

No. 22

Revised: February 2003

This Information Sheet lists examples of many different groups and activities that can be organised or supported by a community association or similar multi-purpose community organisation.

## Organising Activities within a Community Association

### 1. Introduction

Community associations should, as possible, try to organise a widely-ranging programme of activities and neighbourhood services to meet local needs. This information sheet addresses the ways in which a community association's activities and services are actually run. The Community Matters Model Constitution makes provision for:

- the affiliation of independent local groups such as the Brownies, Asian Women's Group or Youth Club;
- the establishment of Sections, which are defined in the Model Constitution as groups formed within the association among its individual members for the furtherance of a common activity;
- the appointment of sub-committees.

All of these are methods to enable the skills that are available within the association to be employed in organising its activities. There may be some doubt as to whether a Section or a sub-committee is the better way to organise particular events, so some detailed examples will be found later in this paper. A Section, while part and parcel of the association, is to a degree also responsible to the individual members taking part in the activity or activities it runs; it should be able to recruit from these members helpers to run the activities, so it encourages delegation and the sharing out of the work.

© *Community Matters*

*Quoting from this information sheet is permitted with acknowledgement to Community Matters. Reproduction of the whole sheet for **external** use is only permitted where an organisation holds a reproduction licence from Community Matters.*

## 2. Affiliated Groups & Sections

### 2.1 Affiliated Groups

These are independently constituted groups, over which the Community Association has no control, except that the association with a centre may allocate space and fix rents as appropriate.

However, the activities they promote, form an important part of the overall programme, and care should be taken to avoid the promotion of overlapping activities by the community association itself, which, in any case, will regard provision to meet unfulfilled local needs as its first priority.

### 2.2 Sections

Many of the activities of community associations are organised and run on their behalf by these groups of individual members. Typical Section activities are Carpet Bowls Clubs, Parent and Toddler Groups, Over Sixties' Clubs, Arts and Crafts Groups, Jazz or Steel Bands, Drama Groups, etc.

It should be noted from the outset that Sections are members' groups. Activities and services for the general public may better be organised by a sub-committee of the association.

As an integral part of the association, a Section has a duty to be more loyal to it than an affiliated group, which may also be part of a national organisation relevant to its purposes, and may therefore have to look at things from that point of view rather than concentrating exclusively on the activities carried out by the Community Association.

Sections should not become too parochial in character, considering only the needs of their own members and their programmes of activities. They should organise their

activities in line with the objectives of the community association as a whole.

In practice, it is sensible for Sections to have a degree of financial independence, within set limits, but it is equally essential to make clear that they should provide the association with a realistic financial contribution toward utility bills, and other overhead costs. Both the association's main committee and the Section members must have a clear idea of their financial relationship, and a meeting of all concerned should settle this in the early days of the Section's existence and should record its decisions.

As Sections are part of the association, it is essential that their income and expenditure are recorded in the community association's annual accounts, and normally very desirable for the figures to be shown as separate items for each Section's activities. If a particular Section wishes to carry forward an earmarked fund (e.g. towards the purchase of an expensive item of equipment), the association treasurer should be consulted, and, if necessary, the permission of the community association committee obtained.

Further details of the rights and responsibilities of Sections, as compared with those of affiliated groups, will be found in Community Matters Information Sheet No. 45, ('Affiliated Groups and Sections of a Community Association'), and some suggested terms of reference for a Section (which may be amended to suit local requirements) are appended to that Information Sheet.

Most Sections run a particular activity, but it is possible for allied activities to be run jointly by a single Section - e.g. an Indoor Games Section. Whether committees are established in each Section will depend on the nature of its activities and the views of the members concerned. Where Section committees are set up these typically consist of the

regular helpers at its activities, but any committee will need the minimum three officers - Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. In practice, a Section needs someone to be responsible for its finances more than anything else - a person who can collect fees for, and pass on bills to, the community association treasurer.

*NOTE: More detailed information on affiliated groups and sections is to be found in Information Sheet 45, 'Affiliated Groups and Sections of a Community Association'.*

### 3. Sub-committees

For the organisation of activities, the main committee may appoint one or more sub-committees. Sub-committees are discussed in more detail in Information Sheet 45, *Affiliated Groups and Sections of a Community Association*.

### 4. Insurance

As soon as a community association begins its activities, it becomes responsible for any risks which these may occasion, and its committee becomes liable for any accidents or other detrimental effects which members and attenders may suffer as a result of the community organisations' actions or negligence. So, if it has not already done so, the community association must take out adequate insurance cover against third party risks, at the very least.

Community Trading Services Ltd offers an insurance package for community organisations - contact details are in 6.2 below.

### 5. Health and Safety

Community organisations managing buildings or other premises (e.g. playing fields) open to the public or where workers (including volunteers) operate have responsibilities under the law to ensure the health and safety of all people

who enter those premises. Further information on relevant aspects of Health and Safety is in Information Sheet 12, *'Health and Safety in Community Buildings'*.

## 6. Further Information

### 6.1 Community Matters Information Sheets

- No 12 *Health and Safety in Community Buildings*
- No 13 *Community Organisation Sub-Committees.*
- No 26: *Bingo*
- No 29: *Setting Up an Out of School Club*
- No 42: *Organising a Carnival or Gala*
- No 45: *Affiliated Groups and Sections of a Community Association*
- No 49: *Leisure Interest Surveys;*
- No 63: *Starting New Groups;*
- No 74: *Community Organisations and Youth Clubs*
- No 75: *Parents and Toddler Groups*

### 6.2 Useful Address

Community Trading Services Ltd (CTS),  
Community Matters,  
12-20 Baron Street, London, N1 9LL  
☎ 020 7837 7887  
E-mail: [cts@communitymatters.org.uk](mailto:cts@communitymatters.org.uk)  
Web site: [www.communitymatters.org.uk](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk)

**APPENDIX****Some Activities for a Community Association****1. Introduction**

The community association with the use of a community centre or other building is obviously better able to sponsor and accommodate a variety of activities than the community association which does not yet have one. However, all community associations will endeavour to provide the widest possible range of activities in furtherance of their objects. It will be seen from the lists which follow this introduction that a considerable variety of groups and interests need not be 'centre-based'.

It is clearly impossible to produce a comprehensive list of community association activities; new community needs are constantly coming to light and leading to the formation of new groups. The list which follows therefore includes only some of the activities which have, up to the present, been established within community association or similar bodies, but it may serve to indicate gaps in, and possibilities for, the community association programme.

Some of the activities listed will be run by independent groups affiliated to the community association. No attempt has been made to compile a list of all the bodies which could affiliate to the community association nor to list the activities which they normally undertake (e.g. uniformed youth organisation, the local football club, or branches of national bodies such as Friendly Societies, Women's Royal Voluntary Service, British Red Cross Society, etc), but it is obvious that the work of the community association can only be enhanced by the involvement of such affiliated groups.

**2. The Arts****2.1 Drama**

Amateur Dramatic Societies  
Make-up  
Play-reading Groups  
Production classes  
Puppetry Groups  
Stage Management  
Stage Movement.

**2.2 Literature**

Book Exhibitions  
Housing a Public Library or providing magazines/periodicals in the Centre  
Members' Library  
Poetry Reading Groups  
Poetry Workshops.

**2.3 Music**

Brass Bands  
Choirs & Community Singing  
Concerts  
Folk Music  
Guitar Groups  
Jazz Bands  
Music Appreciation  
Operatic Society  
Orchestra  
Recorded Music Circles (Vinyl Records, Cassette & CD Clubs)  
Recorder Groups  
Steel Bands  
Visits to Operas & Concerts

**2.4 Painting, Design, etc.**

Art Exhibitions  
Batik Posterwork  
Carving  
Computer-generated art  
Lace making  
Lapidary  
Origami  
Painting for Pleasure Groups  
Pottery-making/painting  
Sketching Clubs

## 2.5 Photography/Video

Digital photography and processing  
 Film Club  
 Film Shows  
 Photographic Society  
 Video-making Group

## 3. Clubs

Apart from special-interest groups, such as the Photographic Club, these are usually arranged for particular groups of members. Some of the more usual ones follow.

Ethnic Minority Groups  
 Gingerbread (single parent)  
 International  
 Junior  
 Over 50s  
 Parents & Toddlers  
 People with particular disabilities  
 Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied (PHAB)  
 Pre-School Playgroups  
 Retired Persons/Senior Citizens  
 Singles  
 Young Wives  
 Youth  
 Women's Group

## 4. Hobbies & Housecraft

Archaeology  
 Basket-making  
 Bird-watching  
 Bridge Club  
 Cage Bird Society  
 Car Maintenance  
 Chess Club  
 Computer Group  
 Cookery Classes (e.g. Chinese, Greek, Indian, Vegetarian etc)  
 Do-it-Yourself  
 Domino Club  
 Dressmaking  
 Embroidery  
 Field Studies  
 Flower Arrangement  
 Furniture Making/Repairs  
 Gardens & Allotments Society  
 Home Brewing

Interior Decoration  
 Leatherwork  
 Local History  
 Metalwork  
 Model Aircraft/Railway Club  
 Model making  
 Motorcycle Club/Maintenance  
 Natural History  
 Pigeon Club  
 Quizzes  
 Radio Group  
 Stamp Collectors' Circle  
 Toy Making  
 Tropical Fish  
 Video Club  
 Weaving  
 Whist Drives

## 5. Public Affairs / Community Service

Adult Literacy Schemes  
 Amenity Society  
 Blood Donor Session  
 Carers'/Family Support Group  
 Christmas Parties for children and/or the elderly  
 Citizens' Advice Bureau  
 Clinics (ante-natal, etc)  
 Community Newspaper  
 Community Transport  
 Councillors' Surgeries  
 Current Affairs Group  
 Credit Union Collection Point  
 Debates & discussion  
 Diary of neighbourhood events  
 Displays & exhibitions  
 English as a Second Language  
 First Aid Classes  
 Good Neighbours' Scheme  
 Healthy Living  
 Holiday Play Schemes  
 Home Safety Group  
 Hospital Visiting Scheme  
 Legal Advice Centre  
 Lunch Club  
 Marriage Guidance Centre  
 Mothercraft Classes  
 Mother Tongue Classes  
 Neighbourhood Directory  
 One Parent Family Groups  
 Outings & Holidays for children, people

with disabilities and/or elderly,  
and/or for the community in  
general  
Parent/Teachers Association  
Public speaking  
Savings Group (if appropriate, in  
conjunction with local Credit  
Union)  
Translation/Interpreting

Old Time & Modern Sequence Dancing  
Pool  
Rambling  
Running  
Sailing  
Skiing  
Skittles  
Snooker  
Swimming  
Table-tennis  
Tennis  
Volley ball  
Weight-lifting  
Weighwatchers  
Yoga

## **6. Sports & Physical Recreation**

Aerobics  
Adventure Playground  
Aikido  
Archery  
Athletics  
Badminton  
Ballet Dancing  
Ballroom Dancing  
Basketball  
Billiards  
BMX Club/Course  
Bowls  
Boxing  
Camping  
Canoeing  
Car Rallies  
Carpet Bowls  
Caving  
Climbing  
Cross-country running  
Cycling; Cyclo-cross  
Discos  
Fencing  
Fishing  
Folk Dancing  
Football - Association or Rugby  
Golf  
Gymnastics  
Hockey  
Indian classic dancing  
Jazz Dance  
Jogging  
Karate  
Keep Fit  
Kite Flying  
Mountaineering  
Netball