

# Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) handbook

A step-by-step guide on how to develop a TRA







## Section 1

# Welcome

## 1.1 Welcome

Welcome to the Tenant and Resident Association (TRA) handbook. This is a step-by-step guide on how to develop a TRA, key roles and responsibilities of a TRA and gives practical ideas on what you can do to work effectively as a resident group.

The TRA handbook will refer to the Community Partnership Officers (CPOs) who are your first points of contact for all TRA matters and who are there to support you. Your CPO can be contacted by email: [partnerships@islington.gov.uk](mailto:partnerships@islington.gov.uk)

We appreciate there is a lot of information in this handbook, if you would prefer a member of the [Community Partnerships Team](#) to go through this with you we can arrange for this.

## 1.2 What is a Tenants and Residents Association (TRA)

A Tenants & Residents Association (TRA) is formed by a group of residents living on an estate who come together to form an Association to make their area a better place to live in.

A TRA gives residents more say in how their estate is managed and allows them to work with Islington Council to find solutions to problems affecting the area where they live. A TRA can also be a way to organise events and activities for all residents to enjoy and create a thriving community.

The aims of the TRA are:

- To work together as a group and in partnership with the council to improve your housing estate and environment including communal areas and the safety of residents
- To volunteer their time to organise and attend committee meetings
- To promote, arrange and host social activities for the benefit of the community
- To represent the views of all tenants and leaseholders.

## 1.3 The advantages of setting up a Tenants and Residents Association

Forming a TRA can bring many advantages for you and your neighbours. TRAs can:

- provide residents with an effective way to make their views known to Islington housing services and other organisations and give them a greater say in how their estate or block is managed.
- meet with the staff and the managers who are responsible for delivering services
- raise funds for their community and to improve the local area
- sharing information and news to residents about the local area
- develop a positive community spirit and enhance cohesion, helping neighbours to get to know each other
- organise social activities and events for the local community
- bring a sense of achievement to those involved in running a group
- give people a chance to meet new people, gain invaluable experience, access training, gain new skills and be a part of a community
- attend an estate walkabout to inspect your estate and make suggestions for improvements

# 1.4 The constitution

The constitution is a document that sets out and defines the rules for running the TRA in an effective way.

A constitution should:

- Outline the defined area that the TRA covers
- Set out the agreed aims of the TRA
- Set out responsibility and accountability so that there is a mechanism in place for decision making, and finding resolutions if there are issues
- Set out financial responsibilities
- State how a TRA would be dissolved
- Ensures that the TRA is inclusive to residents within the defined area

For your association to be recognised by Islington council, a formal constitution is necessary. The constitution should form the basis of your organisation and be issued by the secretary to all committee members and any member who requests a copy.

The council has a model constitution that your TRA will need to adopt. A copy of this is provided in [Appendix A](#). Any changes to this constitution must be agreed with the Community Partnership Team ahead of presentation to the committee.



## Section 2

# Your Committee

## 2.1 A committee

A committee is a group of volunteers. They need to be seen as an open, democratic body which represents all the people identified in its governance documents, including:

- Those who elected them
- Those they say they represent; and
- Those who find it hard to express their views elsewhere

If a committee is perceived as a group of people which only represents the views of the committee members, and not the constituents, then this may be a breach of the code of conduct.

Your Committee will be elected every two years at the **Biennial General Meeting**.

The Committee members responsibility is to make sure that the TRA is responsive to the residents it represents and that it is run properly. In order to do this, their role is to:

- positively promote the work of the organisation to members and others organisations
- help share information on behalf of the TRA
- attend meetings, contribute to discussions and volunteer to support tasks
- gather residents views and discuss these collectively as a group
- support the organisation of community activities and events
- be inclusive of all involved
- maintain confidentiality by not breaching the GDPR statement
- provide overall support and decision making on behalf of the residents
- maintain a long term view for the organisation and leave a good legacy for those who follow

When making key decisions, its important that the TRA are confident that they have consulted and engaged with the resident members. TRAs must engage with as many residents as possible and keep a record of this engagement. The CPO can advise and support with this.

Any committee will be made up of individuals with different life experiences, skills and abilities. These differences should enhance the groups ability to function. To make sure that this is the case each member of the committee should respect others right to have a different view for the benefit of the committee, the members and partnering organisations.

## 2.2 The roles within a committee

Outlined in this section is a summary of the roles of different officers on a TRA committee.

### The Chair

**The Chair is the spokesperson for the group and makes sure that the meetings are run effectively.**

The Chair role includes:

- Leading the committee to work towards achieving the stated aims of the association and being the lead spokesperson for the TRA provide overall support and decision making on behalf of the residents
- Encouraging discussions and making sure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in meetings
- Ensuring all relevant and planned matters are discussed
- Decision making and acting upon those
- Supporting the rest of the committee to complete tasks and ensuring they are completing them
- Delegating tasks to people that agree to carry them out
- Checking that all the work is carried out by the people who agreed to do it
- Be aware of all activities carried out by the group
- Help plan and prepare the agenda and invitations for meetings (with the Secretary)
- Represents and promotes the group at other meetings and events within and outside of the Council

In addition to this the chair should also organise regular reviews of governance documents; and lead the organisation's development of better communication with TRA members, councillors, officers and partners.

## The Secretary

The role of a Secretary is to support the chair in making sure that the committee is effective. A key part of this role is to ensure that everyone is kept informed and that the admin functions of the committee are carried out and run smoothly.

The secretary role includes:

- Taking notes at meetings, recording who attends, what decisions are taken and who agrees to do any tasks (see appendix B for the sign in sheet template)
- Circulating notes to members after meetings
- Making sure that notices of meetings or agendas are drawn up and sent out beforehand
- Inviting staff from the Council or possibly other organisations and guest speakers.
- Making sure that a suitable room is booked for the meetings, ensuring accessibility for all
- Raising any matters at meetings that the members need to make decisions on
- Making sure that the right number of meetings takes place, in line with the group's constitution
- Dealing with correspondence in partnership with the Chair
- Sending out publicity or other information, there is an admin grant available to support this work. See section 5 for more details
- Keeping a record of the members
- To notify the chair of any issues – e.g. the meetings are inquorate, clarifying decisions for minutes, informing meetings of apologies, etc.

## The Treasurer

The Treasurer has the overall responsibility for the group's finances. The role of the Treasurer is very important in supporting the group to be able to plan for future events and ongoing costs.

The treasurer role includes:

- Open or maintain the bank account of the organisation; making sure that the bank mandate is kept up to date and that the required number of signatories is on it.
- Keep accurate record of the organisations income and expenditure, and financial transactions.
- Keep petty cash for paying out day-to-day expenses
- Pay bills promptly and keep a record of money spent
- Give an update of income and spending at each meeting
- Help the group to plan its earnings and spending activities
- Prepare financial statements for the committee, Annual General Meeting and auditor.

It is important that there are three people from different households willing to act as signatories for the groups bank account. Two out of the three people will be required to approve each transaction (i.e. signing cheques, but also ensuring that no one individual can initiate and approve non-cheque transactions)

The treasurer is the one who advises the committee on finances, not the one who makes the financial decisions – this remains the responsibility of the committee based on the advice given.

The Council provides free training to support you to carry out your duties effectively. Our training programme includes how to run meetings, how to keep accounts and minute taking skills. For more information about training opportunities please contact your **Community Partnerships Officer** or email [partnerships@islington.gov.uk](mailto:partnerships@islington.gov.uk)

## 2.3 Leaving a committee

For many different reasons a resident may need to step down from their role within the committee this can be planned or unexpected.

If this situation arises it is important for the remaining committee members to agree on the next actions. In all circumstances a meeting should be held, and any agreements recorded in the minutes.

For a treasurer or secretary, it is acceptable to temporarily appoint a current committee member to cover these roles until the follow up biennial general meeting where official elections are held.

In the case of the Chair stepping down, it is recommended that the committee hold a Special General Meeting to appoint a replacement.

All circumstances are different, and we suggest that advice is sought from your CPO ahead of making any changes.



## Section 3

# Establishing your TRA

## 3.1 What you need to know before establishing your TRA

### Does your estate or street already have a TRA?

- There are many active TRAs on Islington estates who work in partnership with Islington Council to improve services for residents. A new or additional TRA cannot be formed if a TRA, a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), Cooperative or Estate Management Board (EMB) already exists, but there will still be plenty of opportunities to get involved.
- To find out if your estate or block has a TRA or to get involved in an existing one please contact the **Community Partnerships Team** by emailing [partnerships@islington.gov.uk](mailto:partnerships@islington.gov.uk)

### Do your neighbours want to get involved?

- If you are interested in establishing a TRA, you will need to gather the interest of your neighbours to support you with this.
- There are many ways you can engage with your neighbours to find out if they would be interested. Some examples are:
- Carry out an informal survey with your neighbours.
- Talk to neighbours about it if you see them around.
- For more advice and support on how best to make contact with residents on your estate, contact the **Community Partnerships Team** on [partnerships@islington.gov.uk](mailto:partnerships@islington.gov.uk)



## 3.2 Preparation in establishing your TRA

Your TRA will be a resident led group, and the Community Partnership team is here to support you to get together and get up and running. To demonstrate a commitment from yourselves and your neighbours initially, the Council requires at least three residents from different households to be engaged in the establishment and running of a TRA for your estate. The more people whose interest you can capture early on, the more support you will have to spread the word to your neighbours.

**From here the Community Partnership team can support you to share information and get more neighbours involved. This could include:**

- a letter to the estate
- an information session or drop in
- a coffee morning or social activity

The information session is an excellent time to discuss what the purpose of forming your TRA is, what you hope to achieve and what your reasons are for coming together.

This session would be led by a CPO with the purpose of:

- Providing information on the constitution and governance requirements to be recognised by the Council
- Discussing the elected committee roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, and what these roles involve
- Discussing the aspirations of your TRA. This can include working towards making

improvements on your estate in partnership with Islington Council; voicing suggestions on upcoming developments or major works; meeting to pursue common interests in your area; arranging social activities and promoting community cohesion

- Deciding what estate(s), block(s) your TRA will represent. You should discuss this with your CPO as you will need to ensure that residents of all the areas you wish to cover are represented.
- Agree a generic email address for your TRA (eg [myhousingestateTRA@emailprovider.co.uk](mailto:myhousingestateTRA@emailprovider.co.uk)). Details on how to set up an account can be found at [support.google.com/mail/answer/56256?hl=en-GB](https://support.google.com/mail/answer/56256?hl=en-GB)
- Support you with next steps

You might decide that you already have enough information and support from your neighbours without hosting an information session. In this circumstance your CPO can support you to go ahead with your TRA's inaugural meeting.

## 3.3 Inaugural Meeting

The inaugural meeting is the first meeting held to establish your TRA. At this meeting you will democratically elect your officers (Chair, Treasurer and Secretary), adopt the model constitution, code of conduct, GDPR and equalities statement and set the date for your next meeting.

**The inaugural meeting should be chaired by your CPO (or an alternative member of Council staff / Councillor if your Officer is not available) if you wish your TRA to be recognised by Islington Council.**

To prepare for this you will need to carry out the following, your CPO can support you:

- Set a date – this must be enough time to give at least 21 days notice to everyone on the estate
- Arrange a venue – this should be accessible for all and suitable for the number of residents you anticipate to attend
- Invite everyone from your estate – you will need to send individual flyers/posters to each household as well as place posters on notice boards and electronic noticeboards around the estate. We have included examples of this for you in [Appendix C](#)

- You should think about what you want on your agenda (this can be included on the flyers and posters). Typically for your Inaugural Meeting the agenda would be restricted to democratic voting, any other agenda items should be kept short and take place last.
- Discuss which of the roles and responsibilities residents would like to volunteer for (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer)
- It is good practice to invite your ward councillors to the Inaugural meeting – details of your local councillors can be found online at [democracy.islington.gov.uk](https://democracy.islington.gov.uk)

## 3.4 Voting and being recognised as a TRA by Islington council

There needs to be a minimum number of residents from different households from your estate at an Inaugural Meeting. This is called a 'quorum'. The quorum requirements are based on the number of properties (this is a flat or any individual dwelling) on your estate that you will be representing.

### Quorum requirements are as follows:

- **50 properties or less**  
5 households
- **51 – 100 properties**  
6 to 10 households
- **101 – 200 properties**  
11 households
- **201 – 300 properties**  
12 households
- **301 – 400 properties**  
13 households
- **401 – 500 properties**  
14 households
- **501 – 1000 properties**  
15 households

- Remember representatives will need to be from different households and we encourage individuals with all different life experiences, skills, upbringings, values to enhance the innovativity and productivity of the group
- If the quorum is not met the Community Partnership Team can discuss alternative models on engagement for your area.

- Both tenants and leaseholders can be members of a TRA and stand for elected positions such as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
- The number of leaseholders who can hold an elected position should be proportional to the number of leaseholders on the estate. Islington council will carry out checks to advise the requirements.
- Leaseholders should not form a majority in the elected committee positions unless agreed by all attendees and recorded in the meeting minutes, this is to ensure fair representation for all residents on the estate
- You must commit to holding one Annual General Meeting per year (every other year this should be a democratic meeting where elections are held), plus at least one committee meeting. Minutes and records must be kept from these and shared with Islington Council on request. You can find a copy of this template in [Appendix D](#).
- Agree and uphold the Islington Council Code of Conduct, GDPR and Equalities statement
- Sign the Islington Council Constitution



## Section 4

# Meetings

# 4.1 Types of meetings

Types of Meetings	Meeting Purpose	Frequency	Who the meeting is for	Quorum	Notice
<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	<p>Opportunity to discuss any TRA matters or items related to the area.</p> <p>TRA should provide activity summary from the previous year.</p> <p>Annual accounts should be presented.</p>	One a year	Open to all eligible members of the TRA (anyone living on estate/catchment area)	Varies depending on size of estate/area the TRA represents. See section 3.4 for more information	21 days must be given to all households within the area covered by TRA. This must include leaflets to each household as well as posters on noticeboards and other key locations across the estate such as communal entrances (with permission of Estate Services).
<b>Biennial General Meeting</b>	<p>Meeting used to accept resignations (and subsequent elections) of TRA's committee and officers</p> <p>Share annual report of the committee and statement of financial accounts</p> <p>Must be moderated by a representative of the council to check it has been conducted in accordance with Islington Council's recognition process.</p> <p>Re-adopt documents such as Constitution and code of Conduct</p>	Once every two years	Open to all eligible members of the TRA (anyone living on estate/catchment area)	Minimum of 5 but increases depending on size of block, estate, or street the TRA represents. See section 3.4 for further information	21 days notice must be given to all households within the area covered by TRA. This must include leaflets to each household as well as posters on noticeboards and other key locations across the estate such as communal entrances (with permission of Estate Services).
<b>Special General Meeting</b>	<p>Called when changes to the TRA membership or officers occur. For example if the area that the TRA represents changes, or an officer leaves.</p> <p>May be called by the committee or at least 10% of members.</p>	When required	Open to all eligible members of the TRA (anyone living on estate/catchment area)		<p>Meeting request must be made in writing to secretary at least 14 days before the meeting.</p> <p>Secretary must send written notice to all members at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>At least 21 days' notice must be provided to all households.</p>
<b>Committee Meetings</b>	To discuss TRA matters	At least once a year	All committee members	Quorum decided by committee however at least 3 committee members must be in attendance.	7 days notice to all committee members
<b>Regular Meetings</b>	To discuss TRA matters and items relating to area	No minimum requirement, but recommend holding these regularly depending on items that the TRA is working on	Open to all eligible members of the TRA (anyone living on estate/catchment area)	No minimum required	Good practice to provide 21 days notice to all households in the area covered

## 4.2 Documents for meetings

### The agenda

- an agenda is a list of items that you wish to discuss at your meeting
- an agenda makes 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 to keep the meeting on track
- the Secretary and Chair should prepare an agenda for all meetings and give committee members the chance to suggest any items for discussion.
- Any miscellaneous items for discussion must be taken at the end of the meeting once the agenda items have been concluded, permitting there is time left in the meeting
- An example agenda template is included in [Appendix E](#)

### Minutes of your meeting

Minutes are written notes and records of what happened at meetings.

They should document:

- Where and when the meeting took place
- Who attended the meeting and anyone who apologised for absence
- Decisions that were taken
- Actions that need to be carried out, by who, and when
- The secretary should take minutes of your meeting – see [section 2.2](#) for more on the secretary's role
- An example minutes template is included in [Appendix D](#)

It is important to note that any personal data such as names or addresses should not be included in the minutes.

## 4.3 Organising meeting venues

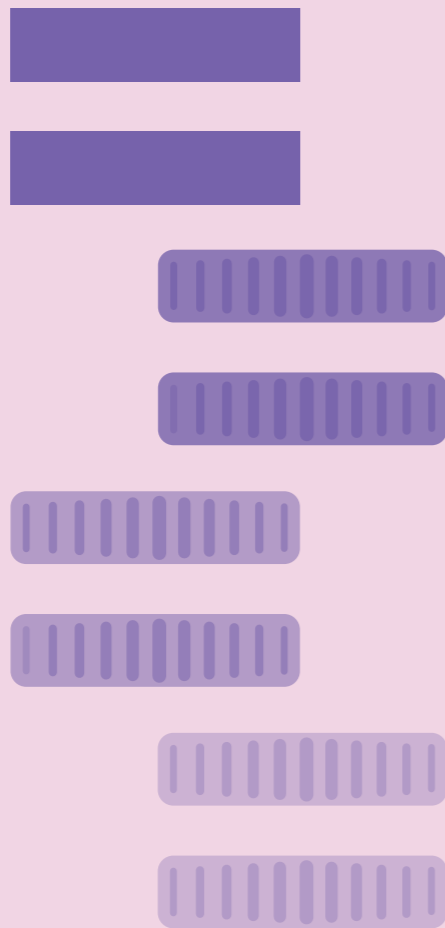
Finding the right place for a meeting is important. It should be easy for people to come along, this will encourage better attendance. You can meet anywhere just make sure it's suitable and accessible to all residents on your estate.

### You must consider:

- the accessibility of the venue – it should be suitable for all residents including those who may have disabilities
- the location of the venue – to encourage better attendance meetings should take place relatively local to where residents live
- how you will include people who may not be comfortable or able to meet in a public place. Your CPO can discuss with you how you may be able to offer a 'hybrid' style of meeting allowing some people to join online as well as others meeting in person.

### You also may want to consider:

- Whether there is a Housing Estate based Community Centre close to your estate. These make excellent spaces to hold your meetings and build positive relationships with your community. Visit the page here for more information on where the Community Centres are and their contact details. You will need to speak to the Centre about availability and if there are any associated costs.
- In warmer weather you may decide to hold your meeting outdoors. You will need to ensure that there are sufficient facilities available, such as table, chairs and drinking water available. If you decide to do this on your estate it's important to seek permission from your [Islington Council Estate Services Co-Ordinator](#). You can find out who your Estate Services Co-Ordinator is on the website.
- Holding your meeting at local public spaces such as libraries, cafes and parks.



## Section 5

# Grants, Funding and Managing Finances

## 5.1 Grants available from Islington Council

The Community Partnership Team provides TRAs, recognised by the Council, with financial assistance to help with the running costs of managing your TRA.

### Types of grants available:

#### Start Up grant

All new TRAs who are formally recognised by Islington Council are entitled to a one off start up grant of £100.00. Your CPO will arrange this payment after the TRA's inaugural meeting and once your bank account has been set up.

#### Annual grant

Each year TRAs are able to apply for an annual grant payable from April of each year. You will need to complete an application form and give details of your bank account, minutes of your first meeting or a biennial general meeting and details of your financial accounts showing how the previous grant was spent. The Community Partnership Team will email details of how to apply for this on a yearly basis.

This grant includes:

- Administration and Publicity Grant - All recognised TRAs can apply for an administration and publicity grant on an annual basis. The allocation is £200.00 plus 50 pence per unit on the number of properties that you represent on your estateCommunity event/activities grant.
- Community event and activity grant - Grants up to £250 are available to help fund a specific estate-based project or activity.
- Estate based gardening group grants - Recognised Council estate-based gardening groups can apply for annual grants of up to £100

## 5.2 Other funding opportunities

There are various organisations that have funds and grants available for voluntary groups to apply for. They have conditions about who can apply and what the money can be used for. [support information here.](#)

**These funds are particularly useful for groups who would like to expand their activities like:**

- facilities for young people
- play and sports facilities
- buying IT equipment
- community safety
- environmental improvements

You can find the most up to date funding support information online at [www.islington.gov.uk/advice/voluntary-and-community-sector/funding-support](http://www.islington.gov.uk/advice/voluntary-and-community-sector/funding-support)

### Local Initiative Funding (LIF)

Local ward councillors have an annual budget of £14,000 per ward for small grants that deliver benefit to the residents of their ward (subject to the final agreement of the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee).

They can go towards a variety of locally run activities like:

- sports clubs
- local festivals
- youth activities
- community events
- environmental improvements

- education and training classes
- outings and day trips

We strongly advise you to try to contact your local ward councillor(s) and discuss your project before making an application. We would recommend you email all three councillors of the ward you wish to apply to, rather than just one. You can find their contact details [here](#)

Details on how to apply, guidance notes, application forms and deadlines can be found [here](#)

For any queries please contact [localinitiativesfund@islington.gov.uk](mailto:localinitiativesfund@islington.gov.uk)

In addition to the funding and grants available, you can also raise money for local activities.

### Community fundraising

You can raise your own funds to pay for trips out for residents, social events, children's parties and other community events. You should record any fundraising money separately in your accounts to identify the amount clearly. Examples of ways to raise funds are:

- raffles
- bingo
- jumble sales
- fun days / street parties

## 5.3 Funding Support and the Islington Funding Toolkit

### Islington Funding Toolkit

**Voluntary Action Islington** and Islington Council have set up the Islington Funding Toolkit, which is a fully searchable database of local, regional, national and international funding opportunities. You can also sign up for tailored funding bulletins so that you don't miss out on any opportunities. For more information visit [vai.org.uk](http://vai.org.uk)

### Fundraising Support

Voluntary Action Islington provide training and personalised fundraising support to community groups in Islington. They have a range of funding guidance available online and produce a regular funding booklet. For more information visit [vai.org.uk](http://vai.org.uk)

Sign up to their e-news bulletins to receive voluntary sector news, including details about funding opportunities visit [vai.org.uk](http://vai.org.uk)

### Thriving Neighbourhoods

Thriving Neighbourhoods is an annual three-year, investment programme that aims to transform shared spaces on estates and their immediate vicinity across Islington. Projects include work to improve playgrounds, community centres, storage, recycling facilities, sports pitches and more. The scheme is working to make the borough's estates cleaner, greener, more child-friendly and generally a better place to live.

For more information, please contact [ThrivingNeighbourhoods@islington.gov.uk](mailto:ThrivingNeighbourhoods@islington.gov.uk)

## 5.4 Managing the TRAs finances

### Some basic rules should be followed when it comes to the TRA money:

- adopt one simple and clear book-keeping system which shows your income, expenditure and balance. An example spreadsheet is attached in Appendix F.
- check the book-keeping regularly – at least once a month. It's easier to correct a mistake if you identify it early. Find a safe place to keep all items; cheque books, receipts and records of all transactions are as important as the money itself.
- present a brief update of your accounts at each TRA meeting and a Treasurer's report and full accounts for the Biennial General Meeting (BGM)
- pay income into the bank as soon as you get it. Many groups find it convenient to use cash income as petty cash – but this isn't recommended. By paying this income into the bank there is a clear and independent guarantee that your organisation really received the income
- keep as little cash in hand as possible. Try to make as many transactions as possible through the bank either by BACS (electronic transferral) or by cheque
- keep a receipt for every item of spending, no matter how small. If a receipt is lost or was not provided, ask the person claiming the money back to sign a petty cash slip, which authorises the spending
- keep cheque stubs as a separate record of spending
- the accounts should be open and available to all members at any time on request
- make sure that you receive bank account statements as often as your bank will allow – ideally every month. You can contact your bank if you need support this.

### Extremely Important to note –

Members of same household must not, in any circumstances, be joint signatories to the TRA's bank account.

## 5.5 Opening a bank account

We recommend that TRAs 'shop around' to find the most suitable account provider for their needs. The internet is great to see what banks offer for community or resident groups.

There should always be at least three signatories to the TRA's bank account and in the event of someone stepping down or no longer being able to undertake that role, another signatory should be identified and appointed by the committee, at the earliest available opportunity.

Helpful information to setting up bank accounts for charities and residents groups is provided online at [www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information-category/starting-a-group/opening-a-bank-account/](http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information-category/starting-a-group/opening-a-bank-account/)



## Section 6

# Additional TRA Support

## 6.1 Training

### Training opportunities to help your TRA

The Community Partnership Team offer a variety of training courses for residents from helping to run a TRA, to skills for life courses such as cookery and DIY.

We offer specific training related to helping TRAs develop their group such as:

- Running effective meetings
- Chairing meetings
- Managing money
- Roles and responsibilities
- Effective Communication Skills

Details of these are emailed to TRAs when available. You can also contact your CPO to discuss any specific topics you may require support with.



## 6.2 Setting up and Running your TRA

The Community Partnership Team are here to provide support and advice for TRAs. Your CPO will be your first point of contact for all TRA matters.

### When setting up your TRA a CPO will help you to:

- arrange your first meeting
- invite the relevant people who you wish to attend e.g. Councillors / Council representatives
- help you to produce a poster/leaflet to advertise your meeting
- Support with the distribution of the poster / leaflets around the estate
- find a suitable venue
- help set the agenda
- produce copies of attendance sheets, agendas and other paperwork for the meeting
- take the minutes at your first meeting

### After your first meeting CPOs will:

- send out minutes of the meeting
- send an introduction email to relevant Council departments advising of your TRA's inauguration along with contact details
- help you complete funding applications
- inform you about training opportunities
- help identify members of staff to invite to future meetings
- help set up a generic email address
- add your TRA email address to the Community Partnership Team mailing list
- provide support in matters of governance

**The Community Partnership Team** will email regular correspondence regarding offers and opportunities for the TRA and residents. This can include free offers for activities, job opportunities, health and wellbeing opportunities and training.

It's important that you regularly check the TRA email address for this information and share with residents.

## 6.3 Useful top tips

### Tips on how to get your neighbours together:

- ask your CPO to help. They can help you with designing, printing and distribution of posters and leaflets
- produce a leaflet to post to every resident on your estate. A template leaflet is provided in Appendix C
- ask your CPO to display a poster on estate electronic notice boards where available
- ask your neighbours and committee to spread the word and get the whole estate talking
- create your own TRA social media
- email your neighbours – ensure that when you are communicating with them through email, you use the TRA email address
- create a newsletter to keep your neighbours updated on good news stories, important estate information and upcoming meetings

### Tips for setting up your TRA:

- Have realistic targets for your group which you are confident you can achieve
- Try to get as many people involved as possible in making decisions and taking on tasks and responsibilities
- Keep everyone well informed about what is happening, this can include emails and newsletters
- Be open and transparent with volunteers about their time commitment and attendance of meetings
- Promote the positives of having and being involved in a TRA
- Tips for designing your promotional material:
  - Make sure to include contact details for the group
  - Keep the text in plain English and easy to read

- Try to make your material eye catching but keep it simple
- If you need suggestions your CPO can assist you with this

### Tips for promoting your TRA:

- Create posters, leaflets or newsletters which will advertise:
  - upcoming events and meetings
  - improvement works being carried out on your estate
  - fundraising successes
  - how you have spent funding

### Tips for organising venues for meetings:

- is it close by and easy for everyone to get to?
- what time will work best for the majority of residents? For example evening meetings mean that most people will have time to finish work, school pick ups etc and attend. You might even consider a weekend meeting.
- does the venue have disabled access, a toilet and adequate lighting and are tables and chairs available?
- what dates and times is the venue available and do you need to book?
- what are the venue arrangements for opening and locking up?
- how much will the venue cost
- is the room large enough?
- is WiFi available and can the venue host a hybrid style of meeting?



## Section 7

# Keeping in touch with the council

Forums provide an opportunity for the exchanging and sharing of information between the council, TRAs and borough-wide organisations. Getting involved will empower your TRA to influence local decision making.

As a TRA you can have your voice heard on issues which matter to your members and which relate to your estate/ street.

There are a number of formal and informal bodies that your TRA should know about so that you can decide which ones you can get involved with to improve services.

## 7.1 The Council

- the Council is composed of 51 councillors across 17 wards. The overriding duty of councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents
- all councillors meet together, approximately six times a year, as the Council. The Council decides overall policies and sets the Council's budget each year. Some of the meetings are ceremonial, such as the Annual Council in May each year and the Mayor's Awards and, although open to the public, there is no provision for the public to ask questions at these meetings.
- council meetings are held in public (unless there are confidential or exempt matters for discussion, which is very rare), in the Council Chamber, at the Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD
- members of the public are entitled to a copy of the agenda for the meeting and any non-exempt/ nonconfidential papers. The agenda and accompanying papers are available five working days before each meeting. They can be downloaded by visiting: [democracy.islington.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx](http://democracy.islington.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx)

## 7.2 Staying Informed

The Council has lots of different ways to keep you informed of what's happening in your area. You can keep up to date with news and events by signing up to Council email bulletins or following us on social media.

- **Local updates** – The latest news and updates relevant to your area. Select the area you are most interested in and we will share tailored information that is relevant to you and your community. This includes updates on council improvement works, exciting local projects taking place, and inclusive community events. Sign up to **Your local updates**.
- **Tenant and Leaseholder updates** – Sign up to the **Housing Matters email bulletin** for the latest news and updates in your area.
- **Council news** – There are easy ways for you to stay up to date with council news on issues that may affect you by following us on **X** (formerly known as Twitter) **@IslingtonBC** or **Facebook @IslingtonBC**. If you want to keep up to date with council news sign up for **our email news and updates**.
- **Council meetings** – Subscribe at **democracy.islington.gov.uk/ielogon.aspx?lp=1&META=mgSubscribeLogon** for email updates about committee meetings.
- **Local community news** – If you are interested in what is going on in your local community, you can join the growing **IslingtonLife** community at **https://islingtonlife.london**:
  - Sign up to our monthly email bulletin at **islingtonlife@islington.gov.uk**
  - Follow **@IslingtonLife** on **X** (formerly known as Twitter)
  - Follow and like us on **Facebook** at **www.facebook.com/IslingtonLife**
  - Follow us on **Instagram** at **@islingtonlife**
  - Follow us on **YouTube** at **www.youtube.com/@islingtonlife4111**

## 7.3 Getting involved

### Estate inspections

- The estate services team regularly carry out estate inspections to assess caretaking services, check the communal areas and identify any repairs that might need doing
- TRAs often take an active interest in the upkeep and maintenance of their estate and are invited to attend estate inspections with staff four times a year to identify any areas of concern and agree what should be done about them
- To find out more about estate inspections, contact the estate services team in your area housing office. Visit: **www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/contact-housing-services/services-and-contact-information-for-your-estate**

### Ward partnerships

- The partnerships are a way for people and organisations in a ward to get involved, meet their councillors, share their knowledge and to help tackle local issues
- Ward Partnerships have replaced Islington's area committees and must be consulted by council departments on a range of issues that affect local residents including: planning and community benefit from developments; traffic and parking; road maintenance; utility works; crime and antisocial behaviour; environmental improvements; tree felling; litter, dog fouling and neighbourhood clean-ups.

For more information on Ward partnerships visit **www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/have-your-say/ward-partnerships** or email **partnerships@islington.gov.uk**

### Police ward panels

- Police ward panels are community meetings specific to your ward and provide an opportunity for residents to engage with the local policing team to discuss crime and

disorder concerns. Each meeting includes a rundown of local crime statistics and information on recent incidents including anti-social behaviour.

- It is important that all estates are represented at their ward panel meeting to ensure police are aware of any issues. By providing local intelligence to the panel your views could help decide how resources are deployed and which priorities you want the local police team to focus on.

If you are interested in representing your estate or TRA at your local ward panel meeting please contact **communitysafety@islington.gov.uk** to be directed to your local policing team.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- Local ward councillors recommend the allocation of a proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding collected in their wards. CIL is paid by developers when they build houses and commercial properties and the money is used to improve local infrastructure such as roads/footpaths, play areas, parks, nurseries etc.
- Projects that councillors may wish to support if funds are available or have previously supported are set out in Community plans which are available on the Council's website: **www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/have-your-say/community-plans**.

The Community plans are often discussed at Ward partnership meetings where ideas can be put forward. TRA's can also suggest improvements on estates direct to ward councillors.

# Notes...

**If you would like this information in another language or reading format, such as Braille, large print, audio or Easy Read, please contact 020 7527 2000.**

For any enquiries please contact:



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**[www.islington.gov.uk/housing](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing)**

Published October 2024