Residents' Group Handbook

Tuath Housing

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SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION

At Tuath Housing communication plays an essential role in how we conduct our business. How we communicate with people not only reflects us as an organisation but the sector we work in. We value our ability to communicate with our tenants and we aim to follow best practice in doing this for the benefit of our tenants and for the efficiency and transparency of our business.

We believe that residents' groups play a vital role in the communication process between Tuath and our tenants. This is why we have been supporting the development of residents' groups since 2019.

This handbook has been developed by Tuath Housing to provide a user-friendly guide to running a successful residents' group. The handbook will support residents' groups to create and develop community engagement in their estate and local area.

Tuath Housing has a dedicated team of Tenant Engagement Officers (TEOs) to support tenants to set up and get involved with residents' groups.

How Tenant Engagement Officers can help:

- Encourage residents to get involved with a residents' group.
- Arrange a first meeting to discuss setting up a residents' group in a local venue and at a time that is suitable for everyone.
- Facilitate a group discussion on the set-up process of a residents' group.
- Provide information and training on the role and responsibilities of a residents' group committee, for example the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Minute Taker.
- Assist with the set-up of the residents' group's public liability insurance.
- Assist with the residents' group's registration with the local Public Participation Network.
- Support the development of the group's constitution to include the group's vision, aims, and objectives.
- Support the residents' group to identify key issues affecting the estate/local community.
- Support the residents' group to develop an action plan based on agreed actions to address these issues.
- Inform the group of funding opportunities and assist with funding applications.
- Create links to existing similar residents' groups.
- Source training for residents' groups when required.
- Communicate events and information relevant to all residents' groups via regular newsletters, social media and the Tuath website portal.

Please note that Tuath Housing's role in relation to Residents' Groups is to provide assistance and guidance via its Tenant Engagement Officers. Tuath Housing may occasionally make a small contribution or donation towards miscellaneous costs related to a Residents' Group however any items (e.g. equipment etc.) purchased using this contribution remain the sole responsibility of the Residents' Group. Should any costs or claims arise in relation to the running or the dissolution of a Residents' Group, Tuath Housing will not be liable for same.

Training opportunities to help your residents' group

Tuath Housing offers training to help residents' groups develop. The following training will be made available during the year:

- Residents' Group Induction, including committee roles and meeting skills.
- Funding and Grant Applications, including completing grant application forms and where to look for funding.
- How to organise a Successful and Safe Community Event, including event planning, how to obtain insurance cover and Health and Safety.

SECTION 2
WHAT IS A RESIDENTS' GROUP?

A residents' group (also known as a residents' association) is made up of residents, tenants and/or homeowners who represent the interests of everyone living in an area. They come together to represent the views of all residents in their area to help make their neighbourhood and community a better place to live.

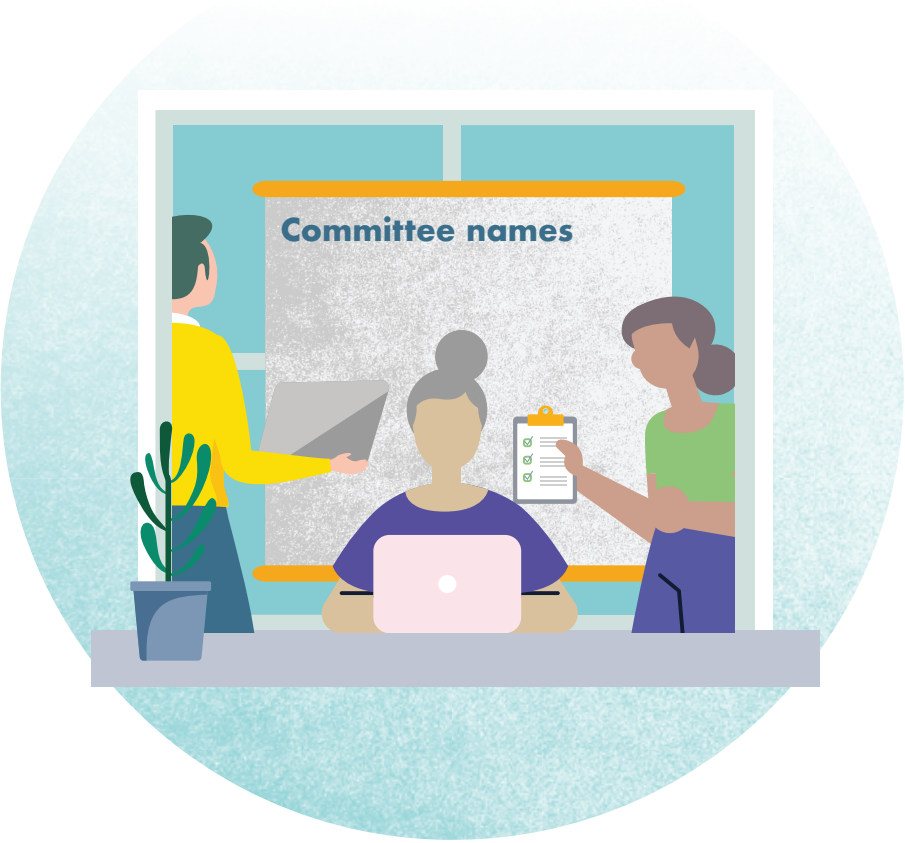
Why start a residents' group?

- To work together to improve facilities or services, e.g. a better repair service, improved road safety, improved local security etc.
- To increase the sense of belonging to a community.
- To organise outings and other social events and build community spirit.
- To link in with other residents' groups in the area and work together on common issues.
- For residents to have a representative body to approach the Local Authority, Tuath Housing, Management companies or other agencies about issues of interest or concern.

What are the benefits of a residents' group?

- Creating and developing your community.
- Meeting your neighbours socially.
- Achievement and pride in your estate.
- Providing services and activities for your community.
- Gaining new skills and knowledge.
- Sharing skills and knowledge.
- Achieving more as a group for the wellbeing of the estate.
- Linking into the wider community.

SECTION 3
SETTING UP AND RUNNING A RESIDENTS' GROUP



What are the first steps for setting up a residents' group?

Following the first meeting with the Tenant Engagement Officer (TEO) a group of volunteers are invited to come forward to form the residents' group.

The next steps are to:

- Decide a group name.
- Agree the aims and objectives of the group.
- Choose who will be the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Minute taker of the residents' group committee.
- Agree a constitution for the group - the TEO can provide a template for the constitution.
- Agree and sign a code of conduct – the TEO can help with this.
- Set up a residents' group bank account - the TEO can provide support with this.
- Register the group with the Public Participation Network.
- Develop an action plan and agree when the actions in it should happen.
- Keep a record of all the committee's meetings. This record is called the 'minutes'. A sample meeting minutes is available in section 9.
- Agree times and dates for future meetings.
- Set an agenda for your next meeting. An agenda template is available in section 9.

Should the residents' group have insurance?

Tuath Housing advises residents' groups to have adequate public liability insurance to protect them against claims. Many community centres require groups to have public liability insurance before they can use the premises. Tuath Housing may provide seed funding towards insurance costs.

Some Local Authorities may also provide funding for residents' groups towards insurance costs, community events, grass cutting and training. It is important that residents' groups check insurance policies before holding events to ensure adequate insurance cover. Some insurance policies require additional or separate insurance cover for the use of bouncy castles. Speak to your Tenant Engagement officer for more information about holding an event where you live.

It is solely the responsibility of the Residents' Group to obtain insurance and to ensure that they comply with the terms and conditions of same. Tuath accepts no responsibility for obtaining/complying with any policy of insurance or for any claims made against the Residents' Group and/or any claims made against any policy of insurance.

Should the residents' group have a bank account?

Having a bank account is essential for a residents' group to be able to receive funding. It can be a credit union, post office or bank account. The account should be set up by the treasurer of the group. The account must have a minimum of three signatories chosen by the committee. Signatories are members of the committee who are authorised to make transactions on the account. One of the signatories must be the treasurer. Signatories should not be related or live in the same house.

Should the residents' group join the Public Participation Network?

The Public Participation Network (PPN) is a register of community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups active in the Local Authority area. PPNs provide an opportunity for community groups to participate in local policy and decision-making. This is in addition to other ways of influencing local policy such as through your local Councillor or public consultations.

PPNs also provide training for community groups and are a good source of information on funding, events and opportunities to network and be involved in the local community. PPNs usually require a group to have a constitution in place before they can join. To apply for a community grant from your Local Authority your residents' group must be registered with the PPN.

What should be the principles of a residents' group committee?

It is important that a residents' group committee operates in a way that shows they are accountable, transparent, inclusive and participatory.

- Accountable to the residents that the group represents, by putting in place and abiding by good governance structures, policies and procedures. For example, by keeping minutes of each meeting, abiding by a code of conduct, keeping a clear record of income and expenditure.
- Transparent in its dealings with residents and representatives, Tuath Housing, the local Council etc. A residents' group should communicate openly, regularly and clearly with all residents about its work.
- Inclusive of all residents and actively seeking the inclusion of people who may find it harder to take part.
- Participatory in the way it operates, seeking the views of the residents it represents when appropriate and open to working with other groups and organisations to achieve its aims.

Some dos and don'ts for residents' group committee members

Committee members should:

- Take part equally in the decision making of the committee.
- Attend meetings or send apologies if not able to attend.
- Follow up on any items that they have committed to do at meetings.
- Ask neighbours for their views on important issues.
- Help organise events.
- Respect confidentiality and not discuss the private affairs of individuals.
- Support the committee and accept majority decisions.
- Have a team spirit and a positive attitude.
- Help produce or distribute leaflets to keep residents updated about what the residents' group is doing.
- Share work equally, ensuring it doesn't all fall to one or two people on the committee.

Committee members should not:

- Act as a policing force for the estate, it is not the committee's role to enforce any rules and regulations on any individual in the estate. If there is an issue, the committee should bring it to the attention of their Housing Services Co-ordinator.
- Discriminate against any members of the committee or community because of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community. Membership of the residents' group should be open to all residents.

SECTION 4
COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The committee members are the most important part of the residents' group. Their role is to attend meetings, organise events, contribute to discussions, give feedback on issues affecting the estate and work together as a team.

Officer Roles

The Chairperson

The Chairperson's role is primarily to lead the committee and facilitate its meetings. The key responsibilities of a chairperson include facilitating the group to work well together and ensuring all committee members are allowed and encouraged to speak.

The Chairperson's role is to:

- Welcome people, open committee meetings and keep the meeting on track and on time.
- Guide the residents' group towards achieving its aims.
- Ensure that each agenda item is discussed, and a decision made and recorded.
- Keep the discussion on the relevant topic and make sure the group is clear about what has been decided, who will do what and when.
- Arrange the next meeting and make sure everyone who needs to be there knows about it.
- Be one of the Bank/Credit Union/Post Office account signatories.
- Open the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and deliver the Chairperson's Report.

A Chairperson should have some of the following abilities:

- Approachable and friendly.
- Tactful and sensitive to other people's feelings and interested in hearing other people's views.
- Able to assign tasks to other people as well as assigning tasks to themselves.
- Interested in the community, it's development and wellbeing.

The Secretary

The Secretary's role is mainly an administrative one. This includes:

- Ensuring that the committee meeting agenda is prepared.
- Recording attendance at committee meetings.
- Writing funding applications on behalf of the group.
- Contacting people about when the next meeting is taking place.
- Dealing with any correspondence for the committee.
- Preparing and presenting the Secretary's report at the AGM.

A Secretary should have some of the following abilities:

- Well organised.
- A good eye for detail.
- Good at communicating.
- Be motivated for the group's success.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer's role is primarily in relation to the finances of the residents' group. This includes:

- Monitor income and outgoings of the group.
- Keep an accurate record of financial accounts.
- Keep the committee informed of the financial situation of the association.
- Present the accounts at the residents' group's AGM.
- To open a bank account for the residents' group.
- Collect membership fees, if they are being charged.
- Pay bills and keep receipts.

A Treasurer should have some of the following abilities:

- Responsible and dependable.
- Able to handle figures and cash.
- Well organised.
- A good eye for detail.

See section 9 for a sample template of a Treasurer's report for the AGM.

The Minute Taker

The Minute Taker's role is to record the decisions made at committee meetings. The role of minute taker is not an elected role and can be swapped between other members of the committee who are not Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer. The Minute Taker's role is to:

- Draft the agenda with the chairperson.
- Take notes during the meeting of what is discussed, what the decisions are and who is supposed to carry out any actions agreed on.
- Write up and circulate the minutes and the agenda for the next meeting.
- Assist in organising the meetings, e.g. time and place etc.

Some good qualities for a Minute Taker:

- Good listening skills.
- A good eye for detail.
- Well organised.

See section 9 for a sample template of a committee meeting minutes.

Some committees also choose to have other officer roles on the committee, depending on what their activities require the committee to take responsibility for e.g. event volunteers.

SECTION 5
GOVERNING DOCUMENTS FOR A RESIDENTS' GROUP

What is a constitution and what is it for?

A constitution is important to a residents' group because it is:

- A written understanding of the group's purpose and keeps the committee on the right track.
- It avoids members having different ideas about the purpose of the group.
- It will serve as a reference for how the group operates and help to resolve problems in times of controversy.
- Potential funders will want to see that your group is accountable, transparent and fair in how it operates and makes decisions. Your constitution demonstrates this.

In general terms the constitution will include the following information:

- Name of the group/association
- Aims and objectives of your organisation (why the group exists and what it wants to achieve)
- Powers (remit of the group)
- Membership (who can be members of the group/organisation)
- Management Committee (representation)
- Officers (roles and responsibilities and voting rights)
- Meetings (frequency, duration etc.)
- The AGM
- Quorum for meetings
- Finance (process for financial management)
- Dissolution of the group
- Alterations or amendments to the Constitution.

The Tenant Engagement Officer can provide training and support to assist you in the development of your constitution that reflects the work and principles of the residents' group.

What is a code of conduct?

A code of conduct is an agreement about how members of a residents' group will behave as a group and to each other. It helps the group to maintain a high standard of conduct, assists members in their work for the residents' group and protects the best interests of the group. A code of conduct can be included in your constitution or can be a separate document.

See section 9 for a sample template code of conduct. The Tenant Engagement Officer can also assist the group with developing this.

What is a statement of equal opportunities?

Equal opportunities ensure people have the same opportunities in life as other people, without being treated in an unfair way because of their gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or ethnicity. A statement of equal opportunities is usually included as a statement within your constitution. It should give reference to how you intend to include everyone within your given community.

See section 9 for a sample statement of equal opportunities. The Tenant Engagement Officer can also assist the group with developing this.

What is an action plan?

In the early stages of a residents' group it is good practice to develop a simple action plan. An action plan will keep the committee focused and will help the committee to assess the group's progress and achievements. A plan is a list of actions or tasks that the residents' group have agreed to follow up on within an agreed time. Tasks are usually issues or concerns raised at meetings by the members of the residents' group committee. The actions or tasks within the plan should be realistic and achievable.

An action plan should;

- Clearly set out the issues/concerns and the solutions the committee would like to achieve.
- Clearly set out what needs to be done to ensure each task is achieved.
- A timescale for each action/task should be agreed.
- It is good practice to assign a committee member to each task/action. The committee member can then encourage others to help them.
- Progress on each action/task should be reported on at each meeting and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- It is important for the committee to evaluate the action plan regularly. This will allow the committee to identify successes, barriers and help plan for the future.

See section 9 for a sample template action plan. The Tenant Engagement Officer can also assist the group with developing this.

SECTION 6
RESIDENTS' GROUPS MEETINGS

Holding a well organised committee meeting

A good committee meeting is well planned and organised. The most important thing a committee does is to meet to discuss issues and make decisions on addressing those issues.

Before the meeting:

- Find a date and time that suits as many members of the committee as possible.
- Choose a venue for the meeting. Meetings should be in a suitable venue, warm, accessible and free from disruptions.
- Notify all members of the committee of the meeting at least one week in advance.
- Members should be informed that any items they wish to discuss should be forwarded to the chairperson before the meeting.
- Prepare the meeting agenda in advance and share it with members of the committee. They should have the agenda at least a few days before the meeting. If there are any other documents, they will need for the meeting these should be shared too.
- Agree a time for the meeting and stick to it, meetings should last no longer than 1.5 to 2 hours.

At the meeting:

- There must be enough committee members present at the meeting to make a quorum. A quorum is the number of members needed to enable any decisions made at the meeting to be binding. Your constitution should include information about the amount of people needed to make a quorum. e.g. a third of the members plus one should be present to enable the meeting to go ahead.
- The meeting should start no later than 10 minutes past the intended start time.
- Remind members to turn off their phones or put them on silent.
- New items to the agenda can be added at the beginning of the meeting under Any Other Business (AOB).
- The Chairperson should remind members of the code of conduct and confidentiality agreement; what is discussed at the meeting stays within the meeting.
- Questions should always be directed through the Chairperson as the facilitator of the meeting.
- Following a discussion on an agenda item, if there isn't complete agreement on a decision the Chairperson should hold a vote on it. Voting is by a show of hands and a simple majority of votes wins. In the event of an equal number of votes for and against, the Chairperson has the casting vote.
- While everyone may not always agree, it is important to respect the opinions of every member.
- At the end of the meeting it can be useful to agree the time and date for the next meeting.

After the meeting:

- The Minute Taker shares a draft of the minutes to all members of the committee as soon as they can. At the next meeting the committee should agree that these minutes are an accurate record of the meeting. Minutes should not be made public until they are agreed at a committee meeting.
- Anyone who has been assigned a task during the meeting should try to get it completed within the agreed time.

See section 9 for a sample template of a committee meeting agenda and minutes.

What is an Annual General Meeting (AGM)?

An AGM is an annual review of how the residents' group is doing. This meeting is about looking at what has happened in the past year and preparing for the upcoming year.

The purpose of the AGM:

- To present the Chairperson's and Treasurer's reports of the work and achievements across the year to members, the format of which will usually be a short written report. This needs to include a summary of the year's activities and provide an end of year financial statement.
- The current Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and any other officers stand down and new ones are elected by secret ballot.
- To agree any proposed changes to the constitution.
- To give members an opportunity to question the committee and discuss how they see the residents' group developing.
- AGM's should happen every year, or at the most no longer than fifteen months after the previous one.

Before your AGM, you will need to:

- Advertise it, in line with the timeframe set out in your constitution; good practice is to give 14 days' written notice.
- Any proposed changes to the constitution must be published and consulted with members in writing, 14 days' ahead of the Annual General Meeting.
- Ask for members to submit any suggested constitutional changes to the Chairperson prior to the AGM.
- Generate interest in committee positions amongst members and provide information on these positions so that everyone has an opportunity to put themselves forward.

For voting at AGMs, it is usual to have one vote per household. This should be laid down in the residents' group constitution.

Closing a residents' group

The residents' group may only be dissolved at a special general meeting called for that purpose. A proposal to dissolve the association can take place if the majority of committee members agree. Funds and possessions will be disposed of according to the residents' group constitution. Tuath Housing is not responsible for the opening or closing of any resident's groups or any matters arising there from e.g. unpaid bills, monies owing to third parties etc.

SECTION 7
LOCAL COMMUNITY AND SOURCES OF FUNDING

Public Participation Networks (PPN) – PPNs are run by all Local Authorities around Ireland. PPNs work with various types of community and voluntary groups such as residents' groups, sports clubs, cultural societies, Meals on Wheels, Tidy Towns etc. to give citizens a greater say in local government decisions which affect their own communities. Most Local Authorities require community and voluntary groups to be members of the PPN in order to apply for their community grants.

Local Grant Scheme – Each Local Authority operates an annual Community Grant Scheme in order to support community participation and involvement. Under the scheme community and voluntary groups may apply for grants for activities which benefit the local community. The range of grant categories available under the Community Grant Schemes include, Community Development; Residents' Groups; Tidy Towns; Equality, Integration and Social Inclusion; Active Elderly; Recreation, Sport and Youth Activity; Festivals and Events and Local area issues.

Community Environment Action Fund (previously known as the Local Agenda 21 Partnership fund) – Administrated by Local Authorities it promotes sustainable development by assisting small scale environmental projects at local level. It involves partnership arrangements between the Local Authority and various local groups. The fund assists with the provision of services at a local level including community gardens, allotments and compost schemes as well as education and training for correct disposal of food waste, anti-litter, environmental awareness and biodiversity.

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2022 – provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public-sector agencies. The programme is managed at a local level by 33 Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), with support from local authorities, and actions are delivered by Programme Implementers (PIs).

TÚS – A community work placement scheme providing short term working opportunities for unemployed people. All the work carried out by participants in the Tús scheme must benefit the community. Participants are referred to their LEADER Partnership who facilitate a suitable work placement within various participating community and voluntary organisations.

Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) – The CEP programme replaces and builds on two existing schemes (Communities Facilities Scheme and RAPID). Combining the schemes makes for a more flexible, streamlined and targeted approach to providing funding to those communities most in need. The CEP is administered by the 33 Local Community Development Committees and funding can range from small scale (for example the purchase of lawnmowers etc.) to larger scale projects in disadvantaged areas.

Community Enhancement Programme (Men's Sheds) – the provision of €500,000 funding for Men's Sheds in Ireland. The funding is provided for Men's Sheds under the Community Enhancement Programme. The funding is for small capital grants for equipment and minor capital works.

Irish Local Development Network – Promoting and supporting the work of Local Development Companies - Local Development Companies (LDCs) are known by many different names including Local Area Partnerships, LEADER Partnerships Integrated Development Companies as well as Local Development Companies. LDC's work with communities to develop local solutions to local issues, they focus on addressing inequality and social exclusion and they promote local economic development.

SECTION 8
GLOSSARY

Action plan	An action plan is a list of actions or tasks that the residents' group have agreed to follow up on within an agreed time. Tasks are usually issues/concerns raised at meetings by the members of the residents' group committee.
Agenda	A written plan for a meeting that lists what will be discussed.
Annual General Meeting (AGM)	An AGM is an annual review of how the residents' group is doing. This meeting is about looking at what has happened in the past year and preparing for the upcoming year. The committee for the upcoming year is elected at the AGM.
Chairperson	The Chairperson is an officer of the residents' group committee. They lead the committee and facilitate its meetings.
Code of Conduct	A set of rules for how a group of people are expected to behave.
Committee	A group of people chosen to take responsibility for the running of a residents' group.
Constitution	A constitution is a written understanding of what your residents' group is going to do and how it is going to do it. It sets out the aims, objectives and rules of the group.
Grant	A sum of money given by an organisation for a particular purpose.
Housing Services Co-ordinator (HSCO)	Housing Services Co-ordinators manage Tuath Housing's properties and provide customer care to Tuath Tenants.
Induction	An introduction to the basic information needed to carry out a job, such as running a residents' group.

Integration	Successfully joining or mixing with a different group of people.
Local Authority	Another name for a city or county council. Local Authorities provide public services such as housing, community development, planning, roads and parks.
Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs)	The Local Community Development Committee is a council committee that co-ordinates community development in the county. This includes managing some community development funding schemes.
Local Development Company (LDC)	Local Development Companies work with communities to develop local solutions to local issues, they focus on addressing inequality and social exclusion and they promote local economic development.
Minutes	A record of the discussion and decisions made at a meeting.
Minute-taker	The Minute-taker is a member of the residents' group committee. They write down what is discussed at a committee meeting, including what decisions were made and who must carry out actions decided at the meeting.
Mixed tenure development	A housing development that has a mixture of social housing tenants, private homeowners and people renting from private landlords.
Nominal funding	A small amount of funding also known as seed funding to cover essential costs to get a residents' group operational, for example room hire for initial meetings.
Public Liability Insurance	Public Liability Insurance is insurance that protects the residents' group against claims of personal injury or property damage that someone suffers as a result of the residents' groups activities.

Public Participation Network (PPN)	The Public Participation Network (PPN) is a register of community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups active in the Local Authority area. PPNs provide an opportunity for community groups to participate in local policy and decision-making.
Quorum	A quorum is the number of committee members needed to enable any decisions made at the committee meeting to be binding. Your constitution should include information about the amount of people needed to make a quorum.
Residents' group	A residents' group (also known as a residents' association) is made up of residents, tenants and/or homeowners who represent the interests of everyone living in an area.
Secretary	The Secretary is an officer of the residents' group committee. They act as an administrator for the committee, dealing with documents, applications and correspondence.
Social inclusion	Social inclusion is a process which gives all groups of people within society an equal opportunity to take part fully in life.
Statement of Equal Opportunities	A statement of equal opportunities is usually included within a constitution. It outlines how a residents' group intends to include everyone within the community.
Tenant Engagement Officer (TEO)	Tenant Engagement Officers support tenants to set up and get involved with residents' groups and community development.
Treasurer	The Treasurer is an officer of the residents' group committee. They deal with the finances of the residents' group and keep the accounts.

SECTION 9
SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR RESIDENTS' GROUPS

Sample Committee Meeting Agenda

St. John's Residents' Group
Committee Meeting Agenda
21/01/2020, 7pm
St. John's Community Hall, Blackchurch, Co. Wexford

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

[The chairperson should welcome everyone to the meeting; introduce any new member, or anyone who is attending the meeting. Apologies from members who are unable to attend should be read & recorded.]

2. Approval of Minutes

[Members agree that the minutes of the previous meeting are accurate and can propose any changes.]

3. Matters arising

[This relates to issues within the minutes of the previous meeting that need to be reported on.]

4. Correspondence

[Any letters, emails or information that has been sent to the committee since the previous meeting should be read and recorded.]

5. Agenda items

[Example, Community Easter event, grass cutting in green area etc. Discussion, feedback and decisions on any issues being progressed.]

6. AOB

[Any other business that needs to be discussed that is not already on the agenda.]

7. Date of next meeting

[Confirm date, venue & time for the next meeting.]

Sample Committee Meeting Minutes

St. John's Residents' Group
Committee Meeting Minutes
21/01/2020, 7pm
St. John's Community Hall, Blackchurch, Co. Wexford

Present: [This should list all committee members who attended. This is important to prove there were enough people present for a quorum so that any decisions made are binding]

Julia Parnas (Chairperson)
John Roe (Treasurer)
Flora Onuzo (Secretary)
Nic Petrescu
Teresa O'Connor

In attendance: [This includes anyone attending as a guest and who does not have decision-making or voting rights.]
Tony O'Dwyer, Blackchurch Tidy Towns

Apologies: [This is a record of people who haven't been able to come to the meeting but have let the meeting know that they won't be there. Don't record people who haven't turned up.]

1. *Welcome, introductions & apologies*
   The Chairperson welcomed Tony O'Dwyer. The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Frederica DeSoto.

2. *Approval of Minutes*
   The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the committee, proposed by Nic Petrescu, seconded by Teresa O'Connor.

3. *Matters arising*
   The Secretary confirmed that the funding application for the Community Grant discussed at the previous meeting was submitted on time.

4. *Correspondence*
   An email was received from the PPN regarding a consultation on the Blackchurch Local Area Plan which will take place on the 27th of January in the Community Centre.

Agreed: [The most important things to note in the minutes is what has been decided and who is going to do it.]

The Secretary will share this email with all residents. Flora Onuzo will attend to represent St. John's Residents' Group.

5. *Easter event*

A discussion followed on preparations for the event. Tony O'Dwyer informed the committee about what supports Blackchurch Tidy Towns would be able to provide.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a clean-up day would be a good idea to hold on the as the Easter event. Teresa O'Connor will ask the council for litter pickers, bags and gloves.

6. *AOB*

The committee noted that a number of complaints have been received about a large pothole in the main road near the entrance to the estate.

Agreed: Julia Parnas will contact the council about this.

8. *Date of next meeting*

19th of February at 7pm in St. John's Community Hall.

[Note that when writing the minutes, it is important to use simple language and be as clear as possible]

Template Action Plan

St. John's Residents' Group action plan 2020

Issue: Halloween event

Planned action	When	Who	Resources	Outcome
Clean up and Halloween Spooktacular - Fancy dress walk - Halloween party	Start working on in late August for October 31st	Julia, Flora, Teresa	Funding for party – apply for Community grant. Check if Local Council can support.	13 kids and 14 adults took part. Very good feedback.
Run activities during the Summer - Sports day - Clean up day	Start working in this in March	Flora, Teresa, John, Nic	Funding – apply for grant. See if local businesses would support.	15 attended the sports day. 26 attended Clean-up day.

Issue 2: Improve Committee communication to residents

Planned action	When	Who	Resources	Outcome
Recruit new members twice a year	Spring and Autumn	Nic, John	Identify who join the group.	Flyers printed and delivered to residents.
Send quarterly email update	March, June, September, December	Julia	Source training on email newsletters – try PPN.	2 email newsletters sent this year.

Sample Event and Community Development ideas

- St. Patricks day
- Easter
- Summer
- Halloween
- Christmas
- Meet and Greet
- Coffee morning
- Bake off
- Litter picks/clean up days
- European neighbours' day
- Walking Group
- Men's shed
- Youth Ireland
- Family fun day
- Health and wellbeing days
- Gardening
- Tree planting
- Table Quiz
- Sensory garden
- Arts and Crafts
- Drama
- Nature walks
- Biodiversity
- Tidy Towns
- Knitting group
- Women's group
- Food safety courses
- RSA demonstrations
- Street feast
- Remembrance night/candle vigil
- Scheme Defibrillator
- Sports days
- Vegetable garden
- Big Hello
- Multicultural Day
- Summer film festival
- Breakfast Club
- Homework Club

Template Treasurer's report for the Annual General Meeting

The purpose of this template is to show what information needs to be included within your Treasurer's report.

1. Name of the Residents' Group
2. The period which the report covers (beginning to end)
3. The cash balance at the beginning of the period
4. The income received during the period (who from, when)
5. The expenses paid during the period (who to, when)
6. The cash balance at the end of the period
7. The signature of the treasurer and date

Template Accounting budget

This table is designed to show you what needs to be included within an account budget. An account summary should accompany the Treasurer's report.

Date	Cheque. No	Description	Income	Expenditure	Balance
Example: 1st April	001	Seed funding	€200		€200
Example: 25th April		Room Hire		€20	€180
Date					
Total					
Date		Balance brought forward			€180

Template Code of Conduct

1. Members are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly fashion, respecting other members at all times, both in meetings and at the meeting venue.
2. Members should at all times remember their role as a residents' representative is to bring forward the views of residents in general. It is inappropriate for members to raise matters that directly relate to their personal circumstances.
3. Members should be aware of the confidential and sensitive nature of information that they may be given or may be told to them by other residents.
4. Offensive, disruptive, threatening or abusive behaviour and language including racist, sexist, disablist or homophobic inflammatory remarks shall not be permitted and will constitute a breach of reasonable behaviour.
5. In their roles as members, residents should not act in a manner that might bring the residents' group into disrepute.
6. Members wishing to speak should indicate to the Chairperson, and then wait to be called upon to speak. All speakers should address the Chairperson. It is the Chairperson's role to make certain everyone has the opportunity to speak. Members should be careful not to dominate the discussion.
7. Speakers should stick to the subject matter in hand and not stray from the point.
8. Only one person shall speak at a time and there should not be any private debates within the meeting.
9. Members should be punctual and arrive at meetings on time.
10. Any breach of reasonable behaviour will result in a vote of no confidence being called against the offending member. In the event of a "vote of no confidence" being proposed in the chair or any other officer, this must be seconded and if carried by a simple majority of those present and voting, the officer concerned shall cease to carry out his or her duties for the remainder of that meeting, and for the remainder of that term of office until the next General Meeting, Special General Meeting or AGM; at which time he or she shall be entitled to stand for re-election provided he or she is nominated, and seconded.

Template Statement of Equal Opportunities

All people in the community should be able to participate in and/or be represented by the Residents' Group. No person should suffer disadvantage or discrimination by reason of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, or because of their religion, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, age, disability or marital status.

In order to achieve these aims:

1. The Residents' Group will actively seek to recruit members that reflect the diversity of the community we represent.
2. We will ensure that our choice of dates, times and venues for meetings does not exclude any particular section of the community.
3. Behaviour and language that is discriminatory will not be tolerated in the Residents' Group meetings or at any time where members are representing the Residents' Group.

This constitution was adopted at a committee meeting of the XXXXXXX Residents' Group

on (date)

Signed ..... Print name .....

Chairperson ....

Secretary ....

Treasurer ....

Sample Health and Safety Checklist

1. Designate a safety officer and inform volunteers who that person is and provide contact details of the safety officer.
2. Survey site beforehand to determine specific hazards.
3. There should be a safety briefing before all clean-ups, especially for new volunteers.
4. Ensure that all volunteers are aware of who is responsible for the first aid kit and where to find it.
5. Wear good gloves to keep hands clean.
6. Wear high visibility clothing – be safe be seen.
7. Do not touch broken glass, syringes or unidentified containers. Report same to safety officer. Keep yourself clean by not touching litter and by wearing gloves.
8. Always wash your hands after clean-up. Avoid touching face or eyes when working.
9. Road traffic: Stay off roads where possible. High visibility clothing will help you be seen, but it does not make you bulletproof.
10. Manual handling: Take your time and don't do too much. If something is heavy don't struggle; ask for help.
11. Caution: Persons under 18 years should be supervised at a ratio of at least one adult to each child.
12. Any containers or drums that look as if they may be hazardous should not be touched. Keep people away and contact the coastguard or county council.
13. Ensure that one member of the clean-up has a working mobile and check that there is signal before starting the clean-up.
14. Report all accidents to the Safety Officer.

Template Health and Safety Risk Assessment

The level of risk of an activity is dependent upon two factors; the probability that harm will occur and the severity of that harm.

An event organiser should satisfy him or herself that their work activities are safe and do not endanger the general public or anyone affected by those activities. In the case of contractors or others working on the residents' group's behalf, the group must satisfy themselves that those contractors also manage their work, so it does not endanger anyone else. This would include the event organiser satisfying themselves that all workers have insurance, safety statements and risk assessments.

In respect of all the above it is the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure they are in compliance with the terms and conditions of the regulations and relevant legislation.

The Health and Safety risk assessment template should be completed for each risk associated with a planned activity so that risks and precautions are identified and understood. This form should also be used as guidance for Health and Safety briefings prior to any projects/activities/clean up activity.

Template Health and Safety Risk Assessment

Section 1: Event details	
Residents' Group Name	
Overview of the event (summarise what the event will consist of and where it will take place)	
Event location (give short synopsis)	
Event schedule and timings (set out the dates of operation, opening and closing times)	
Attendance profile (i.e. numbers, age range, nature)	
Event management structure (set out the key personnel/residents' group)	
Residents' group public liability insurance (is there a current insurance policy in place)	
Is the residents' group registered with the PPN (Public Participation Network)	
Is there a residents' group bank account	
Permissions required, local authority, management company, Tuath Housing etc.	
Overview of large equipment and temporary structures (lighting etc.) Details of the Electrician and insurance certificates	
How will the event be funded? Is there funding in place to cover event and contractor costs?	

Section 2: Event safety	
Safety policy statement (what it is and who should know)	
Event risk assessment (set out in tabular form)	
Fire precautions (means of escape, safe holding capacity calculations, fire safety equipment)	
Electrical installations (lighting, auxiliary power provision)	
Environmental issues (noise, sanitation, catering, litter pickers and waste, sharps box (for syringes) etc.)	
Medical/First Aid Provision (numbers required, location, ambulance, equipment)	
Section 3: Emergency action	
Emergency incident organisation (set out the structure for liaising with the emergency services)	
Section 4: Plan appendices Check	
Action in the event of Fire	
Action in the event of any other emergency incident	
Section 5: Contact details	
Should include telephone numbers of key personnel of the residents' group and external agencies, such as the emergency services contacts and key suppliers	

Get Involved!!

If you would like to set up a residents' group in your area or would like some support to develop your existing residents' group, please contact the Tenant Engagement Officer. Residents' groups within Tuath Housing schemes will receive nominal funding support from Tuath Housing Association. Please contact the Tenant Engagement Officer for more information.

How you can contact us:

Dublin
33 Leeson St Lower
Dublin 2
T 01 676 1602

Cork
24 Marlboro St
Cork
T 021 427 3508

Dundalk
17 Church St
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