

This is a key role, because none of the others will work without it!

Basically, your job is to make sure everyone in the street is aware of what is going on, feeding into what is going on and enjoying the flow of communication that makes a community feel like a community.

### **Finding out who's who**

One of the key tasks is to get a good handle on who is part of the Association. For example, if an event for teenagers was contemplated, it would be important to know how many there are and where they live. Likewise with elderly people, mums with toddlers, and so on. So an early priority would be to visit everyone and find out who lives in each house, what ages they are, what kind of events they might be interested in – and how best to communicate with them. For example, some look at emails daily, others never; some are into Facebook, and others would need a hard copy' notification of what is going on.

### **Getting the news out**

Ideally, the communications coordinator should be computer literate and familiar with websites and social networking – as well as more traditional ways of communicating.

One option is to create a website for the Street Association. Another is to have a Facebook group for the street. Certainly, it's good to collect email addresses and send out info to all those who can receive it that way. The other great way of communicating is to text people. That seems to get the best response – so collect as many mobile numbers as you can!

For many, though, a visit and/or a leaflet through the door will be what they will best respond to. You just have to use common sense to see how best to get the message to different kinds of audiences.

An occasional newsletter is an excellent idea, preferably with pictures of events that have taken place, so that those who didn't come see something of what has been going on. And it's good to create an Association email address, so that people can easily contact you.

### **People who don't take part**

There can be two reasons why people don't take part (assuming they know what is on): first, they genuinely don't want to – in which case, that obviously needs to be respected; second, they are shy, withdrawn or anxious – in which case, they really might like to be helped to become part of things as a result of you showing kindness and interest. Sometimes, "let me pick you up and we'll go together" can be the offer that will get someone taking part for the first time. After that, "I won't know anyone"

becomes less and less true, and turns into “I want to go because my friends will be there”.

Also remember, a Street Association is not just about what people can get, but also about what people can give. So the proposition is not just “you might want this”, but also “could you help someone else on the street?” Sometimes we all need to be reminded that our involvement is about serving others as well as helping ourselves!

### **New to the area**

It is really nice if people who move in to the street get a welcome visit as soon as they arrive – and if neighbours can offer help and support. We suggest it should be part of your ‘brief’ to make the first contact and introductions. One woman we met was “blown away” when she moved into a Street Association area and was given a card signed by her immediate neighbours and a box of chocolates to welcome her to the street. She quickly became part of the core group as a result.

### **Face to face**

The key thing is actually to get to know as many people as possible. It’s relationships that make the world go round! And it’s those relationships that will make anything the Association does work well, and your relationships will provide the best communications service for the core team as a whole.