

RESIDENTS

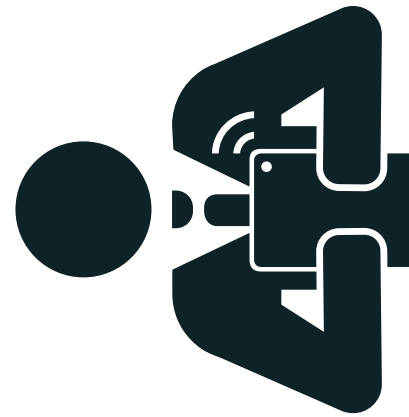
A USER FRIENDLY GUIDE TO

COMMITTEE

RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL RESIDENTS

HANDBOOK

COMMITTEE





THIS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK

This Residents Association Handbook has been developed by the Estate management section within the Housing department of Monaghan County Council. This handbook has two functions designed to assist the Estate management section of Monaghan County Council Housing department in its work with Residents Committees, while also assisting Residents Committees to develop and grow in their role of supporting their estate/area.

The aim of this handbook is to set out a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a group who take on the task of representing their Estate/area with a view to improving the physical and social environment of that area. The handbook also contains details of how a Residents Committee functions, the role of the local authority & the role of the Residents Association and its individual members.

This booklet was compiled by Monaghan County Council Housing and Community sections who are available to assist you in the establishment and or development of you Residents Association.

*Residents Committees within County Council housings estates receive support from the housing department, Residents Committees from estates not owned by Monaghan County Council receive support from Community & Enterprise department. *

WE HOPE YOU FIND THIS PUBLICATION USEFUL AND BENEFICIAL TO YOUR GROUP.

WHAT SUPPORT CAN WE OFFER YOUR GROUP?

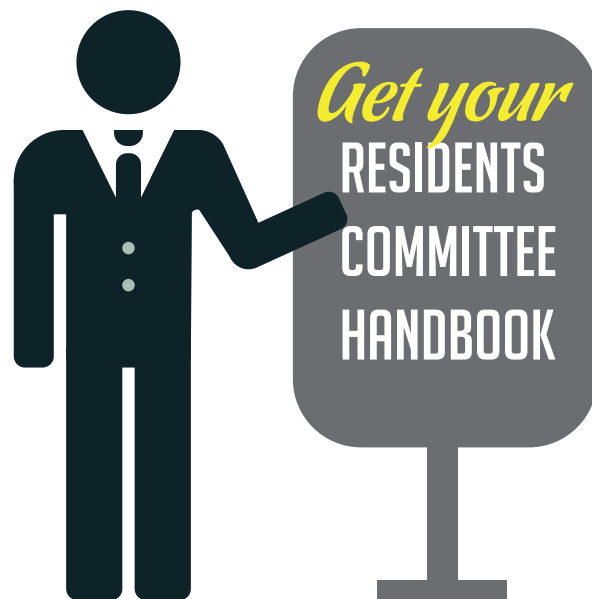
The Estate Management section is located within the Housing Department of Monaghan county Council. The estate management sections deals with the physical and social maintenance and development of Local Authority estates.

Central to this role is supporting the involvement of residents in the estate management process. The Estate Management section works in partnership with the Community & Enterprise section within the local authority to develop and enhance the work of local communities and volunteers.

STAFF WITHIN HOUSING & COMMUNITY SECTION WILL HELP:

- ❖ To support the development of existing residents associations, and encourage the establishment of new residents associations.
- ❖ To encourage local residents to get involved with the Residents Association.
- ❖ To provide information and training on the role and responsibilities of a Residents Association i.e. Committee Officers: Chairperson, Secretary, Minutes Taker, Treasurer.

- ❖ In the development of the Associations constitution to include the groups Vision, Aims, and Objectives.
- ❖ To facilitate the development the group by identifying the local problems and agreeing on the priority actions necessary to address these issues.
- ❖ To provide induction training to Residents Associations.
- ❖ To provide residents associations with information on funding opportunities and relevant supports available to them through other departments within the Local Authority.



WHAT IS A RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION?

A Residents' Association is a group of people, made up of local residents (tenants and/or homeowners) who represent the interests of everyone living in a particular area or building. They come together to represent the views of all residents in their area to help make their neighbourhood a better place to live. Residents Associations work in conjunction with Local Authority and other statutory bodies to address physical and social issues and problems that may arise in their area.

Monaghan Local Authority's Residents' Associations are set up for everyone to join. Membership is open to all local residents and do not discriminate against members of the community because of race, age, sex, disability, income, religion or class.

WHAT DOES YOUR LOCAL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION DO?

Your local Residents Association represents all members of your Estate/area, addressing all the various issues/concerns that arise in your area. The Residents Association works closely with the Local Authority and other agencies in maintaining and improving the estate/area.

GETTING STARTED!

WHAT ARE THE EARLY STEPS FOR A RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION?

STAFF WITHIN HOUSING & COMMUNITY SECTIONS WILL PROVIDE THE ASSISTANCE TO A RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION IN ITS EARLY DAYS.

STAFF WILL ASSIST YOU TO:

- ❖ Ensure that everyone living in the area/estate is given the opportunity to become involved in the residents association.
- ❖ Ensure your group get involvement from as many people as possible living in the estate.
- ❖ Arrange a first meeting in a suitable local venue that is easily accessible for everyone.
- ❖ Facilitate a discussion on the key areas/issues of concern in the area both physical and social.
- ❖ Support groups to put together a plan of action to address the issues identified.



HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING?

- ❖ Book a suitable venue: community centre/parish hall
- ❖ Inform all residents of the meeting
- ❖ Have an agenda (list of things to be discussed) ready
- ❖ Make sure someone is in place to Chair the meeting
- ❖ Chairperson should make sure everyone who wishes to join in the discussion is given an opportunity to contribute.
- ❖ Record any decisions or proposed actions agreed at the meeting
- ❖ Record the names of everyone in attendance so you can keep everyone up to date with progress



FIRST STEPS FOR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

- ❖ DECIDE ON A GROUP NAME
- ❖ AGREE YOUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- ❖ SET YOUR COMMITTEE STRUCTURE I.E.
 - ★ CHAIRPERSON
 - ★ TREASURER
 - ★ SECRETARY
 - ★ MINUTE TAKER
- ❖ DRAFT A CONSTITUTION
(SUPPORT PROVIDED BY MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL IF NEEDED)
- ❖ DEVELOP A PLAN OF WORK AND AGREE ON A TIMESCALE
- ❖ DECIDE ON WHO ELSE SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN YOUR GROUP?
- ❖ REGISTER THE GROUP WITH MONAGHAN COMMUNITY FORUM
- ❖ KEEP A RECORD OF ALL YOUR MEETINGS – MINUTES
- ❖ AGREE TIMES AND DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS



THE KEY ROLES IN A RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBER

The first task of a committee member is to attend meetings of the committee. However the role of a committee member is much greater.

A COMMITTEE MEMBER NEEDS TO:

- ❖ Be aware of and be committed to the aims of the Residents Association
- ❖ Participate fully in meetings and events
- ❖ Take share of the work in between meetings
- ❖ Work together with other members to ensure work of the groups gets delivered

CHAIRPERSON

The Chairpersons primary role is to lead the committee and facilitate its Meetings.

THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CHAIRPERSON INCLUDE:

- ❖ Taking responsibility for facilitating the group to work well together towards achieving the committee's aims, and giving help and support where needed, ensuring all are allowed /encouraged to speak.
- ❖ Acting as spokesperson and representing the committee to outside bodies, networks, etc.

- ❖ Helping the committee to maintain its focus on achieving the agreed aims, objectives and work plans.
- ❖ Making emergency decisions between meetings, where necessary, in accordance with procedures agreed by the committee.
- ❖ Planning and running of meetings (or delegation as necessary).
- ❖ Ensuring that all necessary information is made available to committee members.
- ❖ Ensuring that adequate records of meetings are kept.
- ❖ Ensuring that plans decided on during meetings are implemented.

SECRETARY

THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SECRETARY INCLUDE:

- ❖ Writing letters officially on behalf of the group.
- ❖ Receiving correspondence on behalf of the group and keeping the group up to date on all correspondence.

TREASURER

THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TREASURER INCLUDE:

- ❖ Establishing Policy and Procedure.
- ❖ Monitoring income and expenditure of the group.
- ❖ Keeping the committee informed of the financial situation of the organisation.
- ❖ Keeping an eye on the budget.
- ❖ Presenting the accounts at the organisation's AGM.
- ❖ Representing the organisation in funding applications.

MINUTE TAKER

THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MINUTE TAKER INCLUDE:

- ❖ Organisation of meetings, e.g. time and place etc.
- ❖ Drafting the agenda with the Chairperson.
- ❖ Taking of minutes.
- ❖ Writing up and circulation of minutes and next meeting agenda

HOLDING A MEETING

The most important thing a committee does is to meet to discuss issues and make decisions on addressing those issues. A good meeting is well planned and organised to ensure decisions are made in an effective manner.

TO ENSURE YOUR MEETING IS WELL ORGANISED

TO ENSURE YOUR MEETING IS WELL ORGANISED YOU SHOULD:

- ❖ Notify all members of the committee of the meeting at least one week in advance.
- ❖ Prepare the meeting agenda in advance (a list of items that you want to discuss)
- ❖ Members should be informed that any items they wish to discuss should be forwarded to the chairperson before the meeting.
- ❖ Any new items to be added to the Agenda at the beginning of the meeting are added under Any Other Business.
- ❖ Each meeting should have an agreed number of members present in order to go ahead. This is known as a Quorum (Your group will decide what your Quorum is while completing the Constitution). For example the committee's quorum might be 1/3 of the membership plus 1.
- ❖ The meeting should start no later than 10 minutes of the time you set i.e. 8pm.
- ❖ Meeting should be in a suitable venue, warm, accessible free from disruption



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



- ❖ Agree a time for the meeting and stick to it, meetings should last no longer than 2 hours.
- ❖ Ensure all mobile phones are switched off or put on the silent setting
- ❖ Agree on ground rules for the group.
- ❖ Agree on confidentiality: what is discussed at the meeting stays within the meeting
- ❖ Questions should always be directed through the chairperson
- ❖ While everyone may not always agree, it is important to respect the opinions of every member.

EXAMPLE OF A MEETING AGENDA

- ❖ Welcome, introductions & apologies (the chairperson should welcome everyone to the meeting; introduce any new member, or anyone who is attending the meeting).
- ❖ Apologies from members who are unable to attend should be read & recorded
- ❖ Minutes - this is a record of the decisions made at the previous meetings, members agree that the minutes are accurate, and propose any changes or amendments
- ❖ Matters arising- Relates to issues within the minutes that need to be reported on
- ❖ Correspondence- Any letters, information that has been sent to the committee since the previous meeting should be read & recorded
- ❖ Committee issues - feedback and discussion on any issues being progressed by the committee
- ❖ AOB. Any other business that should be discussed
- ❖ Confirm date, venue & time for the next meeting

WHAT IS A CONSTITUTION AND WHY SHOULD A GROUP HAVE ONE?

- ❖ A constitution is a written understanding of what your group is going to do and how it is going to do it. It sets out the aims, objectives and rules of the group.
- ❖ A constitution is important to a group because:
 - * A written understanding keeps the committee on the right track, and avoids members becoming at cross purposes.
 - * It will serve as a reference, and help to resolve problems in times of controversy.
 - * Potential funders typically want to see that your group is accountable and transparent and fair in how it operates and makes decisions
 - * Staff in Monaghan County Council will assist the group in developing a constitution that reflects the work and ethos of the Residents Committee.



HOW DO YOU DEVELOP A RESIDENTS WORK PLAN?

In the early stages of a Residents Committee it is good practice to develop a work plan. A work plan will keep the committee focused and will help the committee to track their progress and achievements.

A work plan is a list of actions/tasks that the Residents Committee have agreed to follow up on. Tasks are usually issues/ concerns raised at meetings by the members of the Residents committee.

A GOOD WORKPLAN

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

SETTING UP A RESIDENTS COMMITTEE

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SET UP A RESIDENTS COMMITTEE IN YOUR AREA OR WOULD LIKE SOME SUPPORT TO DEVELOP YOUR EXISTING RESIDENTS COMMITTEE PLEASE CONTACT:

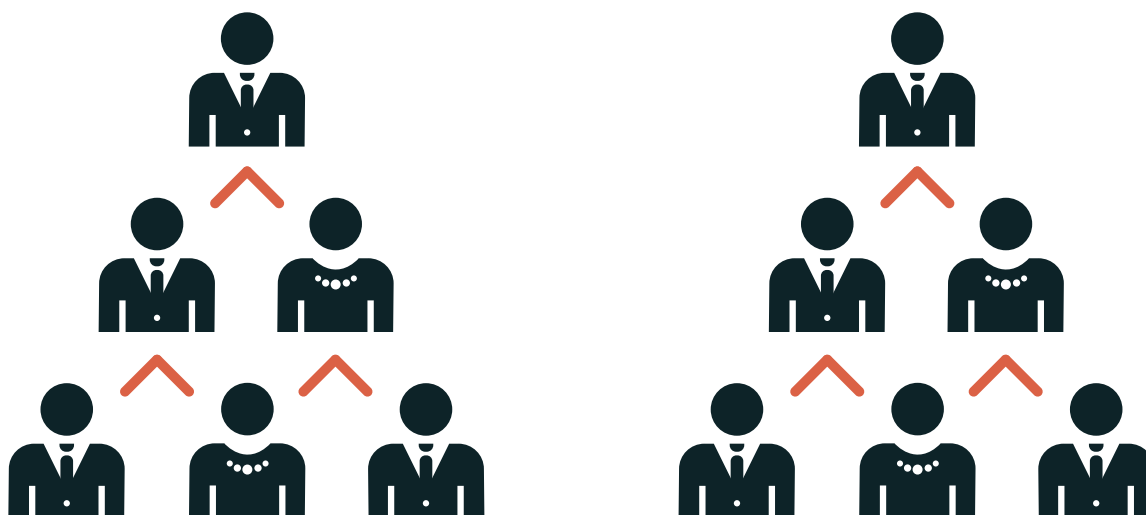
FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY ESTATES

Estate Management
Monaghan County Council
Glen Road
Monaghan
047 30500
residents@monaghancoco.ie

FOR NON LOCAL AUTHORITY ESTATES

Community & Enterprise
Monaghan County Council
Glen Road
Monaghan
047 30500
residents@monaghancoco.ie

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MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL SUPPORTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH!

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF AND YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Monaghan County Council have been involved in promoting positive mental health initiatives for the past number of years. It is important to Monaghan County Council as a landlord that residents and communities are safe, well and happy in their home and environment.

Are you, or someone you know, in crisis now and need someone to talk to?

Ask for help; don't be embarrassed about getting help for your mental health.

Everyone needs help from time to time and there is nothing wrong with asking for it. In fact, asking for help is a sign of personal strength.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

See below for details where you can get help.

IMMEDIATE HELP

If you are worried that you or someone you know is at risk of suicide or self harm, you should immediately contact your local doctor or go to the Accident and Emergency department of the nearest hospital. If it's late in the evening or night time, contact a GP out of Hours Service 1850 777911.

TALK TO SOMEONE NOW

If you need to talk to someone NOW call the Samaritans PHONE 1850 609090 for confidential, non-judgemental support 24 hours a day - no matter what problems you're facing or where you are, there will be someone available to offer you support.

TEXT SOMEONE NOW

You can also access support and information on where to go for help in a crisis through your mobile by texting the word HeadsUp to 50424.

The Samaritans also offer a 24:7 text support service, 365 days a year, for anyone in emotional distress. To receive the service, simply send an SMS text message to 087 2609090.



ONLINE SUPPORT:

The following websites offered excellent information on where to find help if you, someone in your family or someone in your community needs some help.

www.yourmentalhealth.ie

www.aware.ie

www.reachout.com

www.pieta.ie

www.mentalhealthireland.ie

www.anxietyireland.com

www.aisling.ie

www.console.ie

www.belongto.org

www.leanonme.net

We encourage you to get help if you or someone you know is feeling low.

A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

EAT WELL

There are strong links between what we eat and how we feel – for example, caffeine and sugar can have an immediate effect. But food can also have a long-lasting effect on your mental health.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Friends and family can make you feel included and cared for. They can offer different views from whatever's going on inside your own head. They can help keep you active, keep you grounded and help you solve practical problems.

KEEP ACTIVE

Experts believe exercise releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good. Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, look and feel better. Exercise also keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy.

DRINK SENSIBLY

We often drink alcohol to change our mood. Some people drink to deal with fear or loneliness, but the effect is only temporary.

ASK FOR HELP

None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things go wrong. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help.

TALK ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled. Talk to family, a friend or contact one of the organisations below.

MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL
SUPPORTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH!



know your community

NOTES

YOUR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

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MONAGHAN COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CONTAE MHUINEACHÁIN

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Bernie Bradley, Social Inclusion Development Officer
Monaghan County Council, Glen Road, Monaghan, Co Monaghan.
tel: 047 73727

design: www.ph7.ie