

The Chairperson

Chairing is a key role. The chair is expected to provide leadership to the managing committee but should not dominate meetings.

At Committee meetings the chair's role is to ensure full communication and effective decision-making

- ❖ **Communicate** – start the meeting, set the scene, state the objectives
- ❖ **Control** – but not dominate, allow freedom of expression, keep to the agenda
- ❖ **Co-ordinate** – highlight areas of common agreement
- ❖ **Compare** – weigh up contributions impartially
- ❖ **Clarify** – ensure everyone understands what is being discussed, explain any 'jargon', summarise

The role of the Chair is to:

- ❖ Prepare the agenda for meetings (usually with the secretary). This will include thinking about how long each item might take and whether committee members need information in advance
- ❖ Chair committee meetings and the annual General Meeting
- ❖ Represent the group and speak on its behalf
- ❖ Have an overview of the organisation and its work
- ❖ Sign and write letters (only sometimes and usually with the secretary)
- ❖ Lead, produce ideas and keep the organisation on the right lines
- ❖ Support and encourage other members (any paid staff or volunteers the organisation may have) and help to resolve conflicts

It is a good idea to have a Vice Chairperson who can take over if the Chair is away or ill. This can also be a training opportunity for someone who may be the next Chairperson.

Chairing Meetings

The Chairperson has to perform two tasks:

- ❖ Make sure the business of a meeting is completed
- ❖ Help members work together

The Chair should be able to:

- ❖ Clarify and explain
- ❖ Lead and control
- ❖ Summarise

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- ❖ Involve members and give everyone a chance to contribute
 - ❖ Maintain a balance between getting the business done and making sure members' needs are met (how is everyone feeling?)
 - ❖ Be patient – it takes time before people really start working together in a productive way
 - ❖ Try to be objective and unbiased
 - ❖ Be formal when appropriate
 - ❖ Avoid speaking too much

Before the meeting the Chairperson should:

- ❖ Prepare the agenda (with the secretary)
- ❖ Be clear about the purpose of the meeting and the possible implications of each agenda item
- ❖ Be clear about what decisions have to be made
- ❖ Think about how much time should be spent on each item
- ❖ Make sure everyone has the relevant information well before the date of the meeting

At the meeting the Chair should:

- ❖ Arrive early and allow time for people to socialise before the start
- ❖ Start the meeting on time
- ❖ Make sure introductions are made if needed
- ❖ Set the tone by being friendly but businesslike
- ❖ Ensure that members understand the structure of the meeting, as well as what is being discussed and why
- ❖ Explain points and items where necessary
- ❖ Ensure that all members know exactly what they are voting for or against and what has been decided
- ❖ Be aware of the time
- ❖ Be prepared to alter the order of the agenda, or how an item is handled, if the committee so wishes
- ❖ Regularly sum up what has been decided and check that everyone is in agreement
- ❖ Ask a member to clarify what they are saying if other people do not appear to understand
- ❖ Discourage separate discussions by small groups within the meeting
- ❖ Discourage dominant members from taking over
- ❖ Make sure everyone has the chance to speak
- ❖ Encourage the expression of ideas but try to prevent conflict
- ❖ Try to end on a positive note

After the meeting the Chairperson should think about the meeting and how any improvements could be made for next time.



The Secretary

The job of the Secretary is to:

- ❖ Prepare the agenda (with the Chairperson)
- ❖ Produce and circulate the agenda and relevant papers
- ❖ Ensure that appropriate information is obtained and provided for committee members before the meeting
- ❖ Check to ensure that a quorum is present at meetings (ie enough members are present to make decisions)
- ❖ After meetings, to inform members who were absent of any actions they need to take
- ❖ Maintain the membership list
- ❖ Receive correspondence and report about it to the committee
- ❖ Write letters on behalf of the organisation – these may need to be checked/signed by the Chairperson
- ❖ Book rooms, arrange meetings and organise refreshments
- ❖ Keep the organisation's constitution, a copy of the minutes and other records in a safe place
- ❖ Ensure the organisation has adequate insurance
- ❖ Ensure that necessary documents are completed – eg for the Charity Commission, companies House or funders

At meetings the Secretary should

- ❖ Ensure the Chair signs previous minutes, once approved
- ❖ Produce the minutes – they do not always take them, someone else may do this)
- ❖ Make sure decisions and any subsequent actions are recorded

The Treasurer

The task of the Treasurer is to make sure money and proerty are properly managed. They have a 'watchdog' role over all aspects of financial management but may not necessarily carry out all the book-keeping, record keeping etc. some duties may be delegated. They act on behalf of the management committee to safeguard the organisation's finances.

Their duties include:

- ❖ Keep accurate, up-to-date financial records (these should be kept for 7 years)
- ❖ Produce end-of-year accounts – or arrange for these to be completed and externally examined, in line with statutory requirements, and the group's constitution
- ❖ Communicate with the bank, including ensuring that bank statements are regularly received and kept safely and that cheque signatory mandates are kept up to date
- ❖ Check bank statements and reconcile them with the cash book/computer records on a regular basis

- ❖ Ensure that understandable systems are in place and operated by all members, staff and volunteers eg for petty cash claims
- ❖ Ensure that bills are paid promptly and all income is banked on a regular basis
- ❖ Report regularly to the committee on the financial situation
- ❖ Be able to give an accurate picture of the organisation's financial position at any given time
- ❖ Report to the Annual General Meeting on the end-of-year accounts
- ❖ Prepare an annual budget for the committee
- ❖ Ensure that funds are being spent in accordance with the organisation's objects and that money given for a specific purpose can be seen to have been used correctly
- ❖ Keep an inventory of equipment eg computers
- ❖ Appoint auditors (if required by charity law or the group's constitution)

Not the Treasurer's Job

Although the Treasurer is responsible for preparing a draft budget and reporting regularly to the committee about the state of finances ***it is the responsibility of the whole committee to:***

- ❖ Agree the budget
- ❖ Make decisions about allocating money
- ❖ Fundraise
- ❖ Make grant applications (although the Treasurer should be involved in this - eg over the budgets)
- ❖ Chase committee members - eg for receipts

What does a committee member do?

- ❖ Come to meetings whenever possible, or send apologies if you can't attend
- ❖ Contribute to the discussion – your views matter
- ❖ Volunteer if you can see a job that needs doing
- ❖ request items on the agenda for discussion
- ❖ report back if you go to meetings on behalf of the group
- ❖ respect confidentiality – don't gossip about individuals or their private affairs
- ❖ don't let differences of opinion cloud the issues
- ❖ help the honorary officers produce and distribute leaflets or newsletters
- ❖ make sure you represent the views of everyone
- ❖ give the Treasurer receipts for your expenses (if any are paid)

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