

# RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE GUIDE





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# 1. RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE

## **WHY SET UP A RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE?**

Establishing a residents' committee is a good way to get together with your neighbors for your neighborhood and its residents. This way you can organize social activities for your fellow residents so that the neighborhood gets to know each other better. Furthermore, you can deal with structural problems at a higher level within DUWO. By uniting yourself with others and becoming an official discussion partner of your landlord, you can get much more done than when you would try alone. The power of unity always wins.

## **WHAT IS A RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE?**

A residents' committee is a group of tenants who are coming up for the interests of the tenants on their own campus. This expresses itself mainly through consultation with DUWO. A residents' committee can also provide more social activities on the campus so that the residents meet each other or to improve the quality of life by refurbishing or creating common areas.





Openingparty Little Manhattan 2017

## WHAT DOES A RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE DO?

The residents' committee is committed to all tenants of the campus. This can be achieved through addressing long-term and/or structural problems of the campus. Incidental complaints should be resolved by the residents themselves by contacting DUWO unless of course, many tenants have the same complaint. Examples of long-term and/or structural problems are security, such as whether or not cameras are installed in the campus, not enough lighting in the corridors or around the campus, better protection of the bicycle parking facilities and public areas. Other common complaints are washing machines that do not function properly, the internet that regularly fails or is slow, and DUWO that does not respond adequately to complaints from residents.

Naturally, a residents' committee can also focus on socializing or in some way make it more attractive to live on the campus. That is possible by organizing events with drinks and food like barbecues. It is also possible to organize a party, sometimes in bars close by if there is no common room on the campus. Other activities for residents are movie nights, ice skating or bowling. Of course, you can come up with an activity yourself.

You can often request a subsidy from Duwoners for these matters (see: What is the role of Duwoners?) An important function is that you, as a residents' committee, act as an official consultation partner and regularly meet with DUWO. These consultations deal with issues that are on the campus or affecting all tenants of the campus. Lastly, DUWO will submit the service costs settlement of the entire campus to the residents' committee each year and request it to be checked. The final settlement will only take place if the residents' committee gives its approval.

It is worth checking whether all items on the service costs settlement are correct and whether the costs are reasonable. For

DUWO it is mandatory to justify all service costs with invoices if the residents' committee requests them. Duwoners can help the residents' committee by looking at the service costs settlement together.

DUWO will also perform the annual inspection (maintenance status of the building) together with the residents' committee. This is usually done together with the technical caretaker and social caretaker by walking around the site and inspecting the campus.

This is the perfect moment for the residents' committee to indicate which matters they consider important and what must be repaired (see also: What is the role from DUWO?)

### **WHAT REQUIREMENTS SHOULD A RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE MEET?**

The residents' committee is a group of people who are all tenants living on the campus. There are some demands to an RC in accordance with the law (explanation will follow). A minimum of 25 tenants must live in the campus, the residents' committee must consist of at least two people and be representative of all residents and tenants in the campus must have the option to participate in the residents' committee. It is therefore important to organize a meeting at least once a year to which all residents of your campus are invited to.

DUWO can ask to prove that you are representative of all tenants, but in practice, DUWO appears to not be too difficult about this. DUWO often endorses new RC's because they function as a point of contact for DUWO and the tenants of the campus.

## 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A RC

### HOW DO I SET UP A RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE?

First, find out if there are several residents who want to join. The committee consists of at least two, but preferably several residents. If you are interested in setting up a residents' committee and you can not find other candidates, then Duwoners can help you find other interested tenants on the campus.

Secondly, create your own e-mail address for the committee. This makes it convenient to communicate with DUWO, with the residents of your campus and with others. Moreover, this way all the information remains available for future committee members.

Many tenants like to communicate via Facebook. We recommend to also have a Facebook account for your RC and if there is no group for the tenants, to create one. Whether it should be shielded or not, is up to you, but with non-protected Facebook groups, everyone can read along, and certainly DUWO!





**Duwoners boattrip with RC's 2017**

# 3. THE ROLE OF DUWONERS

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF DUWONERS?

Duwoners is the tenant association of tenants of DUWO living in and around Amsterdam (with the exception of Uilenstede in Amstelveen because it has its own tenant association). For Duwoners the founding and support of RC's are one of its most important tasks. After all, tenants in the campus know best what they want, what problems there need to be solved and can be changed for the better. In this way, Duwoners is in much more direct contact with its members. The contact person at Duwoners for the residents' committees, is the board member with the Portfolio 'Bewonerszaken' (email: [bewoners@duwoners.nl](mailto:bewoners@duwoners.nl))

Structural issues such as refurbishing common rooms, placing bike racks or security cameras are the responsibility of DUWO and thus should be paid for by DUWO.

If DUWO refuses, Duwoners can sometimes finance these things. DUWO does not fund social events. Duwoners can give a financial contribution if you apply for it on time. (see Request financial contribution for resident activities)

Duwoners supports residents' committees in all sorts of ways, such as thinking along and advising on problems that play on the campus and by supporting them in their contact and consultation with DUWO. When a residents' committee has problems with DUWO, for example, if it takes a long time before they respond, you can request assistance from Duwoners.



Even when a resident has a question or problem that the residents' committee cannot help them with, you can contact us. You can also contact Duwoners if there are any questions about the service cost settlement of the campus. Finally, Duwoners also organizes special evenings for residents committees where you can meet other residents committees and gain knowledge.



## 4. THE ROLE OF DUWO

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF DUWO?

The residents' committee is the first point of contact for all tenants on the campus. DUWO strives for regular consultation with the residents' committee about the needs and wants of the tenants. The contact with DUWO will mainly be with the caretakers of your campus: the social and technical caretaker. According to the Consultation Act (WOHV: Wet Overleg Huurder Verhuurder), DUWO must ask the residents' committee for advice on policy changes that specifically affect the residents of that campus.

### DIFFERENCE NESTOR (STUDENT CARETAKER) AND RC

The Nestor is a student who is paid by DUWO to pay attention to the quality of life and minor technical defects. Nestors are also called student caretakers. DUWO does not yet have a clear policy about student caretakers. Formulating a clear job description is something that Duwoners considers of great importance. Although the student caretakers per campus seem to perform different tasks, the tasks are usually to replace things like lamps when broken and reporting technical defects to DUWO and address residents for making noise.

There is a clear distinction between nestors/student caretakers and residents' committees. Nestors/student caretakers are officially employed by DUWO and must, therefore, promote DUWO's policy. Residents' committees are independent and stand up for the interests of the residents.

## SERVICE CHARGE SETTLEMENT

The service costs are often included in the rent. An overview of this can be found in the rental agreement. The tenant pays an advance each month. Every year the actual costs are settled with tenants. DUWO may only provide service costs that are stated in the rental agreement. Before DUWO settles the service costs, they send it for a check to the residents' committee. The RC looks critically at the costs incurred. Are these realistic? Has anything happened in the past year that the tenant could not help (for example, a leak or cleaners who didn't show up)?

To check whether the actual costs match the overview that DUWO has sent, you can request receipts and invoices. DUWO must be able to demonstrate that they have incurred those costs. If something is not right, then you consult DUWO about the service costs settlement. Duwoners can support the RC in this conversation. In the past, DUWO has adjusted the costs of water consumption in a certain campus because water from the toilets continued to run through due to technical defects, or maintenance or cleaning turned out not to have happened or did not happen properly. As a result, tenants got more money back from the service charge settlement.

If there are any service costs that you do not consider necessary, it can be removed. It can only be done for a whole campus and at least 70% of the tenants must agree. Residents of campus were dissatisfied with the cleaning of the common areas that were arranged by DUWO. By supplying a petition, those costs are removed and the service is no longer delivered.









AUC Dormfest 2017

# 5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

## IS FINANCIAL SUPPORT POSSIBLE FOR THE RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE?

Residents' committees can promote the quality of life of their student campus in various ways. Often there are costs involved, these costs may declare residents' commissions to DUWO or Duwoners. A plan, including a budget, must be submitted to both parties in advance. These costs will be reimbursed upon approval. DUWO finances sustainable applications that promote the quality of life. Finally, the residents' committee can turn to Duwoners when it comes to organizing social activities.

## SOCIAL MANAGEMENT BUDGET (DUWO)

DUWO does not, in principle, finance the social activities of residents. DUWO does finance structural issues in the field of safety and quality of life. You can think of: bicycle parking, fixed BBQs in the open air (Spinoza campus) and security cameras. Discuss this with the social manager of your site. These matters can be reimbursed from the DUWO Social Management Budget that is intended for this purpose. If a request for such matters is rejected, it may be worth talking to Duwoners. Duwoners can start negotiating with DUWO and if that does not work, Duwoners can decide to finance it themselves.

## **SUPPORT FROM DUWONERS**

Duwoners has a budget to financially support activities for residents. Examples of activities are drinks and parties in the communal area or a café nearby, ice-skating with the entire campus or playing pool in a pool cafe. In addition, we can also make a contribution for benches and tables for the common indoor and/or outdoor space, if DUWO does not want to reimburse this.

However, a budget must be sent to [bewoners@duwoners.nl](mailto:bewoners@duwoners.nl) at least 3 weeks in advance, with a brief motivation and an explanation for the costs. We discuss an application for a contribution during the board meeting, which in principle takes place every two weeks. So it is important to submit the budget and motivation at least 3 weeks in advance.

## **DUWONERS GUIDELINES**

There are no strict guidelines, but it is examined whether the budget and the requested amount are realistic. In addition, activities (examples: bowling, skating, pooling) have priority over drinks and parties. Financing of structural issues and activities that are expected to have a long or significant effect on all residents of the campus (and possibly neighborhood residents!) also has priority. In addition, we try to distribute the money as fairly as possible across all the campuses for which subsidies are requested. That is why Duwoners encourages the organization of activities in a common area, especially when this is done on a regular basis. Think of weekly a cheap meal for residents, a campus drink, games or movie night, etc. These activities are assessed separately from the incidental applications.









**Zuiderzeeweg Neighbourhood Party 2017**

## BUDGET REQUEST

The board of Duwoners evaluates the application and will provide a response within a short time. If the board approves, the invoice will be paid after receiving the receipts. Duwoners does expect that the activity will be sufficiently promoted through Facebook, posters and possibly flyers so that as many residents as possible are reached.

In addition, Duwoners asks the residents' committee to provide a written report with photos after the event has taken place, which we can post on our website and social media. In this way, Duwoners can justify the costs to all its members.



**Safetycheck Meeting Zuiderzeeweg 2016**





## Course Consultation Law 2017

# MORE INFORMATION

For more information, you can consult the websites below. If you are unable to find a solution, we will gladly give advice. You can always contact us by sending an email to [bewoners@duwoners.nl](mailto:bewoners@duwoners.nl)

Text Consultation Act: <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0009810> / 2015-07-01

Website Duwoners: [www.duwoners.nl](http://www.duwoners.nl)

Website DUWO: [www.duwo.nl](http://www.duwo.nl)

Facebook Duwoners: <https://www.facebook.com/duwoners/>



Annual Members Meeting 2016