

Journey of a Group:

The Management Committee

Overview

A Management Committee is a group of people who have been elected and appointed to make decisions on behalf of a voluntary and community group (also known as a board of directors, board of trustees or committee).

How does it work?

Any voluntary organisation needs a committee of people who will organise how the group is run. The committee function ensures that decisions are made in a democratic way, with members taking on collective responsibility for the group.

The committee is responsible for holding regular meetings to make sure the organisation follows its aims and objectives (on their governing document) in accordance with the law. All committee members have a duty to ensure that the organisation manages its finances properly and that any activities carried out (or decisions made) are in the best interests of the organization and its members. Even if an organisation employs staff, the ultimate responsibility for the organisation lies with the management committee.

Your **governing document (or constitution)** should say how committee members are voted onto the committee, for how long they serve, and how regularly they should meet. Having an induction process for new management committee members can help to engage them from the start. If your organisation is a registered charity, then your organisation must abide by charity law (in this case your management committee members will be known as trustees). Even if you are not a registered charity, you can still follow charity law as good practice.

Sub-committees

If necessary, the committee can organise a sub-committee to take on specific tasks such as finance or organising an event. A sub-committee is a useful way to manage extra work or activities that require special care and attention. A sub-committee can meet away from the main meetings to tackle a key issue and report back to the main committee.

Honorary officers

Honorary officers are usually the three people who have specific responsibilities as well as being management committee members. The honorary roles are usually Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Some organisations choose to have a vice or secondary roles as well, in case replacements are ever needed.

Key Words:

Constitution – governing document or set of rules

Chair – lead role in the organisation, the one who chairs meetings

Treasurer – the person who is responsible for the group's finances

Secretary – the person responsible for minutes and communications

The Chair

The responsibilities of the Chair:

- To prepare the agenda for meetings (with the secretary)
- To plan meetings
- To chair committee meetings and the AGM (Annual General Meeting)
- To represent the group and speak on its behalf To have an overview of the group and its work
- To act or take decisions for the group between meetings, if necessary To support and encourage other members
- To lead, produce ideas and keep the group on the right lines
- To be able to sign cheques

Chairing meetings - the chairperson has to perform 2 tasks:

- To make sure that the business is completed
- To help members to work together so that they leave the meeting feeling that something has been achieved.

Before the meeting the chairperson should:

- Be clear about the purpose of the meeting and possible outcome 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 meeting.

At the meeting the chairperson should:

- Arrive early and allow people to socialise
- Start the meeting on time & make sure introductions are made

- Ensure members understand the structure of the meeting as well as what is being discussed and why
- Ensure members know what they are voting for/against and what has been decided
- Sum up what has been decided and check everyone is in agreement
- Be prepared to change the order of the agenda if necessary
- Ask a member to clarify what they are saying if others do not appear to understand
- Draw in quieter members and discourage dominant members from taking over
- Encourage ideas and opinions but prevent conflict - end on a positive note.

The Secretary

The responsibilities of the Secretary:

- To prepare (with the Chair), produce and circulate the agenda
- To make sure the appropriate information is obtained and provided to committee members before the meeting
- To take and write minutes
- After meetings, to inform absent members of any action they need to take
- To remind individuals between meetings of actions they have agreed to take
- To maintain the membership list
- To send and receive correspondence and report back to the committee
- To book rooms, arrange meetings and organise refreshments
- To keep the group's records and constitution
- To deal with legal matters, eg, insurance

- To produce a written annual report
- To be able to sign cheques
- Any other roles that the secretary takes on can be decided by the management committee.

The Treasurer

The responsibilities of the Treasurer

- To keep accounts/financial records
- To arrange end of year audit
- To ensure the bank mandate forms, etc are completed and up-to-date
- To communicate with the bank and ensure bank statements are received
- To check bank statements and reconcile them with the cash book
- To make sure she/he receives all money and/or information regularly about money received or paid and to pay bills
- To prepare accounts
- To report regularly on the financial situation
- To report at the Annual General Meeting on the end of year accounts
- To be able to sign cheques

The duties of the treasurer can depend on the size of the organisation. In a large organisation with paid staff (who may undertake the day-to-day finance work), the treasurer has more of a planning and authorising role.

In a smaller organisation, the treasurer is responsible for keeping petty cash, looking after accounts, cash books and getting cheques signed.

Common Problems

Power – Avoid the pitfall of having one person in control of the organisation and deciding everything that it does

Laziness – There will be times when one person is doing far more than others within the group, this needs to be managed as all the organising cannot be just for one or two people within the group.

The quiet one – Being a committee member can seem a difficult prospect. Make sure new members are not overwhelmed by what they've taken on and are given as much support as possible.

Further Sources:

Trustee roles

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/governance/what-is-governance/trustees-and-their-roles/trustee-roles/>

Charity Commission Trustee Welcome Pack

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-trustee-welcome-pack/charity-trustee-welcome-pack>

This factsheet is for guidance only. For any further information, guidance and support, please contact Bolton CVS on: 01204 546010 or e-mail: info@boltoncvs.org.uk