

How to Set up and Run Residents Groups

Introduction



Friends, Families and Travellers is working with Gypsies and Travellers to assist the community represent itself effectively. FFT believes that one way this can be achieved is through the formation of Gypsy Traveller Resident and Community groups.

This guide is designed to help Gypsy Travellers come together to form Resident or Community groups. The toolkit is designed so that you can read those pages relevant to you rather than the whole document.

- **What are Residents groups and why are they useful?**
- **Government Policies**
- **Recognised resident's associations**
- **Setting up a group**
- **Running a group**
- **How to apply for funding**
- **How to handle finances/ bookkeeping**
- **Guide to setting up a community website and email**

Documents and Policies:

- **Constitution**
- **Code of Conduct**
- **Equal Opportunities**
- **Child Protection**
- **Volunteer Policy**
- **Complaints procedure**

What are Residents Groups and why are they useful?

There are many different definitions of a ‘Residents group’ or ‘Tenants group/associations’:

“...a group of people living in an area, block or street who have come together to take up issues of common concern in relation to their housing, community and general environment”.

Tenant Participation Advisory Group definition

“Voluntary body of tenants representing the views of its membership and local residents to their landlord, the local authority and any other relevant agencies”.

Chartered Institute of Housing definition

“It is a group or committee of like-minded people, living in a community, who have a strong desire to see their neighbourhood develop as a safe and enjoyable place to live.”

ACIS Group

A residents group on a Gypsy Traveller site shares broadly the same aims as a tenants group from a street of houses as the last definition from ACIS shows; to see the area that they live in is “a safe and enjoyable place to live”. This toolkit will refer to “Residents Groups”.

So why would you want to set up a group?

- get people together to get something changed (e.g. making the site safer for children)
- to have a greater voice as a group than you would have as an individual, so other people hear what you are saying (e.g. agencies, local government, site owner/ management).
- to campaign **for** something (e.g. new play equipment, community meeting area)
- campaign **against** something happening in your area or on your site (e.g. site becoming smaller, services been withdrawn...)
- organise events or trips
- to feel like more of a community by meeting people and helping one another

Case Study A

Residents on one site had problems with a site manager. He was ineffective as a manager and abusive towards residents. The police became involved.

A Residents Association may have been able to negotiate with the manager at an earlier stage to prevent issues becoming so inflammatory. Equally, if negotiation had not worked, a Residents Association could have been a central point for the recording of incidents to allow the police to have the relevant information about the manager in a coherent manner. A recognised Residents Association also has the right to be involved in the appointment of a site manager.

Case Study B

Repeated flooding on a site has led the Local Authority to conduct improvements on site. Unfortunately these improvements have had a significant impact on some residents, as their homes have been moved.

A recognised Residents Association would have the right to be involved in the employment of contractors, the timing of the work and so on. It is also likely that a Residents Association recognised by the Local Authority would be consulted thoroughly on the plans and have their views considered at an early stage.

If the site is new, or if a site is being planned, it is a good idea to set up a Residents Association at the very beginning. This can help to make everyone on the site feel part of the management process and understand the decisions made to run the site, and the fees the residents have to pay.

Government Policies

What government policies have talked about community/residents groups?

If you know what government policies talk about community or residents groups, you can find ways of funders or councils helping you:

- Gypsy and Traveller Site Management Good Practice Guide Chapter 14: Consultation and resident involvement talks about residents groups being vital to the consultation process on site:

“14.2

Resident consultation should be actively encouraged with well publicised consultation arrangements organised in the same way as for other forms of social housing, which may include a residents’ association or committee to represent the views of site residents.”

“14.6

The Mobile Homes Act specifically requires that residents are consulted about improvements to the site, and that any residents association that meets the criteria set out in the Act are consulted on improvements and on the operation and management of the site. It requires landlords to write setting out proposals for improvements at least 28 days in advance and to take all representations into account before proceeding.”

Further details of consultation with residents groups outlined in chapter 14. Download the document at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/sitemanagementguide>

- Supporting People (SP) by the Department of Community and Local Government.
The basis of the SP outcomes framework was developed and uses the 5 high level outcomes from the DfES approach:
 - Achieve economic wellbeing,
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Be healthy

- Stay safe
- Make a positive contribution

Gypsy and Traveller groups can be supported by point five “Making a positive contribution” which says

“Greater choice and/or involvement and/or control at service level and within the wider community”

- Compact Code of Good Practice on Community Groups
<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/activecommunities/activecommunities36.htm>
- *'Resident involvement is now central to government and local organisations' approach to the delivery of housing services.'* (Housing: Improving services through resident involvement, Audit Commission, 2004)

Resident engagement or involvement officers are employed to insure that council tenants and leaseholders have the right to be consulted on tenancies and housing services. They help set up Tenant Residents Associations for council tenants, and they may be able to help with resources and information that they have put together for council tenants. Some councils have a ‘Residents Involvement Strategy’ or “compact”, that may have areas that can be applied to Gypsy and Traveller residents groups. Use the internet to find about your council’s services.

Recognised residents associations

Resident associations can be set up informally, however getting official recognition from the landlord of your site (or forcing recognition by applying to the Residential Property Tribunal Service) gives certain rights to your association. The group will have the right to:

- ask for information about costs incurred by your landlord which effects how much you pay in service charges
- look at the relevant accounts and receipts
- see estimates taken by your landlord for intended work
- put forward names of contractors for inclusion in any tender list when the landlord wishes to carry out major works
- see a written summary of the insurance cover and look at the policy
- be consulted about the appointment or re-appointment of the agent managing the services

Since a recognised Association has rights and an informal one doesn't, it is a good idea to start your group with the intention of becoming recognised. To get official recognition, ask the landlord for written notice of recognition. If the landlord refuses or withdraws recognition (with six months warning), then the Association can apply for recognition to one of the five Rent Assessment Panels which constitute the Residential Property Tribunal Service (see http://www.rpts.gov.uk/pubs_and_forms/pdf/guidancetenassoc.pdf). The landlord may ask that the Resident's group has extra clauses add to its rules or constitution.

If your site is run by the council, you should be able to apply to get your Association recognised by the local authority. Contact the council's housing department or the housing association, or look for 'tenant participation' on their website for more information.

You will need to be able to show that you have:

- ✓ a constitution and officers, at least a chairperson and treasurer
- ✓ meetings, including an annual general meeting
- ✓ accounts
- ✓ membership open to site residents.

Setting up a group

Are you sure people want a group?

The first step is to find out if enough people in your area are interested in forming a group. So you need to talk to as many people as you can before doing anything else. Ask them to ask their friends and family.

Gypsy Residents' Group (South East area)



Residents on a council site in the South East started regular meetings between site residents and the local authority which resulted in the local authority appointing a dedicated site manager and applying for a government Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant to improve the site.

What do you want from people?

Do not be put off by people's reactions or comments. Although some people will be enthusiastic, many will not give a definite answer and some may be very rude. Many people may have a lot of reasons why they do not want to be involved in the group, but if the group is successful, more and more people will join the group and get involved.

What to ask people:

- ✓ Do they think that the issues that are affecting the community are the same issues you are concerned about.
- ✓ Do they think it would be a good idea to set up a group.
- ✓ Would they come to the first meeting? Would they like to be told what happens at the first meeting?

You only need around six people to attend the first meeting to have enough to set up a group. It does not help to be too pushy, but it always helps to tell a person that attending a meeting does not mean they have to help or do anything if they don't want to.

Talking to people can take a long time and you will need confidence and a thick skin. If there are already a few of you who know each other and want a group, you could all start talking to other people in the community and this will make it quicker and easier.

How do you plan the first community meeting?

So if enough people want to come to the meeting, it is time to plan it. This could be in someone's home or trailer. Use the people who have shown an initial interest to plan the group's first public meeting.

If you decide to miss out on a public meeting because you think you have got everything sorted at this stage you run the risk of thinking that everyone in the area agrees with you, and this might not be true. You need a public meeting to be sure that the community will support the group.

You will have to decide who will do what in the meeting. Someone will make sure the meeting keeps to the point (the '**Chair**'). People will feel that the meeting has been worthwhile and has achieved something if everything has been discussed fully, clearly and decisions made. The

person chairing needs to make sure everyone has a chance to talk if they want to.

Someone else needs to take notes of the main decisions made at the meeting and who has agreed to do what (the ‘**Secretary**’). It is also useful to write down who came to the meeting, with people’s contact details for future reference.

Why are you meeting?

Every meeting needs a theme – what you are going to talk about, and what you want to happen. This is usually written down to make an ‘**agenda**’. You might want to talk about:

- Getting people to agree to form the group
- Naming the group
- Electing a committee
- Deciding on the aims of the group

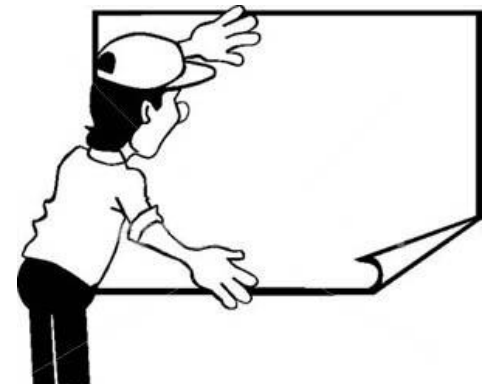
Gypsy Traveller Community Public Meeting Example Agenda

1. Welcome and introduction of people
2. Apologies (a list of people that wanted to come, but then couldn’t make it)
3. Why we need a group
4. Choice of name for the group
5. Membership requirements and any other regulations (any legal stuff that needs to be talked about)
6. Election of a Committee
 - Chair
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
7. Plan of action – what do you do next? List things to talk about. Vote on them if everyone does not agree.
8. Date of first meeting of the Committee
9. Date of the next meeting of members every month? What will you talk about?)
10. Any other business – is there anything else to talk about that was not on the agenda?

How do we run our first community meeting?

Publicity

Do you need to publicise the meeting? You could make a leaflet or a poster to let people know (give people at least a week’s warning). Where is the best place for a poster to make sure people will see it? Where could you leave your leaflets? Or will you have to put them through people’s doors?



Tell people what the meeting is for, but don’t talk too much and bore them! Try to get people curious and interested, so just say where and when the meeting will be held and how to contact you if they want more information. Ask people you meet to tell their friends and

families. Don't forget to say that there will be food and drink, as this does help to get more people to come.

Date and Time of meeting

Who do you want to come to the meeting? Do you just want local residents or do you also want people from other community groups to come, or local councillors?

Case Study

A Gypsy Group (in the Southern area) invited local councillors to their meetings. They say that by having councillors at meetings the group is taken seriously, and that issues that the group raise are acted upon quickly by the councillors present.

If you want everyone from the area to have the opportunity to come (which will include young people, families and elderly people) then you will need to think carefully about where and when to hold the meeting. Arranging a date and time to suit everyone will be quite difficult if some people are working, have children to look after or do not like coming out at night etc., but with thought you will get the best place and time to make most people happy.

Place of meeting

The place of the meeting could be a room in a local community centre, a school or church hall or a meeting room. Are there any free meeting rooms you could use? Are there any organisations that might be able to offer a room? You need to make sure the room is easy for people who have difficulty walking or who use wheelchairs.

It is not a good idea to hold a meeting in a place where alcohol is served as this prevents young people from being able to come and can make for heated talking later in the meeting, which is not that useful.

On the day

Go to the meeting place early and make sure the room is open, clean and has enough heat/ cool enough. Arrange the furniture so everyone has a seat and can see what is happening. Provide some sort of food and drink to keep people happy.

The public meeting should be seen as the proper start of the group. Don't be disappointed if only a few people come. Although you may be enthusiastic and have worked hard to organise the meeting, many people will be very uncertain about whether or not to join in. It may take some time for people to become confident enough to take part, but experience has shown that this should happen eventually.

Have informal time before and after the meeting for people to talk and meet each other. That's a big reason people joined your group in the first place, and it's where you can find new group members. Remember, sometimes "the meeting after the meeting" is where people get to like the group--and also get their best ideas to bring to the next meeting! This is also a great time for you to ask people what they thought of the meeting.

After the community meeting

If the meeting went well, and people are happy to form a group, it is time to make a constitution and some policies. How to do this is in this toolkit.



Running your new group

How do we make the meetings work well?

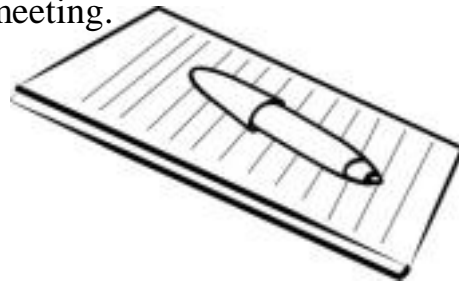
Meeting Agenda:

It is important for the secretary to make an agenda for the meeting. This tells people what will be talked about during the meeting. It also is useful for the Chair, as they need to make sure the meeting is staying on track.

Sample Agenda

1. Title of meeting
2. Date, time, venue
3. Apologies for absence
4. Minutes of previous meeting
5. Actions relating to previous meeting
6. Items to be discussed and decided
7. Any other business
8. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The agenda should be sent out to the committee members at least seven days before the meeting.



Taking Minutes

Minutes should be taken by the Secretary. It is important to record what happens in the meeting and what decisions are made, so that members can understand what the group is doing and why.

Sample Minutes

1. Title of meeting
2. Date, time, venue
3. Apologies for absence (who was at the meeting and who couldn't come)
4. Minutes of previous meeting
5. Actions relating to previous meeting
6. Items to be discussed and decided that are on the agenda
7. Any other business
8. Date, time and venue of next meeting

The minutes should follow the agenda (talk about point 1, point 2 etc.); be clear, short, easy to read and to understand; include details of all decisions made, how those decisions were made. It is useful to have an Action column stating who will do what has been decided.

The minutes should be written up and sent out to other committee members soon after the meeting. The Secretary should also keep a copy of minutes for future reference.

Alternative ideas for minutes:

If there are many members of the group who will not be able to, or are uncomfortable reading the minutes, the committee may have to find alternative ways of minute taking and making the minutes (and other material) accessible to the group members.

Alternative ideas include:

- Scribing (<http://www.cognitivemedia.co.uk>) which is drawing the ideas that are talked about in the meetings.
- Sound recording the meeting
- Using a video camera to record the meeting.



The problem with recording the meetings with cameras or sound recorders is that some people may contribute less, as they worry that what they say may be used against them later.

How to record a meeting

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1155.htm

How do we make the Committee work well?

A committee is a group of people working together towards a common goal. It is a team of people with a mixture of skills and of opinions. It is natural that people's opinions may be different at times, and this may make conflicts. This is natural, but conflicts must be looked at as soon as they happen.

To help prevent problems with members of the group, it is a good idea to make a Code of Conduct, so every group member knows what is expected of them. It can be used to ask a difficult member of the group to leave if they have broken the rules in the Code of Conduct. See [Code of Conduct](#), under the policies section.

There are also people on committees who don't appear to be doing or saying much. This may be because they do not have the information they need, or they simply lack confidence. Information and encouragement is probably what they need. Always try to use people's strengths rather than criticise their weaknesses. Remember, everyone has something to offer.

How do we keep the group together?

If people are to feel involved and part of the group they must know what the group is doing and what decisions it has made. Just because people don't attend meetings doesn't mean they're not interested. Maybe they don't want to come out at night, or can't find a baby sitter, or haven't been able to read or understand your leaflets. If you keep in touch with people you'll find out about these things and be able to organise in a way that involves more people.

Send out regular newsletters and leaflets, and generally let people know what is going on. People may rarely attend meetings but as long as they feel a part of the group they may come at some time to help out. Try knocking on everyone's door at least once a year, and organising regular public meetings and events.

Try to make your group a fun thing to do that people want to be involved with. At meetings remember to stop for tea, coffee and food, so people can talk and make friends. You could organise some events that are just for fun, so people can get to know each other and become friends.



How to apply for funding

You will need money to launch and run your association, for example to pay for publicity, refreshments, meeting room hire and other expenses. To cover this, you may decide to charge members a small fee to join the association, or you may carry out other fundraising activities.

If your association is “recognised”, you may well be able to obtain funding from the council. Alternatively you can apply to grant making bodies or funds such as the National Lottery.

To apply for funding, you will have to identify funders that wish to support your group. You must be very clear about what you want and why, as this will help you to match the needs of your group to the right funding organisations.

Some funders will only look at funding applications from groups that have a [Constitution](#) and an [Equal Opportunities policy](#). Make sure you have these before you apply for funding.

Questions to think about before a funding application is made

Who are you?

You need to be very clear about who you are as a group. You need to set out a clear and simple one-line explanation, like: “We are a residents group looking to improve our site for our children”. Then give a little background to the group.

What do you want to do?

No matter how complicated the reasons that the group decided to form, you need to decide on what you want money for. It is better to ask for money for very clear things like: producing a newsletter; buying play equipment for the children; building an on-site classroom, etc.....

Why do you want to do it?

Always assume that no one knows anything about you or what it is you are trying to do. Again, keep it simple and straightforward but make sure that you cover everything. It can be helpful to break it down into three

short paragraphs covering background, recent developments and the situation today. For example, explain how and why the site came about (the background), explain that no play equipment was provided and the children are unsafe playing where they are (recent developments), explain that the residents group came together to solve the problem of the children having nowhere to play (the situation today).

How you are going to do this?

Set out a clear and straightforward step-by-step plan of how you will achieve what it is you want to do. For example: we will talk to the council about how to make a safe play area; we will get quotes for the work that needs to be done to make the area safe; we will talk to the children to find out what child equipment they want to have; we will find out where to buy it, how much it costs, and who can install it. Create a realistic timetable for the work that will be done.

What is this going to achieve?

This is called “project outcomes” and shows the benefits that result from doing the project that you are asking funding for. For example, by building a play area, (a) the children will be safe from physical harm, (b) the play area will assist the physical development skills of the children, (c) the building of the play park will help the residents to bond together, (d) young people will feel more involved in the site and respect the site more.

Why is your group the best to do the project?

If you are directly affected by something, then you are probably the best person to sort it out. For example: Because of the discrimination that Gypsy Traveller young people face, using a playpark off site is difficult. Residents are also the best people to find out what the residents want from a playpark, and ensure that it happens in a way that everyone is happy with.

Why that particular funder should help you?

Almost all funders will want to know why you need money from them in particular. Once you have identified a funder that meets the criteria of your project, use their own aims and objectives to justify your application. Don't hesitate to literally use their own words – if their website and leaflets say they want to tackle social exclusion, promote the arts or support communities, use those exact terms in your application.

How much it is going to cost?

There is one golden rule when setting out a budget or a costing for a project – Be realistic and don't guess - research and estimate! It doesn't take much to make a few phone calls to suppliers of equipment or services, to look at your own phone bill to calculate an average cost of calls or to speak to people already working in a particular field to get an idea of what someone's time is worth. And always double-check and get advice, as there will usually be hidden costs that you might not have thought about.

How do we find out who to apply to?

Once you have answered these questions, you are then in a position to look for funders who are likely to support your project. The easiest way to find out who funds what is through the Directory of Social Change and Funder Finder (www.dsc.org.uk). The DSC publishes a range of directories of funding bodies and you should be able to find at your local Community Voluntary Services (CVS) or local library. The CVS (and some libraries) might also have access to a computer programme called Funder Finder (or buy 24 hour access over the internet: (www.funderfinder.org.uk) which helps you select funders that are likely to support your work.

Basic lists of funders can be found on the internet at such sites as the Directory of Social Change (www.dsc.org.uk). You will then need to look at each funder and see what they will or will not fund. This may take a lot of time, but it could be worth it!

How do we know that a funder will be interested?

Funders will normally state very clearly what they will or will not fund. Always look at a funder's criteria and exclusions before you even think about applying, as some will not fund individuals, will only give grants to registered charities, or only fund work with children. If they only support charities and you are not one, don't apply as your application will go straight in the bin!

Call the funders first to have an informal chat about your group applying for funding. You may get some very important advice on how to fill in the forms, or they may even offer to help you with your application.

Some tips for filling in the forms:

- ✓ Read the guidance notes that will come with the application form. This will tell you what the funders want and where to write it.
- ✓ practice writing your bid on a photocopy of the application form
- ✓ if they ask you to write in black ink, don't use blue! Black is requested to make photocopying the forms easier.
- ✓ if you can, fill in the forms on a computer, using a font size of at least 11 points and in a clear font such as "Arial"
- ✓ if you cant use a computer, make sure the application looks good and is neat and easy to read with your BEST handwriting.
- ✓ Fill in all the question boxes on the application form, unless the form says that the question is optional. If the question does not apply to your group, say so.
- ✓ address your application to the correct person
- ✓ select a catchy but appropriate project title
- ✓ be clear and too the point. Remember that funders have to look through a lot of application forms, and don't want to wade through too much information to find the answer to the question.
- ✓ show how you plan to monitor/evaluate the project and what will happen to the project when the money runs out
- ✓ enclose appropriate supporting material that the funders have asked for (but no more, don't flood them with paper!) - accounts, budget, annual report, constitution, other policies, leaflets etc
- ✓ be on time! Make sure that you meet the funder's deadline, or your application will be put in the bin!
- ✓ always keep a copy of your application (on paper and on your computer). You will be surprised how many times you will have to look up what you said you would achieve with the funding.

Which websites will give us more advice?

- <http://www.dsc.org.uk/FundingWebsites>
- <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>
- <http://www.grantnet.com/>
- <http://www.turn2us.org>
- <http://www.open4community.info/lisburn/default.aspx>
- <http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRRedirect/index.jsp?LGSL=615&LGI L=8&ServiceName=Find%20out%20about%20grants%20to%20local%20voluntary%20organisations>



Which organisations specialise in community group funding?

- **Travellers Aid Trust** - The only independent grant-maker dedicated specifically to supporting Gypsies and Travellers in the UK
The Travellers Aid Trust
PO Box 16
Llangyndeyrn, Kidwelly
Carmarthenshire SA17 5BN
Tel./fax: 01269 870 621
Email: info@travellersaidtrust.org
Website: www.travellersaidtrust.org/grants
- **The Allen Lane Foundation** - The Foundation is a charitable Trust which makes grants in the UK (and, for a small programme, in the Republic of Ireland). It makes grants to voluntary not-for-profit organisations (which need not be registered charities, provided the work carried out is charitable) which are small (as its grants are small) and where the work benefits groups of people who are unpopular in UK society today. Please note that it does not make grants to individuals.
90 The Mount
York YO24 1AR
Tel: 01904 613 223
Email: info@allenlane.org.uk
Website: www.allenlane.org.uk
- **Groundswell** - Groundswell's Grant Award Scheme offers grants of up to £700 to homeless people to set up their own projects. They welcome applications from anyone with experience of homelessness, ie. rough sleepers, Travellers, squatters, refugees and asylum seekers, residents of hostels and B&Bs etc. Anyone without a secure tenancy.
Groundswell UK
1st Floor Lesley Court
23-33 Strutton Ground
London
SW1P 2HZ
Tel: 020 7976 0111
Email: info@groundswell.org.uk
Website: www.groundswell.org.uk

- **The Tudor Trust** - Tudor is an independent grant-making trust which supports organisations working across the UK. They aim to support work which addresses the social, emotional and financial needs of people at the margins of our society.
7 Ladbroke Grove
London W11 3BD
Tel: 020 7727 8522
Website: www.tudortrust.org.uk
- **UnLtd.** - UnLtd's Millennium Awards provide practical and financial support to social entrepreneurs in the UK; people with vision, passion, drive and commitment, who want to change the world for the better.
123 Whitecross Street
Islington
London
EC1Y 8JJ
Tel: 0207 566 1100
Email: info@unltd.org.uk
Website: www.unltd.org.uk
- **Joseph Rowntree Charitable Foundation** – Supports work which promotes racial justice in all parts of society, including empowering black and minority ethnic people to engage in decision making and policy development, and work which monitors and challenges racism and racial injustice whether relating to colour or culture.
The Garden House
Water End, York YO30 6WQ
Tel: 01904 627810
Website: www.jrct.org.uk
- **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation,**
Kings Place,
90 York Way,
London
N1 9AG11
Tel: 020 7812 3700
Email: info@esmeefairbairn.org.uk
Web: www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

- **Northern Rock Foundation**
The Old Chapel,
Woodbine Road,
Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1DD
Tel: 0191 2848412
Web: <http://www.nr-foundation.org.uk/>
- **Yapp Charitable Trust**
Margaret Thompson
47A Paris Road
Scholes
HOLMFIRTH
HD9 1SY
Tel: 01484 683403
Email: info@yappcharitabletrust.org.uk
- **The Baring Foundation**
60 London Wall
London EC2M 5TQ
Tel: 020 7767 1348
Fax: 020 7767 7121
Email: baring.foundation@uk.ing.com
- **Co-op**
Web: <http://www.co-operative.coop/membership/Community-Fund/onlineapplicationprocess/>
- **Community Land Trust Fund**
Web: <http://www.cltfund.org.uk/how-to-apply>
- **Community Development Foundation's Grass Roots Grants**
Web: <http://www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/news-headline?id=180106>

Other funders you might want to consider approaching are:

Lloyds TSB
Awards for All
Children in Need
Dion

How to handle finances/ bookkeeping

Who is a Treasurer and what do they do?

The **Treasurer** is the person who handles the group's finances.

The Treasurer should:

- ✓ open a bank account
- ✓ pay money received into the bank, keep a record of money received and issue receipts
- ✓ pay bills and keep a record of money spent
- ✓ keep petty cash and a petty cash account book for day-to-day expenditure
- ✓ keep an account book of all money going in and out of the organisation
- ✓ prepare statements to the committee and for the Annual General Meeting



Setting up a bank account

It is useful for a new group to set up a bank account (and this is usually a requirement for fundraising, after all, you will need somewhere for a grant to go!). You will need to make sure there are at least two signatories (people who can sign cheques) for signing cheques. Sometimes, especially with newly set-up groups, two members of the same family may be officers of the committee. In this case it would be a good idea to make sure only one person from that family can sign cheques and to make someone else from the committee the other cheque signatory.

For more details about how to open a bank account, and which are suitable for groups, please visit:

http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/dealing_money/info_pdf/Bank%20Accounts.pdf

Constitution:

Remember that you have put information about how the money will be handled in your group's [constitution](#)!

Annual budget:

If you are creating a project, and asking for funding, the project will need a budget. This should have been worked out as part of any funding applications the group made.

Creating an annual budget might seem scary, and members of your group might not be great with maths. The group might need to hire a bookkeeper or an accountant. Often, community volunteers who are good with budgets may help with the budget for free.

So why do you need an annual budget?

- ✓ Budgeting makes it clearer exactly what you need to spend your money on.
- ✓ If you want to do something, but there is not money in the budget, your group must fundraise or apply for more grants
- ✓ If you apply for more grants, the funders will need to see your annual budget.
- ✓ An up-to-date, accurate budget makes your life easier by helping you to maintain control over the finances of the organization.

The amount of time and effort you spend on your budget should bear some relation to the size of that budget. If your annual budget is £1,000, your budgeting shouldn't take a lot of time, although it's still important to balance your income and your spending, and to try to get the most out of your money. If your budget is £100,000 or more, it's worth a good bit of time and effort to make sure that you know exactly how you'll manage it. At that level, you may have several different sources of funding, and you'll have to account for your spending carefully.

What websites can help with making budgets?

- Planning and writing an annual budget:
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1303.htm
- Community Money Matters is a comprehensive guide to financial management and accounting



for small charities and community organisations.

<http://www.cash-online.org.uk/docs/1197054705CASHbook.pdf>

- Six steps to producing a successful budget:
<http://www.cash-online.org.uk/content/1/9/>

Guide to setting up a community website and email

Websites

If you want a free website, that looks professional and is easy to update (after you have learnt a few things), we recommend Wordpress. This is how you get started:

1. Open your internet browser
2. Type in the following address into the address bar:
<http://www.wordpress.com>
3. Click on the huge button to the right of the screen called “Sign Up Now”
4. Fill in the form on the signup page:

Fill out this one-step form and you'll be blogging seconds later!

Username	<input type="text"/>
	<small>(Must be at least 4 characters, lowercase letters and numbers only.)</small>
Password	<input type="password"/>
Confirm	<input type="password"/>
	<small>Use upper and lower case characters, numbers and symbols like !/"£\$%^&(in your password.</small>
E-mail Address	<input type="text"/>
	<small>(We send important administration notices to this address so triple-check it.)</small>
Legal flotsam	<input type="checkbox"/> I have read and agree to the fascinating terms of service.
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Gimme a blog! (Like <code>username.wordpress.com</code>)
	<input type="radio"/> Just a username, please.
<input type="button" value="Next →"/>	

Your “Username” will makeup the address of your website. For example, if you put “Gypsycommunitygroup”, your new website address would be <http://gypsycommunitygroup.wordpress.com> So think very carefully what you want your site to be called. Some names might be already taken, so be prepared to think of a few names that might work.

Enter a password that you will remember! The Wordpress site will tell you if the password is strong, medium or weak based on how complicated a word or word and numbers it is. The site will not let you have an account if the password is “weak”, so go for a word and number combination like “ilovemydog1234” for example.

Enter your email in very carefully, as Wordpress will send you emails to start your account. These emails will have all the login details for your new site, so keep them safe!

5. Click “Next” at the bottom of the page. This page then appears

Blog Domain
(Your address will be gypsycommunitygroup.wordpress.com. It must be at least 4 characters, lowercase letters and numbers only. It cannot be changed so choose carefully!) You may later choose to use your own domain name, such as gypsycommunitygroup.com, through our domain mapping upgrade.

Blog Title
The blog title can be changed at any time.

Language What language will you be primarily blogging in?

Privacy I would like my blog to appear in search engines like Google and Technorati, and in public listings around WordPress.com.

This page lets you check the name that will become your web address. In this case it is gypsycommunitygr.wordpress.com. (Wordpress has cut off the end of “group” to “gr” so we might want to think again about a name!

If you are happy with the name, click on “signup”

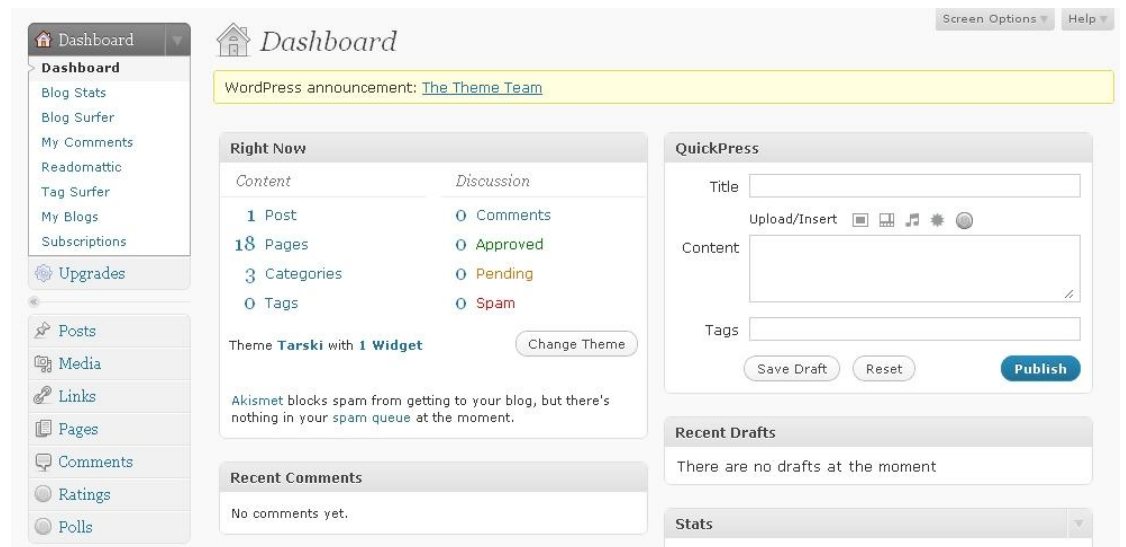
6. An email is then sent to your email account. So login to your email, find the new wordpress email and click on the link in the email.

Well Done! You now have a new Wordpress account!

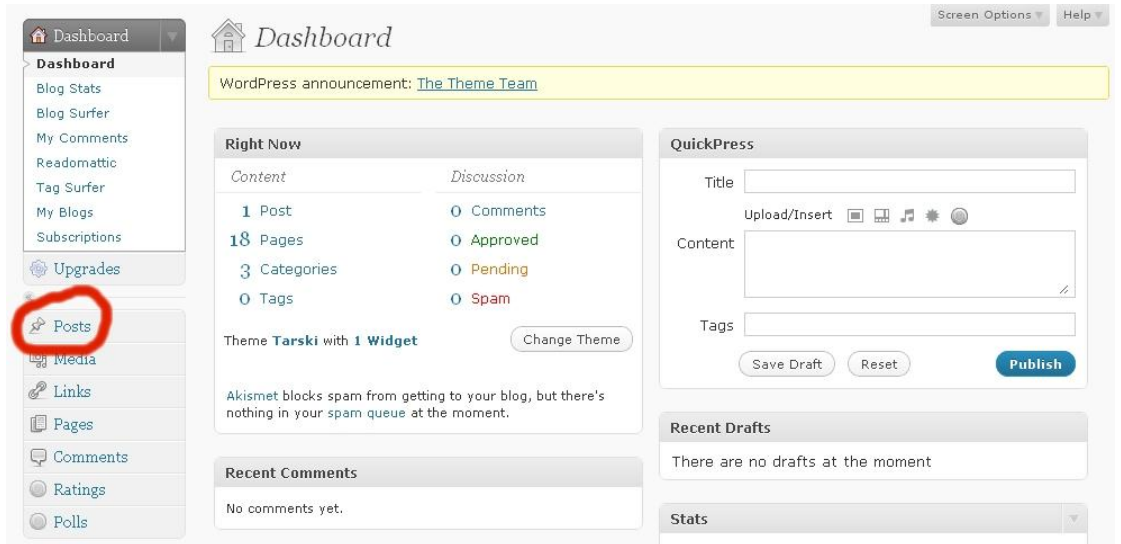
Now to login and get started!

BUT please remember that your website is now LIVE. Any changes and any experiments you do will be LIVE and visible on the internet straight away.

7. Log into <http://wordpress.com>
Goto the login boxes at the top left of the screen, and enter your username and password. Make your life easier by ticking the “remember me” box. Press “Log In” button.
8. This will take you to a page which shows you “my blogs”. Click on your “dashboard” link. This takes you to your dashboard page, which gives you full editorial control of your website.
9. “Dashboard” screen will appear:

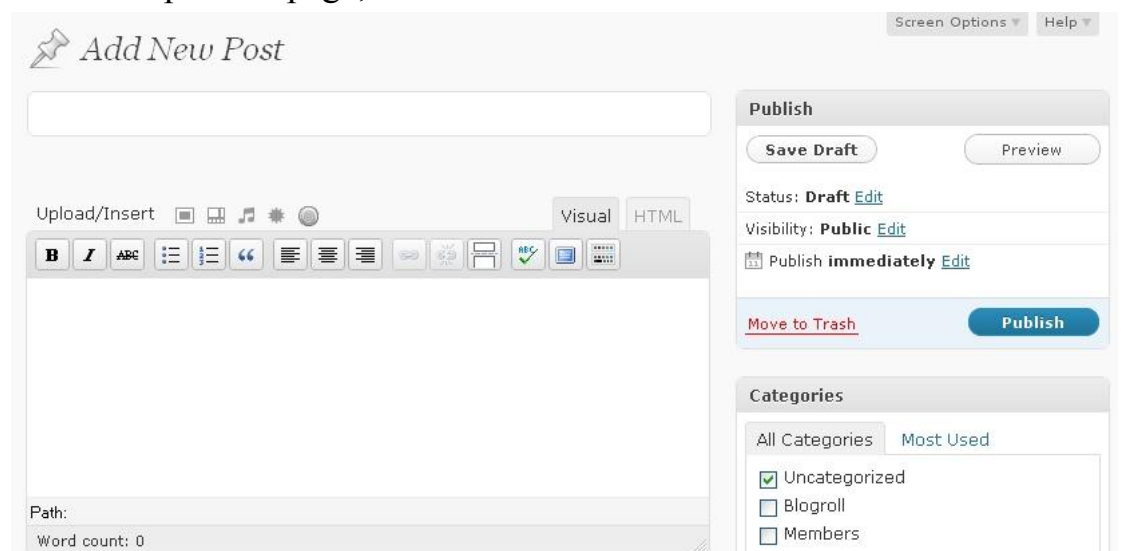


10. First thing is to make your **homepage** (first page of your website). The homepage has been created through the use of “post” facility, and is not, as such, a page (strange thing in Wordpress, best to nod your head and crack on). So click on “Posts” on the menu on the left of the dashboard screen.



11. You can see that wordpress has already created a post for you, called “Welcome World”. Hover the mouse over the title to reveal “Trash” and click. Gone!

12. So we want to make a new homepage. Click on the “Add New” button at the top of the page, near the “Posts” title. The “New Post”



13. Give the homepage a title. For example “Welcome to our site”

14. Write what you want to say on your homepage.

15. When you have finished, goto “Categories” on the right of the screen and make sure “uncategorized” is ticked.

16. Under “Discussion” at the very bottom of the screen (you may have to scroll down to find it hidden away) always, always make

sure “Allow Comments” and “Allow Rings” are un-ticked.

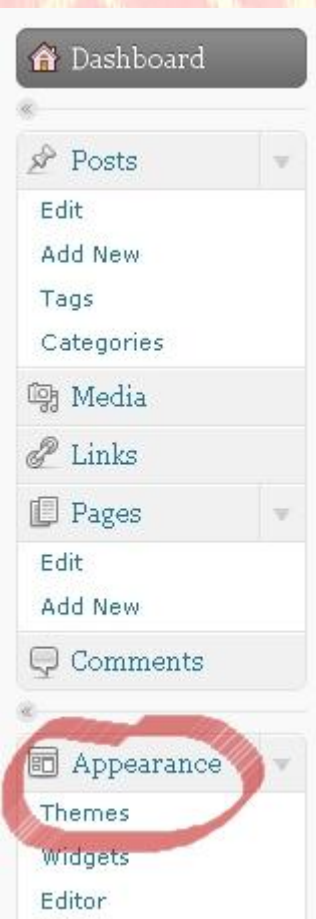
17.If you want to know what your new homepage will look like, press “View Site” at the top of the screen to see what your new edits look like.

18.When you have finished writing, make the homepage live by pressing the blue “Publish” button.

Well Done! You have finished the first page of your website!

Making your site look great: Using themes

1. Click on the “Themes” link on the menu (left of the screen)
2. This leads you to the “Manage Themes” page. The theme that wordpress gives you at first is fairly dull, so lets give your website something more fancy!



Manage Themes

Current Theme



Tarski by [Benedict Eastaugh](#) and [Chris Sternal-Johnson](#)
A relaxing two-column theme, with two spots for widgets and a custom-header.

OPTIONS: [Widgets](#) | [Extras](#) | [Header](#) | [Typekit Fonts](#) | [Edit CSS](#)

Tags: two-columns, fixed-width, custom-header, rtl-language-support, left-sidebar

Browse Themes

Random | [A-Z](#) | [Popular](#) | [Recently Added](#)

Displaying 15 random themes out of 99

[Refresh](#)



3. To get a new theme, click on the “Popular” link, which is under “Browse Themes”. You will then see lots of different themes that you might like to use. When you are happy with a theme, click “activate” under the picture of the theme and Hey Presto! Your site has changed!

So looking good! If you look at your site (click on your blog name in the top left corner of the screen) you can see your new look site. You will also see the name of your blog. Under that, in smaller letter is a bizarre tagline that will say: “Just another Wordpress.com blog”. Doesn't look great does it? Lets fix it!



4. Click on “Settings” at the bottom on the menu on the left hand side. Then Select “general”.
5. This screen comes up:

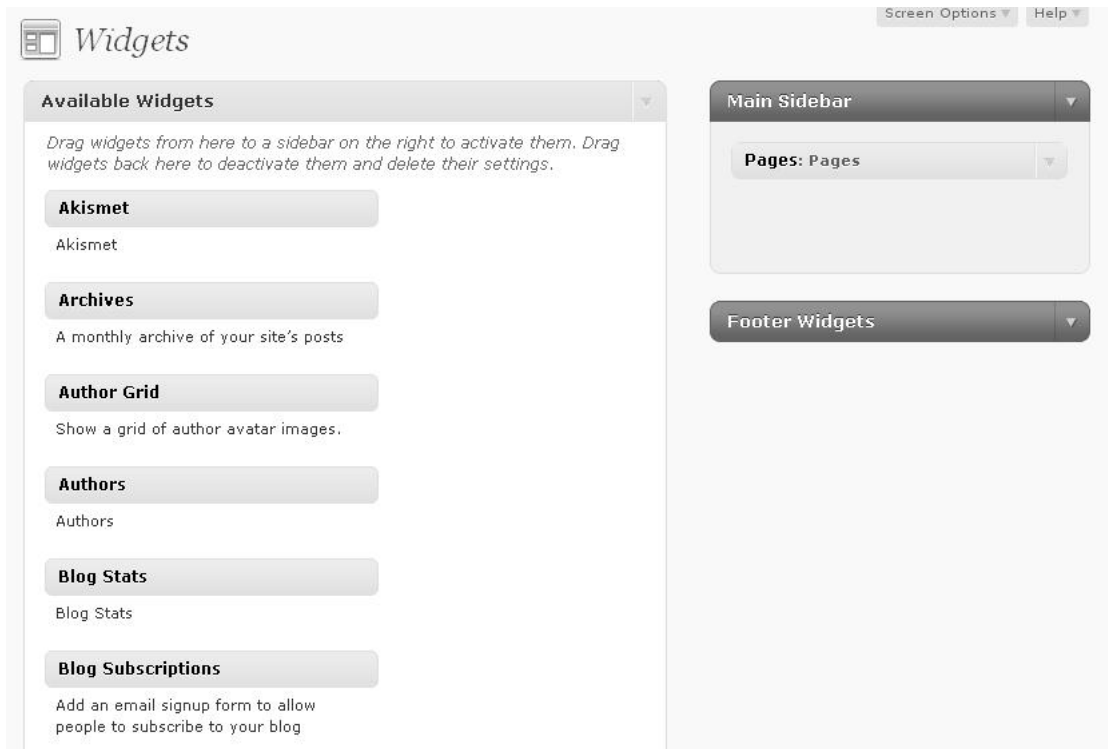
A screenshot of the WordPress General Settings page. The page title is "General Settings". The settings are: Site Title: "Gypsy Community Group"; Tagline: "Just another WordPress.com blog" (highlighted with a yellow border); E-mail address: empty; Timezone: "UTC+0" (dropdown menu); Date Format: "May 26, 2010" (radio button selected). The page includes instructions for the email address and a link to documentation on date formatting.

Delete the “Just another Wordpress.com blog” in the Tagline box. Replace it with a brief description of your group if you want, or leave blank. Click “Save Changes” at the bottom of the screen.

Sidebar

If you look at your site, you will see that there different things in the sidebar (left or right, depending on your theme. There may be one or two sidebars, again depending on your theme). These are known as “Widgets” and can be changed by accessing the Widget panel on the left hand menu.

To change the widgets, drag and drop them from the left hand side “Available Widgets”, to the “Main sidebar” panel on the right of the screen. It is best to experiment; by looking at your site to see what the new widgets look like.

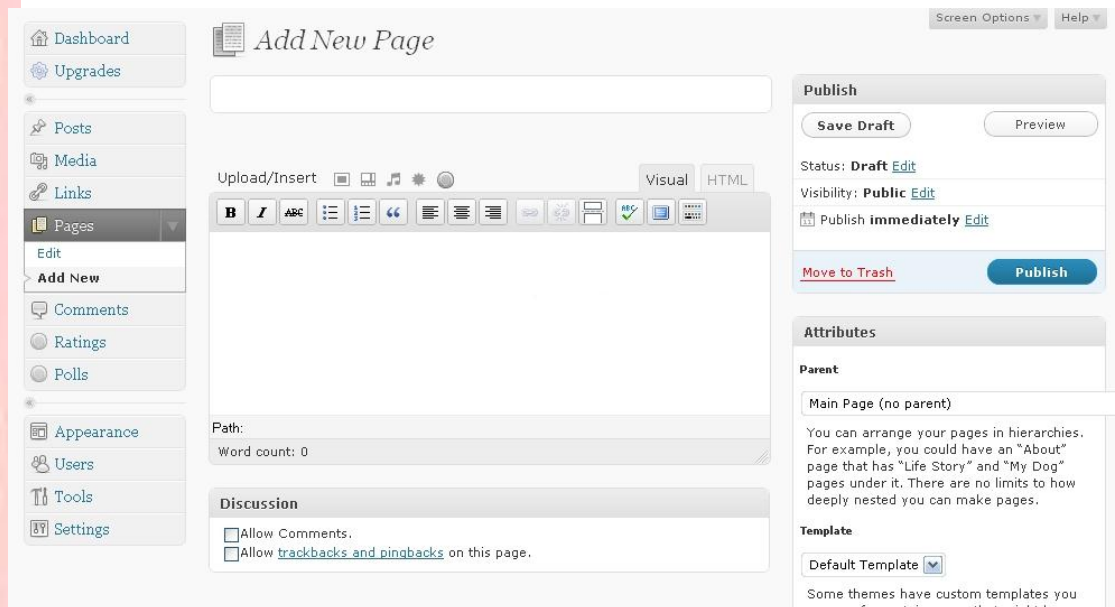


Creating a Page

To make website pages is different than the homepage (that uses posts). A suggestion of a website page you may need is “About Us” or “Links” or “Contact Us”.

Let’s make an “About Us” page where you can talk about the group, what you do and what you hope to do in the future.

1. Click on the small arrow to the right of the “Page” button on the left menu, which will reveal the option to “Add New” (see screen picture on the right)
2. This brings you to this page:



Type the title of your page (Example: About Us) into the thin box below “Add New Page”.

Be aware that this title will become the address for this page (“What Now?” I hear you shout!). So if the title of the page is “Where to stop on a rainy day in Eastbourne”, the address for the page will be <http://www.mysite.wordpress.com/where-to-stop-on-a-rainy-day-in-eastbourne.html> which isn’t the easiest and fastest to type in! So, there are two ways of slaying this beast:

3. Think of a snapper, shorter title
 4. Edit the permalink (“The What?”)
- The permalink is displayed here on every page you edit.



Click on edit at the end of the permalink, and change it into something easier to type and remember!

5. Type everything you want to say about your group into the big blank box, in the same way that you would type an email or a word document.
6. Now there are some more complex things we will have to explore. Under “Discussion”, which can be found under the main text box, always, always make sure “Allow Comments” and “Allow Rings” are un-ticked.

Under “Status”, be aware that the default setting is “Immediately Published”. So when you press, “save” be aware the page is live!

But what about this box on the right of the page?

This helps you to control the structure of the site. A site has the main pages like “about us”, “my photos”, “my family” which you can see on a website’s navigation. These main pages (referred to as “parents”) are really folders that have sub pages (“children”) a bit like a family tree. So if you had a parent folder called “my photos”, you may have children pages called “my family holiday”, and “Seaside trip”. If all these pages were “parents”, the website would be a mess, and all the pages could be seen on the menu (fine if you have only four pages, but imagine if you had over 100 pages!). Discipline is key, as it actually helps the user find things, so do your filing!!



If you look at this website address:

http://www.mysite.wordpress.com/stopping_places/eastbourne.html

you can see that there is a parent folder called “stopping places” and within that folder there is a page called “Eastbourne”. There may be other pages for Brighton, Hastings, Hove etc...

Editing a page

Once you have created a page, you may remember that you want to add something else to the page.

1. Click on the “Pages” button to the left of the screen (as you did before).
2. This opens the “pages” section, which will list all the pages that you have up on your website. Scroll through the list, looking for the offending page, and click on the pages title, which will take you through to the “edit page” screen.
3. This page is the same as the “Add New Page” screen that you first created before. You will be able to see the text for your page in the big box in the middle of the screen. Make any changes you need here.

How do I?

Make a link

You may want to point the user to another page for more information, or tell the user about a great website that you have found very helpful. In this case you will want to make a link.

1. Highlight the text you want to make into a weblink, and click on the “Insert Link” button:

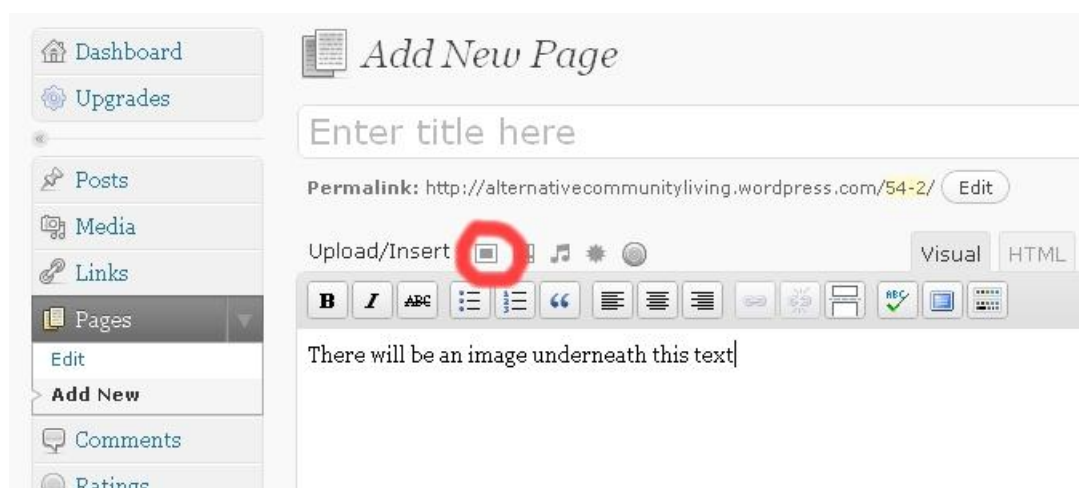
2. A box pops up. You can make three types of link: internal, external and email

If you want to link to another website (external):

- “Link URL”: Type in address. Check that <http://> is at the beginning of the address and that you have not accidentally deleted it when you started to type. Also make sure that there is not an extra space at the end of the address, as this will make the address invalid.
 - Pull down the “Target Box” and select “Open link in new window”. This will open up the website in a new window or tab, making sure the user doesn’t leave your site for another!
 - Give the link a “Title”, for example “Nice new Traveller website”.
 - Click “Insert”.
3. If you want to create a link to something on your site (internal) it is the same process - would you believe! Put in the full web address of your webpage. How do you find this out? Go to your website, click on the page you want, copy the web address from the browser address bar!
 4. If you want to make an email link: It is the same as above, except in the link box, when you are typing in the address into the “link URL” box, delete <http://> Type <mailto:> then the email address. E.g. <mailto:fft@gypsy-traveller.org>

Insert an image:

Place your cursor where you would like the image to appear, and press the “insert/edit image” button:



This box will appear



Click on select files, and chose an image file stored on your computer. Allow the file to upload, or “crunching” as Wordpress calls it. The information about the image will then appear. Give the image a “Title” and an “Alternative Text” (important for impaired vision users). Decide where you want the image to appear on the page (left, centre or right), then click “insert into post” button.

Setting up email

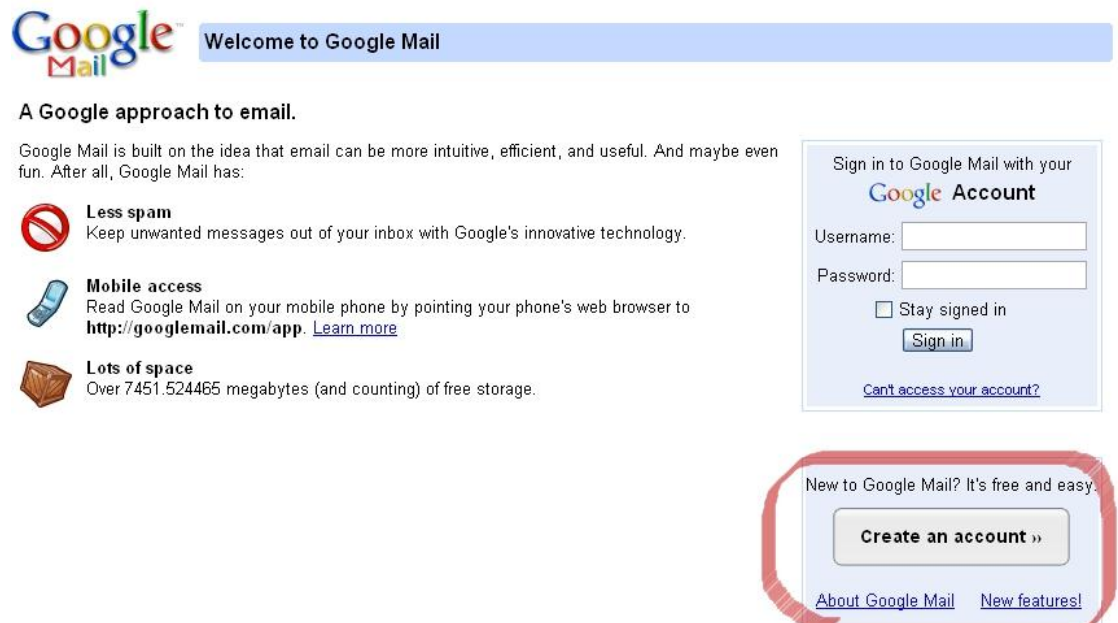
So you want an email account? For free? Accessible anywhere with an internet connect? Then Google has the answer with “Google mail”.

How to set up an account:

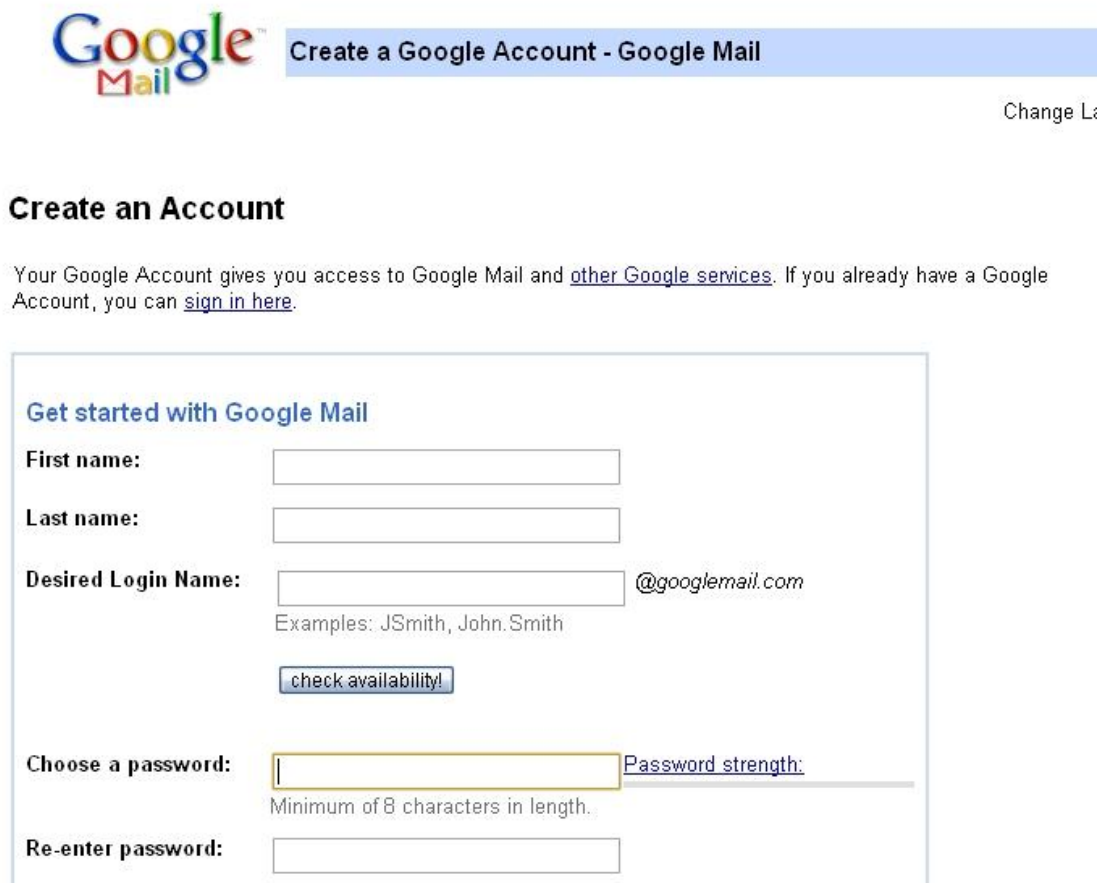
1. Open your internet browser (Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari etc..)
2. Type in www.google.com in the address bar
3. The page below will appear (Google’s homepage and search engine)
4. Click on the word “Mail” in the top left of the page (outlined in a red circle below, so that you can see it better).



5. This page will appear: “Welcome to Google Mail”



6. Click on the “Create an account” button at the bottom right of the page.
7. The “Create a Google Account – Google Mail” page will appear. The page is long, so we will do a little bit at a time.



8. Type in your first (Christian name), into the “first name” box
9. Type in your last name (Surname) into the “last name” box
10. Now the fun bit! Think of what you would like your new email address to be. If it is for your group it could be mysitegypsygroup@googlemail.com or if it was for you it could be sarahsmith@googlemail.com The problem is that someone else in the world might have the same name or group name as you, so you must check availability. So:
11. Type in the email address you want into the “Desired Login Name” box
12. Press “check availability” button

Create an Account

Your Google Account gives you access to Google Mail and [other Google services](#). If you already have Account, you can [sign in here](#).

Get started with Google Mail

First name:

Last name:

Desired Login Name: [@googlemail.com](#)

Examples: JSmith, John.Smith

In this case “Sarah Smith” is a name that another person might have. So Google comes up with some suggestions of other names that you might like that are free to use:

Create an Account

Your Google Account gives you access to Google Mail and [other Google services](#). If you already have a Google Account, you can [sign in here](#).

Get started with Google Mail

First name:

Last name:

Desired Login Name: @googlemail.com
Examples: JSmith, John.Smith

sarahsmith is not available, but the following usernames are:

- sarahsmith.smith879
- sssarahsmith722
- sarah.sarahsmith.smith848
- sarahsmth899

13. So choose a name by clicking in the circle next to the name. For example, let's pick sarahsmth899

14. Now choose a password that is easy for you to remember, but has a few words in it (Google calls these "strong passwords"). It has to be over 8 letters long. It is easier if you type in the letters all in lower case, as you may not remember that you used capital letters in your password. You will have to type it in twice.

Choose a password: Password strength: _____
Minimum of 8 characters in length.

Re-enter password:

15. Below “Chose a password” there are two small, but important boxes:

Choose a password: Password strength: **Strong**
Minimum of 8 characters in length.

Re-enter password:

Stay signed in
Creating a Google Account will enable Web History. Web History is a feature that will provide you with a more personalized experience on Google that includes more relevant search results and recommendations. [Learn More](#)

Enable Web History.

16. The first box: “Stay signed in” will tell your computer to remember your login and password. This is great if it is your computer and no one else uses it. But if you are using a public computer (at a library or internet café) or sharing your computer with your friends and family, don’t tick the box, otherwise they will be able to see your emails.

17. The second box “enable web history” tells Google to change the way the google search engine works by personalising your searches. It does this by monitoring what sites you go to. Some people do not like this, so they do not tick the box. Again, if you are using a public computer, don’t tick the box.

The next section is full of security questions, but some of it can really help you!


18. “Security question” is great, because if you lose your password or something goes wrong, Google will ask you a question to make sure that you are who you say you are! So:

19. Click the little arrow in the box called “Choose a question”

20. Pick a question you like


21. Fill in the answer in the “Answer” box. For example, you could pick “What is your library card number” or you could select “write

my own question”. This makes a question box, so you can make a question that you are sure only you would know the answer to.


Security Question: 
If you forget your password we will ask for the answer to your security question. [Learn More](#)


Answer:

Recovery email:
This address is used to authenticate your account should you ever encounter problems or forget your password. If you do not have another email address, you may leave this field blank. [Learn More](#)

Location: 

Word Verification: Type the characters you see in the picture below.




Letters are not case-sensitive

22.If you have another email account, type in the address under “recovery email”. If you don’t, just leave it blank.

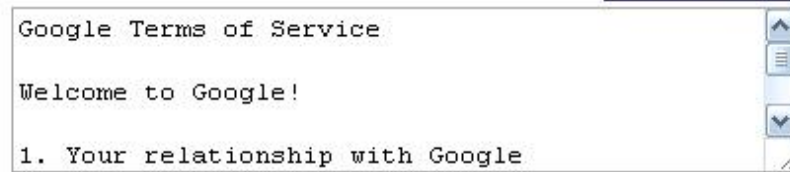
23.“Location”, chose “United Kingdom”

24.“Word Verification” – this is to make sure you are a human and not a computer that has been programmed to set up lots of email accounts. The problem is that it is quite hard to read. The example above is “orimulde”, but it is hard to see! Type the word you see into the box.

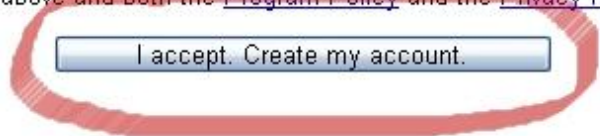
25.All you have to do now is to click “I accept. Create my account”.

With Google Mail, you won't see blinking banner ads. Instead, we display ads you might find useful that are relevant to the content of your messages. [Learn more](#)

[Printable Version](#)

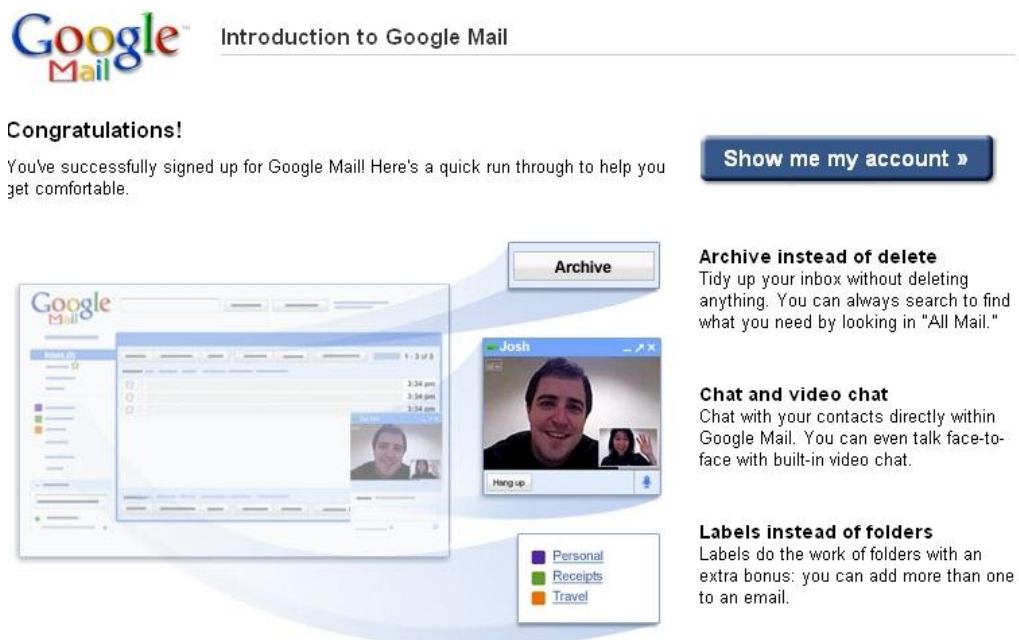


By clicking on 'I accept' below you are agreeing to the [Terms of Service](#) above and both the [Program Policy](#) and the [Privacy Policy](#).



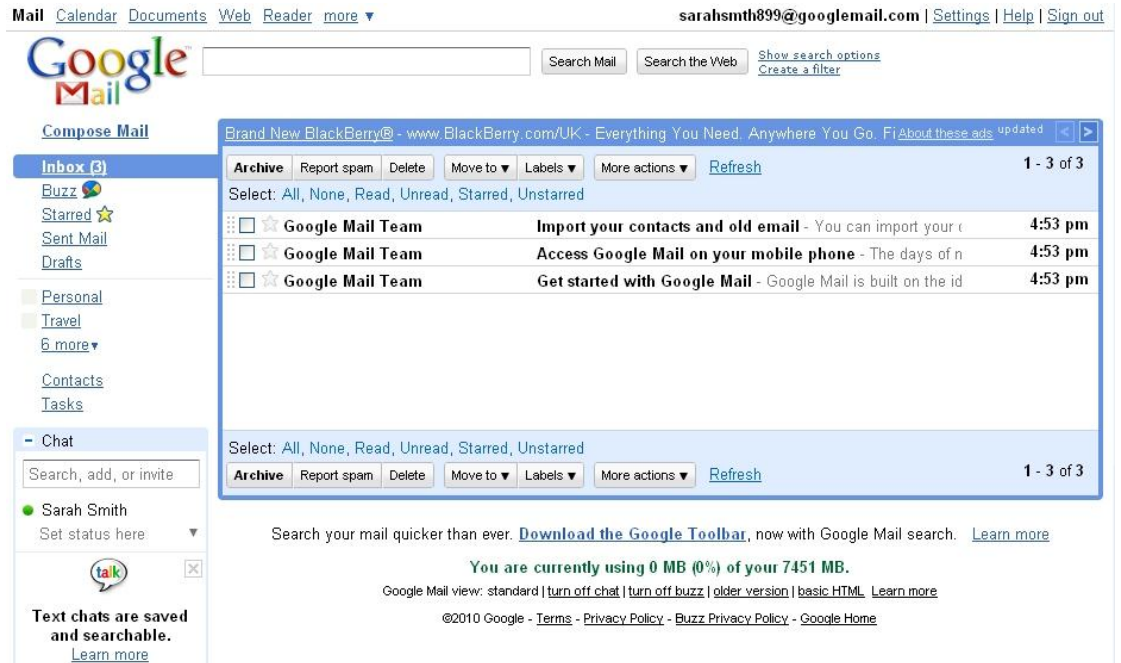
26. The congratulations page then appears! Phew! Almost over!

27. Click on "Show me my account" button



28. Your new email page will appear, all ready to use:

How to set up and run Resident groups



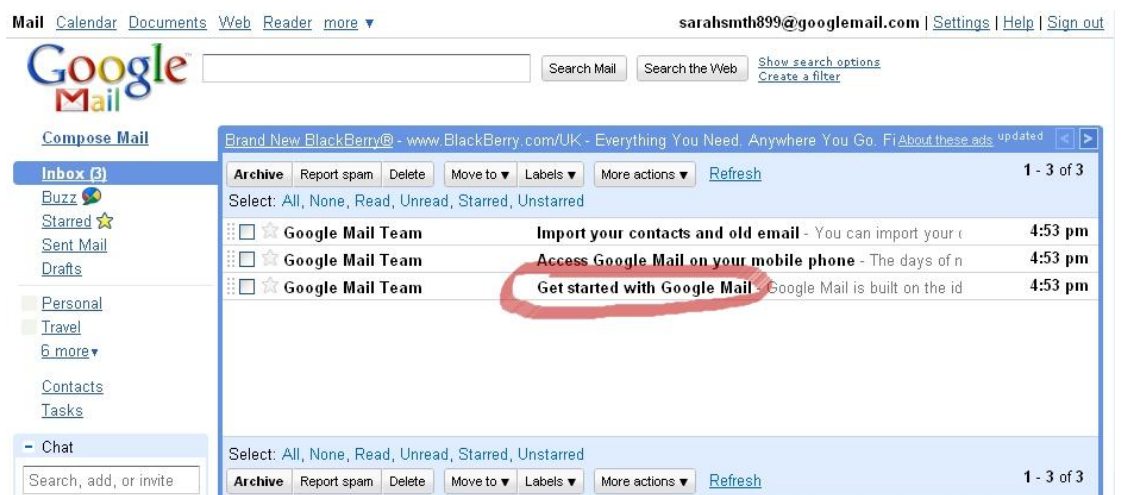
The screenshot shows the Gmail interface for sarahsmth899@googlemail.com. The inbox contains three new emails from Google Mail Team, all received at 4:53 pm. The emails are:

- Import your contacts and old email** - You can import your c
- Access Google Mail on your mobile phone** - The days of n
- Get started with Google Mail** - Google Mail is built on the id

The third email, "Get started with Google Mail", is circled in red in the original image. The interface also shows a chat window for Sarah Smith and a search bar.

29. You can see that you have three new emails from Google that will help you do more with your email, such as access your email on your mobile phone (this will depend on your phone). All your new emails from your friends will appear here (just remember to give them your new email address!) and it is called your “inbox”. New emails appear in **bold**. Once you have read them they become like normal text.

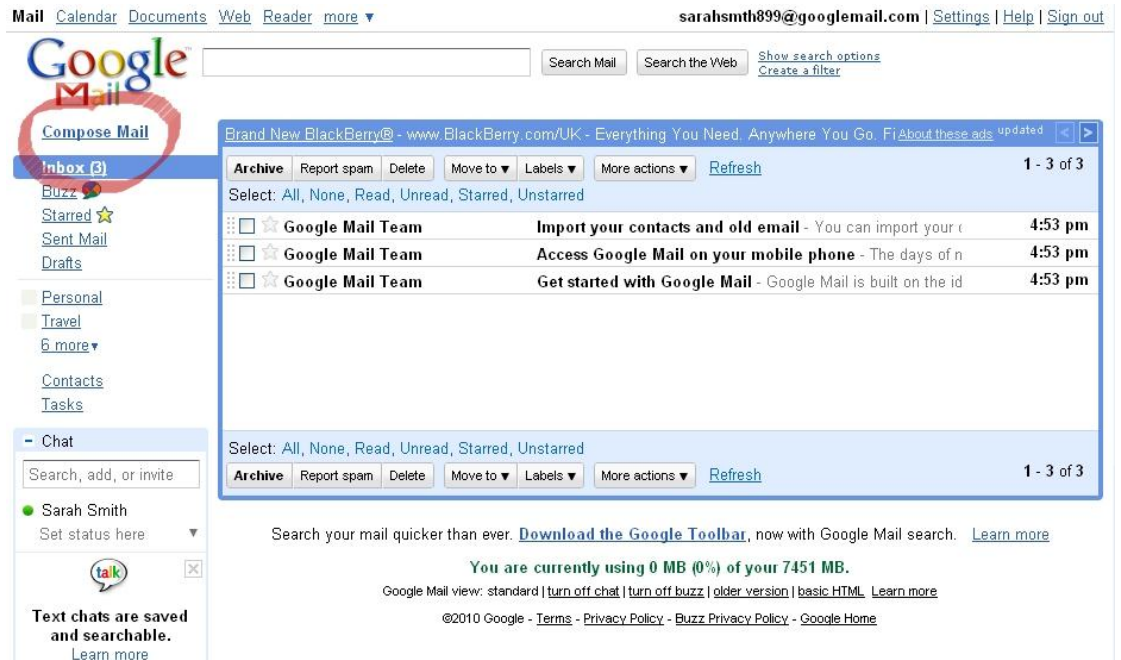
30. If you want to read an email, click on the name of the email. For example, if you wanted to read the email called “Get started with Google Mail”, click on the name of that email:



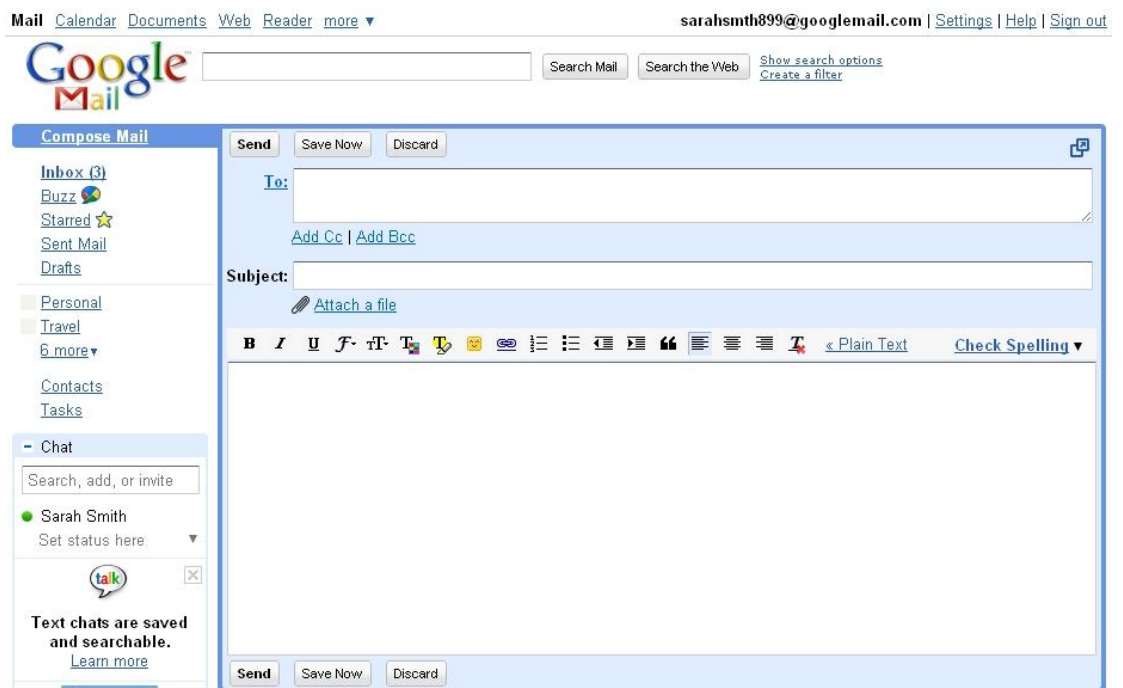
This screenshot is identical to the one above, but with a red circle around the email titled "Get started with Google Mail".

31. Just to get you started, lets see how you can send a new email to a friend:

Click on the “Compose Mail” link in the top left corner of the page:



This page will appear:



32. In the “To:” box, type the email address of your friend.
33. In the “Subject:” box, type what your email is about, such as “Hey Sarah Smith has a new email!”. If you leave the box empty, your friend may think the email is a spam email (selling something they don’t want) and delete it before they read it.
34. In the big blank box write your message
35. If you want to check your spelling, click the “check spelling” link on the right hand side of the page. This will look through your message to see if you have spelt all your words properly. If it finds words misspelt, it will suggest how to spell them.
36. When you have finished, click the “send” button at the bottom left of the page.

That’s it!!

Documents: **- Constitution**

What is a constitution?

A constitution is a formal document, adopted by many groups, that says what you want to do (aims and objectives) and how you will do it. This is important, so take your time decided what your constitution will say, make sure it is true, and makes sure you can do what you said you would! The constitution can also be changed later as your group changes.

Why do you need a constitution?

Many groups can work well without a constitution, but if you want to be more formal and apply for funding and grants you will need to have a constitution. You will need to show that you are set up for 'charitable benevolent or philanthropic purposes'. So your aims should include:

- ✓ at least one charitable aim or objective,
- ✓ a clear public benefit,
- ✓ no private gain or profit,
- ✓ a dissolution clause which passes money or other assets to similar groups or organisations for use for charitable purposes.

Will other people have a say in what goes into our constitution?

Some groups, to get extra rights, have to put specific things into their constitution. For example, Tenants' Associations have to be registered with the local council to get negotiating rights, or groups seeking charitable status have to be accepted by the Charity Commissioners. To get accepted there will be some requirements about the sort of things that go into a group's constitution.

Do you have an example?

Below is a suggestion of what you might want to put in your constitution. You will need to change it to say what your group does and why.

The Constitution

Name of the Organisation

{Here you state the name of your group. For example: }

The name of the group shall be the Gypsy Traveller group.

Aims

{Here you list what you want your group to do. For example: }

1. To promote the interests of all residents in the area, and to assist in maintaining good relations between all members of the community.
2. To promote all residents' rights and the maintenance and improvement of site conditions, amenities and the environment.
3. To promote social activities for all members in the community.
4. To work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination within the community by encouraging all members of usually excluded groups to participate in the association.
5. The Association shall be nonpolitical.

Membership

{Here you state who can join your organisation. For example: }

1. Membership shall be open to *{residents in the area? Residents on the site? If they are not residents, can they be Associate members with limited voting rights?}*.
2. Over the age of Eighteen *{under eighteens can be junior members or elect representatives to attend meetings}*
3. All members shall have an equal vote *{or you may want to limit voting to one vote per household/trailer}*.
4. All members should actively seek to represent the various needs of the area and must not discriminate on the grounds of nationality, political opinion, race, religious opinion, age, gender, sexuality or disability.

5. Where a subscription or membership fee is paid, the amount payable per household shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. *{Membership fee can be yearly, weekly, monthly or yearly}*

6. Members shall at all times conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Conduct. *{See Code of Conduct later in this document}*.

The Committee

{It is up to you to decide how many committee members you want, how they are elected and how often they should meet. This must be written clearly in the constitution. Usually there is a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

For example:}

1. A committee shall be elected to carry out the business of the group.
2. The committee shall be made up of a secretary, chair, treasurer and three general members *{you may wish to have a vice-chair, and other members}*.
3. The committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
4. Officers shall carry out the duties given to them at General Meetings.
5. The committee shall meet once a month, and no less than 10 times a year *{this is only a suggestion as to how often the committee meets. You may also want to consider if these meetings are for the committee only, or if all members can come}*.
6. Minutes of committee meetings shall be available to all members.
7. Vacancies arising during the year can be filled by an election at a general meeting. The committee may fill any vacancies arising amongst officers of the committee until the next general meeting.

Finance

{Finance is very important to groups and can also cause the most concern. If detailed clauses are included in the constitution this will help the group to run smoothly and help the treasurer do their job.

For example:}

1. All money raised by or on behalf of the group is to be used only to further the aims of the group.
2. The treasurer shall open a bank account in the name of the group. The treasurer shall keep accurate and up-to-date records of the group's finances at all times.
3. Committee members cannot receive any money or property from the group, except to refund reasonable out of pocket expenses.
4. All cheques and instructions to the group's bankers shall require two of the agreed signatures. Cheque signatories will be nominated by the committee (one to be the treasurer). These should not be from the same household/trailer or the same family.
5. The treasurer shall have the accounts checked by an independent person with adequate financial experience, for example, a representative of a community organisation, law centre or council for voluntary service, at the end of each financial year.
If the organisation has an annual turnover of over £10,000, accounts should be externally examined or audited before every Annual General Meeting. If the Association's turnover is less than £10,000, the accounts should be presented as a summary of the year's income and expenditure.
6. The accounts shall be made available to members at the AGM.

Annual General Meetings

{The Annual General Meeting is an important meeting where the committee talks about the activities of the group over the last year to the members. At this meeting some or all members of the committee resign and new committee members are elected. Your constitution should say when and how this meeting will be held and how members will be told about it.

For example :}

1. There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) held *{state which month every year the meeting will be held}* at which the committee shall:
 - a) Accept the Chairman's Annual Report;
 - b) Accept the Treasurer's financial statement of accounts (where applicable);
 - c) Elect Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer for the next year;
 - d) Elect any other committee members as required;
 - d) Consider any other items previously notified to the secretary or raised at the meeting; and

- e) Vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution.
2. The secretary will notify all members of the date of the meeting not less than twenty one days before the AGM.

Other general meetings

{These are other meetings throughout the year which are open to your members. This section will state how these meetings will be organised.

For example:}

1. There will be a general meeting open to all members every *{state how often, or decide that the Chairman can call a general meeting when needed, giving 14 days notice}*.
2. A Special General Meeting (SGM), open to all members, will be held if twelve or more members submit a request for such a meeting to the secretary. SGM can be called if the membership decides there is a serious problem, or a change to the constitution needs to be made. The secretary shall arrange for the meeting to take place within twenty-one days.
3. The secretary will publicise all general meetings at least five days in advance.

Quorum

{This means the number of members required for a meeting to go ahead. You can decide what will be a quorum for your group. For example:}

1. No General Meeting or Annual General Meeting shall take place if less than 10% of members are present.
2. No committee meeting shall take place if less than two thirds of the committee are present.

Voting

{Here you state how voting will take place. For example:}

1. Members shall have the right to one vote *{per individual, or one vote per trailer}*.
2. All decisions at the general meetings, AGM or SGMs shall take place through a simple majority, by a show of hands. A ballot can be requested.

3. Changes to the constitution must be agreed by two thirds majority.
3. Any member may make a proposal or amendment. In order for it to be voted on by other members it must be seconded or supported by someone else.
4. Only members present at the meeting may vote.
5. In the event of an equal vote, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

Changes to the constitution

{Your constitution should develop along with your group, so it is sensible to have a section in it that covers how to make changes to the constitution. For example :}

1. The constitution can only be altered at an AGM or at a SGM called for that purpose.
2. Any suggested changes to the constitution must be handed to the secretary fourteen days before the AGM.
3. Changes to the constitution must be agreed by two thirds of the members present at the meeting.

Codes of Conduct

{Some groups have a separate code of conduct, which covers the way tenants are expected to carry out their duties as members of the group. If someone behaves badly, the group needs a way of stopping that behaviour or making them leave.

It is useful to make reference to the code of conduct in the constitution to make sure it is agreed and reviewed along with the constitution. For a model Code of Conduct, [see later in this document](#). For example:}

All members shall agree to abide by the group's code of conduct and failure to do so will result in the member being asked to resign.

Dissolution

{Here you must state how your group will come to an end and what will happen to any assets (money or possessions) the group has. For example:}

1. The Association may only be dissolved at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose, which must be advertised fourteen days before the meeting.
2. A proposal to dissolve the Association shall take effect only if agreed by two thirds of the members present at the meeting.
3. Any assets (financial or otherwise) remaining, after the payment of all debts and liabilities, shall be given to charitable organisations, according to the wishes of the members of the meeting.
4. All of the group's documents shall be disposed of in a manner agreed at the meeting.

Setting up the Association

{A Committee should have discussed, agreed and adopted your constitution. This can be shown by the constitution itself being signed and dated, and/or be a record in the minutes of the meeting.}

This constitution was adopted on _____ 20__ by the people whose signatures appear below.

Signed

Print name and address

Code of Conduct

What is a Code of Conduct?

A Code of Conduct can be formal and part of the Constitution, or a set of rules of how to behave at meetings that are agreed at the start of every meeting.

Do you have an example?

Example of Code of Conduct

Conduct of meetings

Members should, when going to a meeting:

- The Chair should welcome members and others to the meeting The Chair should generally avoid getting involved in debates at meetings, their main task is to chair the meeting
- Members should keep to the subject being discussed
- Only one member should speak at a time and there should be no cross talking
- Meetings must start at the stated time and keep to the agenda
- Late arrivals should enter quietly
- Mobile phones should be switched off during the meeting
- If things are getting heated a five minute “time-out” can be organised by the Chair.
- Wherever possible jargon should be avoided. If it is used then a full explanation should be given
- It is the responsibility of each member to ensure that they are prepared for the meeting by reading all the relevant papers and bringing them to the meeting.

Discrimination

No member will discriminate on any ground against any other member of the group or public. Discriminatory language will not be used in discussions. All those who attend meetings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, marital status, age, sexuality, religion, or any other matter, which causes people to be treated with injustice. (This may be part of your

constitution and therefore could be left out as long as the appropriate reference is made.) This will also be part of the [Equal Opportunities Statement](#).

Constitution

All members should familiarise themselves with the [Constitution](#) of the group to ensure that they continue to meet the aims and objectives of the group.

Breach of Code of Conduct

- If a member of the committee or group, or member of the public does not abide by the code of conduct, the Chair will warn that if they break the code again they may be asked to leave the meeting
- The Chair may give the member of the committee or group, or member of the public two further warnings (a maximum of three warnings in any one meeting and/or three consecutive meetings)
- If the member of the committee or group or member of the public continues to ignore the code then the Chair will ask the meeting to vote on whether the member should be asked to leave.

There may also be times when members of the public, or members of the group, may complain about the behaviour (conduct) of another member of the group. In this case, a complaint may be made. This is when a Complaints Procedure is very important, as it makes it clear how to fairly deal with complaints. See [Complaints Procedure Document](#).

Equal Opportunities Statement

It is important that your organisation has an Equal Opportunities policy, and funders expect to see that you have adopted one.

Do you have an example?

Example of Equal Opportunities Statement

(Name of your group) undertakes to actively oppose all forms of discrimination against groups or individuals on such grounds as race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age and/or disability or towards those who are marginalised or socially excluded.

As part of this policy, we will endeavour to introduce measures that combat all direct and indirect discrimination in employment and volunteer practices. We will seek to implement a programme of positive action and to make this policy effective by ensuring that no job applicant, employee or volunteer receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, age, disability, religion, lifestyle or homelessness.

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Child Protection Policy

Why do you need one?

Writing a child protection policy is important even if you are not planning children or young people's events. The policy will show that your group have thought about how to keep young people safe. This is also important when applying for funding. Although cases of abuse are relatively rare, it is important that everyone plays a part in prevention, and that we all have a shared responsibility for the protection of children and young people.

The policy statement outlines your commitment to child protection and what you should do to protect children or young people involved with your group. The policies are very detailed, and it is worth looking at actual policies and procedures to understand what you need to write. Many small organisations have found this difficult to get right, so several local governments have provided on-line templates of Child Protection policies designed for voluntary organisations. Print these out and edit them, to make them apply to your organisation:

- http://www.hcvs.org.uk/EN/store/Policies/CYP_child_protection_template.pdf
- <http://www.salford.gov.uk/d/example-of-child-protection-policy-for-voluntary-organisations.doc>
- <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/modelchildprotectionpolicy.pdf>

Code of Conduct with Young People

A code of conduct is a useful way to guide volunteers and workers in what is appropriate conduct when working with children and young people. 'Abuse of Trust' legislation (*Caring for young people and the vulnerable, Guidance for preventing the abuse of trust*, Home Office 1999) outlines what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour from paid staff and volunteers. However, you may also like to work together with young people to produce a code of conduct for them to follow.

You may like to consider guidance on:

- ✓ how to avoid physical contact with children

- ✓ what behaviours are specifically not allowed, such as sexual conduct, lending or borrowing of money or property, keeping of secrets
- ✓ when physical restraint can be used and what training will be offered
- ✓ what policy you have regarding smoking, alcohol and drugs
- ✓ how and when parents or guardians are involved in activities
- ✓ how a complaint can be made if the code of conduct for young people is not followed
- ✓ what the consequences would be for a breach of the code of conduct.

Other useful resources:

- **Community Matters**
Information Sheets 30 (Safeguarding Children and Young People), 81 (Criminal Records Checks) and 81a (Vetting and Barring Scheme)
www.communitymatters.org.uk
- **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**
For up-to-date information on Child Protection and support for third sector organisations
www.nspcc.org.uk
- **National Council for Voluntary Youth Services**
For 'Keeping It Safe – a young person-centred approach to safety and child protection'.
www.ncvys.org.uk
- **Participation Works**
See their free guide 'How to safeguard children and young people'
www.participationworks.org.uk

- Volunteer Policy

A Volunteer policy is important if your group plans to use volunteers to achieve its aims. The policy defines the role of volunteers within the group and how they should expect to be treated, and what should be done if things go wrong. These can be seen as an agreement between the group and the volunteer, rather than a policy.

Do you have an example?

Example of Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are an important and valued part of this Gypsy Traveller Resident's group. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and working with the community.

This agreement tells you what you can expect from us, and what we hope from you. If you have any suggested changes to the Volunteer Agreement, please let us know.

We, [group name], will do our best:

- to introduce you to how the Resident group works and your role in it and to provide any training you need if it is possible. The initial training agreed is [write any training agreed upon here].*
- to provide regular meetings with [say who the volunteer can talk to in the group] so that you can tell us if you are happy with how your tasks are organised and get feedback from us.*
- to respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.*
- to reimburse your travel and meal costs up to our current maximum [if this is possible. State the maximum, or go into more detail in a Volunteer Handbook].*
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes.*
- to insure you against injury you suffer or cause due to negligence and provide a safe workplace [you may need to think about volunteer insurance. Again outline this in a Volunteer handbook].*
- to apply our equal opportunities policy.*
- to apply our complaints procedure if there is any problem.*

I, [name of volunteer], agree to do my best:

- *to work reliably to the best of my ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot work when expected*
- *to follow the Residents group's rules and procedures.*

Note: this agreement is in honour only

- Complaints procedure

As previously discussed, this is an important document to have, as it protects the group from outside complaints and inside arguments.

Do you have an example?

Example of Complaints Procedure

By definition, a complaint is a perceived wrong held by an individual or group. Every effort will be made to resolve complaints at the earliest possible opportunity and in the main this will be on an informal basis. However, should informal discussions not alleviate the situation; the following formal procedure will be followed.

Definitions:

Complainant

Person(s) bringing the complaint

The Management Committee

Members elected onto the Management Committee of the organisation at the AGM.

Complaints Officer

A member of the Management Committee elected to fulfil this post

Secondary Complaints Officer

A member of the Management Committee elected to stand in for the Complaints Officer where appropriate and/or relevant

Senior Member of Staff

The most senior member of staff (i.e., manager or director) employed by the organisation.

STAGES OF THE PROCEDURE

Stage One

In the first instance, the matter must be raised by the Complainant(s) with the Senior Member of Staff, who after any necessary consultation with the Complaints Officer, will give a formal reply within five working days.

Stage Two

Failing settlement at Stage One, a meeting will be arranged between the Complainant(s), the Senior Member of Staff and the Complaints Officer within ten working days of the formal response required at Stage One. If the complaint is being made on behalf of another organization, at least one formally elected member of the organization's management committee must also be present. If the Complaints Officer is not available or the complaint is being made against him/her, the Secondary Complaints Officer will stand in. If settlement is not achieved at this stage, a 'failure to agree' will be recorded. Minutes must be taken at this meeting.

Stage Three

A report will be submitted by the Complaints Officer present at the Stage Two meeting to a full Management Committee meeting to be held within 21 days of the Stage Two meeting and at which minutes must be taken. An investigation may be necessary at this stage before a decision is reached by the Management Committee. A formal decision will then be issued forthwith by the Management Committee to all parties concerned.

CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION

In the procedures set out above, if settlement is not achieved at the final stage and the formal decision of the Management Committee is not acceptable to the complainant(s), the matter may, if mutually desired, be referred to the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service. The arbitrated decision will be binding on both parties.

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