

Let's get Organised



حان الوقت لتنظيم جهودنا في إطار جماعي

আসুন, সঠিকভাবে পরিচালনা করি

ਆਉ ਈਕੱਠੇ ਹੋਈਏ

Aannu Isku Duubnaano

چلو منظم ہو جائیں

وهرن بار ڪوڀڪ و دامهزراو بين



How to get started and successfully
run a tenants and residents association
or a single issue group

Sandwell Homes
Quality Housing, Excellent Services



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Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.



Welcome

WELCOME TO SANDWELL HOMES 'LET'S GET ORGANISED'

This handbook has been designed for use by tenants and residents, already established or new community groups of Sandwell with the following aims:

- To help you to start and run a group successfully.
- To help you decide which type of group to form. (*For example, Tenants and Residents Association or a Single Issue Group.*)
- To help you to develop and sustain your already established group and serve your members more effectively.
- Clarify the type of support you can receive from your Sandwell Homes Community Involvement Officer and the Community Involvement Team.



Sandwell Homes are committed to involving the community and recognise the role tenants and residents can play.

If you think that a Tenant and Residents Association or a Single Issue Group would be a good idea for your area, read on. This pack can help you set up and build your group.

Please see the Tenant Participation Agreement to find out how you can get involved at other levels. (*See section 1.4 Tenants Participation Agreement on page 12 and section 6.0 Getting Involved on page 50.*)


1.0



Introduction

This section contains information about the types of groups and support that is available.

- 1.1 What is a Tenants and Residents Association?
- 1.2 What is a Single Issue Group?
- 1.3 Support from Sandwell Homes Community Involvement Team
- 1.4 Tenant Participation Agreement (TPA)
- 1.5 Sandwell Community Information and Participation Service (SCIPS)



Remember: Your Community Involvement Officer will be happy to provide any help and assistance your group will need to get started.

Setting up a group is the best way of making your voice heard, campaigning for improvements in your area and to help make the area you live in a safer place.

1.1

What is a Tenants and Residents Association (TRA)?

A voluntary group of tenants and residents who work together to improve the neighbourhood where they live.

THE BENEFITS OF SETTING UP A TRA

- To campaign for more facilities in the area such as car parking, litter bins and street lighting.
- To campaign against a particular issue that people are worried about for example, crime, or nuisance.
- To gain a stronger voice than you would have as an individual.
- To arrange outings and social events.
- To develop a sense of community by meeting and helping other people.
- To keep people in the area informed of the issues that affect them.
- To help recognise and develop the talents of community members.
- To get involved with what other groups may be doing.

1.2

What is a Single Issue Group?

Unlike a Tenants and Residents Association, Single Issue Groups are not required to have a constitution. This enables them to be less formal.

Single Issue Groups (*sometimes known as focus groups*) are generally short life groups where tenants and residents come together for a limited time in order to get a specific matter resolved. (See section 2.4 Single Issue Groups on page 21).

If you wish to speak to someone about the contents of this pack or for more information then please contact the Sandwell Homes Community Involvement Team whose contact details are as follows:

Phone: [0121 569 6466](tel:01215696466)

Fax: [0121 569 5345](tel:01215695345)

Address: [Community Involvement Team](#)

[Dartmouth House](#)

[Sandwell Road](#)

[West Bromwich](#)

[B70 8TQ](#)

email: customer_relations@sandwellhomes.org.uk

Web: www.sandwellhomes.org.uk



1.3


Support from Sandwell Homes Community Involvement Team

Sandwell Homes are fully committed to encouraging and supporting tenants and residents who want to be part of the decision making that affects their homes and the housing services they receive.

The Community Involvement Team consists of 6 Community Involvement Officers (*one for each town*) and a manager.

One aspect of their job is to provide help & support to new and existing Tenants and Residents Associations (TRA's) and Single Issue Groups.

They help organise training for groups, look after all applications for funding and organise many consultation and participation events.



Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.

1.3

THE TYPE OF SUPPORT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OFFICER (CIO)

When setting up a group we will;

- Visit you within 10 days of your initial enquiry.
- Help you to bring together other interested people.
- Help produce a flyer/survey form to determine interest from the rest of the community.
- Help to get the flyer/survey form printed.
- Help you to distribute the flyer/survey around your neighbourhood.
- Analyse the responses to determine the interest from the community.
- Agree on the roles that people want to be responsible for.
- Help to develop a set of rules (*constitution*) for the group.
- Help you decide which type of group to form (*Tenants & Residents Association or a Single Issue Group*).
- Help you to develop committee roles of the group.

For your first public meeting we will help you to;

- Find a suitable venue.
- Develop, print and help deliver posters and flyers to promote the meeting.
- Set the agenda.
- Produce attendance sheets, agendas, copies of the constitution and other paperwork for the meeting.
- Invite your Housing Officer/Manager and any other relevant people.
- Chair the meeting (*if necessary*).
- Elect Committee members and ensure the constitution is officially adopted and signed by new committee.

(continued overleaf...)

1.3

For your first public meeting we will; *(continued...)*

- Register your group with Sandwell Homes.
- Notify your local councillors, Sandwell Community Information and Participation Services (SCIPS) and your local neighbourhood office.
- Help the group apply for a starter Grant from Sandwell Homes (*see section 5 - Funding on page 46*).

Continuing support. We will;

- Provide basic training in committee skills and simple book keeping.
- Give advice on organising and running your meetings.
- Provide support with your promotional material. (*For example, newsletters*).
- Provide you with a list of useful contacts.
- Direct you to other agencies that can advise your group on issues affecting your area.
- Periodically check your group to ensure it is acting in accordance with the constitution.
- Help you to organise community events.
- Work with you to increase membership and ensure your community involvement is representative.
- Provide regular funding.
- Help you with funding applications to other organisations (*for example, The Lottery Fund*).
- Check your financial records prior to any Annual General Meeting.
- Attend your Annual General Meeting to support you in re-electing the committee.
- Help deal with conflict should it arise within the group.

1.3

- Once the group is running effectively you may not want your Community Involvement Officer to attend every meeting.
 - Your local housing officer will be interested in attending some of your meetings.
- If you receive grant funding from other organisations other than Sandwell Homes, it is their responsibility to audit those grants. We will however provide you with support where necessary.



1.4

Tenant Participation Agreement

The Sandwell Tenant Participation Agreement (TPA) is a public document that sets out how council tenants can participate in housing issues that affect them. It aims to maximise the influence and involvement of tenants in the management of their homes.

The original agreement, (*known as the Tenant Participation Compact*) was launched in April 2000 and then reviewed in 2003. A number of changes have taken place that affect how we deliver the agreement. This includes the development of Sandwell Homes and the introduction of the government's revised National Framework for Tenant Participation Compacts. To reflect these changes a further review took place during 2006/7.

Within the TPA are opportunities for tenants to get involved and have their say in influencing the housing services they receive.

The 'Wheel of Involvement' describes the different types of involvement and the amounts of time someone would be required to give (*see section 6.0 - Getting Involved on page 50, for more information*).

HOW DO I GET A COPY OF THE AGREEMENT?

The Agreement is available in full as a download from the main partners websites:

www.sandwell.gov.uk

www.scips.org.uk

www.sandwellhomes.org.uk

Alternatively you can obtain a hard copy by phoning Sandwell Homes on **0845 359 7600**, or by emailing your request to: customer_relations@sandwellhomes.org.uk.

A copy for reference can be viewed at all Sandwell Homes Neighbourhood offices.

1.5

Sandwell Community Information & Participation Service (SCIPS)

SCIPS are a small user-led registered charity providing information, support, advice and training to local Tenants & Residents Associations, individuals and where appropriate to the wider local community. They have over fifteen years of knowledge and experience in the field of tenant involvement and their core work is around the delivery of support services and projects within Housing, Regeneration and Community Development.

SCIPS are completely independent with no political affiliations and are able to offer support and advice without any agenda. They work in close partnership with Housing, Regeneration and voluntary organisations to ensure that communities are consulted on issues that are important to them and can in turn influence policy development and decisions.

SCIPS have a well-equipped resource centre located centrally in Christ Church, Oldbury. The resource centre and facilities are available for use by members on request. The facilities include:

- Meeting room
- Photocopying and printing
- Use of desktop computers
- Computer equipment loan scheme
- Funderfinder scheme
- Visual aids equipment

To find out more about them and the work they are involved in, please visit their website at www.scips.org.uk.

Alternatively:

Mail at: **SCIPS Ltd,**
Ground Floor, Christ Church, Birmingham Street, Oldbury West Midlands B69 4DY

Telephone: **0121 544 1230**

Fax: **0121 544 9676**

2.0



For New Groups

This section contains information to help get your group started.

2.1 Starting a Group

2.2 The Constitution

2.3 Sandwell Homes Model Constitution

2.4 Single Issue groups

2.5 Funding available from Sandwell Homes

2.6 The Launch

2.7 The Committee – their roles explained



Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.



2.1

Starting a Group

You will have your own reasons for wanting to start a group, you may feel passionate about something in your community, or there may be a specific issue that has been bothering you. You may feel that other people in your area share the same views.

By bringing other people together you can all decide what you would like to do.

HOW TO GET PEOPLE INVOLVED

Speak to as many people as possible. Listed below are various steps you might find useful to get the information you need:

- Speak to your neighbours.
- Speak to parents at schools, playgroups, nurseries, youth clubs and so on.
- Put up notices in local shops asking people to contact you.
- Go to places where people meet socially, for example pubs and community centres.
- Go to religious centres in the area, churches, mosques and so on.
- Immediate family.

Also,

- Contact the Community Involvement Team who will offer your help and assistance in getting other people involved.
- The Community Involvement team can help you design and print a survey that can be sent to residents in the area. This is a good way of finding what people think and a good way of meeting people.

Don't be disappointed if some people don't want to get involved. This can change when they start seeing some results from your group.

2.1

When you have received interest, your next step will be to bring all these interested people together.

Your Community Involvement Officer can help you to book a room somewhere so that a meeting can be arranged to discuss the ideas further.

You might feel that if only a few people initially respond, then a meeting could be held in somebody's home.

You may want to consider the following points:

- What are the shared issues that concern you all.
- What is the best way of taking these issues forward.
- What type of group do you want to be.
- What will be the geographical area your group will cover.
- Do you want to be a tenants and residents association?
- If it is only one problem would a Single Issue group be a better idea.
- Do you want to involve the Community Involvement Team for support.

From this initial meeting a steering group can be formed who can start meeting to discuss the problems in your area and what you would like to do about them.



Remember: The Sandwell Homes Community Involvement Team can help you with leaflets, translations & interpreters, booking venues and so on.

2.1

Useful hints and possible points to achieve at this first meeting:

- Balance formality with informality so people can get to know each other.
- Ask people attending the meeting to think about ideas for getting other people involved.
- Make it possible for anyone who wants to attend to be able to gain access to the venue. (*People who use wheelchairs and so on.*)
- Get everyone to introduce themselves and keep a record of the names of people who attended.
- If you have nominated a chair person get them to chair the meeting.
- Ask someone to take down notes of the meeting so you have a record.
- Draw up a list of the aims for the group.



2.2

The Constitution

If you decide to become a Tenants and Residents Association then you will need to have a constitution.

Your constitution is a key feature of your group, without one you will not get recognition from Sandwell Homes and you will not be entitled to any financial grant funding.

The constitution is a set of rules which will set out the aims of your group, indicate the roads and streets that you cover, how the association will be run, who will run it, and what it can and can't do. However, if you choose to form a single-issue group you will not need to have a constitution (*see section 2.4 - Single Issue Groups on page 21*).

WHY DO YOU NEED A CONSTITUTION?

A constitution is necessary for Sandwell Homes to recognise your Tenants and Residents Association.

Other benefits are:

- The group can affiliate with SCIPS (*Sandwell Community Information and Participation Services*). By becoming a member you will receive a regular newsletter and have access to the services they provide (*see section 1.5 - Sandwell Community Information & Participation Service (SCIPS) on page 13*).
- Gives members rules and guidance to work with.
- Allows you to apply to other organisations for funding.

2.2

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Your constitution must include an equal opportunities clause.

You must not discriminate against anyone because of their ethnic origin, religious belief, disability, age, sex, marital status or sexuality, or any other reason, which could be considered discriminatory.

You should also ensure that your association is representative of the area that you cover.

Your group must take account of issues that affect all the community, for example:

- When arranging meetings, think about whether the venue is easily accessible for people with disabilities.
- Do you need an interpreter for residents who do not speak English?
- Can childcare be organised so that people with young children can attend?



2.3

Sandwell Homes Model Constitution

Sandwell Homes have designed a model constitution which covers everything that a new association would need to consider.

It also ensures that groups are able to apply for funds from a variety of sources. The model constitution is based on best practice from across the UK with many Tenants and Residents Association's already successfully working to similar constitutions.



Please contact the Sandwell Homes Community Involvement team for a copy of the Sandwell Homes model constitution.

- The Sandwell Homes model constitution is designed to provide a simple and comprehensive set of rules to enable all Tenants and Residents Association's to conduct their business with the minimum of fuss and red tape.
- It is designed to be Lottery friendly and ensure that groups can continue to secure funding from a wide variety of sources should they wish to do so. It also provides a clear framework for all members who wish to contribute to the outstanding work being carried out by Tenants and Residents Association's across Sandwell.
- The tenant's movement in Sandwell played a large part in the design of the current model constitution.
- The model constitution allows flexibility to take account of local circumstances.
- As Sandwell Homes is ultimately responsible for the conduct of groups registered with and funded by them, groups must abide by agreed standards of conduct in their dealings with the public and Sandwell Homes which the model constitution is designed to ensure.

2.4

Single Issue Groups

After your initial meetings you might agree that becoming a Single Issue group is preferable to becoming a tenants and residents association.

Your group might only want to meet while they are resolving the issue that is causing concern. You can still become a Single Issue group if there is more than one issue causing concern.

A Single Issue group (*sometimes known as a Focus group*), is a short life group and generally only exists for a few meetings.

Single Issue groups do not need to adopt a constitution, but will need to agree a basic set of rules.

These rules would cover issues such as behaviour in meetings and showing respect to other members of the group.

Single Issue groups do not receive funding from Sandwell Homes but we would help you with some minor costs to ensure the group can run and be effective.

If you feel that you are likely to receive better support from the community by tackling one issue at a time then a Single Issue group is ideal.



Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.



2.5

Funding available from Sandwell Homes

Registered tenants and residents associations are able to apply for funding from Sandwell Homes. The following amounts are available;

£250.00 STARTER GRANT

This grant is payable to new associations in order for them to pay for the initial costs they will incur when setting up. For example, design and printing fliers and survey forms, room bookings, telephone calls and so on.

£600.00 RUNNING COSTS GRANT

Established groups will need funding to keep the association running, sending members to meetings, production of newsletters and so on. This grant which is payable up to the full amount providing groups can demonstrate that the money has been spent accordingly.

£750.00 CAPITAL COSTS GRANT

Once the group is well recognised within its community, they may want to promote the association better. This grant allows them to apply for items such as a digital camera (*for producing newsletters*) computer equipment (*to produce own literature*) and so on up to the full amount.

2.6

The Launch

If your group is to become official, it will need to be formally launched at a public meeting to:

- Officially set up the group or association
- Adopt the constitution.
- Elect a committee to run the group.
- Recruit members to the group.
- Identify issues and concerns within the represented community.



Remember: Your Sandwell Homes Community Involvement Officer will help you organise this meeting.

FINDING A PLACE TO MEET

Try and make it easy for people to come along - What sort of venues are near to your group? For example local schools, community centres, youth clubs...

Points to consider when choosing the venue:

- Is it local and easy for everyone to get to including elderly people?
- Is there disabled access and toilets?
- Does the building have toilets?
- Is the lighting adequate?
- Are there chairs and tables available?
- Is the room large enough?
- What dates and times is it available?
- Are there facilities to provide refreshments?
- What are the arrangements for opening and locking up?
- How much will it cost?
- Is there space for children to play or crèche facilities?
- If you had someone attending to do a presentation, are there facilities for an overhead projector and so on?

2.6

WHO TO INVITE

As well as tenants & residents, you might want to invite the local councillors from your ward. They can support you at the meeting by answering some questions local people may ask.

If you know that there is going to be a specific question raised about a certain local problem, you could invite someone from the relevant agency .

Other people you could consider inviting include:

- Your Community Involvement Officer
- Neighbourhood Office Manager
- Local police
- Guest speakers

If you have members from your community whose first language is not English, you may need to consider providing an interpreter.

PUBLICISING YOUR MEETING

Leaflets need to be designed, printed and delivered to every household within the area of benefit, giving 7 to 10 days notice. Posters can be displayed in Neighbourhood Offices, shops, places of worship and libraries.

AT THE LAUNCH MEETING

Make copies of the draft constitution available.

The constitution should be formally agreed and adopted by a vote of all those present.

The meeting must then elect its officers and committee, who should represent the community they serve.

2.6



CHECKLIST FOR LAUNCH MEETING

- ✓ Is the venue suitable?
- ✓ Have arrangements been made to open up on time and lock the building after the meeting?
- ✓ If you are providing refreshments have they been ordered?
- ✓ Is all the paperwork ready?
- ✓ Attendance sheets, (*so you know who has attended*).
- ✓ Agendas (*see below*),
- ✓ Copies of the Constitution,
- ✓ Map showing the streets you want to cover.
- ✓ Have all the guests been invited?
- ✓ Local Councillor.
- ✓ Local Office Housing Manager.
- ✓ Your Community Involvement Officer.
- ✓ Local police.
- ✓ Other guests.

MODEL AGENDA FOR THE LAUNCH MEETING

Here is an example for you to follow to help plan your own agenda for your first public meeting (*see page 32*).

NAME OF THE TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

PLACE

DATE AND TIME

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Why we need a tenants & residents Association 10 mins
4. Choice of name 5 mins
5. Electing the committee 15 mins
6. Recruiting new members 5 mins
7. Adopt constitution 10 mins
8. Open forum to discuss issues 30 mins
9. Date, place and time of the first committee meeting

For more information on agendas (*see section 3.1 Running your Meetings on page 31*).

2.7

The Committee - Their roles explained

The committee runs the association on behalf of its members. Usually it is made up of people who were on the initial steering group, but others may also have joined at the public meeting.

THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Help to ensure that the association runs effectively.
- Attend each committee meeting where possible.
- Submits apologies if unable to attend meetings.
- Contribute to the discussions
- Put items on the agenda.
- Helps to produce and distribute leaflets and newsletters.
- Volunteer if they see a job that needs doing – so the workload is shared.
- Report back if they have carried out a task or gone to a meeting on behalf of the group.
- Support the Committee and accept majority decisions.
- Have a team spirit and positive attitude.
- Ask neighbours for their views on important issues.
- Respect confidentiality – don't discuss the private affairs of individuals.
- Make sure they represent the views of the whole community.
- Respect the views of other committee members.

Remember:
it's all about teamwork!

2.7

THE CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson is the spokesperson for the group and makes sure the group meet their aims.

Outside meetings they should:

- Be aware of all activities carried out by the association.
- Make sure that other officers are carrying out their tasks.
- Help plan and prepare the agenda and invites for meetings (*with the secretary*).
- Go to outside meetings on behalf of the association.
- Promote the group.

During the meetings the chair should:

- Make sure that the meeting starts and runs on time.
- Welcome any guests.
- Encourage new members.
- Introduce and summarise the purpose of the meeting.
- Introduce each item on the agenda, giving the necessary background information, making sure that everything is covered and decisions are made when necessary.
- Stop people talking too long and going off the point.
- Help the group to deal with differences of opinion and conflicts.
- Make sure that everyone in the meeting gets a chance to take part.
- Be positive and help the group find solutions.
- Be unbiased.
- Set realistic, achievable targets.
- Encourage teamwork.

2.7

THE SECRETARY

The secretary is the communicator for the group and makes sure that everyone is informed. This includes doing the following:

- Taking minutes at the meeting, noting who comes along, what decisions are taken and who agrees to take on follow-up work (*see section 3.1 - Minutes on page 33*).
 - Copying and circulating minutes to members after the meetings.
 - Making sure that notices of meetings or agendas are drawn up and sent out beforehand, and that members receive all necessary information.
 - Making sure a suitable room is booked for the meetings.
 - Raising any matters at the meetings that members need to make decisions on.
 - Making sure that the right number of meetings take place in accordance with the groups constitution.
- Helping the chairperson in follow-up work between meetings.
 - Writing and receiving letters on behalf of the association.
 - Reporting at meetings what correspondence or letters have been received.
 - Filing correspondence to and from the association.
 - Sending out publicity or other information.
 - Keeping a record of the members.
 - Keeping all information that is relevant to the association.

2.7

THE TREASURER

The treasurer deals with the group's finances, keeps the accounts in order and updates the other members on the finances.

The treasurer's job is to:

- Open and maintain any bank accounts.
- Keep a record of all money going in to and out of the group's accounts.
- Keep petty cash for paying out day-to-day expenses.
- Pay the bills promptly and keep a record of money spent.
- Apply for grants.
- Identify other means of funding and fund raising.
- Pay any money into the bank account promptly.
- Provide regular updates of income and spending for the committee.
- Help the group to plan its earnings and spending activities.
- Get books checked prior to AGM by Sandwell Homes.
- Prepare a financial statements for the AGM.

It is important that there are three people from different households who are willing to act as signatories for the groups accounts. Two out of the three people will have to sign any cheques on behalf of the association.

The committee can also include:

- VICE-CHAIR:** The vice-chair stands in for the chairperson when he or she is unable to attend.
- FUNDRAISER:** Responsible for raising money for the group.
- SOCIAL SECRETARY:** Responsible for organising events.
- PRESS OFFICER:** Responsible for getting publicity for the group through press, radio etc.

Sandwell Homes provide training for all committee roles.

For further information contact your Community Involvement Officer on **0121 569 6466**.

3.0



For Existing Groups


This section contains information about keeping your group running.

3.1 Running your Meetings

3.2 Publicity

3.3 Holding the Annual General Meeting

3.4 Maintaining Financial Records - Simple Book Keeping




Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.

3.1

Running Your Meetings

Having established the need to set up a group and gained support, the work of the group needs to be carefully discussed and decisions recorded. Well-organised meetings have the potential to be inspiring, creative, empowering and enjoyable.



Ideally meetings should last **no longer** than 2 hours.

AGENDAS: An agenda is a list of things to be discussed at the next meeting. You should send out the agenda with invites and minutes from the last meeting to give people time to think about the items.

The secretary and chairperson should prepare an agenda for all the meetings and give committee members the chance to put forward any items for discussion.

Agendas make sure that meetings are effective, structured and don't go on too long. They tell those at the meeting what will be discussed and you can also include a time limit for each item.

Agendas should include:

- The name of the group.
- The date, time and place of the meeting.
- Items in priority order.
- The time limit for each item (*if appropriate*).
- An early spot for any guest speakers.
- No more than 4 main items.

3.1

MODEL AGENDA

Here is a model agenda, with some explanations and guide times, to help you plan your own.

NAME OF THE TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

PLACE

DATE AND TIME

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome** *2 minutes*
Welcome people to the meeting paying particular attention to any guests who have come along.
- 2. Apologies** *2 minutes*
Names should be noted of members who have formally sent apologies. Any member who does not attend has no voting rights.
- 3. Minutes Of Previous Meetings** *5 minutes*
This is for the approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Are they correct? What amendments need to be done before they are accepted? Any amendments should be written on to the end of the minutes and signed by the chairperson. Ask for two people to propose and second acceptance of the minutes.
- 4. Matters Arising** *10 minutes*
To raise any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting **if not** covered elsewhere on the agenda. To decide whether to deal with the matter quickly there & then or to defer it either to later in the agenda or to another meeting.
- 5. Correspondence** *5 minutes*
This allows the secretary to go through important correspondence received by the group.
- 6. Treasurers Report** *5 minutes*
General information from the treasurer on the association funds. What money has been spent and how. What funds have been received. Amount remaining in the account.
- 7. Main Item** *20 minutes*
(If you have invited a guest speaker to do a presentation it is a good idea to introduce them now. Allow no more than 10 to 15 minutes speaking with about 10 minutes for any questions).
- 8. Secondary Item** *10 minutes*
(Try not to have any more than 4 items)
- 9. Any Other Business** *10 minutes*

 - These are items that will be discussed in addition to the pre-arranged agenda by members who wish to raise issues.
 - To raise anything else, BUT NOT to expect it to be fully discussed or a proper agreement made.
 - Raise issues to be discussed on future agendas.
- 10. Date, Time & place of next meeting** *2 minutes*

3.1

Remember: Keep
It
Short and
Simple!

MINUTES

Written notes called minutes, are a record of what happened during the meeting.

The secretary takes minutes of all the meetings to make sure:

- i) There is an accurate record of the meeting
- ii) Decisions are made and noted for reference
- iii) It is clear what actions are to be taken and by whom.

1 - TAKING NOTES AT THE MEETING

- Record the names of those who was present and any apologies.
- Take brief, relevant notes under a heading for each agenda item in the order they appear on the agenda.
- Leave several blank lines between your notes on each item in case a member refers back to a certain point at a later stage in the meeting.
- Make a note of what action is decided on and who is to carry out that action.
- Keep your rough notes until after the minutes have been approved at the next meeting. You may need to refer back to them if there is any doubt about what happened.

2 - PREPARING THE MINUTES

- Prepare a rough draft as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Your minutes should be brief **BUT** accurate.

There is no need to record who said what and when. Simply record the decision, which was reached, and any factors, which were relevant to the decision.
- Avoid complicated numbering systems, but at the same time make sure it is possible to refer back to old minutes when necessary.
- It is helpful to give the items in the minutes the same number as they are on the agenda.
- Keep minutes together with any reports or papers that were presented to the meeting.

3.2

Publicity

PRESS RELEASES

- Now you are under way, you might want to put out a short press release to say who you are and why you got started.
- Publicise your successes i.e. litter picks, estate walkabouts.

NEWSLETTERS

Your Sandwell Homes Community Information Officer can help you with producing newsletters, leaflets and so on.

Newsletters can:

- Publicise your events.
- Publicise your successes.
- Get your views across.
- Consult on specific projects.
- Encourage people to get involved.
- Influence decision makers.

When writing **use the five W's:**

- What is happening
- Who is doing it
- Where is it happening
- When is it happening
- Why is it happening

3.2

DESIGN AND LAYOUT FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER

- Keep sentences short and sweet.
 - Use headings that are short and punchy.
 - Use cartoons and pictures to add interest.
 - Have a children's section-get them to write or draw something.
- Give the newsletter a title – let them know its yours.
 - Use coloured paper.

DISTRIBUTING THE NEWSLETTER

- Door to door - try and get one person to be responsible for their street or block or have a rota.
- Display in community centres, pubs, neighbourhood offices, shops and so on.



3.3

Holding the Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting should take place every 12 to 15 months in accordance with your constitution. As well as re-electing the committee it is a chance to let your community know about your successes and confirm on-going support from Sandwell Homes.

All members (*everyone who lives in the area your group represents*) must be invited to the Annual General Meeting. You must inform them they have the right to vote and can stand for election.

Before the Annual General Meeting, the committee must arrange for their Community Involvement Officer to check the accounts.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) CHECKLIST

- ✓ Book a suitable venue large enough to accommodate as many members who might attend.
- ✓ Flyers advertising the meeting should be delivered to members at least 14 days before the AGM as per constitution. Invite nominations for committee posts from the community.
- ✓ Posters to be displayed in community centres, shops, schools, pubs, libraries and neighbourhood offices and so on.
- ✓ Involve your Community Involvement Officer in supporting you in arranging the AGM.
- ✓ Your Community Involvement Officer should receive your financial records at least 4 weeks before the AGM so that an audit can be completed.
- ✓ Send an invitation out to any guest speakers that you want to attend.
- ✓ Check that the committee members wish to stand again.
- ✓ The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will need to prepare a brief report which they would present to the AGM.

3.4

Maintaining Financial Records – Simple Book Keeping

Once your group is receiving financial support it will be important to keep and maintain a record of these transactions. The records kept need to be clear and easy to understand and in some type of order. This will be the responsibility of the treasurer.

Be aware of the following basic rules when it comes to your group's money matters.

- Adopt a simple and clear book-keeping system.
- Check the bookkeeping regularly – at least once a week. Mistakes can be easily corrected after a week rather than leaving it for longer.
- Pay any income into the bank as soon as soon as you get it.
- Keep as little cash in hand (float) as possible for those small expenses, try and make as many transactions through the bank by paying by cheque.
- Keep a receipt for every item of spending, no matter how small.
- Keep cheque stubs as a separate record of spending.
- Report to each committee meeting about how the money has been spent.
- The accounts should be available for the chair to check at any time and made available for any member to check at the Annual General Meeting.
- Make sure you receive bank account statements as often as your bank will allow – ideally every month.



3.4

KEEPING FINANCIAL RECORDS

The treasurer should enter each payment and each receipt into a Ledger and check the entries monthly against bank statements.

You can buy a ready-made Ledger book (*with columns*) from a stationers or you could make one yourself out of an exercise book.

Rule out a double facing page yourself with columns and lines - like this:

On one side of the page

INCOME		
Date	Details	Amount
1.6.07	Starter Grant from Sandwell Homes	£200
2.7.07	Raffle	£42.75

On the facing page

PAYMENTS			
Date	Cheque No.	Details	Amount
1.6.07	001	Room Hire	£20
3.6.07	002	Stamps	£12.36
30.6.7	003	Petty Cash	£25

PETTY CASH

If you need a petty cash float, try to keep it small. The amount will rely on the size of the group. The committee have to agree the amount and record it in the minutes. You will need a separate Petty Cash book.

In your Petty Cash Book, on a double page rule out columns for income and payments.

INCOME		PAYMENTS			
Date	From Bank	Date	Receipt	Details	Amount
30.6.07	£25	1.7.07	01	Tea & Coffee	£6.25

Keep all receipts, bus tickets, till receipts etc. Number each one and enter this number in your Petty Cash book. **Remember** - do not put cash from other activities (*raffles or similar*) into your Petty Cash box as this could cause confusion. Pay other monies, apart from petty cash straight into your bank.

3.4

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

You need to prepare this at least once a year and certainly around the time of your Annual General Meeting. It sets out clearly all the money paid out and received during the year.

Statement of Accounts for Any Place Tenants & Residents Association 2006/07

INCOME

(Monies coming in)

Balance in Bank	£52.66
Grants	£300.00
Bank Interest	£1.30

PAYMENTS

(Monies going out)

Telephone	£42.20
Postage	£ 6.70
Stationary	£53.20
Room Hire	£60.00
Travel to Meetings	£19.85
Coach Hire	£82.00
Refreshments	£16.70

Total Payments £280.65

Petty Cash	£12.92
Cash in Bank	£60.39

Balance £353.96

£353.96

RECEIPT BOOK

This book should be kept for any monies that are issued or received regarding the activities of the group. Ensure it is a duplicate book. One copy to person given/receiving cash and original stays in the book for groups records.



4.0




Action Plans

This section is all about organising yourselves and taking actions to help you achieve the aims of the group.

4.1 Action Planning

4.2 Building Your Group - How to keep existing members and recruit new ones



Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.



4.1

Action Planning

If you have decided to form a Tenants & Residents Association, you should now have a committee, constitution and a list of issues that you want to tackle.

A useful way of doing this is to produce an action plan. This is a list of things your group need to achieve in a given period of time.

- List what your group would focus on for the year.
- Keep the list short and realistic and therefore achievable.
- Make sure everyone in the group is kept informed.
- Take up training sessions offered by Sandwell Homes and SCIPS. This ensures that you are fully equipped with the key knowledge needed to run your group effectively.
- If you do not meet your target within the time set, identify why this has happened, deal with it, and carry on until you achieve your target.
- Sit back regularly with other members of the group to review progress.
- If you feel you need help contact your Community Involvement Officer for advice.
- Once you achieve your goals, celebrate your achievements, publicise them and begin the process all over again!

HOW TO USE YOUR PLAN

1. List your issues
2. Divide the list into things you can do a) now; b) soon or c) later
3. How important is each issue to your group
4. How easy will it be to achieve each of your priorities
5. Make a list of people you can contact to help achieve your priorities.

Start with the Now and Soon list. Think about who can help you achieve these things. For instance, you may need to talk to your local Housing Manager, Police and so on. You may be able to do some things yourself (*for example, fundraising*).

4.1

PLANNING A CAMPAIGN

Make sure people know what you want to achieve. You could send a copy of your plan to your local councillors to get their support. Invite your nearest Neighbourhood Office to come to a meeting.

SURVEYS

You may need to find out more about your estate and what people are looking to get out of your group.

You can do this by doing a survey on your estate.

Why do surveys?

- They are useful to get people's views about local issues.
- They provide evidence to back you up.
- They are an excellent way to advertise your group and recruit new members.
- They help you to consult with people and show you are being democratic.

Things to decide:

- What area will you be surveying.
- How many people are available to help.
- What are your deadlines for competing survey and publishing results in a report?

4.1

Points to remember

- Say who you are.
- Explain the purpose of the survey.
- Say what is going to happen with the information.
- Make the questionnaire easy to follow.

ESTATE WALKABOUTS

Sandwell Homes officers organise a number of different Estate Walkabouts throughout the borough.

These Estate walkabouts are organised to allow members of the neighbourhood to go around their estate and highlight any local issues that concern local residents.

They are an effective way of discussing how to solve any problems and tackle issues.

It is important you focus on issues that affect the community rather than your own home.

You could find out whether there are Estate Walkabouts in your area organised by your local office and join those or, you could take the lead and organise them yourselves.

You want the walkabout to look like you are bringing about positive improvements, not just policing the area. You should point out overgrown bushes, potholes, untidy shared areas and so on. Take notes and agree targets with the officers. Remind them of those targets and ask them back to report on the progress.



4.2

Building Your Group - How to keep existing members and recruit new ones

MEMBERS OF YOUR GROUP

Membership numbers give groups strength as well having more helpers. Some community groups have a system of street representatives whose job it is to keep in contact with members and to deliver leaflets in their street(s).

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS OR MEMBERS

1. DIRECT PERSONAL INVITATION

The most successful way is sending out personal invitations. People are much more willing to join something if they already know the people involved or are able to ask someone directly about it.

2. DOOR-TO DOOR CANVASSING

Canvassing means going from house to house asking people if they would be interested in joining the group. This could be combined with another campaign such as collecting signatures for a petition. A better response may be achieved if the household has received a letter or newsletter beforehand giving notice that someone will call.

- Go in pairs.
- Have identification.
- Make a note of hostile pets.
- Record responses to avoid duplication and identify hostile responses or people keen to get involved.
- Record houses where no response so can do a follow up visit.
- Have details of group to leave with people who want to join or who are unsure.

3. CHAIN METHOD

Ask each group member to recruit one extra member or give the name and address of someone they think could be persuaded to join. These can be visited or sent a letter.

4. RETURNED MEMBERSHIP SLIPS FROM A NEWSLETTER OR SURVEY.

5. MAKE MEMBERSHIP SLIPS AVAILABLE AT PUBLIC MEETINGS OR COMMUNITY EVENTS.

6. HOLD COMMUNITY EVENTS - For example - fun days, coffee mornings etc.

7. REVIEW MEETING TIMES AND VENUES.

Always review your meeting times and so on, to see if you are attracting as many people as possible.

4.2

FOLLOWING UP AND KEEPING IN TOUCH

It is important to quickly make new members feel part of the group by informing them about what you are doing in their community.

- Make sure you invite all members to public meetings and community events and send them newsletters.
- When members first come to meetings make sure they are welcomed and know what is happening and what has happened in the past.
- Delegate tasks. Many people join because they want to do something. Others are less sure, but can become committed if given a chance to contribute.
- Do the job you promised. People will soon leave if they think nothing is happening.

BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT

- Are there transport problems?
- Are childcare facilities available?
- Does the venue have disabled access?
- Do you make people welcome?
- Are different languages spoken?
- Is the venue suitable? (Some religions/faiths will not enter pubs).

CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING UP YOUR GROUP

- ✓ You have set up a representative and lively committee
- ✓ You communicate regularly with local people keeping them informed of new services and ongoing projects.
- ✓ You have found out what people on the estate are concerned about.
- ✓ You hold regular meetings – get people used to attending.
- ✓ You have published your successes.
- ✓ You have worked out a programme of activities that are achievable.
- ✓ You have had some success with some of the things you tackled. Compliment yourselves!
- ✓ Share the workload- don't take on too much. Accept help and advice when it's offered.
- ✓ Make sure everyone knows what the rules are.

5.0



Funding

This section is aimed at introducing groups to the variety of funding resources available to them.

5.1 Getting Funding



Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.



5.1

Getting Funding



Remember: Keep an eye on your funds and apply for your grants **BEFORE** you run out of money!

GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM SANDWELL HOMES

(Also see section 2.5 - Funding available from Sandwell Homes on page 22).

Other Funding

As a group you can bid for other funding for example, the Lottery, charities and so on. All funders have strict conditions about who can apply and what the money can be used for.

These funds are particularly useful for groups who would like to expand their activities and deal with issues such as:

- Facilities for young people
- Environmental improvements
- Play and sports facilities
- Crime and safety



5.1

HOUSING SERVICE PANEL

In return for funding from Sandwell Homes, please support us by sending representatives from your group to the Housing Service Panel for your town and the various conferences we organise throughout the year. *(See section 6.0 - Getting Involved on page 50).*

Your Sandwell Homes Community Involvement Officer will be able to give you more information.

If you are interested in other funding possibilities then see our separate leaflet "Guide to Funding" which introduces groups to the variety of funding resources that are available to them.

Contact the Community Involvement Team on **0121 569 6466 for a copy.**

FUNDRAISING

As there are restrictions on what you can spend our grants on, you may think about raising funds through your own efforts to pay for trips, parties and other social events. You should record any fundraising money separately in your accounts to identify the amount more clearly.



The key to a successful event is planning!

Examples of fundraising ideas are:

- Raffles
- Bingo
- Jumble sales and table tops
- Car boot sales
- Quiz/games nights
- Recipe book - get favourite recipes from within the community
- International evening-food & music from different ethnic groups within the community
- Disco
- Barbecue
- Coffee mornings


5.1



The list of ideas is endless!

As well as raising money, the events can be enjoyable and a way to can gain publicity and raise the profile of your group as well as encouraging involvement.

Make sure you involve all your group members and ensure you have enough volunteers for each event. Allow plenty of time to organise and publicise the event.



Remember: Take plenty of photos. These can be used for future newsletters and advertising your group.

Sandwell Homes Community Information Team is available to assist registered community groups and associations to identify suitable funding opportunities and also to help with the actual application for funding.

For more information contact the Community Involvement Team on 0121 569 6466.




6.0



Getting Involved

This section tells you the ways you can get involved in the decision making process of Sandwell Homes. Tenant involvement is about giving you a real say in your housing service.

6.1 Wheel of Involvement



Remember: The Community Involvement Team will support and help you to set up and maintain a group.

6.1

Wheel of Involvement

In order to enable as many tenants as possible to get involved we have set up a 'Wheel of Involvement'. The wheel is made up of four stages that require different levels of commitment and time, from very little to quite considerable.

All housing services involve tenants at level 1, where information about the service is provided. Then, depending on if a charge to the service is being planned and the impact that this will have on tenants, the level of involvement may extend.



6.1

Each level of the wheel is explained in more detail below. Please note that the time and frequency information is to give an idea of the level of commitment, and may vary from this on occasion.

LEVEL	INVOLVEMENT	TIME	FREQUENCY
LEVEL 1 COMMUNICATION	Reading HOMELIFE, (Sandwell Homes magazine for tenants and leaseholders). Being informed of new policies and services by a different range of methods e.g. internet, leaflets, reports, by enquiry through contacting any of the partners signed up to this Agreement.	Up to 30 mins	Up to 4 times a year
LEVEL 2 CONSULTATION	Your feedback on services and suggestions. This could be either face to face at drop-in sessions, by telephone, by post or email for example; satisfaction surveys. This feedback will be used to shape and improve the housing service.	Up to 1 hour	4 to 6 times a year
LEVEL 3 INVOLVEMENT	Being a member of a group such as the Policy and Monitoring Panel, Housing Service Panels, or attendance at special focus groups and conferences, where the views of tenants are sought before decisions are made. Also these panels may make local decisions.	Up to 3 hours	4 to 8 times a year
LEVEL 4 EMPOWERMENT	Membership of formal decision-making groups that meet regularly. This could include Sandwell Homes Board, SCIPS Board, and TMOs. May represent other tenants at meetings. May provide tenant representation at meetings and take responsibility for aspects of the service.	Up to 6 hours or more	Monthly

Let's get
Organised



Sandwell Homes, Dartmouth House, Sandwell Road, West Bromwich B70 8TQ

Telephone: **0121 569 6466**

Facsimile: 0121 569 5345

Email: customer_relations@sandwellhomes.org.uk

Web: www.sandwellhomes.org.uk

