



ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Learning Resource Pack

Developed through learning with and alongside our wonderful communities in East Sussex

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Section Two: Start Small

Section Three: Build Relationships

Section Four: Make Connections

Section Five: Support communities to take the lead; communities need allies.

Section Six: Equality and Social Justice

Section Seven: Lead by Stepping back

Section Eight: Demonstrating the value of ABCD

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LEAD BY STEPPING BACK

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What does it mean in practice?

"ABCD FOSTERS A WORLD WHERE ALL PEOPLE THRIVE. ABCD HELPS PEOPLE USE THEIR GIFTS TO WORK IN THEIR COMMUNITIES TO DISRUPT SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION AND REGENERATE POWER IN NEW, CREATIVE AND EQUITABLE WAYS."

ABCD Institute

This section is about passing on the baton. Ultimately this is about working to strengths, recognising our limitations. and knowing when to look for alternative routes for support, guidance, knowledge or expertise, and tools to support people, groups and communities to go their own way.



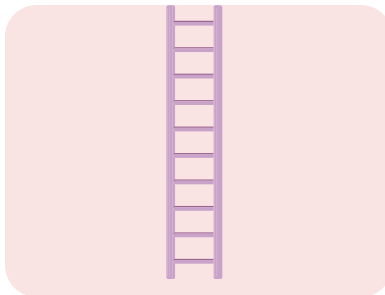
Tools

The tools in this section are about community workers, or community facing services stepping away. They will also be useful for groups to support them in their onward journeys.

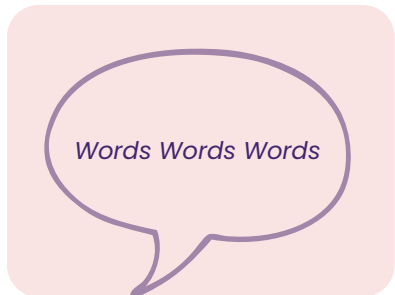
Signposting & Terminology



Ladder of Participation



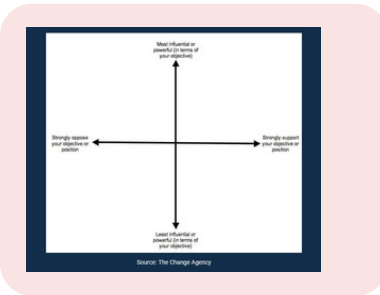
Other Useful Terminology



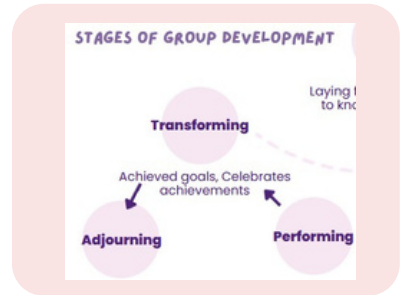
Community Organising



Power Analysis and Mapping



Forming Storming Norming



Governance Tools



Participatory Budgeting



Signposting

Access to different kinds of information, advice or expertise is a crucial part of the community building process.

Signposting is about providing timely information, advice or guidance, or referral to relevant service, once the interests, hopes or needs of an individual or group is understood.



For individuals

- **Information** to help people make informed decisions and access the resources they need to succeed.
- **Advice and guidance** such as Citizen Advice and other advice services, for e such as around money, housing, debt or employment.
- **Advocacy** to ensure that a person is supported to express their views and to stand up for their rights.
- Individual **service referrals**, such as mental health services, domestic abuse, Mind, Care for the Carers and other types of local specialist provision.

For groups and collectives of people

- Information, support and resources to **plan projects** or activities.
- **Networks** for peer support, information sharing and learning.
- **Training.**
- Information about **funding** and resources.
- Opportunities for **voice and influence.**
- Advice about setting up a formal group or organisation via a local Voluntary Action or **Generic Infrastructure Service.**
- Advice about roles and responsibilities of **legal entities**, such as a charity or Community Interest Company.

Ladder of participation

Doing with



Co-Production

Co-Design

Engagement

Doing for



Consultation

Informing

Doing to



Educating

Coersion

Other useful terminology

Lived experience – the knowledge and understanding that comes from directly experiencing something.

Peer support – a way for people with similar experiences to help each other through sharing knowledge, offering emotional support, and providing practical assistance.

EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

IDEA – Inclusion, Diveristy, Equity and Accessibility.

Voice and representation – having the capacity and agency to be able to express views and preferences in the design or monitoring of services, including public services.

Service user involvement – the process of involving people who use or have used a service in the planning, development and delivery of that service.

“**Co-creation** is a collaborative process that involves working with others to develop solutions”, (Genesis in academia and in design and marketing)

“The term **co-production** refers to a way of working, whereby everybody works together on an **equal** basis to create a service or come to a decision which works for them all.” (Think Local Act Personal)

“**Community-Led Development** is a development approach in which local community members work together to identify goals that are important to them, develop and implement plans to achieve those goals, and create collaborative relationships internally and with external actors—all while building on community strengths and local leadership.” (The Movement for Community Led Development)

Community Organising

Community organising is the work of **bringing people together to take action** around common concerns and to overcome social injustice.

The aim is “to bring together people with shared interests, help them to develop their confidence and sense of collective power, identify common goals and develop a strategy to achieve them – and motivate them to act together to achieve their goals and build their power.” (Community Organisers)

Community organising is an extremely valuable route which seeks to draw attention to specific and defined areas for change, and organises around that to take strategic action.

It can happen naturally as a result of a common shared desire... to influence change around particular issues (for example in response to environmental concerns, local anti-social behaviour, or need for traffic calming measures), or it can emerge via a process of community development as communities naturally organise around common concerns.

Visit: Community Organisers: visit <https://www.corganisers.org.uk/what-is-community-organising/intro-about-community-organising/>

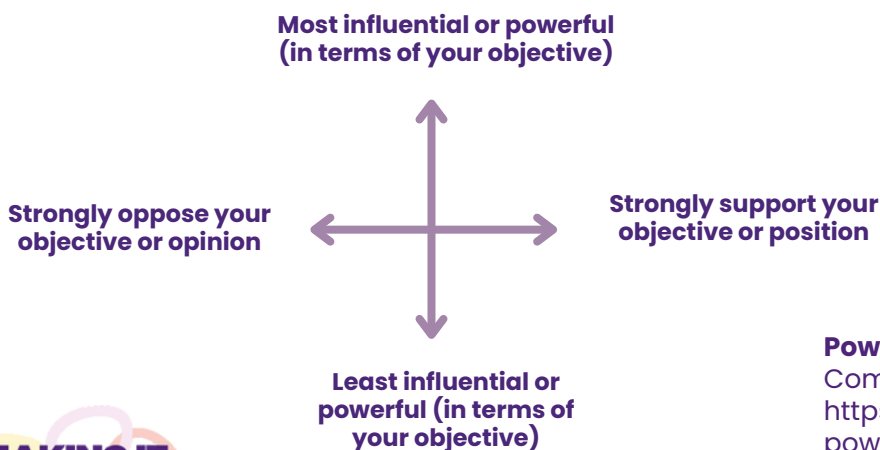


Power analysis and mapping

A power analysis is a way of identifying and exploring the multiple power dimensions that affect a given situation, so as to better understand the different factors reinforcing the 'status quo'. It can help to uncover the hidden or invisible power influencing a situation and inform the best way to act.

By investigating the individuals and organisations who have power, we can get a sense of the current power balance and begin to devise strategies for how to shift it. We can also learn the strengths and weaknesses of both allies and opponents, as well as reflecting on our own base of power and how ready we are to engage with others. Some key things to think about include:

- **WHO?** Individuals, institutions, organisations. Whose voice is trying to be heard? By whom?
- **WHERE?** Context, levels, space. Where are people trying to make themselves heard?
- **WHAT?** Sectors, issues, Which issues are being addressed? What change are we trying to effect? Which kinds of power relations are at play? What other factors are important?
- **HOW?** Strategies, methods and models. What strategic approaches are used for responding to the identified power dynamics? What is the logic behind the choice of partners, allies and actors? What are the roles of the various bodies involved?



Power mapping activity: The Commons Social Change Library: <https://commonslibrary.org/guide-power-mapping-and-analysis/>

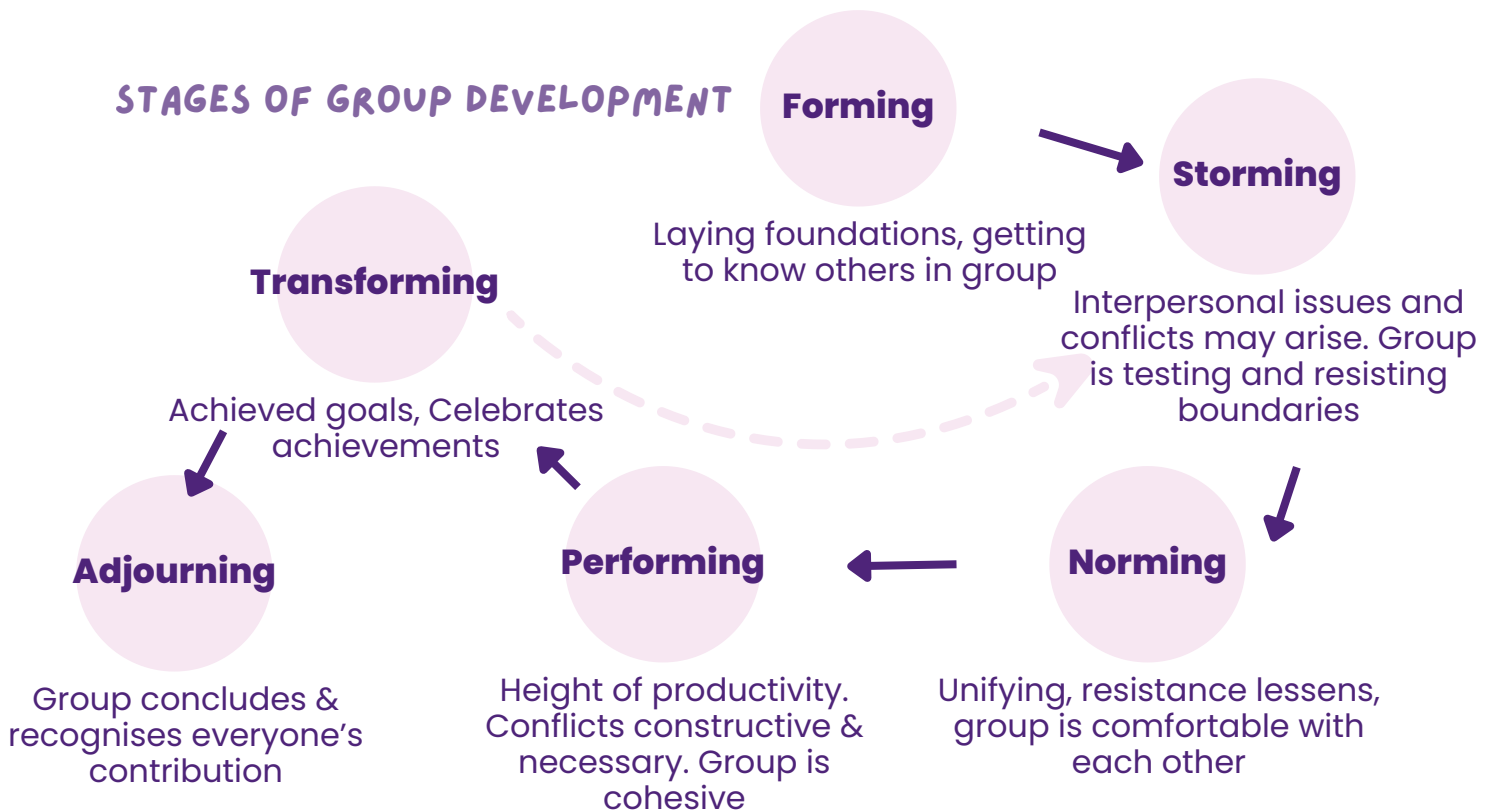
Forming, Storming, Norming

In Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), the Forming, Storming, Norming model helps grassroots groups navigate their development.

Forming is when the group comes together, sharing ideas and setting goals, but members may still be figuring out their roles and how to work together.

In the **Storming** stage, conflicts can arise as different perspectives and approaches surface, but this is a natural part of building a strong foundation.

Finally, in **Norming**, the group finds a way to work together more smoothly, roles become clearer, and there's more collaboration, allowing the group to focus on building community strengths and achieving its goals.



Even just discussing the 'Forming, Storming, Norming stages can support a group work through challenges' <https://www.wcupa.edu/coral/tuckmanStagesGroupDevelopment.aspx>

Governance

In the context of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)- '**governance**' refers to the way grassroots community groups organise and make decisions to harness the strengths, skills, and resources within their own community. ABCD focuses on what a community already has—its people, local knowledge, relationships, and assets—rather than what it lacks.

Governance in this context means creating a **structure** where community members **have a voice** in decision-making and can lead initiatives that build on these local **assets**.

For grassroots groups using ABCD, good governance ensures that decisions are made collaboratively, everyone's contributions are valued, and the group remains accountable to the community it serves. It helps the group stay focused on its **strengths**, maintain transparency, and foster a sense of ownership and **empowerment** among local members. In essence, governance in ABCD helps community groups be self-sustaining, **participatory**, and true to their mission of building on what already exists in the community.

These key areas can be written into the constitution and may more naturally lean towards an association model.

For more specialised support around governance:

- **look to your local Voluntary Action or equivalent.**
- **Work with General Infrastructure support teams.**

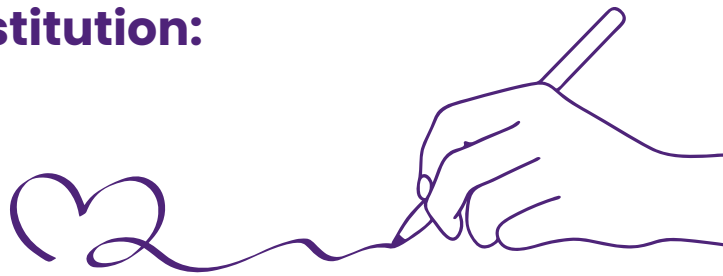
Here is a picture of a Making it Happen Project Volunteer discussing accounting with their local Voluntary Action & a local pro bono accountant.



Governance Constitution

A community group constitution is a document that outlines the basic rules and principles for how a community group is run. It typically includes the group's purpose, how decisions are made, roles and responsibilities of members, and guidelines for meetings and activities. Essentially, it helps ensure everyone knows how the group operates and what is expected from members.

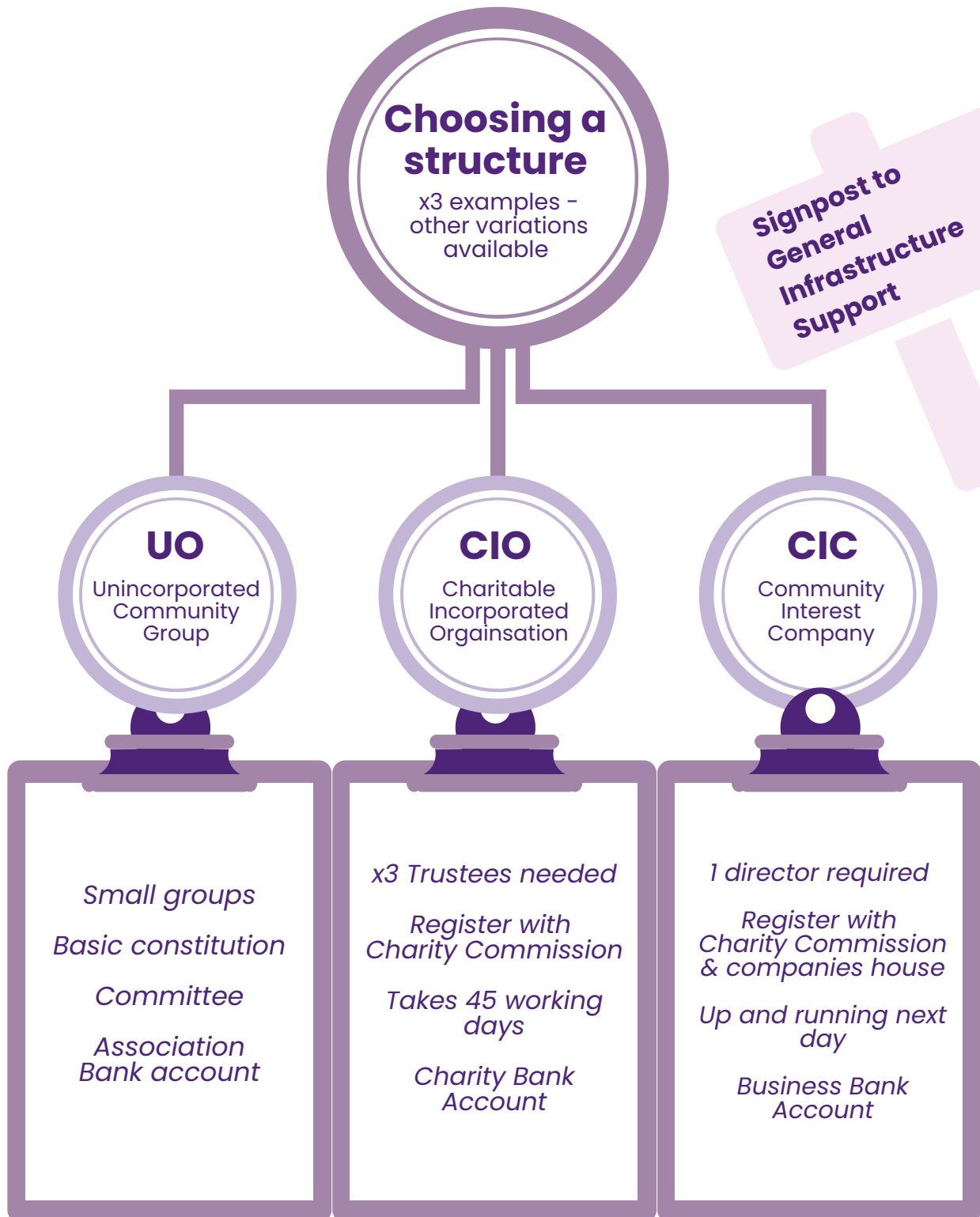
Here are some basic headings for a community group constitution:



- 1. Name of the Group**
- 2. Purpose/Mission Statement**
- 3. Membership**
- 4. Governance Structure**
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Officers and Committees
- 5. Meetings**
 - Frequency and Types
 - Procedures
- 6. Decision-Making Process**
- 7. Finances**
 - Budgeting
 - Fundraising
 - Financial Reporting
- 8. Amendments**
- 9. Dissolution**
- 10. Signatories**

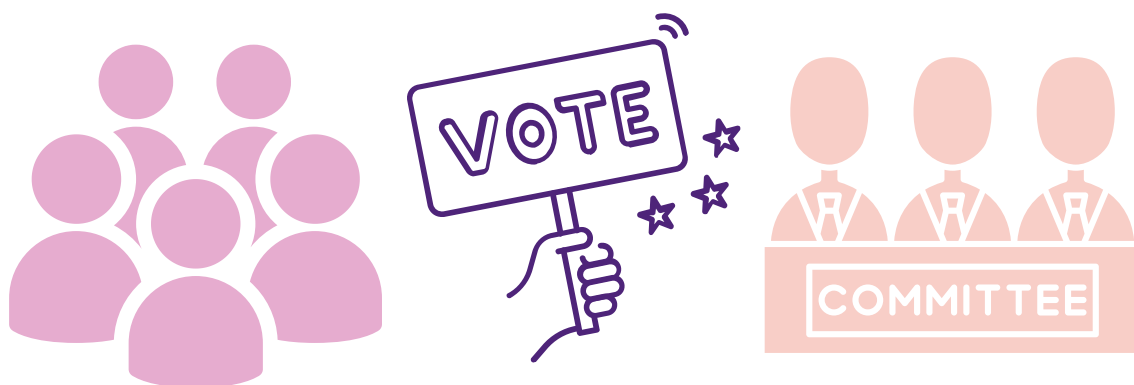
Signpost to
General Infrastructure
Support

Governance Group Structure



Governance

Association & Foundation model



Foundation Model

This structure is for charities whose only voting members will be the charity trustees. In practice a CIO using the 'foundation' model will be like an incorporated charitable trust, run by a small group of people (the charity trustees) who make all key decisions. Charity trustees may be appointed for an unlimited time and they will probably appoint new charity trustees.

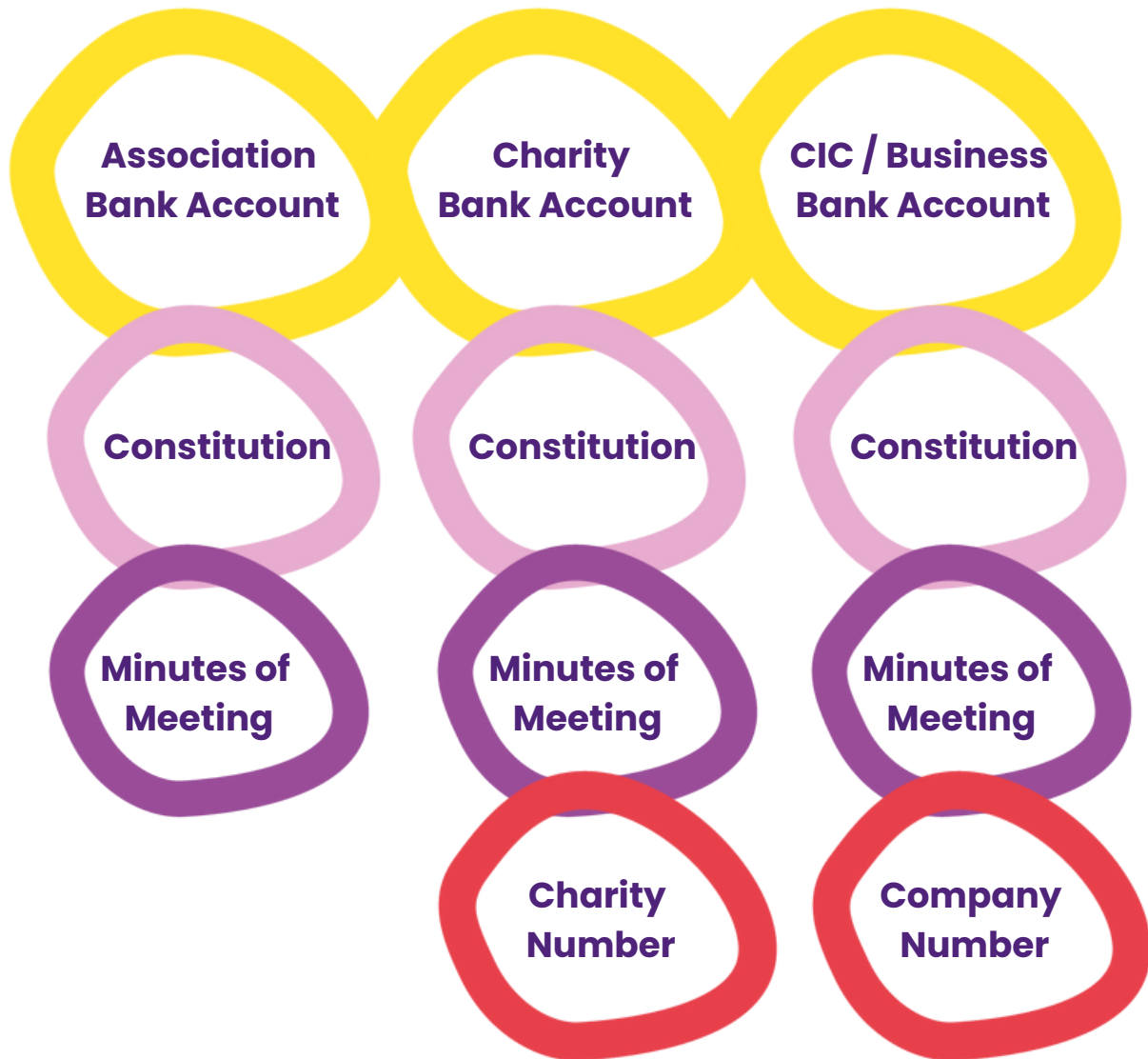
Association Model

This structure is for charities that will have a wider membership, including voting members other than the charity trustees. The wider voting membership must make certain decisions (such as amending the constitution), will usually appoint some or all of the charity trustees (who will serve for fixed terms), and may be involved in the work of the CIO.



Governance

Community bank accounts



Identification needed for committee / trustees

Governance

Community bank accounts, Minutes

Items to include:

- Logo or Name of Group.
- Meeting Date & Time.
- People present - include minimum of 3 committee members & / Or Trustees.
- Basic agenda / list of topics to discuss - vote in committee - if very new group.
- include discussion item about opening bank account.
- Document the decision to open a bank account.
- Document which community bank to use.
- Date of next meeting.

Keeping it simple & to the point.

Meeting Minutes often make people think of large scary documents!

They don't have to be...

Governance Policies + Safety to think about...

FIRST AID



Safeguarding

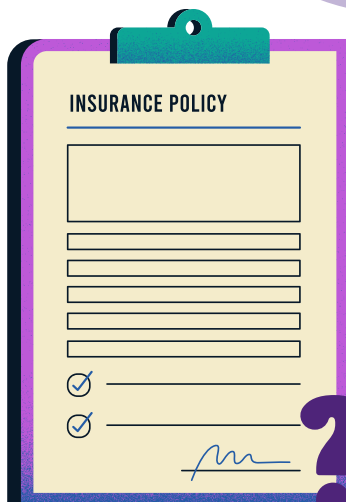


Health & Safety

GDPR

Risk
Assessment

Volunteer
Training



Participatory budgeting

Participatory grant funding is a process in which community members, stakeholders, or intended beneficiaries are actively involved in the decision-making and allocation of grant funds. Instead of having experts or a centralised group make all the funding decisions, the process encourages a more democratic approach where those directly affected by the issues have a say in which projects or initiatives receive financial support. This model aims to increase transparency, ensure the funds are used in ways that best serve the community, and build trust among the participants. It is often used in areas like social justice, community development, and environmental sustainability.

As part of the Neighbourhood Sparks events (see section 5, Support Communities to Take the Lead) each participating neighbourhood was allocated a budget of £2,000 for residents to award to **community led projects**. Local community groups were supported by MIH to plan the events and to decide on a community budgeting process.

Each area approached it slightly differently, but in all the areas local **residents were invited to put forward ideas for projects**, and received support from MIH to develop project plans.

The wider community was then invited to vote for a winner at the Sparks event, and / or through local ballots.



Community Learning

Activities have included:

- Community Connection & Cake - community of practice events.
- Informal networking.
- Visits to projects in other areas.
- Community Roadshows.



Here is a picture of a community learning activity discussing the value of 'Building Relationships'



Participants at the first MIH Community of Practice event organised themselves into groups to discuss themes including:

- Inclusive communities.
- Young people.
- Creativity.
- Communications.

This picture shows 5 community project volunteers (developed through Making it Happen) working together on forward financial planning.



Community Table

The Community Table hosted by the MIH CDWs in Eastbourne has brought together representatives from local community groups.

The aim is **to encourage peer support, skill sharing, resource sharing and networking** in a structured, but friendly and informal setting and style. The intention is to encourage sustainability of the groups through their connection and opportunities for shared learning.

Throughout the sessions participants have fed-back that they: feel safe to open up about challenges in their work; feel supported by others doing similar work; and that this is a space to celebrate successes big and small.



Participatory Budgeting

At the Neighbourhood Sparks events planned and delivered with local residents, Participatory Budgeting activities were held. The following projects won the public vote from their area:

- **Youth Voice and Cup of Joy** mental wellbeing cafe for young people in Willingdon Trees
- The **Polegate Jubilee Nature Reserve**
- In **Hollington** residents split the budget between: Hollington Community Centre; Craig's Cabin; Surviving the Streets; Tidy Up St Leonards and SIAM Boxing
- **Bexhill Community Allotments and Incredible Edible** collaboration project
- The **Peace Community Centre and Mosque** in Peacehaven for Souper Social Saturday events for the whole community.



In Bexhill.....

Community Development Workers took all the project proposals developed at the event out to local bumping spots. They used jars and counters for community voting.

The local community voted between 5 different projects to chose which one they felt should receive funding. It was great to use the large project boards as it enabled people to get an easy to read overview of each project.



The People's Knowledge Exchange

One of the most powerful impacts of ABCD is to see individuals and groups leading their own change, presenting in meetings, and engaging in local strategic decision making.

An example from Newhaven was **the People's Knowledge Exchange** which was organised by the Hospitable Environment Project, a grass roots community arts organisation. The event was the culmination of a series of workshops run by Hospitable Environment with local residents to explore the ways that creativity and connected communities feed healthy lives, and to create '**the People's Plan**' exhibition.

The event illustrated the enormous value of local knowledge, connection and collective action. It showcased the importance of taking the time to build relationships and trust in order to foster conditions for genuine collaboration with communities, and sought to encourage **investment in solutions that build from community led action** rather than look to top down initiatives which too often ignore what might already be present.

Visit: <https://www.hospitable-environment.com/>



Photo credit: Phoebe Wingrove