

# Tenants, Residents and Leaseholder Association Handbook



*A Guide for Starting Up & Running  
Residents' Associations*

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this booklet is to guide your residents' group through the practical steps to forming and running an effective Residents' Association for your community. The advice offered should be tailored to what suits your needs.

Talking with existing Residents' Associations will provide a wealth of information and experience that cannot be contained in any written guide; so, if you would like to get in touch with an existing Residents' Association in your area please contact the Inclusion & Engagement Team at Waltham Forest Council. Sharing ideas and experience will help to build your confidence and enable you to learn from others' mistakes.

Getting a Residents' Association going can be hard work, but it is well worth the effort. Waltham Forest Council will support you in each step that you take with practical help and advice as well as funding. Try to have fun while you're doing it and remember, very few things go along without any hitches or setbacks!

We hope to keep this guide as up-to-date and useful to Residents' Associations as possible. If after looking and using the guide you identify any changes or additional information needed, please let us know by contacting one of the Housing Engagement Officers.

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## WHY A RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION?

There are lots of reasons why people get together in a local area to form a Residents' Association. At the beginning it is probably a good idea to find out what local people, your potential members, see as the priorities that should be tackled.

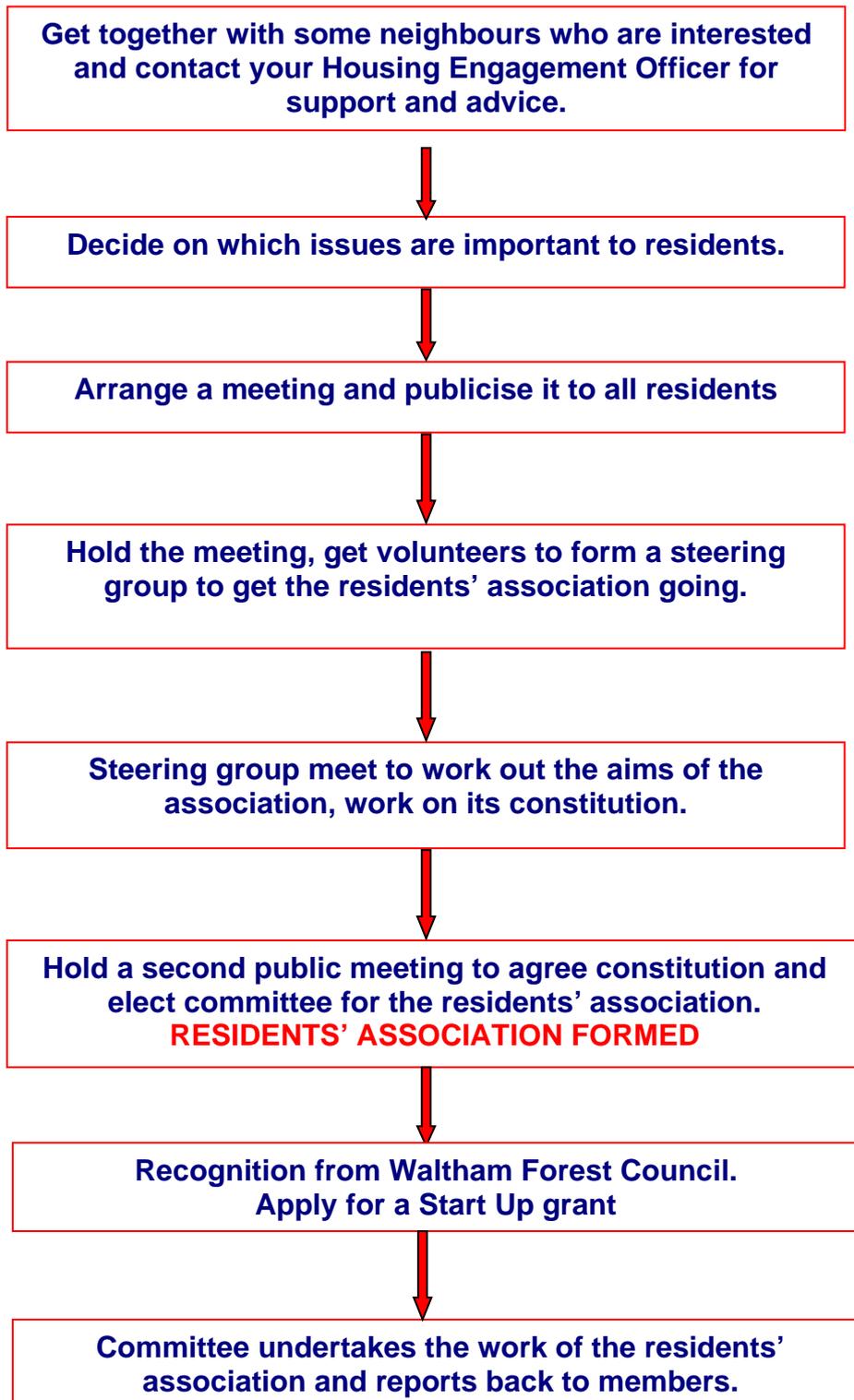
These could include:

- **Campaigning for something, for example: an area for the kids to play, a better bus service, or more information about local services.**
- **Campaigning against something, for example: the closure of the local shop or school.**
- **To increase the community feeling in the area, for example: running a community event so neighbours can get to know each other.**
- **To be more involved in the decisions taken by WF Housing, which affect tenants, leaseholders and homeowners.**
- **To arrange social events and outings for residents.**

**An effective Residents Association can have a real influence on local issues as well as giving the area in which you live a greater sense of community.**

# FIRST STEPS

Below is an outline of the steps you can follow to get a Residents' Association going in your area. Of course, you may want to adapt it to suit your situation.



# THE CONSTITUTION

Your Residents' Association will need a set of rules to run itself by, so that everybody knows what its' aims and objectives are and how it is going to go about achieving them. Below is a model constitution that you may wish to use as a basis for your association.

## MODEL CONSTITUTION

### 1. NAME

The name of the Association shall be.....

### 2. OBJECTS

The objects of the association shall be to promote and protect the interests of the local residents living in .....

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to any interested tenant or leaseholder living in the area covered by the association over the age of 16. All members shall have one vote. A membership list to be kept by the Secretary of the Association.

### 4. SUBSCRIPTIONS

No subscription shall be charged for membership. Membership is based solely on where you live.

### 5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Members of the association shall seek actively to represent the needs of the whole community and will not discriminate on the grounds of nationality, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

### 6. THE COMMITTEE

6.1. At the Annual General Meeting members shall elect a committee. The Committee is responsible for the management of the Association.

6.2. The Committee will be made up of the following members; Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and \_\_\_\_\_, other members.

6.3. The Committee co-opt a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ members who shall be non-voting.

6.4. All elected members of the Committee shall have one vote.

6.5. If vacancies occur among the officers of the Committee, the Committee shall have the power to fill them from amongst their members.

6.6. The Committee may form sub-groups to deal with specific issues, but these must report to the Committee.

6.7. The Committee shall meet not less than \_\_\_\_\_ times a year.

6.8. Minutes shall be taken of committee meetings and shall be available to all members and Waltham Forest Council.

## **7. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

7.1. There shall be an Annual General Meeting held every year (15 months maximum) at which the following items will be included as agenda items:

- Annual report from the Committee
- Present statement of accounts
- Election of Committee
- Amendments to the Constitution (this item may be excluded if there are no recommendations for change)

7.2. The Committee will notify all members of the date no later than 14 days before the AGM.

## **8. GENERAL MEETINGS**

8.1. In addition to the Annual General Meeting the Committee will call at least \_\_\_\_\_ meetings per year which all members of the Association may attend.

8.2. All General Meetings shall be advertised to members at least five days in advance.

8.3. A Special General Meeting open to all members will be held if \_\_\_ or more members submit a request in writing to the Secretary.

8.4. The Secretary shall arrange a meeting within 14 days of the receipt of the request for a Special General Meeting.

## **9. QUORUM**

No General, Special General or Annual General Meeting shall take place if less than \_\_\_\_\_ members are present.

## **10. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**

10.1. The Constitution of the Association may be altered at the AGM.

10.2. Any suggested changes must be handed to the Secretary 14 days before the AGM.

10.3. Changes to the Constitution must be agreed by two-thirds of the members present at the meeting.

10.4. The Association shall notify Waltham Forest Council within 28 days of changes to its Constitution.

## 11. FINANCE

- 11.1. All monies raised by or on behalf of the Association shall be applied to further the objects and aims of the Association and for no other purpose.
- 11.2. The Treasurer shall open a bank/building society account in the name of the Association.
- 11.3. The Treasurer shall keep a proper account of the income and expenditure of the Association.
- 11.4. Three cheque signatories shall be nominated by the Committee (one can be the Treasurer, but this isn't necessary).
- 11.5. Any expenditure over £\_\_\_\_\_ shall be authorised by Committee at meetings.
- 11.6. The Treasurer shall submit the accounts for audit to Waltham Forest Council at the end of each financial year.

## 12. DISSOLUTION

- 12.1. The Association may only be dissolved at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose and advertised fourteen days before the meeting to all members.
- 12.2. At least \_\_\_\_ of the members present at the meeting must agree to the dissolution.
- 12.3. Any funds and possessions shall be donated to a charity or charities of the meetings' choice.

## 13. STANDING ORDERS

- 13.1. Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings.
- 13.2. Members shall be excluded if they contravene the aims of the Association, use abusive language and/or violent behaviour.
- 13.3. The Chair shall have a second casting vote in the event of a resolution being tied at any meeting being held.

**CHAIR:**.....**Date:**.....

**SECRETARY:**.....**Date:**.....



**Recognition:** For your association to be recognised by Waltham Forest Council, you will need to make sure the following items are included in your constitution:

- **Membership must be open to all tenants and leaseholders in the area of your association**
- **A clear statement on the association's commitment to equal opportunities in its membership**
- **Your association must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to which all residents are invited**
- **Provision for a committee to be elected at the AGM**
- **A proper system of accounting must be maintained**
- **Submission of an annual report of the TRLA work and achievements**
- **Submission of accounts which details spending of funding received from Waltham Forest Council**

If you would like more help and advice on drawing up your constitution please let us know.

**For more information on recognition please turn to page 34**

# THE COMMITTEE



The committee of a Residents' Association is responsible for managing the work of the association and making sure its' aims are followed and that the group works effectively and fairly.

**Here are some of the keys to a successful committee:**

- Work together as a group
- Listen to each other
- Support each other
- Do what you say you will
- Abide by decisions made
- Report progress to members of the Association
- Listen to what members of the Association want
- Share the load with each other
- Recognises the strengths and weaknesses of members
- Be as representative of your membership as possible
- Enjoy yourselves!

A committee will usually consist of the following officers:

- **Chairperson**
- **Secretary**
- **Treasurer**

In some cases, Associations also choose to have a Vice-Chairperson to deputise for the Chairperson in their absence. For smaller committees another officer or general committee member can perform this role.

**The committee usually has a number of places for general members.**



# THE CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson is the one who pulls everything together by:

- Guiding the Association to achieve its aims
- Chairing meetings of the Association and committee
- Representing residents at meetings and events in the community

## The Chairperson needs to:

- Know about all the activities carried out by the association
- Ensure that other officers are carrying out their tasks
- Make sure that everybody has an opportunity to have their say at meetings
- Prepare agendas for meetings, with the Secretary
- Make sure that decisions made are clearly recorded and reported to the membership



## Chairing a meeting

One of the main roles of the Chairperson is the chairing of meetings of the Association. Good chairing is the key to successful meetings and a good meeting is one that achieves its purpose and is conducted in a calm fair friendly manner.

## You need to have meetings to:

- Pass on information
- Discuss issues
- Make decisions

### **The golden rules for meetings are:**

- Know what you are there for, have a clear agenda
- Make sure the agenda is followed, decisions are made and a good atmosphere is maintained
- Make them interesting!
- Make them accessible to everybody



### **As Chair you will:**

- Introduce and summarise the purpose of the meeting
- Introduce each agenda item with the necessary background information
- Summarise the points made in discussions and encourage decision making
- Keep people to the point and stop them talking for too long (but don't stifle the discussion too early!)
- Give everyone the opportunity to participate

### **Here are some practical rules to help achieve success:**

- Start your meetings on time
- Keep to the agenda
- Be positive and look for solutions to problems
- Make sure items to be discussed are prepared properly; do you have all the information you need?
- Make sure decisions are clearly taken and agreed.
- Make sure everybody has an opportunity to put their views
- Don't let a few people dominate
- Move the discussion on if people are repeating themselves
- Be polite and encouraging
- Don't put people down
- Don't allow people to make personal criticisms of each other



### **Ground Rules:**

If you are having a meeting when the topics to be discussed will produce a conflict of views, ask the meeting to agree a set of rules at the beginning which all of you will abide by.

### **These could include:**

- **The Chairperson will be the one who is in control of the meeting.**
- **Only one person speaking at a time**
- **Everybody agreeing to let people have their say without interruption**
- **No personal criticisms will be allowed**
- **A time limit on speakers**

This is quite a formal approach but can help to keep things calm if you think they may get out of hand. Remember if a meeting becomes chaotic, you can't make decisions and people will not attend next time. Think about the meetings you have attended and what did or did not make them a success for you and try and apply these to your own chairing.

All committee members have a responsibility to support the Chairperson's role as chair of a meeting by abiding by the rules themselves and encouraging others to do so.

**More information about meetings can be found on page 15**

# THE SECRETARY

Being the Secretary of a Residents' Association does not mean you have to take shorthand and type or have access to specialised office equipment! Anybody who is a bit organised can be a successful Secretary.



## The Secretary:

- Arranges meeting venues
- Lets people know when meetings are being held
- Makes a written record of decisions made at meetings (minutes)
- Keeps copies of minutes of previous meetings
- Helps the Chairperson set agendas for meetings
- Receives and writes letters for the association
- Keeps a record of membership



It is likely that from time to time the Secretary will need access to typing and photocopying facilities. Other members of your committee or general membership may be able to help or alternatively the WF Housing's Engagement Officers can provide the necessary support (see page 32 for further details).

***The Secretary should organise the tasks not necessarily carry them all out themselves.***



## MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS

If you become Secretary then arranging meetings is something that, before long, you are going to become an expert in!

### Types of meetings

As a Residents' Association you will usually hold the following meetings:

**Committee Meetings.** *Attended by elected and co-opted committee members to carry out the work of the Association. These should be held regularly.*

**General Meetings.** *These meetings are open to all members of the Association and may be open to non-members at the discretion of the committee. The committee reports to members on its work and discusses and decides on future activity.*

**Annual General Meeting.** *Held once a year and open to all residents covered by the Associations' area. At this meeting the Chair and Treasurer give their annual report to members and the annual committee elections are held*

**Special General Meetings.** *These are held at the request of a minimum number of members, specified in your constitution. They are to discuss a specific issue of concern to members. All members of the Association are invited to attend.*

### Arranging meetings

Here are some practical things to think about when you arrange a meeting:



**Venue:** Where are you going to hold the meeting? Is it local enough for everybody? Do they know where it is? If not, and there really is nowhere else suitable you will have to make arrangements to get people there and make details available of the location.

Is the hall or room big enough for the people you are expecting? Most halls and rooms for hire have a maximum number of people who can be accommodated. Check this with the organisation you are hiring from. Also check that the organisation hiring out the venue has public liability insurance cover, if not you may have to arrange some.

Are some of your members disabled? If so, is the venue suitable? Watch out for difficult to negotiate steps at entrances, doors that are not wide enough to allow wheelchair access or high ceilings that make it difficult for people with hearing difficulties.

It is always best to visit a venue before the meeting to find out and meet the person who will be letting you in for your meeting. It is best to get a telephone contact number for them so that if they don't turn up you can find out what's happening.



**Layout:** Think about how you want the chairs laid out for a meeting. Rows of chairs facing a table at the front can be very formal and off-putting, although for a large number of people this may be the most suitable. Putting the chairs in a circle or in groups around tables can be much less formal.

Think about how accessible the seating arrangements are for the disabled and wheelchair users. Don't always assume they are happy at the back, make sure aisles between chairs are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and that some spaces are left between for wheelchair users.

On a lighter note, remember that light plastic chairs favoured by schools are extremely uncomfortable after a short period so people may become fidgety quite soon. This should help keep your meeting short and to the point!



**Timing:** When arranging a meeting choose a day and time which suits as many people as possible. Be careful not to pick a day and time when a big sporting or television event is taking place. It might be appropriate to fix a regular day and time that suits most people so that members get used to it.



**Children:** Some people may feel that they cannot come to your meeting because they have children. Consider if you can include older children in your meetings, after all they are potential future members. It may be possible to run a crèche or activity at the same venue as your meeting if you have members of your group who are qualified e.g. a registered child minder. Whatever you decide you should publicise your arrangements for children when advertising your meetings.



## The Agenda

All meetings should have an agenda to make sure those attending know what will be discussed and to make sure that you get through all the business.

Here is an example of a basic layout for an agenda that you might choose to use:

**Wild Thyme Residents' Association  
General Meeting  
Rosemary Street School  
1 August 2018 – 6.30 to 8.30 p.m.**

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last meeting
4. Matters arising
5. Summer fun-day
6. Proposals for new play area
7. Parking area refurbishment
8. Any other business
9. Date and time of next meeting

By including the start and finish time for the meeting you let people know how long they will be away from home. You will have to balance the amount of items you can have on your agenda against the length of time people can commit to a meeting. Don't include too much too soon.

Think about the approximate amount of time each item should take. Be logical when building your agenda; items of information which are quick should be dealt with first with those requiring discussion and decisions coming later.



## Attendance Lists

By asking all those attending your meeting to fill in the attendance list you can make sure that you do not miss anybody out when you write up your minutes and that you spell their name correctly.

An example of an attendance list is shown below.

### Wild Thyme Residents Association Attendance List

**Meeting: General Meeting**  
**Date & Time: 1 August 2018 – 6.30 p.m.**  
**Venue: Rosemary Street School**

Please add your name and address to the attendance list. It is used for two purposes firstly, for safety reasons we need to know who is in the building if there is an emergency of any kind. Secondly, it is used to ensure that everybody present is given any follow-up information or minutes from the meeting.

Thank you

(Please print)

Name	Address



## Minutes

It is the Secretary's responsibility to take minutes of all meetings. If the Secretary is unable to attend arrangements should be made for another member to take minutes. Minutes should be an accurate impartial record of the decisions taken at a meeting and not a record of everything said.

### Here are some tips for taking minutes:

- **Make sure you have a copy of the agenda so that you know what items are coming up when**
- **Make sure an attendance list is completed so that you know who was present at the meeting**
- **Ask people to give their names before speaking if you do not know everybody who is at the meeting**
- **Take notes during the meeting**
- **If you are unsure of the decision taken ask the Chairperson to confirm it to you**
- **As soon after the meeting as possible draft up your notes. By doing this your memory will still be fresh and you will be able to decipher your notes**
- **Write down the facts not your personal feelings about the meeting**

It is easier to follow the same style for minutes as this acts as a prompt when writing them up. Over the page is an example of how to lay out minutes

**Wild Thyme Residents Association  
General Meeting  
Rosemary Street School  
1 August 2018 – 6.30p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Mrs Parsley	Chairperson
Mr Thyme	Treasurer
Ms Oregano	Secretary
Mr Paprika	Committee member
Mrs Sage	Committee member
Miss Garlic	Committee member
Mrs Housing	Housing Engagement Officer, Waltham Forest Housing
PC Nickam	Beat Officer

Mrs Rosemary	Wild Thyme Street
Mr Cumin	Wild Thyme Street
Mrs Salt	Rosemary Close
Mr Salt	Rosemary Close
Ms Olive	Wild Thyme Street

**ACTION**

**1. Welcome**

Mrs Parsley, Chairperson, welcomed members to the meeting and introduced Mrs Housing from Waltham Forest Council and PC Nickam the local police beat officer.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from; Mrs Pepper, Wild Thyme Close, Miss Herb, Rosemary Street.

**3. Minutes of the last meeting**

Mr Thyme proposed that the minutes of the last meeting be agreed as a true record and this was agreed by the meeting.

**4. Matters arising**

Refuse Collection – Mrs Parsley confirmed that she had contacted the Council and the problem had been resolved.

**5. Summer Fun Day**

It was agreed that the fun day would be held on 1 August at Rosemary Street School. Ms Oregano would confirm the booking with the school secretary. It was agreed to invite the police, fire brigade and St John's Ambulance to attend.

**MS  
OREGANO**

Insurance for the day will have to be organised and it was agreed that Mr Thyme would investigate this.

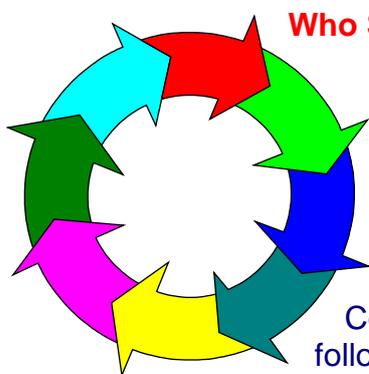
**MR  
THYME**

**6. Proposals for new play area**

Mrs Housing explained to the meeting that a new play area was proposed for Wild Thyme Street and that residents were being consulted about its location and what would be in it. It was agreed because of the concerns of members that following a consultation letter to all residents from the Council, a special meeting would be held. The date and time would be agreed at the next committee meeting and members notified.

**MRS  
PARSLEY**

<p><b>7. Any Other Business</b>          Grounds Maintenance. Mr Cumin asked if members knew if the same contractor was being used as last year. There had been some problems and it might be a good idea to sort things out at the beginning this year. It was agreed that that as the association had not been informed who the contractor was the committee would make contact with the Council to arrange a meeting.</p> <p><b>8. Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 1 September at 6.30 pm at Rosemary Street School.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>The meeting closed at 8.30p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>MRS PARSLEY</b></p> <p><b>MS OREGANO</b></p>
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**Who Should Minutes go to?**

After you have written up your minutes go through them with the Chairperson and make any necessary amendments. Once you have done this you can produce the final version of the minutes for distribution.

Copies of the minutes are usually distributed as follows:

**Committee Meetings:**

- All committee members
- Any others who attended or who need to take action following the meeting

*Copies of committee meeting minutes should be available to all members of the residents' association on request.*

**General Meetings:**

- All members of the Association
- Any others who attended or who need to take action following the meeting

**Annual General Meetings:**

- All members of the Association
- Waltham Forest Council (if your Residents' Association is recognised)
- Any other who attended or who need to take action following the meeting

**Special General Meetings:**

- All members of the Association
- Waltham Forest Council (if your Residents' Association is recognised)
- Any other who attended or who need to take action following the meeting

**You can vary the way you distribute minutes as long as you get your members to agree on the distribution process.**

A copy of all minutes should be kept by the Secretary in date order and be available for members to refer to on request.

# The Treasurer



To become a Treasurer, you don't have to be a financial whizz kid. Keeping accounts for Residents' Associations can be extremely simple. However, if you are lucky enough to have a financial whizz kid amongst your members make use of them!

**The Treasurer is responsible for keeping records of the finances of the Association. The main duties include:**

- Opening a bank, building society or post office account in the name of the Association
- Paying money received into the account
- Drawing money or cheques from the account
- Keeping a record of money received and spent
- Preparing statements for the committee and Annual General Meeting
- Keeping petty cash for the association

The Treasurer does not decide how the money of the Association is spent. That is a matter for the Committee as a whole. The Treasurer does, however, make sure that money is spent in accordance with the rules of the Association. No money should be spent by the Association without the knowledge of the Treasurer.



## GETTING YOUR ACCOUNTS IN ORDER

The finances of your Residents' Association are very important and you will need to make sure that all financial transactions that you carry out are in accordance with your constitution. All the money that is raised by the Association is to be used to further the aims of the Association and so you will have to have an accounting system which clearly shows where and how money has been received and spent.

All Associations should have a bank, building society or post office account in the name of the Association, which is used exclusively for Association business. Some banks and building societies have special accounts for small community groups like Residents Associations. They will usually require at least two signatures on cheques and letters of instruction to them. The signatories are usually the treasurer (but not necessarily) and one or two others. To find out more about the services offered by different organisations contact your local branch.



**Keeping Records:** Records of income and expenditure should be kept in a ledger book. This should be updated as soon as money is received or spent.

From the ledger you will be able to check the transactions that have been carried out with your bank statement and prepare financial reports for your committee and Annual General Meeting. On the facing and following page an example is given to lay out a payment and receipts ledger.

### Cash Book Payments

Date	Description	Chq. No.	Amount		Stationery & Post		Travel		Hall Hire		Other	
			£		£		£		£		£	

It is important that you agree in your constitution an amount of money, over which only the committee can authorise.

**When decisions to spend money are agreed at committee meetings this should be minuted.** You will also need to agree with the committee which items should be included under petty cash.

### Cash Book receipts

Date	Description	Amount		Grants		Fundraising		Donations		Other	
		£		£		£		£		£	

The financial records of the Association should be open to all members to view if they wish. It is usual for members to be asked to give seven days notice if they want to inspect the books to allow the Treasurer time to bring them up to date as necessary. **Remember the money belongs to all the members; therefore, they are entitled to see how the money is being spent.**

**Reporting to members:** The Treasurer should report regularly to the Committee on the state of the Association's funds. Below is a model format for presenting accounts to your members.

<b>Wild Thyme Residents' Association</b>		
<b>Income and Expenditure Account</b>		
<b>For the period 1 January to 31 December 2017</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Grant Received from WF Council		250.00
Fund-raising income		130.00
		<hr/>
		380.00
 <b>Expenditure</b>		
Photocopying	4.00	
Postage	2.00	
Travel	6.00	
	<hr/>	12.00
		<hr/>
Excess of income over expenditure		368.00
 <b>Wild Thyme Residents' Association</b>		
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
<b>As at 31 December 2017</b>		
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash at Building Society		350.00
Amounts owed to the Res. Assoc.		10.00
Petty cash		8.00
		<hr/>
		368.00
Less: amounts owed by the Residents Association		12.00
		<hr/>
		356.00
 <b>Represented by</b>		
Surplus		<hr/>
		356.00
		<hr/>

**Auditing:** Each year at the Annual General Meeting the Treasurer is responsible for presenting the audited accounts of the Association to the members. 'Auditing' is when the records are formally checked to make sure that they are accurate. Somebody who is independent should carry this out. Waltham Forest Council can provide this service for Residents' Associations.

# General Committee Members



The number of general members of a committee is set in the constitution of the Association and will depend on the overall number of members. Although they may not hold a particular office they are vital to the success of the committee.

## **The role of the general committee member is to:**

- **Attend committee meetings and participate in decisions**
- **Support officers of the committee in their work**
- **Take on specific tasks on behalf of the committee, e.g. publicity, fundraising.**

By sharing the workload amongst all its members more can be achieved and nobody feels they are carrying everything themselves. If you are a general member don't forget to volunteer to help; sometimes others don't like asking directly!

# REPRESENTING YOUR COMMUNITY



A Residents' Association should represent the views of its community not just those of its' committee or a small number of members.

To make sure that you are representing your community to the best of your ability you will need to ask members for

their views on a regular basis.

You can do this through:

- **General and Annual General Meetings**
- **Residents' Association newsletters**
- **Surveys**

It is important that members have the opportunity to set the priorities for the Association at the AGM each year and that the committee keeps them informed of the progress made through meetings or newsletters.

Remember your Association is open to everybody to join but how easy is it for them to get involved? It is easy to fall into the trap of excluding people unintentionally. Here are some things to consider when reviewing if your Association is representing the views of all your community:

- **Are your meeting times and venues suitable for all members?** If you find you have a minority that are always unable to attend think about ways to include them by seeking their views beforehand or arranging a special meeting at a time that suits them.



- **Do you always have time for new members who may not know as much as you?** It is easy to be put off if you are a new member, don't risk losing people. How about a brief information sheet for new members? Or a buddying system?

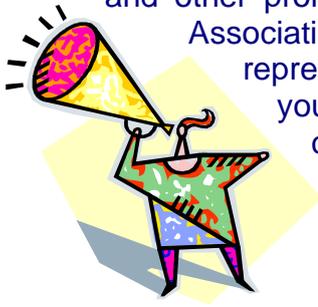
- **Find out about your members needs, transport, childcare, access, and sight/hearing.** You may not have all the answers so seek advice from the individuals themselves on how these needs can be met. You may find that some members do not have English as a first language.



You may need an interpreter. Those with visual impairments may need documents in large print and any deaf members may need a signer.

Additional funding from Waltham Forest Council can be made available to help with these needs.

**Getting the Association on the local map:** A representative residents' association is a valuable resource for local councillors, community police and other professionals. Make sure that they know about your Association and that your Association listens to and represents your community. If appropriate invite them to your general or committee meetings or send them copies of your newsletter to keep them informed about your work.



**Building positive relationships and networks in your local area can help with the success of the Association and in so doing can improve the quality of life in your neighbourhood.**



# CODE OF CONDUCT

Residents associations are encouraged to agree a code of conduct which outlines acceptable behaviour of TRLA members and partners. Below is a model code of conduct.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

(Within this Code of Conduct, the terms committee member refers to any elected/co-opted or nominated member of the TRLA)

### 1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The reputation of the Tenants, Residents and Leaseholder Association (TRLA) committee and Waltham Forest Housing depends largely on the conduct of its members and what residents, staff and other 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 a TRLA 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 TRLA 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 TRLA 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 whether at a local TRLA meeting or as part of Waltham Forest Council's governance structure.

### 4 DEALING WITH THE COUNCIL, STATUOTORY/VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND TENANTS

- 4.1 TRLA committee members shall at all times show courtesy to all Council staff, councillors, contractors, statutory/voluntary agency representatives and residents of Waltham Forest Housing.

4.2 TRLA committee members are entitled to ask staff and contractors employed by Waltham Forest Council to provide their name, job title and ID.

4.3 If a committee member has a complaint about a member of Waltham Forest 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 TRLA 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 TRLA.

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 and Inclusion and Engagement Team.

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. Each conduct panel will select a chairperson from among their number at the start of the hearing and he/she will have casting vote where necessary for the conduct panel. The Inclusion and Engagement Team will be able to advise on this.

6.1.3 The conduct panel will, if it upholds the allegation, issue a written warning to the committee member in question or in the case of serious misconduct, dismiss them from the committee. If the latter is the case, the chair of the TRLA must be informed of the conduct panel's decision

6.1.4 If an allegation of misconduct is made against the chair of the TRLA, 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 TRLA into disrepute.
- Join rival groups seeking to undermine the activities of the TRLA or Waltham Forest Council
- Be abusive or aggressive to other committee members, staff or councillors, members of outside organisation or residents.
- Knowingly misleading the TRLA, Waltham Forest Council, residents or councillors.
- Intentionally disregarding the ruling of the chair of the TRLA 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 TRLA to gain personal or unfair advantage.
- Make public any matter of a confidential or sensitive nature
- Behaviour or language which clearly breaches Waltham Forest Housings Equality and Diversity statement and policies of any actions, intention or behaviour that could be construed as offensive under the Equalities Act.



# RECOGNITION OF RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

Waltham Forest Council values and supports the work of recognised Residents' Associations and includes them in any local or borough-wide consultation it undertakes.

**Being a recognised Association will mean that your Association will have access to:**

- Initial start-up grants to help with the initial costs of establishing your Association.
- Access to free training sessions provided by Waltham Forest Council
- Ability to apply for annual and one-off grants to support the work of your Association.
- Free membership of the Tpas
- Practical support and advice from Waltham Forest Council staff.

**Recognition criteria:** In order to ensure recognition Waltham Forest Council asks that Residents' Associations:

- Are open to all tenants and leaseholders living in the area cover by your group.
- That the Associations can demonstrate that they have encouraged membership from all residents in their area.
- Have a committee elected annually by its members with at least one tenant elected to the committee
- Have a constitution that conforms, in essence, to the model constitution provided by Waltham Forest Council.
- Are able to demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities through its work.
- Keep an up-to-date membership list.
- Have a proper system of accounting and have accounts independently audited annually.

Once a Residents' Association is recognised a check will be made by the Council following each AGM to ensure that the criteria for recognition are still being kept.



## GRANT FUNDING

To ensure all TRAs are correctly managing public funds, the Inclusion and Engagement Team will ensure that all recognised TRA receive financial assistance based on an agreed formula to help with their day-to-day running costs. This includes:

- Two financial audit checks by the Inclusion and Engagement team in the current financial year commencing April until March.
- Monitoring allocated resources and assisting the treasurer to maintain their financial books.
- Ensuring TRA's meet the recognition criteria.

If an association runs out of money before the end of the financial year, then the association will need to raise funds from elsewhere. If there is money left at the end of the year, this will be taken into account along with how well the association has performed against the assessment criteria when issuing the grant for the following year. Where an association has under-performed, this may result in a reduction in the grant to be allocated.

### **Start-up Grant:**

This grant (£250) is specifically aimed at set up costs for a new TRA such as:

- Opening a Community Association Business Banking Account (CABBA).
- Feasibility study to assess need, purpose and aim for the association.
- Financing hall hire, refreshments, telephone, TRA expenses/petty cash.
- Promotion and publicity of meeting dates.
- Start-up stationary pack.

In addition to the above, the Inclusion and Engagement Team will work in partnership with the interim committee to identify and agree training requirements for the TRA, which will be financed separately by Waltham Forest Council.

### **Sustainability Grant:**

TRAs who have been operating for more than a year may apply for a Sustainability Grant. Payment of the grant is subject to the association meeting the recognition criteria. The sustainability grant is calculated using a set formula and is based on the number of properties a TRA covers as part of its stock portfolio (see table below):

No of properties	Baseline funding	Additional Funding per household
Up to 50	£150	£2.00
50 – 100	£250	£2.50
150 – 200	£300	£3.00
200+	£350	£3.50

The sustainability grant can be used to cover things like:

- Setting up sub-committees to look at specific issues.
- Organising resident surveys.
- The cost of inviting speakers to open meetings.
- Translation/interpretation fees.
- Reimbursement of expenses e.g. transport, refreshments, petrol claims, phone costs, childcare.
- Venue hire.
- Publicity, photocopying/printing.
- Purchase administration equipment e.g. stationary.
- Paying for training courses.
- Purchase of refreshments for meetings.
- Health & safety equipment e.g. first aid box

The grant monies cannot be used to:

- Pay for day trips, outings, social or barbeque events.
- Purchase alcoholic drinks.
- Personal or individual reimbursement that are not to do with TRA.
- Paying for repairs.

Where a TRA also manages a Community Centre not more than 25% of the total grant funding can be used to help supplement the Centre's on-costs.

## Further Help and Advice



**How Waltham Forest Council can help:** We recognise that particularly at the beginning Residents' Associations need help and support to get going. Your Housing Engagement Officer is there to help you in the following ways:

- **Provide financial support to for starting up**
- **Advice on other funding including Waltham Forest Council's grants scheme**
- **Training for committee and general members of the association**
- **Practical help with typing, photocopying and account keeping**
- **General advice and support**
- **Putting you in touch with other Residents' Associations and community groups in your area.**
- **Attendance at meetings by officers of WF Housing, if invited.**
- **Recognition of your Association as a representative body**

This is not an exhaustive list. Support will be offered to suit the needs of each Association. For more help please contact:

**Rumana Akthair or  
Julie Haughton**  
Housing Engagement Officers  
Cedar Wood House  
2d Fullburned Road  
London  
E17 4GG

Telephone: 020 8496 4942  
Email:  
[rumana.akthair@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:rumana.akthair@walthamforest.gov.uk)  
[julie.haughton@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:julie.haughton@walthamforest.gov.uk)

### **TPAS:**

Are dedicated to improving tenant engagement standards across the country. They bring tenants, landlords and contractors together through a wide range of services, independent and impartial advice, support, consultancy, and training.

As a recognised Residents Association Waltham Forest Council will sponsor your membership. If you wish to contact TPAS direct their details are below.

TPAS  
4B Paragon House  
48 Seymour Grove  
Old Trafford  
Manchester  
M16 0LN

Tel: 0161 868 3500  
website: [www.tpas.org.uk](http://www.tpas.org.uk)