

Run a successful community centre

A guide for community groups

Foreword

Community facilities are at the heart of vibrant, connected, and resilient communities across Christchurch and Banks Peninsula. We work alongside community organisations to support and activate these spaces for the benefit of local people. Community groups play an important role in helping facilities remain welcoming, well-used, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.

Community facilities also support connection, participation, wellbeing, neighbourhood resilience, and a sense of belonging for diverse communities, including tangata whenua and multicultural communities across the district.

This guide aims to support community organisations that manage our facilities. It outlines key expectations, responsibilities, and good practice approaches to help facilities succeed.

We acknowledge the significant contribution made by volunteers, trustees, committee members, and community leaders who dedicate their time and energy to these important community spaces.

1. Our network

We have a diverse network of community facilities across Christchurch and Banks Peninsula to support recreation, learning, connection, wellbeing, creativity, and local participation.

We own about 80 community facilities within a wider network of around 160 venues across the district.

Your facility is part of this wider network and contributes to broader community outcomes across the district.

Successful facilities will:

- Respond to local community needs
- Be welcoming, inclusive, and accessible
- Support a range of users, activities, and programmes
- Be actively used and well promoted
- Operate sustainably over the long term
- Build strong community partnerships
- Explore opportunities for shared-use and collaboration
- Adapt to changing community needs over time.

Facilities that are well-activated and community-focused are more likely to remain sustainable and valued into the future.

2. Your role

Community organisations are vital in ensuring facilities remain active, accessible, and well cared for.

We expect community-managed facilities to:

Provide community benefit

Support activities, programmes, or services that benefit the wider community.

Encourage use and participation

Actively promote and encourage community use of the facility through programmes, events, partnerships, or regular activities.

Support accessibility and inclusion

Aim to provide welcoming and accessible spaces for people of different ages, cultures, abilities, and backgrounds.

Care for the facility

Keep the facility clean, tidy, safe, and well-maintained, and report issues early before they become larger problems.

Operate safely and responsibly

Maintain appropriate health and safety practices and provide a safe environment for users, volunteers, and visitors.

Work collaboratively with us

Maintain open communication with our staff and seek advice or support when needed.

Provide quarterly updates

Share simple information about facility use, activities, and any emerging issues through our quarterly reporting process.

These expectations support our goal that community facilities are well-used, sustainable, and responsive to local needs.

3. Our role

Our role in community facilities varies depending on the type of facility, the community organisation involved, and the level of community capability and activation.

We may act as a:

- **Direct provider** – we directly manage the facility
- **Supporter** – we own the facility while community organisations activate and use the space
- **Encourager** – we support increasing community activation over time
- **Enabler** – community organisations lease and largely operate the facility independently
- **Investor/Funder** – community organisations own facilities with some support or investment from us.

Most community-managed facilities operate under the Supporter, Encourager, or Enabler models.

Our funding is limited and prioritised across the wider network of facilities. This means not all upgrade requests or renewal projects can be immediately accommodated.

4. Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities are outlined in your lease or licence agreement.

In general:

We are typically responsible for:

- Structural building elements (such as roofs, exterior walls, and foundations)
- Building insurance
- Major capital renewals, subject to Long Term Plan funding and priorities
- Strategic oversight of the wider community facilities network.

You are typically responsible for:

- Day-to-day operations
- Interior upkeep and minor maintenance
- Cleaning and presentation
- Utilities and operational costs (where applicable)
- Public liability insurance
- Managing bookings and hirers
- Health and safety compliance
- Activating the facility and encouraging community use.

If you are unsure about responsibilities for a particular issue, contact your leasing consultant.

5. Care of your facility

Many community facilities are ageing and require ongoing care to remain safe, functional, and welcoming.

Good day-to-day management helps extend the life of the facility and reduces the risk of larger maintenance issues developing over time.

As a general guide:

- Minor interior repairs and routine cleaning are usually your responsibility
- Structural or significant building issues are generally our responsibility
- Report maintenance issues early to help prevent further deterioration

- Keep records of maintenance concerns, incidents, or damage
- Contact us if you are unsure who is responsible for a repair.

In an emergency, make the situation safe first and notify us as soon as possible.

6. Activate your facility

Well-used facilities deliver stronger community outcomes and are more sustainable over time.

Activation does not need to be complicated. Small, consistent activities can make a significant difference to community connection and facility use.

Some ways to support activation:

- Offer a variety of activities, programmes, or events
- Create welcoming and inclusive spaces
- Partner with local schools, organisations, and community groups
- Explore shared-use opportunities with compatible groups
- Promote activities through local networks and social media
- Make spaces affordable and accessible where possible
- Identify gaps or unmet needs within the local community
- Consider how the facility can support community connection and resilience during emergencies or disruptive events.

Facilities that are regularly used and visible within their community are more likely to thrive long term.

7. Quarterly reporting

We need a short quarterly update on how your facility is being used.

This is completed through a simple online form and should take only a few minutes to complete.

Each quarter, a link to the reporting form will be emailed to you.

The quarterly update may include:

- Approximate levels of facility use
- Types of activities and groups using the facility
- Community outcomes or success stories
- Emerging issues or challenges
- Maintenance concerns or support needed from us.

This information helps us:

- Understand how facilities are being used
- Identify changing community needs
- Support community organisations more effectively
- Make future planning and investment decisions.

It is recommended that one committee member is responsible for completing the report each quarter.

8. Governance and good practice

Strong governance supports sustainable and effective facility management.

Good governance helps community organisations make informed decisions, manage risks, and plan for the future.

Good practice means you will:

- Have clear committee roles and responsibilities
- Review budgets and finances regularly
- Plan for future operational costs and maintenance needs
- Seek funding opportunities where appropriate
- Monitor whether the facility is being used effectively
- Keep insurance policies current

- Maintain appropriate health and safety systems
- Keep records of maintenance, incidents, and bookings
- Review lease obligations periodically
- Plan for committee succession and volunteer recruitment.

Sustainable facilities rely on healthy volunteer governance. Share responsibilities across committee members and plan for future leadership changes to reduce the risk of burnout and support long-term success.

Even small organisations benefit from having clear systems and shared responsibilities.

9. Work with us and community boards

Our staff are available to support community organisations to manage facilities.

Support may include:

- Lease and property advice
- Maintenance support and coordination
- Governance and operational guidance
- Advice on community activation and partnerships.

Community boards have an important local role and may make decisions relating to:

- Leases and licences
- Local funding and grants
- Some facility improvements and community initiatives.

Maintaining open communication with us will help to resolve issues early and identify opportunities for support and collaboration.

10. Get started - new committee members

First steps

New committee members should:

- Read and understand the lease or licence agreement
- Confirm insurance arrangements are current
- Review health and safety procedures
- Understand booking and hirer processes
- Familiarise themselves with key Council contacts
- Save the quarterly reporting link and set reminders.

Next steps

To ensure successful facility management:

- Keep the facility safe, clean, and welcoming
- Encourage community participation and use
- Address issues early
- Maintain good communication within the committee and with us
- Plan ahead for maintenance, volunteers, and future needs

Final note

Community-managed facilities are an important part of Christchurch and Banks Peninsula's community infrastructure.

Facilities are most successful when they are:

- Well-used
- Well cared for
- Inclusive and welcoming
- Financially and operationally sustainable
- Responsive to local needs
- Connected to their communities.

We value the contribution community organisations make and we are committed to working in partnership with you to support positive community outcomes.
