

Guidance to support engagement with flood risk communities.

Guidance on developing constitutions information note

There is a wealth of evidence that shows the impact of communities can be enhanced when they operate through some form of collective action. This can take many forms with a range of grassroots bodies working in partnership with responsible authorities before, during and after flooding. These groups can take many forms from informal action groups to formal representative bodies with a constitution. This latter option opens funding opportunities and assists the group to develop clear aims. A constitution is simply the aims and rules that a community group will use. It's a statement of what the group is going to do and how it is going to do it.

This guidance note about constitutions is suitable for a small organisation such as a flood action/resilience group. It may help those supporting the group to consider the issues involved in developing a constitution with a specific flood risk community. It is not suitable for a group that is employing workers, buying premises or dealing with large amounts of money.

It is recognised that coordinated and collaborative efforts that work with responsible authorities and emergency services to manage flood risk are the most sustainable. However, it is very important that any community organisation is given time to consider and own the development of a constitution and that decisions are taken by a group with independent advice if required. It may be useful to point the group to independent organisations who can give free impartial advice on the development of a constitution.

Does the group need to register as a charity?

If the group has charitable aims, but an annual income under £5000, it does not need to register with the Scottish Charity Regulator. If the group has charitable aims and an annual income over £5000 it may be required by law to register with the charity regulator. This information is accurate as of February 2017. Community groups should seek specialist advice if considering a larger remit on becoming a charity, trust, company or similar organisation. Further information can be viewed [here](#). This is unlikely in the early stages of development for a community group, but this point should be made clear at the outset.

Drawing up a constitution will take time and shouldn't be rushed by a community group. It will probably need to hold more than one meeting to discuss it and get agreement on what should be included and what should not. It is important that there is unity about the constitution otherwise the organisation may get off to a bad start if everyone does not agree about the way business should be conducted. Signpost community groups to organisations that can provide independent impartial advice on developing constitutions.

A standard basic constitution for a community group usually contains the following sections.

Name	Aims	Membership
The Committee	Representing Local Views	Annual General Meeting
Conduct Of Members	Changes To Constitution	Finances
Dissolution	Adoption	Equal Opportunities

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Good Practice Points:

Remember, the community should own the process of developing a constitution and any outside role is advisory to support the group to engage, develop and empower itself as a flood risk community.

Responsible authorities can suggest that the group put in an aim about working in partnership on flooding and this provides a sound platform to build engagement with flood risk communities.

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