

How to set up a tenants and residents association



Welcome

This guide tells you everything you need to know about setting up your own Tenants and Residents Association. At Broadland Housing we actively encourage the formation of Tenants and Residents Associations and are committed to supporting these groups in any way we can.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ivan Johnson' with a horizontal line above the 'J' and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Ivan Johnson
Director of Housing

What is a tenants and residents association?

A Tenants and Residents association is formed by a group of people living in an area, block or street who have come together to take up issues of common interest in relation to their housing, community and general environment.

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) definition

Voluntary body of tenants representing the views of its membership and local residents to their landlord, the local authority and any other relevant agencies.



Why set up a tenants and residents association?

An association can be formed for various reasons. It can be a way of getting to know your neighbours, a way of sharing ideas, local information and becoming more involved by having a greater say about decisions relating to your home and neighbourhood.

Good reasons to form an association

- To have a representative voice when meeting your landlord or council on consultative committees etc, and to use the group to discuss ideas and plans with your landlord
- To get involved with what other groups may be doing
- To keep people in the area informed of all the issues that effect them
- To increase the sense of belonging in a community, and to help other people
- To arrange outings and social events (such as coach trips, a street party, bingo or keep fit etc)
- To have a louder voice than an individual would have, when talking to your landlord about things that you would like to see changed
- To campaign for something (for example play facilities or somewhere to meet)
- To campaign against something (such a closure of local facilities or the effect of any changes to services)
- To have a representative voice when meeting your landlord or council on consultative committees etc, and to use the group to discuss ideas and plans with your landlord
- To get involved with what other groups may be doing

How to get the opinion of fellow residents

Getting people involved

The first step is to discover whether there is sufficient interest amongst the tenants and residents in your area to make the formation of an association possible. Talk to as many people as you can. Some ways to try:

- Door knocking
- Going to local shops and facilities that your community uses
- Going to religious centres in the area
- Go to other places where people meet socially such as pubs, community centres and clubs

If you are able to engage with people from these different areas, you will be able to get an idea of how much support there is for starting a group.

The first part of setting up a residents group is probably the hardest, don't be put off by the need to get things organised. When the group 'gets off the ground' the workload will be shared and tasks can be organised between those who are interested, willing and have the right skills.



Getting started

When setting up a Residents' Association, there are a few points that you should keep in mind:

- Find out the level of support for a Residents Association amongst your neighbours
- Set realistic targets for your group which you are confident you can achieve, do not take on more than you can handle
- Try to get as many people involved as possible, both in making decisions and in taking on various tasks and responsibilities
- Keep everyone well informed about what is happening – find a way of keeping in regular contact with people
- Keep a positive approach



Your Constitution

It is usual for a Tenants and Residents Association to adopt a constitution, which sets out guidelines on how the association will be run. This covers matters such as membership rules, frequency of meetings and how they will be conducted.

A constitution ensures that all members of the association are regularly consulted and informed about decisions that have been taken on their behalf.

For a template constitution document contact Residents participation on 01603 750236 or 01603 750295.

Responsibilities of the committee officers

There are a number of different roles within a Tenants and Residents Association, which you can apply for.

The role of the Chair

The Chair is the focal point for the Residents Association, but this doesn't mean that the role should be overwhelming. You are there as the driver of the association which is navigated and powered by others within the Association.

Specific tasks include:

- To lead discussions at committee meetings or at the AGM while still allowing all others a chance to air their views.
 - Its fine to air your own opinions but it's not the Chair's role to make all of the decisions or to just tell people what to do.
- To have the casting vote if a decision is split evenly.
- Always act on the best interests of the Residents Association as a whole.
- At an AGM, the Chair should welcome everyone, open the meeting and then ask others to contribute to relevant agenda items.
- Check the draft minutes and agenda
- If required, the Chair should be able to explain voting rules to members and answers members' questions.



The role of the Secretary

Residents Associations will have a Secretary who helps to oil the wheels of the Association, allowing it to run smoothly. They are responsible for administration of meetings and making sure resources are available for the Association.

Specific tasks include:

- Ensure that AGM papers are collected and sent out in advance of the AGM
- To make sure that there is a suitable venue and time available
- To minute the committee meetings as well as the AGM
- Keep a copy of the minutes to allow them to be signed as a true record at the next committee meeting or AGM
- Send occasional mailings to members
- Produces the annual report
- Produces the agenda
- Reports on actions between the meetings

The role of the Treasurer

The Treasurer of the Residents Association is responsible for the monetary side of the Association and would therefore need to be over 18 years of age. They would be the steward of any funds and should make sure that any money spent is for the benefit of residents.

Specific tasks include:

- To account for any transactions that go through the Residents Association bank account and to account for any amounts that the Residents Association commits to spend (but hasn't actually spent yet)
- Prepare and present a summary financial report at the AGM
- To keep any receipts and make sure that items bought for the Residents Association are used for the benefit of residents
- Maintains control over petty cash funds, signs cheques along with another authorised signatory like the chair

How to raise funds for your tenants and residents association

If you are looking to begin a project or make a purchase for your Tenants and Residents Association, fundraising events and appeals will be a good place to start. You can make appeals to businesses to donate prizes for events, and many larger businesses have allocated funds to support charities and community initiatives.

You can begin by approaching businesses like:

Sainsburys	Jarrollds
Tesco	House of Fraser
B & Q	John Lewis
Homebase	Asda
Argos	Morrisons

There are many different types of event you could consider i.e:

- Coffee mornings
- Brick a Brac
- Summer fayre
- BBQs
- Quiz and Chip Nights
- Bingo



Some projects and purchases will almost certainly need extra money to make them happen, you may need to consider making an application for additional funding such as a grant. There are many different streams of funding available both locally and nationally to provide funding to community groups.

Where to start

One of the most useful tools when searching for funding is the internet. If you do not have access to the internet at home Broadland Housing can help you. We have resource centres and access to the internet the following locations. You should call 0303 303 0003 to check that the relevant office or resource centre is open for you to use.

King's Lynn: Resource Centre

Pleasant Court
Hospital Walk
King's Lynn
PE30 5PR

Norwich office

21 - 23 St Benedicts Street
Norwich
Norfolk
NR2 4PF

Dereham: Resource Centre

7 Aldiss Court
High Street
Dereham
NR19 1TS

Great Yarmouth

19 - 20 Regent Street
Great Yarmouth
NR30 1RL

Norwich: Office

NCFC
Jarrold Stand
Carrow Road
Norwich
NR1 1HU
Resource Centre

Where to look?

The types of funding and grants available vary massively; a good place to start is the Grantnet website this is a funding search engine. You will need to complete a free registration with Grantnet on behalf of your group before you are able to conduct your searches. Once complete you will be able to search for funding available in your area and refine your search by choosing categories for your project. The website also contains useful documents providing tips and advice on how to write a successful application.

Grantnet

Website: www.grantnet.com

You can also find local information and a link to the Grantnet website from Norfolk County Council.

Website: www.norfolk.gov.uk

Search for Grants and Funding

Big Lottery Fund

For every National Lottery ticket sold, 28p is donated to good causes; this is the equivalent of £25 million per week however this is also one of the most competitive sources of funding.

Website: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Email: general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Awards For All

Awards for All is another useful website which provides many links and background information on funding. Again this is a good place to begin when starting your projects.

Website: www.awardsforall.org.uk

Funding Central

Funding Central “is a free smart website for the whole voluntary and community sector, including social enterprise, providing access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, plus a wealth of tools and resources supporting organisations”.

Website: www.fundingcentral.org.uk

Email: fundingcentral@ncvo-vol.org.uk

Phone: 020 7520 2523

Community Foundations

Local community foundations are organisations which distribute funding with the aim of providing long term benefits to local communities. These foundations are independent and use local knowledge to ensure money is invested into groups and projects that meet the criteria of funding donors.

There are community foundations in both Norfolk and Suffolk who are available to offer advice and guidance to groups in need of funding; both share the aim of supporting and building stronger communities.

Norfolk Foundation:

Website: www.norfolkfoundation.com

Email: info@norfolkfoundation.com

Phone: 01603 623958

Suffolk Foundation:

Website: www.suffolkfoundation.org.uk

Email: info@suffolkfoundation.org.uk

Phone: 01473 734120

Community Foundation Network:

Website: www.communityfoundations.org.uk

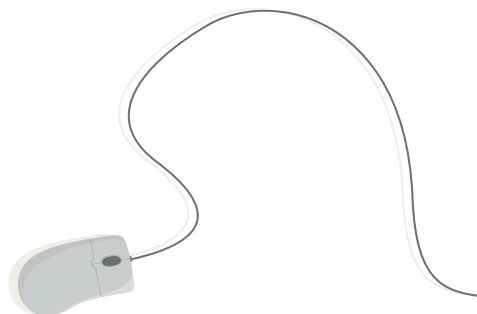
Email: network@communityfoundations.org.uk

Phone: 020 7713 9326

Community Development Agency (CDF):

CDF is the leading source of community development expertise and delivery. As a public body and a charity they bridge government, communities and the voluntary sector

Website: www.cdf.org.uk



Voluntary Norfolk

Voluntary Norfolk is the largest voluntary sector infrastructure organisation in Norfolk. They support the work of voluntary and community organisations through a range of free and paid-for services and by providing a voice for the voluntary and community sector within key partnerships in the county. Voluntary Norfolk is aware of local pots of money and is able to assist with applications and the establishment of organisations.

Website: www.voluntarynorfolk.org.uk

Phone: 01603 614474

Broadland Housing has an Environmental Improvement Budget which residents can use to apply for funding improvements to their local environment and communal areas. This might include (but is not exclusive to) things such as water butts, composting bins, green houses, raised beds and garden furniture. For your application to be successful you must have the support of at least 25% of residents living at your scheme.

If you wish to apply for funding please call Customer Services on 0303 303 0003 to ask for an application form or visit the green page of our website www.broadlandhousing.org.

Writing a funding application

All funders have different aims and when writing an application you'll need to demonstrate how you meet their requirements. Do not waste your time applying to trusts that do not fund projects like yours, or asking for £5,000 from a foundation that only gives grants of £500.

You'll either need to fill in an application form or write a letter (or both). Make sure you find out exactly what each funder expects you to provide and follow their instructions very carefully.

In every case, you'll need to show:

1. The need or demand for your project
2. Why you need the money
3. How you intend to spend it

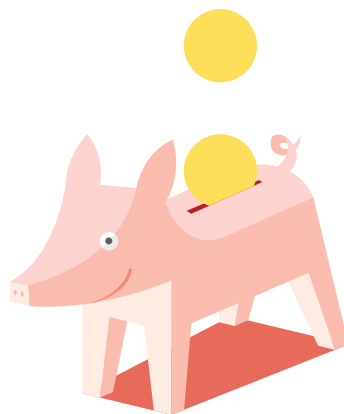
Funders will look for evidence that you are a credible organisation and that you will

spend their money wisely. You should provide details of:

- Your group's background and track record
- How you intend to measure the success of your project
- How you will keep it going when their funding runs out.

More tips for funding applications

- Keep covering letters short - one side of A4 is enough
- Write in clear, concise language. Funders may not be specialists in your field, so avoid using jargon
- Be realistic, make sure your figures add up, and don't necessarily apply for the largest grant available.
- Stay focused, why is this project important? How will you specifically use the money to achieve your aims?
- Take the time to make your application look as professional as possible. Check for typing errors, which could damage your credibility.



Help and advice from the tenants and resident participation team

The Tenants and Resident Participation Team are able to offer support and guidance to any individuals who are interested in getting involved and starting a residents association in your area.

The Resident Participation Team can be contacted on: 01603 750236/295



Frequently asked questions

Q: What is the difference between a Tenants and Residents Association and a Social Club?

A: The only differences are in the goals of the group.

Tenants and Residents Associations may have many wide-ranging goals that aim to improve their neighbourhood, whereas a Social Club has the goal of improving the community through social events.

There is no real difference in how the two are run (both will have constitutions), and they are both set up for the good of residents.

Q: Whose responsibility is it to set an Association up?

A: Any resident can start the ball rolling to set up a Tenants and Residents Association or Social Club.

If there isn't already a Tenants and Residents Association or a Social Club for your area, you just need to drum up the support of fellow residents and gather together a committee.

Once your committee and constitution is in place you can start work on putting on events, getting more people involved in the community and identifying things that we could improve in your area.

Q: Why doesn't Broadland Housing set up a Tenants and Resident Associations for us?

A: We want Tenants and Residents Associations to be all about you. We want them to be for tenants and residents and therefore run by tenants and residents.

Having a Residents Association that is independent from BHA means that you can do things that are of benefit to your own neighbourhoods and communities.

We can provide the framework, but this is your chance to run your own events and give your neighbourhood a collective voice.

Q: Will we need to set up a bank account?

A: Yes, a new group should set up a bank account. You will need to make sure that there are at least two signatories for signing cheques.

Q: Why doesn't Broadland Housing prepare/audit our annual accounts?

A: Tenants and Residents Associations are independent organisations separate from Broadland Housing. As such, they are responsible for preparing their own annual accounts in accordance with the law.

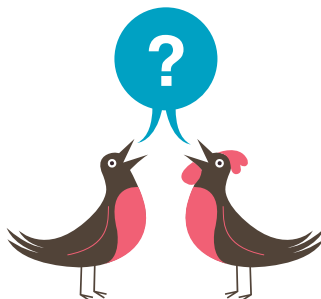
Broadland Housing must remain impartial and should not interfere with Tenants and Resident Association business other than to provide guidance and advice as appropriate.

Q: How does setting up a Tenants and Residents Association in Sheltered or Supported Housing differ from general estates?

A: Setting up a group in sheltered schemes is no different from on estates. In some ways it is easier because you know exactly what 'area' your group will cover. Also the fact that many schemes will have community rooms helps as this is obviously an ideal location for your 'public meeting'. It is still, however, just as important to get to everyone individually. Don't assume that a leaflet on the notice board will do.

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

A: A group can be as small or large as you want it to be. It is up to the tenants and residents to decide the area that they want the group to cover.



Tenants and residents association application form

Please complete the application form (as appropriate) to register your tenants and resident's association with Broadland Housing.

Formal Group or Informal Group

[please circle]

Name of group:.....

Membership area:.....

Chair

Name:.....

Address:.....

Telephone Number:.....

Email:.....

Secretary

Name:.....

Address:.....

Telephone Number:.....

Email:.....

Treasurer

Name:.....

Address:.....

Telephone Number:.....

Email:.....

Details of bank account

Name of account:.....

Sort Code:.....

Account Number:.....

Please enclose the following document

- > Constitution (if appropriate)



Norwich Head Office

Opening times

Monday to Thursday 8.30am-6pm

Friday 8.30am-5pm

Norwich City Football Club

Jarrod Stand

Carrow Road

Norwich

NR1 1HU

Tel 0303 303 0003

Fax 01603 750222

Norwich offices

21 - 23 St Benedicts Street

Norwich

Norfolk

NR2 4PF

93 – 95 King Street

Norwich

Norfolk

NR1 1PH

Dereham Office

Opening times 9am-5pm

7 Aldiss Court

High Street

Dereham

NR19 1TS

Kings Lynn Office

Opening times 9am-5pm

Pleasant Court

Hospital Walk

King's Lynn

Norfolk

PE30 5PR

Great Yarmouth Office

Opening times 9am-5pm

19 - 20 Regent Street

Great Yarmouth

Norfolk

NR30 1RL

Customer Services

0303 303 0003

Customer Services

Lines open 9am-5pm

Monday to Friday

Website www.broadlandhousing.org

Email enquiries@broadlandhousing.org

www.broadlandhousing.org



IN
TRAN
communication for all

This has been produced using paper manufactured with pulp sourced from carefully managed and renewed forest and is fully recyclable

