have an attendance sheet for each meeting to keep record of who is attending
- Make sure that the agenda is followed
- Make sure that decisions are made
- Once actions have been decided, create an action plan to keep to and monitor your objectives of having the group
- Keep the meeting interesting and enjoyable
- Provide accurate minutes, or decisions/ actions list to all members. Also note in the meetings who has passed their apologies to say they can not attend the meeting.
- In order to manage your successes, create and keep to a scheduled action plan.

If the group has been established to become a Tenants / Residents Association and has developed a constitution the group will elect a Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer and a Secretary. These roles provide leadership and guidance to the group.

If you do not have these formalised roles it is best for the group still to decide who would Chair and take minutes at your meetings (secretary) to make sure you keep the meeting on track and keep accurate records of what's been discussed and decided. The Chair and the Secretary can be changed for each meeting, so that everyone has a part to play if they wish to, remember the Tenants / Residents Association has to be a group that work for you and your fellow neighbours / residents, rotate roles if you wish to.

The Agenda

The agenda is the most important tool at a meeting - it sets out what can be discussed and in what order.



Preparing the agenda

The preparation of the agenda is the responsibility of the secretary and the chairperson who should liaise before the meeting to consider:

- What are the objectives / purpose of the meeting?
- What are the most important items? Put the most urgent items at the beginning of the agenda, these are usually the items that require a decision.
- Refer to your action plan to keep accountability on your actions and way forward on your objectives.
- Look at the last minutes. Identify which items need to be discussed under the heading "matters arising"?
- What time limits should be set on each item and the whole meeting? Once the sequence of the items has been agreed you will need to prepare the agenda. There is a standard layout for agendas of normal meetings and an example is shown in Appendix 1.

Wherever possible circulate the agenda before the meeting. This allows everyone the opportunity to think about what is to be discussed. If a member has an agenda item it must be forwarded to the chairperson/secretary for consideration prior to the meeting.

Taking minutes / notes of your meeting

Why take minutes / notes of the meeting?

The secretary or note taker of the group is responsible for keeping a record of what is discussed at the meeting. However informal you keep your meetings, it is important that you always keep a record of what is discussed. It is also useful to make a note of what actions or decisions were taken, in a separate list. This will ensure that items are always followed up and that nothing is forgotten.

Remember after each meeting to also update your action plan, where relevant.

There are a few simple guidelines to follow when making notes at a meeting:

- Do not try and write down everything that is said
- Always record a decision
- Avoid going into too much detail
- Record action points agreed by the group with initials of the person responsible.

Once written, a copy of the minutes/notes should be sent to anyone in attendance at the meeting, or wasn't able to come to the meeting but still wants to be involved.

After the public meeting

Don't be disappointed if not many people came. Some people might be uncertain about whether or not to join in.

If there was enough agreement to start a group, you should begin work. Tell your neighbours about what you're trying to do, and how they can benefit from what you are doing. This will encourage more people to join in.

Highlighting areas of concern

Problems within the local area can be brought to the attention of Housing Officers to discuss any appropriate action e.g. poor lighting, play area issues or Anti Social Behaviour.

Consultation

Where local people would like to express their views over proposals to change any matters affecting the area. Like planning applications or works to properties.

Improvements to the Housing Service

Where an improvement to the housing service is suggested or proposed, eg how do you suggest an improvement.

Highlighting areas of concern

Problems within the local area can be brought to the attention of Housing officers to discuss any appropriate action e.g. poor lighting, play area issues or ASB.

Further Information

Members of the group can request further information about any topics that relate to their area. PLEASE NOTE: While groups are a place for issues to be raised, individual housing related issues should not be discussed eg; rent account, specific repairs. Personal housing related issues should be resolved through the normal channels.



Role of the chair

The role of the Chairperson is important to the group. They are often seen as the figure head, providing leadership and guidance without dominating meetings. The Chairperson should ensure that the group follows its aims and objectives.

During the group meetings the Chairperson will:

- Introduce the meetings.
- Approve the minutes of the last meeting.
- Introduce agenda items and make sure decisions are made.
- Make sure everyone has the chance to contribute to the discussion and that no one person dominates the discussion.
- Maintain control and make sure the meetings run smoothly.
- Close the meeting.

The chairperson is also the person who is responsible for the work that is done outside the meetings and organises people to do work. The chairperson calls the meeting to order, they ensure everyone is given the opportunity to express their views. In the absence of the chairperson a vice chairperson can undertake the duties.

The role of the chairperson can change per meeting, if agreed with all the members of the group and this decision of who will chair the next meeting must be decided and minuted at the end of the last meeting. The previous and next Chairpersons must handover outside of the meeting to understand what actions are underway in order for the next chair to follow up prior to the next meeting.

The chairperson is the person who makes sure things get done – not the person who does or decides everything.



Role of the Secretary

The Secretary's role often becomes the key role within the group. They administer any 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 to take everything on, as the group should share the work.

The Secretary must liaise closely with the Chairperson to ensure that things run smoothly and that the group stays focused, even if other members are not present.

The Secretary's duties include:

- Arranging meetings - a time, date, place etc
- Consulting with the Chairperson in selecting items and circulating the agenda
- Keeping a record of attendance
- Preparing and circulating the minutes (can be an interchanging role)
- Dealing with the correspondence in connection with the group and reporting on this at each meeting.

The role of the minute taker can change per meeting, if agreed with all the members of the group and this decision of who will take minutes for the next meeting must be decided and minuted at the end of the last meeting.



Role of a Group member

All members of the group should be encouraged to become involved in its work. Member's duties include:

- Electing a chair and secretary (or minute taker), or deciding whether this position can circulate for each meeting
- Identify ways of improving the local area
- Providing a response to proposed changes
- Receiving and responding to standards of performance of the group
- Making a commitment to attend the meetings
- Providing their own point of view whilst representing the opinions of other residents in the area.



Role of the Treasurer

The treasurer is the person who has day-to-day responsibility for the groups grants, funds they have received through other charitable organisations, funds that the group have raised through fun community activities and or money that has been donated by both public and private organisations to deliver on local priorities. They are responsible for keeping accurate financial records. However, it is the group who has responsibility for deciding on how the funds are spent.

The group can set up a bank or building society account which requires at least two signatories for any withdrawals, one of whom will normally be the treasurer.

The main roles of a treasurer should include:

- Opening or maintaining a bank account in the name of the group and for paying money into the bank
- Keeping accurate records of all money received and issuing receipts
- Paying bills and keeping accurate records of all money paid out
- Setting up and maintaining accurate accounts for the group
- Keeping petty cash and a petty cash account book for day-to-day expenditure
- Preparing financial briefings for the committee and general meetings. Handling someone else's money is a big responsibility and can often put people off volunteering for the role but following a few simple rules should reduce the worry:
 - Be methodical and ensure your record keeping is accurate
 - Keep a record of all money received or paid – no matter how small
 - Keep the association's money separate from your own
 - Do not keep large amounts of cash at home – put it in the bank
 - Check the bank statements carefully and regularly.



How to publicise your group

How to publicise your group

It is important that you try to publicise the group as much as you can to encourage more people to become involved and to find out what they think.

Most local papers however, do promote community groups and will publish stories or advertise events. If you have a success story make sure that you let them know!

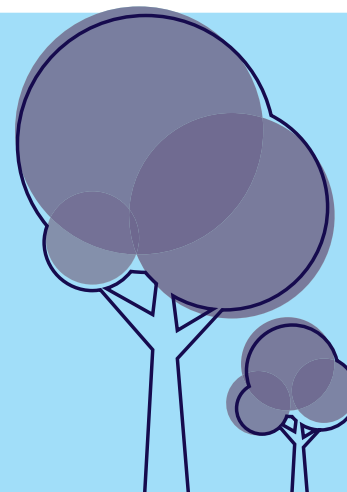
There are some methods of publicising the group that you may wish to use.

Keeping people interested

People are the most important resource your group has. The hardest task is to get people interested, and keep them involved. Here are some suggestions to help you do this:

Find out what people want. It's not much use trying to start up a group if your neighbours don't share your concerns, so:

- Talk to your neighbours.
- Do a simple survey of local residents to find out what they think needs improving.
- Be clear about what your group is trying to do, for example: tackling anti-social behaviour, planning a community clean up, or fund raising for new play facilities for youngsters.
- Be realistic about how long this may take to achieve.
- Set short-term aims too – things you can work towards day-to-day, with a good chance of quick results. People will see the point of staying involved and will enjoy things more if they can see results.
- Check with residents to give / get an idea of how to prioritise the local issues you want to tackle. This will also help promote your group.



Newsletters

Newsletters are a useful way of telling local people what is going on. Newsletters can be anything from one side of paper to several pages stapled together. It is a good way of keeping your members informed and updated on issues that affect them.

Decide who will be responsible for producing the newsletter:

- Find out what skills you have within your group?
- Does someone have access to a computer?
- Is someone good at writing articles?
- How often are you going to produce the newsletter? It is up to you entirely, but thought must be given to costs, time, etc
- Find volunteers to deliver it?

How to publicise your group

- What is it going to look like?
- What are you going to call it?

Word of mouth

Word of mouth should not be underestimated as a valuable tool in publicising a group and recruiting new members.

Posters

Posters that are placed in prominent places can be useful, especially if you have an event to publicise. Kingston Council may be able to help you produce these for you.

Surveys

Surveys are a good way for you to get out and about in your local area and meet people, finding out what they think about the area and getting new ideas for change.



Surveys

Here are a few points to consider when conducting a survey:

What information do you need to find out?

- What information do you need to find out?
- Focus on issues related to people's everyday lives
- Keep it short and simple. Don't tackle too many issues

How do you do a survey?

- Speak to people face to face
- Use questions that can be answered either yes or no
- Let people tell you what their issues are - don't tell them
- Try multiple choice questions
- Allow space for them to write their own comments and views
- Avoid asking for sensitive information (eg Income)

How do you analyse results?

- Perhaps find someone to create a database on a personal computer - eg Google Forms.
- Look for patterns, both average views, plus obvious differences eg if older people reply differently

What do you do with the results?

- Produce a written summary with your main findings, highlighting anything impressive or unusual
- Put the written summary out in a newsletter to all those who could have replied (not just those who did reply!) Remember to say what you are going to do with the results!
- Organise a meeting, inviting those who can deal with some of the issues raised
- Consider repeating the exercise at regular intervals.



How to create action plan

So, you have set up your group, lots of local people are interested and they have identified the issues that they are unhappy about.

What's the next step? How are you going to tackle these issues?

You need a plan – The action plan consists of various elements:

- You need to identify the problem, i.e. dog mess on the streets
- You need to know what outcome you require ie no dog mess
- You need to know what help exists from agencies ie dog wardens, the police, street cleaning etc
- You need to identify who is going to lead and coordinate the action plan (this does not mean do all the work!)
- You need to identify ways to alleviate the problem i.e. put up signs, provide bags and poop scoops, dog waste bins, get the dog warden to visit, talk to people with dogs etc
- You need to have deadlines for all of these actions to ensure they get done in a reasonable time.
- You need to be able to tell if your campaign is a success, i.e how will you measure any improvement.

Draft action plan:

Subject area	Action required	Outcome required	Deadline	Responsibility
Make dog owners aware of the offence they are committing when leaving dog mess	Notices are up warning of the offence they commit	Request signs from the council	Immediately	John Small
Publicity distributed to give details of free bags and warning dog owners of the forthcoming campaign	Leaflets distributed, press releases sent, articles in newsletter	Produce leaflets, issue press releases and send articles to newsletter editor	4 weeks	Mariham Aktar
Fire Safety Campaign	Identify blocks that require inspections	Safer residents and actions taken to reduce fires	4 weeks	John Small
Improvements to the play area in Kingston Drive	Consult with residents on a new design and equipment	More children accessing new equipment, creating active lives	8 weeks	Mary Paul

The sequence therefore is:

1. Define the problem
2. Design an action plan
3. Decide how success will be measured
4. Put the plan into action
5. Was the plan a success?
6. What went wrong, if anything?
7. Design a new action plan based on what went wrong



Funding

The council, subject to the approval of its annual budget, allocates a Community Fund for community projects providing facilities or activities which promote good community relations and that deliver localised neighbourhood changes which improve the experience and lives of local residents.

It's important to note that most funding applications you will need to clearly demonstrate your funding request supports their aims and requirements for the fund.

This can often include:

- Building strong communities through partnership working
- Increasing access to employment opportunities
- Creating safer, cleaner and greener communities
- Improving local residents health and wellbeing
- Improving the lives of children and their families

Community Fundraising

You can raise your own funds to pay for trips, social and community events as well as estate improvements. You should record any fundraising money separately in your accounts to identify the amount clearly.

Other funding

There are various organisations that have funds and grants available for voluntary groups to apply for. They usually have conditions about who can apply and what the money can be used for. The Big Lottery Fund, for example, gives grants to organisations in the UK to help improve their communities. The money awarded comes from the UK National Lottery.

Training: A variety of training courses for residents from helping to run a Residents Associations to skills for life courses such as Do it yourself (DIY) classes. To find out details of programmes available go onto <https://kva.org.uk/our-services/events-training/>. They offer specific training related to helping Residents Associations develop their organisation.

Courses such as: committee skills, chiring skills, secretary skills and treasurer skills are available to residents.

Planning Events

Organising events can be a great way to let residents know about your Tenants / Residents Association or Group and encourage them to take part.

Kingston Council can advise on the risk assessments required. In the planning and preparation stages of an

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should be carried out to consider the risks attached to the event and the actions required to minimise them. All aspects of health and safety should be included as part of the risk assessment.

event, the health and safety and liability implications have to be taken into consideration. More information to support a safe event can be found here: <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/neighbourhood-community-safety/organising-safe-events/3>

Licensing and Permission

You can contact the council to find out whether there are any licensing requirements for your event. For example, food and drink licences. Images of residents, especially of children must not be used in publicity without the permission of the child's parent or guardian.

Safeguarding

Kingston Council is committed to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults. If you think a child or adult has been harmed or are at risk of harm by an adult please contact: <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/supporting-safeguarding-children>. If they are in immediate risk call the police on 999. It should be noted that a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check should be carried out for all those working with children.

Insurance

You are strongly advised to have insurance in place.



Final word

Why not regularly sit back and think about how your Tenant / Residents Association or Group is getting on? Ask yourselves:

- What are we trying to achieve?
- What are we doing to get there?
- What have we done in the past 6 months?
- When did we last send out a newsletter/leaflet?
- Do people come to our meetings?
- Do people say anything when they come to our meetings?
- Do members enjoy the meetings?

Are as many people involved now as there were a year ago? Asking questions like this can help identify what your problems and successes are. Always keep in mind there are more important things than how many attend your meetings.

While you may want people to attend your meetings, talking to people, listening to what they have to say, representing them and working towards changing things for the better is just as important as getting them to attend meetings.

Further help and advice

How Kingston Council can help:

We recognise that particularly at the beginning Residents Associations need help and support to get going. We are here to help you in the following ways:

- Advice on funding including the Council's grants scheme
- Connect you to organisations where training for committee and general members of the association can be obtained

- General advice and support
- Putting you in touch with other Residents Associations and community groups in your area.
- Attendance at meetings by officers if invited.
- Recognition of your Association as a representative body

This is not an exhaustive list. Support will be discussed and offered to suit the needs of each Association.

For more help please contact:
Involvedinhousing@kingston.gov.uk

Good luck!

Example Agenda Appendix 1

Code of conduct

Residents associations are encouraged to agree to a code of conduct which outlines acceptable behaviour of their members and partners. Appendix 3 shows a model code of conduct.

Easy Street Residents Group General Meeting Agenda Broad Street Community Centre Kingston, 15th August 2023

Item	Time
1. Welcome, introductions and apologies	7.00
2. Approval of minutes of last meeting (15th June 2014)	7.05
3. Matters arising from last meeting	7.10
4. Refuse timetable changes	7.30
5. Tenancy matters (Claire James - Tenancy officer)	7.50
6. Estate refurbishment project	8.15
7. Planning family activities for school holidays	8.35
8. Report from local police (PCSO Dave Piper)	8.45
9. Any other business	8.50
10. Date and agenda items for next meeting	8.55
Meeting should close at	9.00

Rules for this meeting

- Respect and support each other
- Please put your hand up if you wish to talk so that everyone has an opportunity to speak
- Let people have their say and don't talk across people.
- Please be brief and keep to the point
- Don't use offensive language
- Switch off mobile phones

Appendix 2

DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF [enter agreed name] RESIDENTS GROUP / ASSOCIATION

1. The Group / Association is known as [enter agreed name here] Resident's Group / Association

The area covered by the Group / Association is [detail geographic area here]

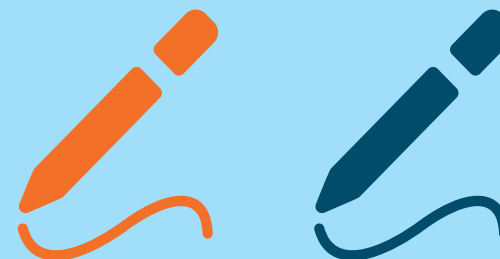
AIMS

2. The aims of the Group / Association are:

- To represent the views of members and share with Kingston Council and other relevant partners and to work collectively towards ensuring that the best interests of members are served.
- To ensure that all members are consulted regularly and that all residents entitled to membership are encouraged to join.
- To work together and with partners to improve local housing conditions and the environment.
- To work with the council and other stakeholders to secure and invest community grants and funding back into the neighbourhood
- To encourage a greater sense of community. [the group may choose to add further aims here]

MEMBERSHIP

3. Membership is open to all persons 16 years or over living in the area who accept the aims of the Group / Association, (including all tenants, leaseholders



and freeholders), irrespective of age, race, gender, sexuality, disability, political or religious beliefs, or marital status. As far as possible, the membership should reflect the make-up of the local population.

4. Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings of or in premises used by the Group / Association. A member may be suspended from the Group / Association for failure to observe this, or for any other conduct not in line with the aims of the Group / Association. Any member so suspended has the right of appeal to the following General Meeting, before permanent suspension from the Group / Association takes place.

5. Membership ends when a member moves out from the area.

6. Every member shall sign an annual written consent to become a member.

7. Racist or sexist behaviour will not be tolerated and will be grounds for suspension.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

8. An annual subscription shall be set at the Annual General Meeting of the Group / Association, and shall be kept as low as possible. Only those who have paid the agreed subscription will be deemed to be members.

if the group agrees not to charge a subscription, use the alternative wording below]

8. The Group / Association has agreed not to charge an annual subscription or other form of membership fees.

9. Subscriptions or other money raised by or on behalf of the Group / Association may be used only to further the aims of the Group / Association.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

10. The business of the Group / Association will be conducted by a committee normally elected at the Annual General Meeting, which shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and not less than two other members. As far as possible, the composition of the committee shall reflect the local people of the area.

11. Councillors or employees of the council shall not represent the Group / Association in its dealings with the council or be members of the committee.

12. The election or removal of officers or committee members may take place only at a General Meeting of the Group / Association. The committee may temporarily fill any vacancy arising among the officers of the Group / Association from its other members until the next General Meeting. The committee has the power to suspend a member or committee member by a simple majority vote until the next general meeting.

13. An officer or committee member must declare any relevant personal interest in a matter under discussion. The committee shall have the right to determine whether that member should withdraw, or be allowed to speak but not vote, or be allowed to speak and vote.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

14. The committee shall meet not less than three times a year and shall be open to any members of the Group / Association wishing to attend, who may speak at the discretion of the Chair but not vote.

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

16. The committee shall report to each General Meeting on its activities since the last General Meeting.

GENERAL MEETINGS

17. General Meetings of the Group / Association, open to all members to speak and vote, shall be held not less than twice a year. Decisions taken at these meetings shall be binding on the committee. Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of members present and voting. All members shall be given not less than 14 days notice of any General Meeting.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

18. The committee shall call an Annual General Meeting of the Group / Association each [insert month]. Not less than 21 days notice shall be given of the AGM to all members and to all those eligible for membership. A formal application for membership shall also be distributed at this time. A representative of the council shall also be invited to attend.

19. At this meeting:

- The committee shall present their annual report.
- The Treasurer shall present the audited accounts of the Group / Association for the past year.
- An independent person or body to audit / check the financial records of the Group / Association for the forthcoming year, shall be appointed.
- The officers and committee for the next year shall be elected.
- Any proposals submitted to the Secretary in writing not less than 14 days in advance of the meeting shall be considered.

20. The minutes of the AGM and the audited accounts should be submitted to the council, together with the names and addresses of the officers and committee members of the Group / Association.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

21. The Secretary shall call a Special General Meeting at the request of a majority of the committee, or on receipt of a written request by at least one third of the membership of the Group / Association. The Secretary must give at least 7 days notice of the Special General Meeting to all members, which shall take place within 21 days of the request.

QUORUM

(The minimum number of members who must be present before a meeting may proceed)

22. The quorum for committee meetings of the Group / Association shall be four members or one third of committee members (whichever is greater). The quorum for all General Meetings shall be one fifth of the membership.

VOTING

23. Those attending a meeting where members of the committee are selected, will be informed that any member may stand for any position on the committee. Any member may nominate individuals or volunteer themselves for any such positions.

24. Where there is a contest for officers of the Committee, or where the Group / Association are unable to reach agreement on an issue, voting will be carried out by a written ballot.

25. Each household will have one vote only. The Chair will have only one vote, they will not have an additional or casting vote.

26. Where voting is required and a council officer is in attendance, they may be asked to administer and supervise the voting process.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

27. Notice of all General Meetings and the Annual General Meeting will be sent to each member's home address and will include the date, time and place of the

meeting and the agenda of matters to be discussed. In addition, notices or flyers will be used to ensure all those entitled to participate are made aware of the details of these meetings.

DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

28. The officers of the Group / Association have a duty to further the aims of the Group / Association.

29. The Chair shall guide the meetings of the Group / Association and its committee. If the Chair is absent, the Vice Chair will take over.

30. The Treasurer shall open and/or maintain a bank or building society account in the name of the Group / Association. All cheques must be signed by the Treasurer and at least one other nominated committee member who is from a different household and not related. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there will be only one bank account for the Group / Association, into which all monies are paid.

31. The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of income and expenditure and details of subscriptions paid. He/she will also report on them as required by the committee, at General Meetings. The accounts should be available for inspection by any member of the Group / Association.

32. The Secretary is responsible for arranging meetings and giving the relevant notice to members. The Secretary shall ensure that a proper record is kept of all meetings of the Group / Association and its committee in the form of minutes, and make them available as required by the committee. A register of members' names and addresses will also be kept by the Secretary.

33. A member appointed to represent the Group / Association in discussions or communication with any other body (including the media) shall act on the instructions of the committee and shall report back to the following committee meeting or General Meeting, whichever is the sooner. No member of the Group / Association will speak on behalf of the Group / Association without the prior approval of the committee or members.

ALTERATION TO THE CONSTITUTION

34. Any proposal to change this Constitution must be given to the Secretary not less than 28 days before the General Meeting at which it is to be discussed. Any change, what is a residents group, requires the agreement of two thirds of those present and voting at the meeting. Such changes made to this Constitution must be notified to the Council within three weeks.

35. The committee or, if a committee no longer exists, a majority of the remaining members of the Group / Association, can propose that the Group / Association should be wound up. They must give to all those eligible for membership at least 14 days notice of the meeting at which the matter is to be discussed.

36. For the sole purpose of dissolution a quorum need not apply, and the Group / Association may be dissolved by a two thirds majority of those present. Any assets remaining when the Group / Association has paid all debts shall be applied for such purposes of benefit to the community as the meeting shall decide. The Council must be notified of the decision.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITMENT

37. The Group / Association shall positively promote equal opportunities and diversity within the community and within its membership, and work for the elimination of discrimination against persons on the basis of race, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, disability, political and religious beliefs.

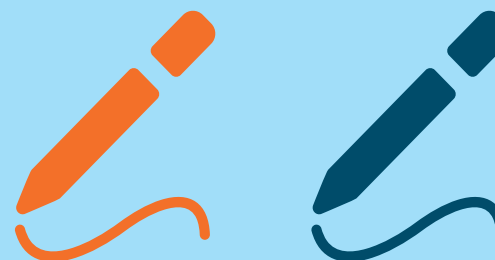
The above constitution was discussed, approved and supported by the Group / Association at the meeting which took place on(Date of meeting) at which the three members below were present:

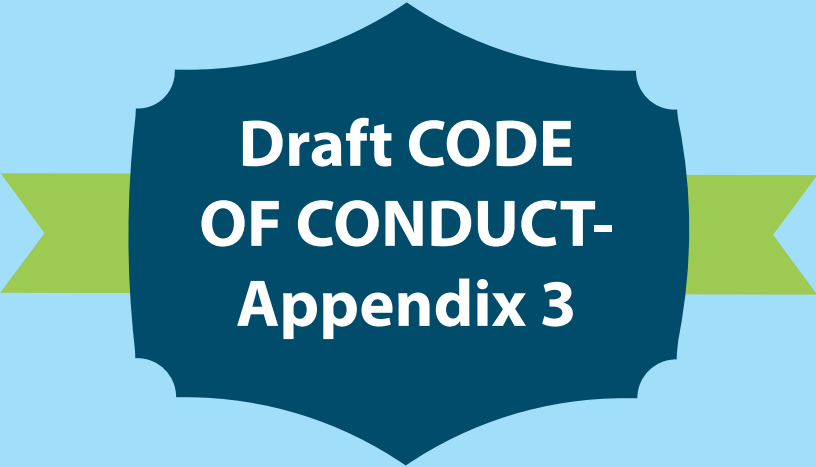
Chair or Vice chair:

Print Name Signature.....
Date.....

Member: Print Name
Signature.....Date.....

Member: Print Name
Signature.....Date.....



A dark blue shield-shaped graphic with a light green ribbon-like border. The text "Draft CODE OF CONDUCT- Appendix 3" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within the shield.

Draft CODE OF CONDUCT- Appendix 3

1. GENERAL

1.1 The reputation of the Tenants, Residents Association and Kingston Housing depends largely on the conduct of its members and what residents, staff and others believe about its members' conduct.

1.2 Conduct of the highest standard is expected and a committee member's integrity will be lost if there is any suspicion that they will have been influenced in any way by an improper motive or that their behaviour is inappropriate to the group and could be considered to have brought the Association into disrepute.

1.3 This code of conduct shall not be altered except by an agreement of the majority of committee members and any such changes shall be notified to all members.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY/EQUALITY

2.1 Information made available to committee members in the course of their duties shall be considered to be strictly confidential unless such information is directly or indirectly affects members in the designated area

2.2 No committee members shall expect or receive more or less favourable treatment by virtue of being a committee member.

3. REPRESENTATION

3.1 Committee members shall normally be expected to represent the views, interest and opinions of the tenants that they represent.

4. DEALING WITH THE COUNCIL, STATUTORY/VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND TENANTS

4.1 Committee members shall at all times show courtesy to all Council staff, councillors, contractors, statutory/voluntary agency representatives and residents of Kingston Housing.

4.2 Committee members are entitled to ask staff and contractors employed by Kingston Council to provide their name, job title and ID.

4.3 If a committee member has a complaint about a member of Council staff or contractor, they should raise the matter with the staff members manager or request that an officer of the committee does so on their behalf

5. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

5.1 A committee member shall inform the committee of any interest, financial, personal or otherwise that he or she may have in a capacity that may compromise their position as a member.

5.2 If a discussion and/or vote is required concerning any matter in which a committee member has declared an interest, the member will be required to absent him/herself from the meeting for the duration of the discussion/vote.

5.3 Committee members will be required to uphold the equal opportunities policy of the Association.

5.4 Committee members are required to report to the committee any change in circumstances that may render them ineligible to serve on the committee.

6. BREACHES OF CODE OF CONDUCT

6.1 Any serious or persistent breach in this code of conduct by a committee member will be treated as misconduct and dealt with in the following manner:

6.1.1 The chair of the committee shall write to the committee member detailing the allegations of their misconduct and send copies to the other members of the committee.

6.1.2 The chair, after discussion with the officers of the committee, will consider the allegation and determine a suitable course of action, which may include convening a hearing of conduct panel.

6.1.3 If an allegation of misconduct is made against the chair of the Association, the above procedures shall be adhered to but the vice chair will take the appropriate action.

SPECIAL NOTE: The following list comprises examples of behaviour likely to be considered breaches of the code of conduct:

- Arguing in public in a manner likely to bring the Association into disrepute.
- Join rival groups seeking to undermine the activities of the Association
- Be abusive or aggressive to other committee members, staff or councillors, members of outside organisation or residents.
- Knowingly misleading the Association, Kingston Council, residents or councillors.
- Intentionally disregarding the ruling of the chair of the Association or the decisions taken by the committee.
- Attending meetings or performing their duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances
- Use their position on the Association to gain personal or unfair advantage.
- Make public any matter of a confidential or sensitive nature



For more information:

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON
UPON THAMES

