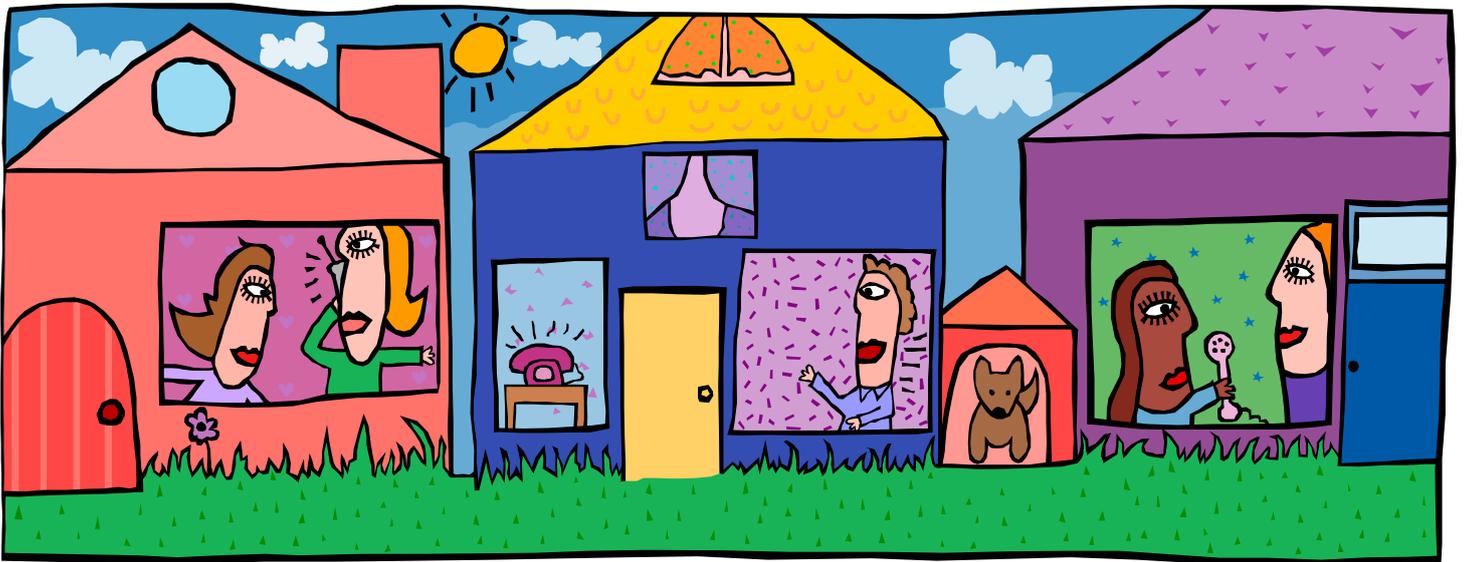


Setting Up & Running A Residents Association

A Guide for Residents



C A R L O W
C O U N T Y C O U N C I L

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Introduction

This guide should help you in establishing a Residents' Association, and explain the roles of the members of the committee. It also includes an example of Constitution for the Residents' Association to clearly set out their aims and objectives. Remember this is only a guide to help get you started and once you meet you can establish your own rules and procedures.

What Is A Residents' Association?

A Residents' Association is a group of people who meet to discuss matters affecting their estate.

Why Start A Residents Association?

- To work together to improve facilities or services, e.g. a better repair service, improved road safety, improved local security etc. Basically whatever is important to your community?
- To increase the sense of belonging to a community.
- To organise outings and other social events.
- To get involved with what other residents associations are doing.
- To have representatives on behalf of the residents to approach Carlow County Council, Cluid, Respond or other agencies about issues of interest and concern.

The Benefits of A Residents' Association:

- Creating and developing your community
- Meeting your neighbours socially
- Achievement and pride in your estate
- Providing services and activities for the residents
- Gaining of new skills and knowledge
- Sharing of skills and knowledge
- Achieve more as a group for the well being of the estate

Setting up and running a Residents Association

How To Get Started? The Steering Committee.

- The residents' who have shown interest in setting up the Association will meet. The purpose of this meeting is to decide on a date and venue for all the residents in the estate to meet and elect a committee.

The Steering Committee will decide the following in their first meeting:

- Who will Chair this particular meeting.
- Who will take the minutes of the meeting?
- Who will make a list of the attendance?
- The Steering Committee will agree on a venue and date for the first Residents' Association meeting.

The Residents' Association first meeting:

For your first meeting you will need:

- A room appropriate to the holding of a meeting
- An Agenda.
- Notify all residents' of the time and place of the meeting.
- Make sure you have accommodated special needs such as wheelchair users.

- Nominate someone to take notes for this meeting only.
- Nominate someone to chair this meeting only.

Agenda

- Election of Committee Members
- Setting the rules and objectives of the Residents' Association (see Constitution)
- Setting a date and venue for the next meeting.

What do Committee Members do?

- Take part in Resident Association decision-making.
- Help out if and when they can.
- Follow up on any items that you have committed to do at meetings.
- Further the stated aims of the Associations Constitution.
- The Chairperson
- Guides the Residents' Association towards achieving its aims
- To chair the meetings (to oversee that the rules and procedures are followed)
- To ensure that each agenda is discussed and a decision made and recorded
- To ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the discussions
- To steer the discussions back to relevant topics

The Secretary

- Take the minutes of the meetings
- Contact people when the next meeting is held
- Ensure the Agendas are prepared in liaison with the Chairperson
- Deal with any correspondence for the Committee

The Treasurer

- Opens a bank account for the Residents' Association
- Collect membership fees
- Pay bills
- Keep accounts
- Prepare final statements for Annual General Meeting

Other Officers

Other officers can be elected to spread the load of the tasks. As you can see, from the descriptions of the jobs, many of the tasks can be divided up and given to other members to help out with. This can be agreed at the meeting and invite more volunteers to help out with some of the administration work or collection of fees.

How to conduct a meeting?

There must be an Agenda, which is designed to identify topics for discussion; this must be distributed to all members of the Residents' Association, at least a week before a meeting. The Chairperson controls the meeting to provide that every topic is discussed and every opinion is heard. The Agenda should also provide time to review and agree minutes of previous meetings, which the Chairperson signs and the Secretary will keep

What if we can't agree on a decision?

If the meeting cannot agree on a topic, either a show of hands or a private ballot must reach a decision. The Chairperson will accept a majority decision. If the vote is equal the Chairperson has the casting vote and the Secretary will record the decision of any vote.

A Constitution

A committee needs a Constitution or a foundation in which to work from. This example of a Constitution will help you in the design and drafting of your own

Name of Association

Aims of the Residents' Association

- To promote the interests of the residents' of
- To promote social activities for the residents' of the estate

Membership

The Residents' Association shall represent more than 50% of the residents of the estate; membership is limited to residents' of the estate.

Equal Opportunities

Membership shall be open to all residents, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, appearance, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or religious belief.

Membership Fees

All members shall pay an annual fee of €... per year or €.... per month

Committee

- The committee shall be elected to carry out business of the Association
- The committee will be made up of the following: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer,
- The committee shall meet times per year
- The Minutes of Committee meetings shall be made available to all members of the association.
- Vacancies on the Committee which arise during the year shall be filled by elections at General Meetings

Annual General Meeting

- The annual General Meeting shall be held every at which time the committee will report its work, present a statement of account and then resign.
- The AGM will elect a new Committee and vote on any amendments to the constitution.
- Nominations for the Committee will be given to the Secretary not less than 14 days before the AGM.
- The Secretary will notify all members of the date of the meeting not less than 14 days before the AGM.

General Meetings

- There will be a General Meeting open to all members every times a year.
- A Special General Meeting open to all members will be held if 25% of members submit in writing to the Secretary a request for such a meeting. The Secretary will then to endeavour to arrange the meeting to take place within 14 days.
- The Secretary will notify the date of all General Meetings not less than 5 days before the meeting.
- Quorum
- No General Meeting or Annual Meeting shall be valid if less than 25% of members present.
- No Committee Meeting shall be valid if less than one third of the Committee are presents

Voting

- Voting at Committee Meetings shall be by a show of hands, unless otherwise resolved.
- Voting at General Meetings shall be by secret ballot
- A simple majority of votes shall prevail
- (you must decide if one vote per household or each member of the association has voting rights)
- In the event of equality of votes the Chairperson has casting vote

Financial Records

- The Treasurer shall open a bank account, in the name of the Association. The account should have two signatories. (One must be the Treasurer and another member nominated by the Committee)
- The Treasurer shall keep proper financial records and produce annual accounts, which will be presented at the AGM
- The Treasurer shall submit accounts for audit at the end of the financial year.

Changes to the Constitution

- The Constitution may be altered at an AGM or at a Special Meeting
- Any suggested changes should be submitted to the Secretary at least 14 days before the AGM
- Changes must be agreed by 75% of the members whether present or not

Dissolution

- The Residents' Association may only be dissolved at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose.
- A proposal to dissolve the Association only if 75% members agree
- Funds and possessions will be disposed of according to the wishes of the meeting or contained in the rules.

