



Residents' association good practice guide



Contents

	Page
1 Communication with members	1
2 Liaise with Notting Hill Genesis	2
3 Meetings	3
4 Agenda and minutes guide	4
5 Handling money guide	5
6 Voting	6
7 Planning events guide	7

Working relationship between Resident Association (RA) and Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) housing teams

RAs will:

- Foster and maintain a productive and respectful working relationship with housing staff
- Ensure at least 2 weeks' notice is given when inviting staff to meetings.
- Ensure meetings requiring staff attendance finish by 8pm.
- Ensure there is a single point of contact on issues to avoid confusion, particularly if the RA has an email address with multiple users.
- Allow NHG staff to respond to queries within the usual service standards
- Provide staff with timely updates on relevant issues being discussed and communicate minutes from meetings and AGM minutes

NHG Staff will:

- Foster and maintain a productive and respectful working relationship with Residents' Associations.
- Work alongside the RA acting as representative voice to resolve issues locally
- Attend meetings where required and where possible and ensure any additional staff are able to attend if needed.
- Support the running of the RA
- Communicate and consult effectively with the RA on any changes to services or local issues.

1 Communication with members

- Advertise all meetings with agenda 2 weeks in advance (e.g. using noticeboards, social media, text or letter boxes)
- All resident members are welcome to attend committee meetings.
- Use a variety of methods to contact people
- Distribute 2 newsletters annually to include info on meetings held, guests/ NHG staff attending, issues discussed, decisions made, 'suggestion box'
- Inform members how to easily get a copy of the minutes.



2 Liaison with Notting Hill Genesis

- Organise meetings at reasonable times (meetings with staff in attendance to end no later than 8pm)
- Give us adequate notice (ideally at least three weeks, but minimum 2 weeks) if you require a staff member to attend a meeting. If a staff member is not able to attend, an alternative date should be provided or request for another member of staff.
- As much as possible, provide in advance an agenda or list of issues to be dealt with at the meeting so that the staff member can find information or answers for you.
- Provide notes of the meeting as soon as possible after the meeting and send to relevant Housing Officer and to the Resident Involvement Team at Notting Hill Genesis.



3 Meetings

- Vary the times of meetings for residents and do not arrange meetings that clash with major events
- Think about other ways to hold the meeting (e.g. Zoom meetings)
- There must be at least 4 Committee members present at meetings, including at least 2 officers of the Committee
- Any expenditure for grant funding must be agreed at Committee meeting
- Meet somewhere local, wheelchair accessible and well-lit
- Accommodate people with care responsibilities such as children by planning meeting times or making children welcome
- Encourage residents who are able to translate and interpret to play an active role
- Make sure meetings start and finish on time so people know what to expect
- Make meetings engaging and interesting
- Allocate small tasks to helpers outside of the meetings such as doing surveys, planning social events etc.

4 Agenda and minutes guide

How to write an agenda:

Having a clear agenda is the key to a successful meeting. The agenda should be prepared and sent out to members well in advance to let everyone know exactly when and where the meeting is taking place. It should deal with short items first and allow time for the most important topics.

Here are a few tips for writing a clear agenda:

- List the items for discussion in a logical order. Try not to include too many as this may make the meeting too long and people may lose interest;
- Time limit each agenda item with clear indications of the presenter for the item;
- Have the previous meeting's minutes as an item for discussion;
- Deal with short items under 'matters arising' – larger issues should be separate items;

Each item on the agenda should have a purpose e.g.

- Items for information, record, note
- Items for discussion
- Items for decision or approval.

Finish with 'Any Other Business':

- This shouldn't take long. If it does, some of the items discussed should have been listed as separate

items on the agenda.

- It is a good idea to keep a note of any issues that come up between meetings, or ask members to let you know what they want to discuss at the next meeting. These things can be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

How to write minutes:

Minutes should show what went on at a particular meeting and what decisions were reached. They need to be an accurate record and include:

- The name of the association and the date, time and place of the meeting;
- A list of who was present and who apologised for their absence;
- The key points discussed and the decision reached on each item (use the agenda to help with this);
- A note of who will carry out any action arising from decisions made;
- The date, time and place of the next meeting.

The Chair will assist good minute taking by summarising the discussion, clarifying decisions and setting the agenda.

Remember that the minutes are also a source of information for external enquiries. It is easier to type the minutes as soon as you can after the meeting.

Agree whether members want the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting or just before the next meeting.

5 Handling money guide

To ensure that everyone knows how the group manages money it is a good idea to adopt a policy on handling money. You can adapt this model to suit your group's own needs.

- At least 2 committee members will be authorised to sign cheques on behalf of the committee. All cheques require 2 authorised signatures. The signature holders cannot be related to each other or dwell in the same property. The committee may authorise further committee members to be signatories as appropriate.
- Blank cheques should never be signed.
- All invoices should be marked paid and have the cheque number, date and initials of the person signing the cheque. The person who makes out the cheque must at the same time complete the cheque stub with the date, amount, payee and brief description. Cheque stubs must always be kept in a safe place.
- All accounts, including the cash book and petty cash book, should be kept up-to-date and made available for inspection at each committee meeting.
- Records of accounts should be kept for a minimum of 5 years.
- A sub-committee can be created to support the treasurer in his/her work.

Paying in cash/cheques

- All cash received should be banked. A receipt should be issued for all items of cash received.
- An agreed amount can be withdrawn by the account holders for petty cash (to purchase refreshments/stationary/travel expenses etc. at meetings.)
- A record of all payments into the bank account should be kept with date, amount, payee and description and type of income or transaction. The bank paying-in book could be used for this purpose.

Payments

- All payments over £30 should have the prior consent of the committee.
- Payments should only be made if supported by a proper invoice/receipt.
- Committee members should inform the chair of any conflict of interest.
- Any payments made online must be done safely and securely. Please refer to advice online about cyber security.

Reports

- A simple report on income and expenditure should be produced annually and presented at the AGM. A copy must also be made available to the Resident Involvement Team.

6 Voting

Voting on the Question

Determine the appropriate voting method. The most common, and the simplest, form of voting in which the chair simply asks for a verbal, simultaneous “aye” or “nay” and determines the result by volume. Other methods include asking for a show of hands (or for members to rise), roll call (in which each member’s name is called and his vote is recorded publicly), and voting by ballot. You should determine which method is most appropriate for the issue a ir should be responsible for the count. Members can nominate themselves for the committee or for particular roles in advance of the meeting or at the meeting itself, depending on what works best for your RA.



7 Planning events guide

Informal community events are an important aspect of everyday life. They help encourage people to play a more active part in society and are an opportunity for residents to come together and have a collective positive experience. An event may celebrate a particular occasion, raise funds for a good cause or simply bring people in a community closer together. Organising a successful event is all about good planning and taking sensible precautions where necessary. Informal events include:

Events around a community hall or facility

- Coffee morning
- Bingo
- Lunch club
- Youth club or activities
- A fun day
- A bring and buy sale

Events in a common garden or space

- Residents' barbecue
- Bring and share food party
- Street party
- Community gardening
- A fun day

- A litter pick morning
- A skip collection for residents' bulky refuse

Other events and activities

- A trip to the seaside/shopping/theme park etc.
- Fundraising for a local play facility
- Celebrating something like a Royal Wedding, a religious festival or even a World Cup

Event planning

- Who do you want to attend the event?
- Will there be activities for a range of different people?
- How many people are you catering for (think of both a minimum and maximum) and do you have the right facilities?
- Will you charge admission? If so, will tickets need to be bought in advance or at the door? Even if admission is free, advance tickets can help you assess the level of interest and the numbers to plan for.

You can encourage more people to get involved by:

- Advertising planning meetings widely and encouraging participation at the meetings
- Thinking about the timing and location of your planning meetings, and asking potential volunteers what suits them best.

- Publicising the event early and combining this with an appeal for people to help.
- Listing jobs that can easily be handed over to new volunteers, even if they don't want to come to meetings.
- Attaching a list or rota to a noticeboard, asking people to pledge a small amount of time on the day or contribute food, raffle prizes etc. Think about asking other local organisations, including event organisations, to get involved. They may have the expertise to organise a major part of the event for you.
- Regularly updating people involved in organising the event, and anyone else who should know about what is happening. If it is a large event, this may include the local council, police and/or emergency services. This can stop an individual or an organising group from making mistakes that may be expensive.

More helpful tips on event planning:

[Organising a voluntary event: a 'can do' guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Events and attractions - Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Risk management

This section contains advice on how to take health and safety into consideration when organising an event. Please note that it is not intended

to replace any health and safety or risk assessment policy and procedure that might already be in place.

1. Risk Assessment

If you are planning an event, you have a duty of care to ensure the safety of all attendees. To help you consider the risks and identify actions to minimise them, complete a risk assessment form. All aspects of health and safety should be included as part of the risk assessment. Areas to consider include:

Fire safety – You must agree arrangements for fire prevention, detection and control before your event. Adequate on-site fire-fighting equipment should be provided in accessible positions near high-risk areas.

Contractors – You should ensure that any contractors employed to set up/take down stands, exhibits, marquees etc submit appropriate health and safety policies, risk assessments and method statements to you. Exhibitors and vendors should submit similar details.

Temporary structures – Any load-bearing temporary structure must comply with health and safety laws and building control regulations.

Electrical generators – The use of generators must be strictly controlled. For example, you must ensure adequate screening and protection for the storage of fuel.

2. Licensing and permissions

Contact your local council to find out if there are any licensing requirements for your event. Examples include food

and drink licences and licences based on by-laws. The council can also be a valuable source of information and advice when it comes to planning events and may even want to take part. You should also talk to the local police to make sure the event does not clash with anything significant in the area. And, like the council, they might also want to take part.

3. Children and incident responses

If anyone has concerns that a child might be being abused or that an adult should not be working with children, either contact the police or inform Notting Hill Genesis staff. This must be done quickly in order to safeguard the child. Images of children must not be used in publicity without the written permission of the child's parent or guardian.

4. First Aid provision

There are service providers that will offer first aid services for an event, such as St John Ambulance. It is important to contact them early. Check they are available and that they have sufficient personnel and equipment for the size of the event.

5. Contractors and volunteers

Any individual or firm that provides a service for the event will be regarded as a contractor.

Examples include:

- Caterers
- Play equipment providers - for example, bouncy castles,

fairground rides or go-karts

- Face painters
- Sports coaches
- Entertainers

If you are planning to employ contractors, then there should be a formal agreement with them. It is particularly important to check things such as their accident record and whether they have had any prosecutions by the Health and Safety Executive. Contractors will be legally responsible for their own negligent acts, so it is important to make sure they have adequate insurance to cover such eventualities.

Adults who have responsibility for supervising or working with unaccompanied children or vulnerable adults must be DBS checked. These checks must be in place whether the adult is a volunteer or being paid for their work. For more information, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

6. Local Community

Any residents likely to be inconvenienced by the event should either be consulted or told beforehand. You should also consider other organisations such as the Fire Service or local shops. For example, is the event likely to be disruptive for them in terms of traffic? You can even ask these organisations whether they would like to take part in or sponsor the event. Remember that the guidance on contractors will also extend to any service they provide.

7. Other areas to consider

Other areas of event planning to consider include:

- Access to and from the event for the emergency services and attendees
- Crowd control issues and means of communication between stewards
- Diary clashes with another local event
- Environmental health issues such as litter control and noise
- Parking

Next review of document: December 2022



