Wandsworth Borough Council
Housing and Community Services Department

RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION ACCREDITATION & GRANT

2015/2016

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATIONS

Southern/Eastern/Central Area Teams
Wandsworth Housing and Community Services Department
Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
London
SW18 2PU

Western Area Team
38 Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 5JE
WANDSWORTH RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATIONS

Wandsworth Council Housing and Community Services Department encourages and supports residents’ associations to form and thrive within the Borough’s housing estates. The Council welcomes and values the input of residents who wish to participate in the management and improvement of their home environment and recognises that this can be done very effectively through the formation of a Residents’ Association.

It is up to those starting the association to decide on the area it wishes to represent. It could be a block of flats or maisonettes, a street or a whole estate (minimum 10 properties). Once this is established, the association may decide to apply to be accredited by the Council, which can bring several benefits:-

- an ‘accredited’ association may apply for a grant to help with its running costs, the purchase of equipment etc.;

- the accreditation sets up a relationship between the residents and the various departments which are responsible for managing and maintaining their homes;

- there is a well-established structure of consultative Panels and Forums to enable residents to participate and make their views heard in the Council’s policy-making and performance reviews.

Because the Council’s resident participation set-up (including the grants to associations) is paid for with public money, the Council is required by law to ensure that money is in safe hands and is being properly spent. This means that it is necessary to insist that certain requirements are met.

It would not, in the majority of circumstances, be appropriate for a separate residents’ association to be established where the estate or grouping of properties is part of a Resident Management Organisation (RMO). In these circumstances, the Housing and Community Services Department would expect the RMO to accommodate, as appropriate, such sub group arrangements within their consultative and governance structures. However, where a distinct group of residents (e.g. a sheltered scheme) wish to seek residents’ association accreditation this would be considered by the Council albeit on certain terms reflecting the fact that the dwellings in question are managed by an RMO.

CONDITIONS FOR ACCREDITATION BY THE COUNCIL

To become accredited by the Council, the residents’ association must agree to meet the basic requirements set out below and to supply supporting information where necessary.

To qualify, the association must:

Be open to all households living within the area that the association aims to represent or leaseholders who live elsewhere but own a property within the area including: -
- tenants, leaseholders, household members, sub-tenants and freeholders;
- where there are 20 properties or over, have a membership of at least 20% of the households in the area it represents;
- where there are between 10 and 20 properties, have a membership of at least 51% of the households in the area it represents;
- keep a membership list, updated every year;
- have a written constitution, which incorporates the Council’s basic requirements including clear aims and objectives, a commitment towards equal opportunities, financial standards, the requirement for an Annual General Meeting and rules about dissolving the association. The association may adopt the Council’s model constitution or write its own, provided all the essential points are included;
- hold an annual general meeting every year;
- keep open financial accounts, which are independently audited on an annual basis and open to inspection.
- have an approved code of conduct for members

GUIDELINES

These Guidelines are intended to give residents’ associations the background information and clarification needed to complete the application form. The numbering matches the questions on the application form. If in doubt, please do not hesitate to contact your Resident Participation Officer who is part of your Area Housing Team.

Details of the residents’ association

1 **Name of the association:** Please give the full name of the association. This will be used for payment of the accreditation grant. The first payment will be made by cheque for an account to be opened by the association. We will then require the bank account details as future payments will be made using the BACS system. Please provide these to your Resident Participation Officer.

2 **The area the association represents:** We ask you to identify the building/s, street/s or estate that your association has been set up to represent. This defines your ‘area’ and helps to prevent overlapping in case there are two associations claiming the same area.

3 **Total number of households in the area:** This is a count of all the households occupying flats, maisonettes or houses in your area, who could potentially choose to become members of your association.

4 **Households in membership:** This is a count of all the households which have become members of the association for the current year. Point 4 also asks for a list of member households to be sent with the application which should include the resident’s signature. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, to confirm that the association meets the requirement of having at least 20% membership of the area it represents (alternatively 51% if there are

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1 Sub-tenants, freeholders and Council tenants’ or leaseholders’ household members can be members but cannot hold an officer position within the residents’ association as they have no contractual relationship with Wandsworth Council as landlord or freeholder.
between 10 and 20 properties) and secondly, if a grant is being claimed, it enables the Resident Participation Officer to authorise the grant and any bonus due to your association. Random checks will be made to verify the list.

5 **Date of the annual general meeting:** As part of ensuring that your association is democratic and accountable to the residents you represent, we need to know that you have held an annual general meeting (AGM) during the year leading up to the application for Accreditation. It is a requirement for accreditation by the Council that an AGM is held every year. We therefore ask you to give the date of your last AGM. If you have not been able to hold an AGM, your association will not be accredited until it has been able to do so. Not more than 15 months should pass between one AGM the next. We also require a copy of the minutes of the AGM, which should detail the election of officers.

6 **Constitution:** We will only need a copy of your constitution if this is your first application for accreditation or if there have been any changes since the last application for accreditation.

7 **Code of conduct:** From 2007 it is a requirement that each association adopts a code of conduct for its members based on the Council’s approved model. This does not need to be submitted every year, only where there have been any changes.

**Details of the residents’ association officers**

8-10 Your constitution should detail what officers are required and we will need to know their contact details. We confirm that these details will not be divulged to any external agencies and will only be released to other Council departments wishing to undertake consultation with residents about services provided. *All residents are eligible to sit on committee and to hold office however only Wandsworth Council tenants and leaseholders (who have a direct legal and financial relationship with the Council) can hold the positions of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Treasurer. These positions cannot be held by freeholders, sub-tenants of absentee leaseholders and Council tenants’ or leaseholders’ household members.*

**Correspondence:** Letters and information are usually sent to the secretary of an association. However, if you would prefer it to go to another officer, please tick the appropriate person.

**Details of the association’s representatives on the Area Housing Panels**

11-12 **Area Housing Panels:** We also invite you to nominate up to two representatives to attend your local Area Housing Panel. There are four Area Housing Panels in the Borough. Each panel meets 4 times per year and gives association representatives the opportunity to discuss unresolved housing management problems and to take an active part in their resolution. The Panels also consider matters of local importance, control the allocation of the Small Improvements Budget for initiatives on their estates, and receive
reports and comment on the performance of the respective area team and the Council’s contractors. Freeholders, sub-tenants of absentee leaseholders and Council tenants’ or leaseholders’ household members are not able to be area panel representatives. *(as explained in footnote).* A residents’ association established on an estate managed by a Resident Management Organisation will only be able to send observers to this panel who would have no voting rights over the allocation of SIBs funding. This is because SIBs for RMOs are prioritised and selected through the Co-op Forum and it would be appropriate for any distinct block or grouping of properties in the management of an RMO to take bids through this route utilising the funding set aside for this purpose).

**Borough Residents’ Forum:** The Area Housing Panels elect representatives to serve on the Borough Residents' Forum, the residents’ consultative body for Wandsworth, which reviews reports and policy being put before the Housing and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Area Housing Panels and Borough Residents’ Forum nominate representatives to serve on working parties and to participate in the selection arrangements for contractors. A residents’ association established on an estate managed by a Resident Management Organisation will only be able to attend this form as observers. This is because RMOs are already represented on the BRF.

**Application for a residents’ association grant**

13 **Annual accounts:** The association is required to provide a copy of the annual accounts at the end of the financial year. The accounts must have been audited by a person who is not a member of the association (perhaps the treasurer of another residents’ association). It is not a requirement that the independent auditor is a professional accountant, as it is recognised that this will probably cost more than the grant received!

The Council has produced two examples of formats for accounts which associations may find helpful. (See pages below):
- type “A” is a ‘receipts and payments’ account suitable for most associations.
- type “B” is an income and expenditure account and balance sheet.

14 **Hire of hall for the AGM:** Where associations do not have a suitable meeting room and need to hire a hall for their residents’ and annual general meeting, they will be able to claim up to £150.00 per year for the purpose, where the expenditure can be proved and a receipt is supplied. This supplementary payment will be at the discretion of the Housing and Community Services Department and will only cover associations without access to their own hall.

15 **Hall allowance:** Enter the amount paid and attach the receipt.

16 **Grant calculation:** The grant scheme is designed to encourage associations to become as representative as possible. To qualify for a grant, associations
must have a membership of a minimum of 20% of households\(^2\) in the area it aims to represent (or 51% if there are less than 20 properties). We ask for a copy of the current list of members to confirm what percentage of membership has been achieved. The grant is calculated as follows:

**Basic grant:**

The basic grant is calculated on the area represented:

- 10 to 20 households in area represented by RA: £100
- 21 to 100 households in area represented by RA: £150
- 101 to 500 households in area represented by RA: £300
- 501 plus households in area represented by RA: £400

**Membership allowance:** A payment of £2 is made for each household currently registered as a member.

**50%+ bonus:** This is an extra payment for associations who achieve a membership of over 50% of the area represented. An extra £2 is paid for each member household over and above 50%. (See example 2 below).

RA’s applying for re-accreditation must return the relevant documentation by 31st March each year in order to receive the full funding. Late applications will be paid on a pro-rata monthly basis e.g. if the documentation is submitted in June only 10 months funding will be payable.

**Hall Hire:** Up to £150 (see point 14)

**Examples of grant calculations**

**Example 1:** calculation for an association with at least 20% membership.

- The association represents 200 flats, with 40 flats as members:
  - Basic Grant: £300
  - Membership Allowance (40 member flats x £2): £80
  - Total: £380

**Example 2:** calculation for an association with over 50% membership.

- The Association represents 200 flats with 150 flats as members:
  - Basic Grant: £300
  - Membership allowance (150 member flats x £2): £300
  - 50%+ bonus (50 members over and above 100 (50%)): £100
  - Total: £700

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2 Household in this context is all those with connections to a particular property, i.e. if a non-resident leaseholder and their sub-tenants are both part of the RA, they are counted as one household.
How the grant will be used:

Refurbishment of residents’ association meeting room - e.g. re-painting etc.

Purchase and maintenance of office equipment - e.g. computers, printers, chairs etc. include relevant training for members.

Running costs of the association - includes costs of telephone, postage, newsletters at least twice per year, electricity, gas, insurance, travel costs for members on association business including attendance at Area Housing Panels etc. and other general running expenses including relevant training for members.

Please note: any additional expenditure should be used for the day-to-day benefit of all residents on the estate, or a specific group such as the elderly or children. However, it should not be used for items like seaside outings but can be used for such things as a community event, plants or flowers for a community garden. If you are not sure about your proposed use of the money, ask your Area Housing Manager or Resident Participation Officer.

Residents' association bank details are sought as grant payments are to be paid directly in to the residents' association account.

Declaration: To be signed by the Chairperson of the Association.

SEND YOUR APPLICATION AND COPIES OF THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO YOUR RESIDENT PARTICIPATION OFFICER AT THE ADDRESS SHOWN ON PAGE 1.

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST
- application form, completed and signed by the chairperson
- list of households in membership
- minutes of your last AGM
- constitution (where required)
- code of conduct (where required)
- annual accounts (if seeking a grant)
- a receipt for the hire of a hall (if claiming a hall allowance)

PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS
Your claim will be checked by the Resident Participation Officer and, provided all criteria have been met, will be approved for accreditation.

PAYMENT OF GRANT
1st payment of the grant will be by cheque made payable to the association, made out as it has been written in point 1 of the application form. Following payments will be made directly to the bank / building society using the BACS system.

The cheque will be posted to the officer nominated for correspondence.
**SPECIMEN ANNUAL ACCOUNT TYPE ‘A’**  
**STANDARD FORM OF ANNUAL ACCOUNT**

**Name of Residents' Association**

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 20XX TO 20YY**

**Receipts and Payments:** xx / xx / xx  to  yy / yy /yy

**Opening Balance from previous accounts dated** xx/xx/xx: £xxx.xx

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wandsworth RA grant</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Incoming</strong></td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters and communications</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of equipment</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee expenses e.g. travel</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running expenses*</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Outgoing</strong></td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closing Balance at yy/yy/yy** £xxx.xx

Signed: _______________________________ (Treasurer of the Association)

Signed: _______________________________ (Independent Auditor)

Print Name: _______________________________

State occupation/relationship with residents' association: _______________________________

Date presented to and accepted by the Annual General Meeting: _____/_____/_____

Signed: _______________________________ (Chairman of the Association)

**Note** List any significant items separately. This would apply to any item amounting to more than 10% of total income or expenditure and any other items thought by the association to be significant.
SPECIMEN ANNUAL ACCOUNT TYPE ‘B’
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Name of Residents’ Association

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FROM xx/xx/xx TO yy/yy/yy

Income
Wandsworth RA grant £xx.xx
Membership fees £xx.xx
Donations £xx.xx
Other* £xx.xx
Total Incoming £xx.xx

Expenditure
Newsletters and communications £xx.xx
Purchase of equipment £xx.xx
Committee expenses e.g. travel £xx.xx
Running expenses* £xx.xx
Other* £xx.xx
Total Outgoing £xx.xx

Name of Residents Association
BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR 20XX TO 20YY
DATE: _____/____/____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>£xx.xx</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>£xx.xx</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petty cash balance</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
<td>Monies owed by association</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank balance</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
<td>Accumulated surplus brought forward</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other investments</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
<td></td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Building Societies etc.)</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
<td></td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock (Stationery etc.)</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
<td></td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money owed to association</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
<td></td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
<td></td>
<td>£xx.xx</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed: ___________________________ (Treasurer of the Association)

Signed: ___________________________ (Independent Auditor)

Print Name: _______________________

State occupation/relationship with residents’ association:
______________________________

Date presented to and accepted by the Annual General Meeting: _____/____/____

Signed: ___________________________ (Chairman of the Association)

Note* List any significant items separately. This would apply to any item amounting to more than 10% of total income or expenditure and any other items thought by the association to be significant.