

Good Neighbours Guide

A guide for community organisations managing and operating Brisbane's community facilities.

Brisbane City Council encourages and supports links between community organisations and neighbours.

Council is committed to the equitable allocation of land and facilities to the Brisbane community via leases, licences or other tenure arrangements for sport, recreation, cultural and community purposes. As the custodian or owner of community facilities, Council must ensure that these facilities are managed and operated appropriately to minimise disruption to neighbours and the nearby community. These good neighbour practices have been developed as a guide for community organisations, such as yours, who manage and operate our city's community facilities.

Why be a good neighbour?

Subscribing to good neighbour practices is a requirement of all tenure arrangements with Council relating to community facilities. What are good neighbour practices? Good neighbour practices are commonsense and courteous approaches to living harmoniously with your neighbours and the local community. They involve working together to minimise inconvenience to, and complaints from, residents whose homes or businesses adjoin a community facility.

Good neighbour practices involve three key steps: nominating a Community Liaison Officer developing a process to deal with and resolve complaints in a way that satisfies your organisation, the complainant and Council getting involved in and openly communicating with your local community. Good communication and the development of good neighbourly links between your organisation and its neighbours will lead to a harmonious relationship, greater cooperation and less tension around the community facility. If any issues do arise, your organisation's relationship with local residents and businesses should allow the issue to be resolved quickly to the satisfaction of all parties.

This booklet provides a number of practical ideas that your organisation can implement to be a good neighbour and meet its obligations under its lease/licence with Council.

Step One: Nominating a Community Liaison Officer

Your organisation must nominate a Community Liaison Officer(CLO), a person within your organisation who accepts the responsibility for leading its liaison with neighbours and the local community. Given the importance of the role, the CLO should be a committee member or senior member of your organisation. It is suggested that the details of the CLO be provided to Council on an annual basis (along with details of new committee members) or otherwise as required. The CLO's contact details should also be distributed to neighbours and the local community.

It is the CLO's responsibility to liaise with all parties to seek a suitable solution if any issues arise or complaints are received. The CLO should work closely with neighbours and community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch to develop relationships within the community.



Step Two: Complaint handling process

The following process has been developed in accordance with your organisation's lease or licence to help you resolve any issues or complaints. If a person makes a complaint to Council regarding your organisation's use of the community facility, the complaint will be referred to your CLO. An agreed date and time for a response to the complainant will be arranged. The CLO will provide a response to the complainant no later than the date and time agreed. The CLO must also advise a Council Community Leasing Officer by telephone of the action taken. Council will contact the complainant to ensure that the issue has been resolved appropriately.

If, in the reasonable opinion of Council, the complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timeframe to the satisfaction of both the complainant and your organisation, Council will record that a resident dispute has arisen. Council will contact the CLO to discuss options to resolve the issue. If the issue is subsequently resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, Council may require your organisation to enter into a legally enforceable agreement. If the issue is not resolved, Council may require the parties to participate in a mediation or arbitration process to resolve the dispute. Please note, if a complaint or issue has arisen as a result of your organisation not complying with its lease or licence, Council may terminate your lease or licence or take any other appropriate action.

Step Three: Getting involved

Once good communication channels have been established, being a good neighbour will be easy. It's about being considerate of those who live and work near your facility and getting more involved in the community. Here are some suggestions:

- Once your yearly calendar has been written, make copies and circulate it to your neighbours so they know when to expect major events. You may even like to invite them along.
- Forward a copy of your organisation's newsletter to your neighbours so they can share in your developments and achievements.
- Invite your neighbours to attend your activities, functions and open days.
- Establish definite times that the field lighting, public address systems, sirens and hooters will be turned on (within the confines of your lease/licence) and notify your neighbours when changes to those times will occur, for example when major events are to be held.
- Encourage your neighbours to become involved in beautifying the facility, for example by planting trees and shrubs (in accordance with your organisation's lease or licence).
- Appoint parking monitors within your organisation to ensure that your patrons do not obstruct access to your neighbours' homes.
- Assess the layout of your organisation's facilities from your neighbour's perspective and review whether the layout could be adjusted to reduce the impact on neighbours (for example, car park exits are aligned in such a way that headlights are not aimed into people's living rooms).
- Encourage your patrons to adopt a 'good neighbour' attitude by being considerate of your neighbours (for example, entering and leaving the car park in an orderly and unobtrusive manner and minimising noise).
- Offer the use of your facilities to other community groups for meetings and other activities.
- Place the name and contact details of your CLO on a sign (if permitted under your organisation's lease/licence) at the entrance to the community facility so your neighbours know whom to contact if they have any issues.

Council is committed to ensuring that community facilities are managed and operated appropriately, and that their use does not negatively impact on neighbours and the local community. Good neighbour practices are commonsense. Just as your organisation evaluates and monitors its core activities, it is important to take the time to evaluate the relationships it has with neighbours. Be accessible to your neighbours and be prepared to consider changes to the way your organisation conducts its activities.

Trying to integrate your activities with your community will provide your organisation with ongoing benefits such as fewer complaints and disputes, quick and successful conflict resolution, and increased patronage leading to a greater sense of community.

Neighbours should be considered as an important part of your organisation's network.

Be prepared to work together and share the benefits.