



Why Does Your Group Need a Constitution.

When a group of people or a rural community come together to form a community, Residents or Tenants Association, a constitution, which draws on the Aims, Objectives and Normal rules of the group is needed/adopted.

The adoption of a constitution

- Confers formal legal status
- Identifies the Beneficiaries of the Group
- Shows who is accountable for the Group

How to draw up a constitution

A useful tip is to look at other similar groups constitution and adopt one that is already used. Or you can devise a new one to suit your group. But whichever you chose a constitution should include:

1. The name of your group
2. Your Groups objectives
3. Membership
4. Management committee
5. Functions of the Committee
6. Finance
7. Trust Property
8. A.G.M
9. Special General Meetings
10. Rules of Procedure of all meetings
11. Alterations to the constitution

Explanation of this.

The name of your group:

This defines the name of your Group.

When deciding on a name think about

- a. The Area your Group represents
- b. The Age range of your Group. (is it just for over 50s?)
- c. The range of people for your Group (is it just for disabled?)

REMEMBER. The name of your group has to be used when applying for all funding.

2. ***your Groups Objectives:*** This defines the reason your Group was set up. Think about what was your Group set up to do. What is its main purpose and what does it hope to achieve.

REMEMBER. If your Group is seeking Charitable Status then your objectives must be seen to be charitable.

Is your Group open to all residents in your rural area? Or people outside your area?

Is it set up for all ages? This will then determine the rights and roles of the collective membership and will also determine an annual rate for subscription for members if appropriate.

3. *Management Committee.*

A constitution clearly defines who can be on the management committee:

- And how often they should meet,
- Numbers involved,
- How they are nominated/elected,
- When to elect office bearers

4. *Management Committee:*

A constitution clearly defines who can be represented on the Management Committee and:

- How often they should meet
- How they are nominated/elected
- When to elect office bearers
- If Trustees need to be appointed and what their role is
- What happens if a member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings

5. *Functions of a committee:*

The Affairs of the Group are directed by the Committee elected at the AGM. Thus they should make decisions on how often they meet. This should be at least 6 times a year. It is also their job to decide what the Group does throughout the year.

6. *Finance:*

The constitution should guide your Group in laying down the role of treasurer and the importance of the Audited Accounts and keeping them concise and up to date to present at each Annual General Meeting. It is therefore recommended to have your accounts independently examined by someone from outside your group.

NOTE: An Audit is the independent examination of, and an opinion on the financial statements of the group.

7. Trust Property:

In circumstances where a Group own property or substantial monies, it may be necessary to appoint Trustees to look after these interests. However your Group does not have to appoint Trustees, it can be down to whatever the Group decides.

8. AGM. (annual general meeting):

An AGM should be 12-15 months after your first AGM and annually every year while the group are in existence.

9. Special General Meetings:

Sometimes there will be a need to call a special meeting. This meeting may be called when a constitution needs to be changed, one of the committee members leave or something of importance, that affects all members of the group. If there is a need for one to be called keep in mind at least 10% of the households in your area need to attend. i.e. 200 households requires 20 members.

10. Rules of Procedure at all meetings:

This encompasses the requirements to effectively conduct meetings in terms of voting, the importance of keeping well documented and up to date records of all meetings, the number of people needed to constitute a quorum at General Meetings of Association as well as Committee Meetings.

11. Alterations to the Constitution:

Any alteration to the constitution can only take place at a AGM or a special General Meeting. Members must be given prior written of the alteration that is to happen.