

**Rotherham Federation of Tenants &
Residents**



**Secretary's
Handbook**

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Arranging Meetings

TARA meetings usually fall into two types, **Committee Meetings & Public (or Open) Meetings.**

It is the responsibility of the secretary to book a suitable meeting place and to inform other members about the meeting.

For **Committee Meetings** the secretary will need to let the other committee members know the place, date & time of the meeting. This can be done either personally, by letter or by phone.

For **Public Meetings or Open Meetings** everyone who is a member of the TARA (as listed in the Constitution) needs to be informed of the place, date & time of the meeting and the reason for the meeting. It could be that there are invited guests who

will be speaking at the meeting or there could be an issue of concern which will be up for discussion at the meeting. The easiest and quickest way to ensure that everyone knows about the meeting is to distribute a leaflet to every household in the TARA area.

If there are invited speakers it is the responsibility of the secretary to confirm that they will be at the meeting and to ask if they have any special requirements (e.g. flip-chart, overhead projector)

Leaflets advertising the meeting can be prepared and photocopied for you by Rother Fed. You are responsible for ensuring delivery.

Remember to try, where possible, to book a meeting place which is accessible to anyone with mobility problems and offer transport to and from the meeting if needed. Check if anyone has any other special needs which

you may be able to help with (e.g. poor eyesight, hard of hearing).



Preparing an Agenda

The best way to ensure that meetings run efficiently and smoothly is to have an agenda and to stick to it.

It is the job of the secretary, together with the chair of the association, to prepare an agenda before the meeting and to make sure that everyone at the meeting is given a copy. You may need to have the

agenda translated into appropriate community languages and you may also need to offer help to other TARA members who, because of their special needs, may have difficulty following the agenda.

On the next few pages are guides to drawing up basic agendas. Agendas will change according to what business needs to be dealt with and whether the meeting is a committee meeting or a public meeting.



Meeting of the Rother Fed TARA
to be held on 1 May, 2000 starting at 7pm
in the Community Centre, Rother Fed Rd

COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome & introductions
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last committee meeting
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Treasurer's report
6. Correspondence
7. Any special items, guest speakers
8. Reports from outside meetings
9. Any other business
10. Date, time & place for next meeting

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Meeting of the Rother Fed TARA
to be held on 8 May 2000, starting at 7pm
in the Community Centre, Rother Fed Rd.

PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome & introductions
2. Apologies for absence
3. TARA update
4. Main speaker or item for discussion
5. Question time
6. Any other business

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Try not to get the two different types of meeting mixed up. Members who have turned up to a Public Meeting to listen to a particular speaker or to take part in discussions on a special subject may get put

off by having to go through lots of committee business. A brief update on what the TARA committee has been doing will usually be enough information for most people. If anyone wants more detail then they can read through the minute book or be invited along to the next committee meeting.

Some TARA's decide to have all their meetings open to everyone so that anyone in their TARA can go along to Committee Meetings even if they are not an elected Committee Member.



Taking Minutes Committee Meetings

Taking minutes of a Committee Meeting is normally the job of the TARA Secretary, who is responsible for taking notes at the meeting, writing up the minutes and distributing them. Minutes can either be written up in a Minutes Book, which is then available to everyone who is a member of the TARA to read, or typed up and copies given out to each committee member with the Secretary keeping a master copy on file.

If a full agenda has been prepared for a Committee Meeting, and the Chair of the TARA Committee ensures that committee members stick to the agenda, then taking minutes of the meeting becomes much easier.

There is no need to write down word for word what is said at a meeting. It is only the essentials that need to be written down, following the same headings as the agenda.

1. Date & time of meeting
2. Who was present at the meeting
3. Who sent in their apologies for absence
4. Who accepted the minutes of the last meeting as a true record
5. What were the matters arising from the minutes
6. Brief details of the Treasurer's Report
7. What correspondence was received and who was responsible for dealing with it
8. Brief details of guest speakers, special items
9. Brief reports from outside meetings
10. Brief details of any other business
11. Date and time of next meeting

Try including an action column so you know who has agreed to do what

Public (Open) Meetings

Taking minutes at a Public or Open Meeting is also the responsibility of the TARA Secretary. Once again this job will be made much easier if there is a prepared agenda for the meeting and copies are given to everyone who attends.

If a lot of people attend the meeting it is often much easier to pass around of piece of paper and ask everyone to sign their name, rather than the secretary try to record everyone who was present.

If there is a special guest speaker invited to the meeting then the minutes could take the form of a report which gives brief details of what issues were addressed by the speaker and what the speaker had to say. For example if the TARA has invited

someone along from the Police to talk about concerns over apparent rising crime then there may be facts and figures to record and also details about how the Police were intending to address the particular concerns of the area. It is also worth recording any questions which were asked and what answers were received.

Always remember that whatever kind of meeting is held by your TARA no one should mention any specific names or addresses or pass on any personal information about anyone else in public. Individual problems should be dealt with in private by the service or agency concerned. Anyone who brings up individual problems at a TARA meeting should be immediately challenged and asked to wait until the meeting is over to have their concerns dealt with. Under no circumstances should a secretary of a TARA record any information which relates to an individual person or address.

Dealing with Correspondence

Incoming

As the Secretary of a TARA you will soon find that you will receive post, mainly from Rother Fed, 2010 or RMBC, and keeping track of correspondence is an important part of a secretary's job.

Incoming post will usually fall into two broad categories:

a) Correspondence which can be kept to one side and brought up at the next TARA Committee Meeting. Having a file especially for such correspondence is a good idea and will prevent things going astray. When the 'correspondence' item on the committee meeting agenda is reached the letters, notices, etc. from

this file can be read out and dealt with during the meeting.

b) Correspondence which needs to be dealt with before the next planned Committee Meeting. This may be things such as the notification of a meeting or seminar with a closing date for bookings which is before the next scheduled committee meetings. In these circumstances it is up to the Secretary to contact the appropriate committee members and reply to the correspondence on their behalf or ensure that someone else will deal with the matter in good time.

Outgoing

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to ensure that all letters, questionnaires, booking forms etc. are dealt with and replies sent out when appropriate. When

correspondence is brought to a Committee Meeting then the Secretary should make a note of what is said at the committee meeting and reply to the correspondence as decided by the committee members. Most TARA's use letter headed paper and it always looks much more professional if this is used for TARA correspondence.



Rother Fed gratefully acknowledges Kirklees Federation of Tenants & Residents for the co-operation shown.