



COMHAIRLE CONTAE  
CHEATHARLACH  
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

# Carlow County Council | Residents' Association Guidelines and Handbook

The Community Section

CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL | ATHY ROAD | CARLOW | R93E7R7

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## Introduction

These guidelines are directed towards members of a community who wish to come together in a group, in the form of a Residents' Association. Residents' Associations come together to address local issues, respond to local community needs, source funding/grants and work together to enhance their estate or local areas.

These guidelines are designed to support new and existing associations and outline procedures for best practice when forming a residents' association.

Carlow County Council promotes the inclusion of all residents in the management and care of their estates through the involvement of democratically elected Residents' Associations. Carlow County Council Assists Residents' Associations through the work of the Community Development Officer and Community Section Staff.

## What is a Residents' Association?

Resident Associations are organisations formed by groups of local people from a specific community who come together to promote and enhance their local area and act as a voice for that community.

A residents' association can:

- Develop a vision and goals for their Residents Association.
- Communicate information to residents locally.
- Apply for grants from funding providers and from Carlow County Council.
- Organise school holiday projects, family fun days, planting days and clean-up days.
- Address local issues and improve residents' local area.
- Work with Carlow County Council to promote and participate in Local Authority Initiatives.

Residents' Associations represent householders who are purchasing, own or rent their houses in Local Authority or private estates. Carlow County Council encourage and support residents to work together and represent the views of all residents to make their estate/community a better place to live.

## Forming a Residents' Association

Residents interested in setting up the association will need to have an **initial meeting**. The purpose of this meeting is to make a plan that will maximise the attendance at an **open meeting**. A residents' association is open and representative of everyone living in the estate/neighbourhood.

### Initial Meeting:

- Ensure that everyone in the area/estate is given the opportunity to become involved in the residents' association.
- Arrange an open meeting in a suitable local venue that is easily accessible for everyone.
- Appoint a chairperson and secretary for the open meeting until the new committee is elected.
- Agree an agenda for the meeting (see Appendix 1)
- Notify residents of the date/time/venue and agenda of the open meeting.
- Ensure as many people as possible living in the area/estate engage in the residents' association.

### Hosting an Open Meeting

- Ensure venue is open on time and people are welcomed on arrival.
- Place an attendance list (see Appendix 2) near the entry point and ask everyone to sign in on arrival.
- Distribute agendas throughout the room and assign a minute taker (see Appendix 3).
- Introduce the main speakers, explain what a residents' association is and how it would benefit the area.
- Request agreement to formally proceed and elect a committee.
- Outline officers' roles (see Appendix 4) and request nominations for:
  - Chairperson
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
- Election of Residents Association Committee
- Discuss and agree on initial aim and objectives of Residents' Association
- Give an opportunity to the group to discuss Any Other Business (AOB) which was not covered on the agenda.

### Committee Meetings

Once the committee is formed regular meetings should take place a minimum of six meetings per year. An agenda should be circulated in good time, at least a week before the meeting generally. Any additional items which come up at the time of meeting can be included in Any Other Business (AOB). Chairperson should follow the agenda and discuss all items. Secretary should update correspondence and take minutes of each meeting and circulate to the group after the meeting. Minutes of the previous meeting should be proposed and seconded by committee members who were present.

## Insurance

Carlow Local Authority advises Residents' Associations to have adequate Public Liability Insurance to indemnify and protect against claims. Residents Associations will require up to date insurance cover to avail of grants/funding.

## Opening a Bank Account

It is strongly recommended that your residents association opens and maintains a bank account with a bank of your choice. The bank will advise you of what documentation you need. This will assist with managing your finances and is a transparent way to track income and expenditure. At least two members of the committee will need to be signatories on the account and must sign for all transactions.

## Constitution

The constitution is one of the most important documents that your group will develop. A constitution is a set of rules/procedures to assist the committee in the day to day running of committee matters. It will help resolve issues and clarify rules. It outlines the aims and objectives of the group. A sample constitution is included in Appendix 5.

## Supports

Carlow County Council, Community Section provide support to Residents Associations. Residents Associations may be entitled to apply for grants such as Pride of Place or Environmental/Amenity Grants. Please register your Residents Association with Carlow County Council by emailing: [community@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:community@carlowcoco.ie)

Grants are advertised on Carlow County Council website and information will be available to groups once grants become available. No late applications will be accepted.

## Public Participation Network (PPN)

Carlow County Council strongly advises Residents Associations to become members of the Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN). For further information on the PPN and how to register go to: [Carlow Public Participation Network - Carlow PPN](#)

## Appendix Documents



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## Appendix 1 Agenda (Sample)

Open Meeting of _____ (Insert name of Residents Association)		
Date:	Time:	Location:
<h3 style="margin: 0;">Agenda</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Welcome &amp; Introductions</li> <li>➤ Guest Speaker</li> <li>➤ Priorities/Concerns</li> <li>➤ Motion that a Residents' Association be formed, and a committee be elected.</li> <li>➤ Election of Committee</li> <li>➤ Setting Aims/Objectives of the Residents Association</li> <li>➤ AOB</li> <li>➤ Date/Time/Location of the next meeting</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 1 Agenda (Template)

Meeting of _____		
Date:	Time:	Location:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li><li>➤</li></ul>		





## Appendix 3 Meeting Minutes (Sample)

Meeting:		Date:
Attendance:		
Apologies:		
Agenda Item	Discussion	Action

## Appendix 4 Officer Roles

Chairperson	Secretary
<p>The primary role of the chairperson is to lead the committee and facilitate its meetings.</p> <p><i>A Chairperson should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Facilitate</b> the group to work towards achieving the committees aims. Give help and support where needed. Ensure the agenda is prepared for meetings in consultation with the secretary. Arrange meetings and sign minutes once agreed.</li> <li>-<b>Chair</b> committee meetings, move through the agenda in the time set out. Encourage full participation of members and ensure the workload is shared amongst the group.</li> <li>-<b>Report</b> at AGM on the work carried out in the previous year. Ensure all necessary information is made available to committee members. Ensure adequate records are kept and be a signatory on the committee bank account.</li> <li>-<b>Represent</b> the committee to outside organisations, networks etc.</li> </ul>	<p>The primary role of the secretary is to communicate and record decisions made by the committee.</p> <p><i>A Secretary should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Prepare</b> the relevant documents for committee meetings. Each meeting should have a record of attendance, an agenda, and minutes of the last meeting.</li> <li>-<b>Read/Report</b> the minutes of the last meeting. Allow for discussion of any matters arising which are not on the agenda. Give an update of any correspondence received.</li> <li>-<b>Record</b> attendance and minutes of meetings and circulate the information to committee members.</li> <li>-<b>Communicate</b> any relevant information to committee members between meetings.</li> </ul>
Treasurer	Committee Member
<p>The primary role of the treasurer is to account for the finances of the committee.</p> <p><i>A Treasurer should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Maintain</b> the financial records for the committee</li> <li>-<b>Account</b> for payments/lodgements made on behalf of the committee. Monitor budgets and seek additional funding through grants.</li> <li>-<b>Present</b> financial reports at each committee meeting and a final financial report at the AGM.</li> </ul>	<p>The first task of a committee member is to attend meetings of the committee.</p> <p><i>A Committee Member should be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<b>Aware</b> of and committed to the aims of the Residents Association</li> <li>-<b>Engaged</b> in meetings and supportive of events</li> <li>-<b>Responsible</b> for sharing in the work agreed at meetings</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5 Constitution (Sample)

### Constitution

**Title:**

The name of the Association shall be \_\_\_\_\_ Residents Association.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of the association are to protect and improve conditions and amenities in the area for the benefit of members and their families.

**Membership:**

Membership is open to all householders in the area of \_\_\_\_\_. Any such householder, having paid their annual subscription, shall be deemed to be a member. Membership is per household. Each household will have two votes which can be at the Annual General Meeting to elect a new committee to represent members, or vote on constitutional changes etc.

**Finance:**

The Treasurer will open a bank account in the name of the committee. Account signatories will be that of the chairperson and the treasurer of the committee and one other nominated committee member. All transactions and instructions to the bank shall require two of these three signatures at committee meetings. A statement of account will be produced by the treasurer at the committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting.

**Committee:**

The committee will be elected to carry out the business of the association. The committee will comprise of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and other committee members. Community members are welcome to form sub-groups to encourage participation and ownership. The committee shall be elected at the AGM and if additional members are required, they can be co-opted by the committee to fill any vacant positions. The committee will meet at least six times per year or more frequently if the committee deems it necessary.

**Annual General Meeting (AGM):**

An AGM shall be held annually in \_\_\_\_\_ or within three months of the same. The committee will report on its yearly work, present a statement of accounts and facilitate elections.

**Quorum:**

A meeting must have a quorum in order to make any decisions. A quorum is generally 50% of the group plus one person e.g., if there are 10 people on the committee at least 6 of those must be in attendance to carry out the meeting.

**Changes to the constitution:**

The constitution can be altered at the AGM subject to notification. Any proposed changes must be given to the secretary at least a week before the meeting is scheduled to take place. Changes to the constitution must be agreed at a meeting ensuring there is adequate committee members present to meet the quorum.

**Dissolution of the committee:**

The association may only be dissolved at a special general meeting or AGM called for that purpose and must be advertised.

**Standing Orders:**

Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings or in premises used by the committee.

Any community member may propose a motion, in order for it to be passed it must be proposed and seconded by members of the meeting.

Only members present at a meeting may vote.

Signatures of committee members:

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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