# Residents' Associations and Groups handbook

## June 2024



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# Contacting us

Before getting in touch you can see if the information you are looking for is in our online **Knowledge Base**, which answers the most commonly asked questions. The Knowledge Base can be found on the Newlon website: **www.newlon.org.uk/knowledge-base**.

If you can't find the relevant information on the Knowlwdge Base, you can contact us in any of the following ways:

- **Online live chat**: Click the 'Chat with us' button at the bottom of the screen on the Newlon website and type your first name to connect immediately to one of our Service Centre Advisors. If there are no Advisors available you can leave a message there and they will get back to you.
- Call: **020 7613 8080** (Monday to Friday 8am – 5pm).
- Email: **customerservice@newlon.org.uk**.
- You can also report repairs through our online reporting tool at **www.newlon.org.uk/repairs** or email: **repairs@newlon.org.uk**.
- To make a complaint email **serviceresolution@newlon.org.uk**.
- To report anti-social behaviour email **asb@newlon.org.uk**.

## Contacting the Resident Involvement team

Email: **getinvolved@newlon.org.uk**

Call: **020 7613 8084**

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# Residents' Associations and Groups

At Newlon we recognise the value of resident involvement. We want to support residents to be active in their communities, and to have a positive impact by working alongside our staff and other agencies. This handbook is designed to answer your questions about what it means to set up and run residents' associations or groups.

A residents' association or a more informal residents' group is set up and run by residents to represent the views of people living in their block, estate or street(s). It brings together people who share common concerns, who work together to resolve them.

Collectively, you can tackle your concerns more effectively by communicating and engaging with Newlon and other organisations in the community. Local councillors and agencies such as the police can also be more receptive to the concerns of a collective voice. The more involved you become in your block, estate or street(s), the more influence you have in terms of how things feel, look or are run.

**In our community having the group has been extremely beneficial and we are stronger for it. You'll see the best of people as you work together towards a common goal.**

**Newlon resident**

## Getting started

Discuss what type of involvement would be more suitable. The most common are a residents' association or an informal residents' group. Here are the main pros and cons:

- Residents' associations are widely recognised, have clear structures and responsibilities, regular meetings and a committee to drive the work of the association. Roles are clear, which can be helpful if you like or need structure. On the other hand, they can take time to set up and run and are process driven and rather less spontaneous, which some people don't like. Keeping residents involved can take effort and perseverance. As a residents' association you may be able to access funding to run projects and keep ticking over, which is a positive.
- Informal residents' groups do need to have a set of rules known as terms of reference, though they take less time to set up and can agree task and/or location based coordinators instead of a committee. This does mean that there is no overall leader like a Chair and a recognised structure so there is less of a hierarchy, which some people prefer. They can be freeing with more energy, or it can lack cohesion and lead to inertia, it just depends on the people involved. People tend to come and go more with an informal group. The group can later develop into a residents' association, if it wants to.
- Either way, they are a commitment, which should reflect the wider concerns and views of your neighbourhood and should not be used for voicing a personal issue or complaint. It's really important to reflect where you live if you are thinking of setting up a group. Newlon won't offer you support or endorse you if you don't give everyone the opportunity to take part when you are setting up an association or group.

Different options to an association or group are available. Summaries are shown in appendix 2 of this handbook.

**When we set up our group there were a lot of local issues. Once we were formally organised, we were then able to represent our community. This enabled us to engage and work with organisations to resolve problems that affected residents here.**

**Newlon resident**

## How Newlon can help you to set up an Association or Group

Newlon's Resident Involvement team can guide you in setting up a residents' association or an informal residents' group for your block, estate or street(s).

The team can assist you in developing a group by providing the following assistance:

- Help to gauge interest in forming a group from other residents and to identify their concerns, e.g. a survey of residents.
- Attending the initial meeting to form a steering group of interested residents.
- Exploring options with the steering group on how the group is set-up and run, e.g. as an informal or formal association or a one-off issue based group.
- Advising on the model constitution, code of conduct and terms of reference (for informal groups). These documents are included in this handbook.
- Attending the formal launch of the association or group once the preliminary meetings are over and enough interest exists to go forward.

We know that a new group needs time to get sufficient support from the people it aims to represent. Residents will need to commit to taking an active role to set up and sustain an association or group. Be prepared to spend time to build support and encourage residents to join and take on some of the tasks. We can give you contact details for established associations who can share their experience of setting up their groups. We can also advise you on ways to gather momentum and you can find some useful tips on page 3 of this handbook, in the 'Getting started' section.



**To establish a group all you need is a small band of people willing to be involved. Once you have a small party of residents interested in organising a group, Newlon's Resident Involvement team will help in the set-up and guide you through the process.**

**Newlon resident**

## How we work with Residents' Associations and informal Residents' Groups

### Finance and practical help from Newlon

- We can help you with publicity.
- We will pay for the venue hire or online meeting costs and refreshment costs for the initial meetings and the AGM for the association or the launch of the informal residents' group.
- When you have had the Annual General Meeting (AGM), a signed constitution and opened a bank account for a residents' association, you can apply for a set-up grant from Newlon of up to £300. This is to cover the cost of hall hire, online meeting costs, beverages, expenses (e.g. telephone calls made on behalf of the association) and, where necessary, contributions toward childcare.
- An annual running cost grant in subsequent years will be dependent on the receipt by Newlon of your expenditure records (including receipts and invoices) and minutes of your AGM.
- For informal residents' groups with signed terms of reference, we will review the amount of funding required with each group, agree record-keeping and submission of expenditure data (including receipts and invoices) to Newlon.
- Residents' associations and informal residents' groups can also apply to Newlon for grants for social events and one-off projects.
- We will support relevant training and skill building for new and existing members of the association or group..

## Having a set of rules

### Residents' Association – your constitution and code of conduct

A constitution is a simple document that sets out clearly who you are, why you exist and how you will organise and run your association to achieve your goals in a way that is open and accessible.

The code of conduct is an agreement on the rules of behaviour for all the members, such as within meetings.

An example of a constitution and code of conduct is included in appendix 3 and 4. You can use or adapt this draft for your own group. Please contact the Resident Involvement team for help with your constitution and code of conduct so that it suits your own group.

The constitution and code of conduct will be agreed and adopted at the first AGM and signed by the elected members.

### An informal residents' group – your terms of reference

The terms of reference describes the purpose of the group, membership, communication, and ways of working, e.g. the scope and authority of the block representatives/coordinators. The terms of reference also includes ground rules on behaviour and conduct.

A draft terms of reference example is included in appendix 4 which can be adapted to suit your own group.

## Making things happen – what we will expect from your Residents' Association or informal Residents' Group

We want to be certain that your association or group is an open, democratic group and responsible for the actions of its members.

- A residents' association will need to hold an AGM to launch the association and in subsequent years following the launch. A copy of the AGM documents will need to be provided to Newlon, including minutes, names of elected officers, the committee and general members, the signed constitution and agreed code of conduct.
- An informal residents' group will need to hold a launch meeting to set up the group and agree the terms of reference. Review meetings should be arranged in line with the terms of reference. A copy of the minutes of the launch meeting, names of coordinators or block representatives and the agreed terms of reference should be provided to us.
- You will need to have regular meetings (in line with your constitution or terms of reference) and keep minutes of every meeting.
- You will be expected to seek the views of and to represent the various needs of residents in the area where you live.
- You will need to be mindful of members' diversity and encourage participation from those who are under-represented in your group, to stand for election or take part in the wider work of the association or group.
- You will need to follow your rules and code of conduct to ensure all members conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at all times, when liaising with Newlon and other organisations and when attending meetings.
- Resident group members will not receive more favourable treatment than other individual residents when reporting repairs or other service related matters and will need to contact us in the same way. Details on how to contact us can be found on page 2 of this handbook in the 'Contacting us' section.
- It is important to update the Resident Involvement team on any changes in the management of the association or group or if you need any additional support to maintain the group.

# Appendix 1

# Forming a Residents' Association

## The role of the Chair

The Chair and other officers are elected at an Annual General Meeting (AGM). If the Chair (or other officer role) is not elected at the AGM, the Chair (or other officer role) is selected by the committee members until the next general meeting.

A good Chair needs to have:

- Patience and tact in dealing with other people.
- The ability to command respect.
- The ability to keep people under control during meetings.
- The ability to be as impartial as possible when discussing topics even if you have a particular interest in what is being discussed.

The Chair has to make sure the decisions made at meetings are done so in a proper manner. They also normally act as spokesperson or leader of the group, so they would need the skills to do that.

Outside of meetings they should:

- Be aware of all the activities carried out by the association.
- Ensure other officers are carrying out their tasks.
- Prepare agendas for meetings (with the Secretary).

In meetings they should:

- Make sure each item on the agenda is discussed and a decision made and recorded.
- Make sure everyone gets an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

Above all the role of the Chair is to take responsibility for the smooth and fair running of the organisation.

## The role of the Vice-Chair

It could be useful to have a Vice-Chair, they will Chair the meeting in the absence of the Chair. It is recommended that the Vice-Chair chairs a meeting where the Chair has an interest in a particular subject as this gives the Chair the option to put their point of view across.

## The role of the Secretary

The Secretary's job is to keep people informed so they are involved and therefore able to join in what the group does. Some duties include:

- Planning and writing agendas in partnership with the Chair.
- Bringing matters which need action to the attention of the committee.
- Ensuring that the number of meetings stated in the constitution actually take place.
- Organising the meeting venue and making sure that members know when and where the meetings will take place.
- Keeping records of all information relating to the association, including a record of membership.
- Taking the minutes and sending these out to members.

- Replying to letters and enquiries on behalf of the association.
- Helping the Chair with follow-up work between meetings.

Some of these jobs can be spread amongst others committee members.

The minutes are one of the most important aspects of the job and can be daunting. However it needn't be. They should:

- Include a statement of the name of the association, date, time and place of meeting.
- Include a list of those present and any apologies.
- Follow the agenda.
- Be clear, concise, easy to read and understand.
- Include all decisions made, and any key arguments leading to that decision.
- Have an "actions" column stating who is responsible for carrying out the decisions or actions agreed.
- Be written up and sent out soon after the meeting.

The Secretary should keep a full set of minutes for future reference.

## The role of the Treasurer

For details of the main duties of the Treasurer, please see the main body of the constitution.

## The Committee

The main role is to:

- Carry out the work of the residents' association on behalf of all the members.
- Manage the association according to the rules set out in the constitution.
- Organise general meetings for all members of the association, including the AGM.
- Act upon decisions taken by members at general meetings.
- Take decisions on behalf of the members between general meetings.
- Represent the views and interest of all members between general meetings.
- Consult members and report back to them on decisions taken.

## Running an effective committee

Here are a few basic points:

- Make sure everyone understands the aims and objectives of the association.
- The committee will need to decide which of these are more easily achievable and set short term and long term goals accordingly.
- Share the work amongst committee members and keep to the agreed schedule of meetings.
- Keep members of the association informed – door knock, produce leaflets and advertise meetings.

# Appendix 2 –
# It's your choice how you get involved where you live

| Type of involvement | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|---|
| **Residents Association (RA)** | • Widely recognised<br>• A collective voice for residents<br>• Good for fundraising<br>• Clear structure and responsibilities<br>• Committee and officers to drive the work of the association<br>• Regular meetings | • Can take some time to set an association up<br>• Process driven<br>• Sometimes difficult to keep residents involved<br>• Regular meetings |
| **Informal residents group with a terms of reference (set of rules)** | • Less time to set up<br>• A collective voice for residents<br>• Less commitment needed<br>• Can later staircase up to become a RA<br>• Task and/or location based co-ordinators instead of a committee and officers | • Less commitment needed<br>• No overall leader like a Chair<br>• Not such a recognised structure like a residents association |
| **A project group to get something off the ground e.g. a gardening club** | • Can be time limited<br>• Less about organising the group and more about doing<br>• Easy to recruit members | • Other important issues for residents do not get dealt with |
| **Getting together with Newlon at least once a year at a meeting or other method of communication to discuss issues important to residents** | • Newlon's responsibility to organise<br>• No need to set up a group<br>• Less commitment needed<br>• Can later staircase up to become an informal group or RA | • Individual rather than collective voices<br>• Less commitment needed<br>• No-one for Newlon to liaise with between meetings |
| **A one off meeting or other method of communication with Newlon** | • To deal with current issues important to residents<br>• Newlon will arrange<br>• Can be quick to set up<br>• Newlon will record the issues/ agreed actions and feedback on progress | • No ongoing involvement<br>• No overall leader like a Chair<br>• No-one for Newlon to liaise with |
| **Digital involvement e.g. Facebook, Meetup etc.** | • Great way to keep in touch<br>• Can use existing social media platforms<br>• No need for meetings | • No overall leader like a Chair<br>• No need for meetings<br>• No-one for Newlon to liaise with |

# Appendix 3

## Code Of Conduct

The purpose of having a code of conduct is to set standards of behaviour for all members.

To this end, all members are expected to abide by the following procedures that are adopted.

### 1. Conduct at meetings

- Members shall be courteous and support each other with the aim of achieving the best possible decisions.
- To speak only when called by the Chair.
- To listen without interruption to other residents and invited guests.
- To indicate to the Chair when you wish to speak.
- To keep comments brief and to the point – i.e. the subject being discussed.
- The use of offensive language (e.g. swearing, racist or sexist remarks) or behaviour that belittles or excludes groups or individuals is unacceptable and will be considered as an act of gross misconduct.
- Late arrivals should enter quietly and not disrupt the meeting with apologies.
- To allow the Chair to direct the meeting, including bringing the discussion to a close.
- The Chair has a duty to run the meeting with fairness to all present.
- Individual issues must not be discussed at the meeting. Individuals can report their issues directly to Newlon.

### 2. Conduct of the committee

- Members should not bring the association into disrepute, e.g. anti-social behaviour.
- Members should conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at all times when liaising with Newlon and other organisations.
- Members should not speak or write on behalf of the group without prior agreement of the group. Any correspondence sent on behalf of the group should be made available to all members of the association.
- Members of the committee shall at all times work within the rules laid down in the constitution.
- Members should observe collective responsibility for committee decisions.

### 3. Confidentiality

- The association may deal with difficult and sensitive issues; discretion and care must be exercised during and after the meetings.
- Members should respect all individual residents' confidentiality whether present or not. Information about individual residents will not be discussed at public meetings.
- Any information or items shared with Newlon that is of a confidential nature must not be disclosed to anyone else apart from committee members of the group in order to allow the business of that specific meeting to take place.

### 4. Political affiliation

Members may not represent a political party in their role as a member of the association.

## 5. Discrimination

No member will discriminate on any grounds against any other member of the association or public. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions or in any other communication. All those who attend meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

## 6. Conflicts of interest

Members should disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group that they represent, that they consider could affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion.

## 7. Breach of the Code Of Conduct

- If a member of the committee or those attending the meeting do not abide by the code of conduct, they will be warned by the Chair (of that meeting/event).
- The Chair may give the person concerned two further warnings (a maximum of three warnings in anyone meeting). Breaking the code three times means that the resident will be asked to leave the meeting.
- If the person continues to ignore these rules and refuses to leave the meeting after being warned by the Chair, then the Chair has the power to close the meeting.
- Subsequent exclusion from meetings will take place when a majority of those present at any meeting of the association or AGM vote to exclude a member (who has previously received three warnings).
- A complaint that a committee member has failed to abide by the code of conduct despite receiving three warnings or has committed an act that is considered to be gross misconduct or conduct which contravenes the objectives of the association, should be tabled at a committee meeting called for this purpose only.
- All parties must be notified in writing in advance and care must be taken to ensure that all concerned parties are given a fair hearing. On the findings of this hearing, the committee can suspend a member with a majority vote decision. The suspension will be ratified at this meeting and the suspension can take place with immediate effect and last for one year.

## 8. All members must observe this Code Of Conduct whenever they:

- Attend meetings of the association.
- Are acting in their role as a committee member.
- Are carrying out the work of the association or acting on their behalf.

This code of conduct was adopted by.....

at a general meeting of its members held at.....

Signed: .....

**Chair**

Signed: .....

**Secretary**

Date agreed: .....

# Appendix 4

## *Draft* Constitution of the .....

*[insert name of Residents' Association]*

The ..... *[insert name]* is for the residents of ..... *[insert name of scheme, street, area].*

(For the purpose of this document it will be referred to as 'the Association')

### 1. Aims

The aims of the Association are:

a) Promote the interests and rights of all residents in the management, maintenance and improvement of ..... *[insert name].*

b) Work towards good relations amongst all residents of *[insert name]* and between those residents and Newlon Housing Trust.

c) To act as a consultative body with relevant divisions of Newlon Housing Trust, local authority, other organisations or individuals whose business interests directly or indirectly affect members of the Association.

To achieve these aims the Association will:

a) Use every opportunity to understand the aspirations, needs and concerns of residents within ..... *[insert name].*

b) Raise issues of concern to its members through the organisation of meetings, events or through other communication channels with Newlon or other organisations as appropriate.

c) Inform and notify the membership of meetings, any actions and issues using different communication channels such as a digital group or email account, noticeboards and other methods to reach all members.

d) Make it as easy as possible for all its members to take a full and active part in the association.

e) Facilitate consultation by Newlon Housing Trust or other relevant parties with all its members on all matters relating to housing conditions, amenities and the environment at ..... *[insert name].*

f) The association shall be non-political.

g) Raise money and other resources necessary to fulfil these objectives.

### 2. Membership

a) Membership shall be open to all adult residents (18 years and over) including sub-tenants of leaseholders *[if this is agreed by the group].* Membership shall be free.

b) Each household (i.e. comprising one or more member(s) residing in the same property) shall have one equal vote on any matters at a general meeting.

c) Any member of the Association may stand for election to the committee or officer role.

d) All members of the Association are welcome to any public events and General Meetings organised by the Association.

e) Members shall agree to abide by the code of conduct and shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner when attending meetings, in premises used by the Association or when acting on behalf of the Association. The code of conduct details the action to be taken for breaches of the Code.

f) A committee member may be suspended for conduct which is considered to be gross misconduct or which contravenes the objectives of the Association at a special committee meeting held for this purpose with a majority vote decision. The suspension will be ratified at this meeting and the suspension can take place with immediate effect and last for one year.

### 3. Conduct of business

a) The Association shall be managed by a committee elected at each Annual General Meeting (AGM). At each subsequent AGM, the committee shall resign to allow the appointment of a new committee. Previous committee members may stand for re-election.

b) The elected committee shall fill a minimum of three roles made up of one Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. ..... *[insert number]* general committee members may be elected at the AGM. Two or more officers shall not be elected from the same household.

c) Vacancies in the number of committee members or officer position(s) can be filled by the committee as an interim measure until the next general meeting.

d) The committee shall meet *[every insert ..... months]* and no fewer than [insert] times a year.

e) The Chair or in their absence another officer will chair meetings. In their absence members in attendance will elect a member to chair the meeting.

f) Minutes will be kept of all committee and public meetings of the Association. The minutes will be presented at or before the next meeting for approval. Minutes of all meetings shall be made available to all members on request to the Secretary and where space permits, publicised on noticeboards within the ..... *[insert name]*.

### 3. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

a) There shall be an Annual General Meeting held within 15 months of the previous AGM at which the Committee shall report on its work, present a statement of accounts and resign.

b) The Secretary will notify all members of the date of the meeting at least 21 days before the AGM. Members will be notified of the meeting by notices placed in public areas and email or by post.

c) Nominations for officer posts and the committee will be accepted in advance or from the floor, only if the person nominated is present at the meeting or has put it in writing that they wish to stand.

d) The AGM shall elect new officers and a new committee, vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution. All elections and votes will be decided by a majority vote of the members present (one vote per household).

e) If there is nobody willing to stand, the previous committee will decide whether to start procedures to close the Association down. Alternatively the committee can continue in office to try and redevelop the Association for up to six months. It is the responsibility of the committee to recruit a new committee or formally dissolve the Association within that period.

f) The minutes of the previous AGM will be presented and approved.

### 4. General and Special General Meeting

a) There will be a General Meeting open to all members at least once a year in addition to the AGM. The General Meeting shall give at least 14 days' notice of the meeting and shall be publicised widely on noticeboards and via other communication methods, such as group email.

b) A Special General Meeting open to all members will be convened at the request of a majority of officers of the committee or if six or more members request this in writing to the secretary stating their reasons for wanting one.

c) The secretary will ensure that the Special General Meeting is held within 28 days after the request and that members are given at least 14 days' notice. All members shall be notified by notices placed in prominent locations and/or e-mail or post if feasible.

## 5. Finance

a) All money raised by or on behalf of the Association shall only be used to further the aims of the Association.

b) The Treasurer shall open a bank account in the name of the Association.

c) Three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Committee (one to be the Treasurer). The signatories cannot be related or from the same household.

d) All cheques and instructions to the Association's Bankers shall require two of the agreed signatories.

e) The Treasurer shall keep proper receipt and payment records of the finances and shall provide regular reports on the finances to the committee. The Treasurer shall submit the accounts to Newlon to be checked annually.

f) If the Association is dissolved, the Treasurer shall submit accounts up to the date of the dissolution and shall arrange the transfer to Newlon of any remaining funding from Newlon or shall issue a cheque to Newlon.

## 7. The responsibilities of the Officers

a) The chairperson will:

- Usually chair all meetings.
- Ensure that all can contribute without interruption.
- Prepare the agenda with the secretary and ensure that all agenda items are resolved. A Vice-Chair (if appointed) will support the Chair and undertake the above responsibilities where the Chairperson is not able to do so.

b) The Secretary will:

- Deal with all correspondence.
- Keep minutes of all meetings and records.
- Prepare the agenda with the chair and give the prescribed notice of meetings to all members

c) The Treasurer will:

- Keep up to date records of all transactions.
- Make sure committee members receive their expenses promptly.
- Make regular financial reports and prepare the accounts for inspection by Newlon.

d) Members of the Committee will:

- Work as part of a team and where they represent the Association to outside bodies shall provide a report to the next Committee meeting

## 8. Quorum

a) No General Meeting or Annual General Meeting shall take place if less than 5% of residents are present.

b) No Committee meetings shall take place if less than half or at least 3 members (whichever is less) of the Committee are present.

## 9. Changes to the Constitution

a) The constitution can be altered at an AGM.

b) Any proposed amendments must be lodged with the Secretary at least 7 days before the AGM.

c) Changes to the constitution must be agreed by two thirds of the members present at the meeting.

## 10. Dissolution

a) The Association may only be dissolved at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose and which must be advertised at least 14 days before the meeting.

## 11. Diversity Statement

a) The Association wants people from different backgrounds and different experiences to be part of the organisation. It will strive to make the Association a place where everyone can feel welcome and safe. The Association will challenge any remarks or behaviour that cause offence and makes some people feel unwelcome. The Association will do its best to overcome any obstacles to people giving their views or getting involved in the organisation. It will take positive action to reach those people that are underrepresented at its meetings.

This constitution was adopted by: .....
(The name of your Association)

At the meeting on (date): .....

Signature of the Secretary: .....

Signature of the Chair: .....

Signature of the Treasurer: .....

# Appendix 4

## *Draft* Terms of Reference for .....

*(insert name of group)*

### Aims of the *(insert name)* Residents' Group

1 The main aim of the ..... *[insert name]* Residents' Group is to represent the interests of all Newlon residents living at *[insert address of estate or block]*. These interests will vary from time to time and may include:

- where there are issues of concern that affect all or several residents and it will be in the interest of all to take a common approach to finding a solution.
- where it is felt that organising a community event will be desirable to foster good relationships between residents.

By "residents" we mean all those that live in Newlon homes at *[insert name of estate or block]* – this includes those renting; shared owners; 100% leaseholders; the people who live with them. (Where 100% leaseholders are renting their homes it will be up to the group to decide if the people renting are able to become members.)

### Membership and communication

1 Every resident of 18 years and over living at ..... *[insert name of estate or block]* as their primary home, is automatically a member of *[insert name of group]*. It is up to them how involved they want to be at any time.

2 To support and encourage all members to be able to contribute fully, the group will distribute information from the group, including notices and minutes of meetings. This could be done using noticeboards and/or by using a digital group or email account.

### Ground rules

1 All members will be listened to and respected and should feel welcome and safe at meetings and events of the group.

2 It is the responsibility of every member to challenge any remarks or behaviour that cause offence or make other members feel unwelcome. We cannot always be in agreement about everything but members are expected to make an effort to compromise.

3 Inappropriate or offensive behaviour at a meeting could result in a member being asked to leave, but only after a warning has been given first.

4 Members can be excluded for a period of time from the group for repeated inappropriate or offensive behaviour.

### Organisation and way of working

1 Meetings are a means to an end, and residents have busy lives. The most important thing is to address issues as they arise; sometimes a meeting will be needed to this effect, but not always. The work of the group can be undertaken on an issue by issue basis. The group will hold one meeting each year that all residents are invited to.

2 The annual meeting will select a small group of co-ordinators to facilitate the smooth working of the group, work together on common issues and take up specific issues for the homes they cover. The group will decide how many co-ordinators are needed and which homes they cover. Co-ordinators must step down at the next annual meeting but may be re selected.

3 The names of the co-ordinators and the homes they cover are shown on page three. They may choose a chief co-ordinator who takes the lead on behalf of *[insert name of group]*. The co-ordinators will collectively take up common issues on behalf of all members. Some of the tasks they undertake could include:

- Meeting together to co-ordinate their work on behalf of all members.
- Liaising with newlon and other external organisations on behalf of the group.
- Calling meetings and chairing those meetings.
- Organising a schedule of meetings and planning those.
- Taking, writing and distributing minutes of meetings to all residents.
- Setting up surveys.
- Consulting their members.
- Responding to correspondence, including emails.
- Sharing details of community events/news that might be of interest to members.

4 Any co-ordinator, can decide to take on as many or as few responsibilities or tasks at any time. Other members of the group may also take on tasks.

5 When an issue of concern is identified, such as a repeating communal repair, a co-ordinator will be chosen to progress this issue and look for a solution. They will always feedback to the group or the chief co-ordinator so that everybody is kept informed. If they cannot progress any further, other co-ordinators will suggest how to continue and offer support.

6 ..... *[Insert name of group]* will not deal with individual complaints made by residents to Newlon. They can however complain as a group to Newlon about common issues.

## Reviewing the Terms Of Reference

1 These terms of reference, and the overall activity of the group, will be reviewed within one year of their adoption at a meeting to make sure things are working as residents want them to work. They can be amended with the agreement of a majority of the members present.

## List of Co-ordinators

Co-ordinators names and the homes they cover to be added here.