



FACTSHEET 3

Management Committees

Any voluntary organisation needs a committee of people who will organise how the group is run. This is to ensure that the decisions that are made in a democratic way and so all committee members take collective responsibility.

The committee should meet as often as is stated in the constitution. This would normally be often enough so that the committee knows exactly what is going on with the organisation, but not so often that nothing happens except meetings! (For more about constitutions, see **Factsheet 2: Constitutions**).

If your constitution states that your organisation has a membership (this is usual for voluntary organisations), then your committee members usually come from amongst the membership.

Your constitution should state how committee members are voted on to the committee, and for how long they serve. The committee as a whole has a responsibility to:

- meet! This sounds obvious but if the committee doesn't meet regularly then it can't manage the running of the organisation properly.
- ensure the organisation follows its aims and objectives
- carries out its aims in accordance with the law
- ensure the organisation manages its finances properly
- ensure that activities carried out and decisions made are in the best interest of the

organisation and not any individual member of the committee

- if necessary, the committee can organise sub-committees to take on specific tasks such as finance or for organising an event.

It is important to note that even if an organisation employs staff, the ultimate responsibility lies with the management committee.

Having an induction process for new management committee members can help to involve them properly from the start. You could have a introduction pack which includes your constitution, all the organisations policies and recent accounts. Ensure that new members aren't bombarded with lots of jargon.

If your organisation is a registered charity, then your organisation must abide by charity law. Officially your management committee members are known as charity trustees. The Charity Commission publishes a leaflet (CC3) called **Responsibility of Charity Trustees**. However, if you are not a registered charity it doesn't mean that you can be irresponsible and mismanage the organisation. Following charity law is good practice for all voluntary organisations.

1: Some common management committee behaviour

Power

You need to avoid the danger of having one person wanting to control

Management Committees

the organisation and everything it does. This is often the person who first had the idea for the organisation and finds it difficult to let go.

Laziness

There will inevitably be someone who does not pull their weight, and will leave everything to someone else.

The Quiet One

Being a committee member can be quite daunting for some people. Make sure new members are not overwhelmed by what they've taken on, and are given as much support as possible.

2: Honorary officers

Honorary officers might sound rather grand, but essentially it is (usually) three people who have specific responsibilities as well as being management committee members. These are:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Some organisations choose to have a vice-chair as well, or perhaps have some form of wording in the constitution that covers what happens if a deputy is needed.

The Chair

The Chair is often the spokesperson for the organisation, particularly when an organisation has no paid staff.

To chair a meeting just means to keep the meeting to order and to make sure that the committee gets through the agenda. You must make sure that you keep to time, and indeed keep the peace at times! Other important points are:

- clarifying specific points, especially any names and acronyms that might be unclear, especially to new committee members
- encourage participation by everyone
- don't allow certain individuals to dominate the discussions
- keep a check on timewasting, interruptions, and any personal attacks
- remember to thank everyone for their time and effort. Committee members are

volunteers and like to be valued.

It is not just the meetings that are important. It is just as vital to be prepared for meetings and to try to be aware of questions that may be raised by the committee.

It is important the chair is supported by the rest of the committee and doesn't take on too much of the work, as this can lead to burn-out.

The Secretary

Usually the main job of the secretary is to keep minutes (notes) of meetings and to distribute them to management committee members.

Any other roles that the secretary should take on can be decided by the management committee as a whole - with the agreement of the secretary, of course!


The Treasurer

The duties of the treasurer can depend on the size of the organisation. In a large organisation with paid staff who 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 the petty cash book up-to-date
- authorising purchases
- keeping the books
- keeping the rest of the committee informed about the financial position of the organisation
- signing cheques

FURTHER HELP

Dudley Council for Voluntary Service
7 Albion Street
Brierley Hill
West Midlands
DY5 3EE

 01384 78166

www.dudleycvs.org.uk

Main duties of the chair

The tasks of a chair can be divided into four key areas, some of which could be delegated to a vice chair.

Planning and running the organisation's meetings

These include the AGM, any other members' meetings and committee meetings. This is the only legal duty of a chair.

Planning meetings involves:

- ensuring the organisation holds the meetings required by its constitution
- helping to plan the agendas for each meeting, checking the minutes of previous meetings and ensuring that these and any background papers are distributed beforehand
- being briefed about each item on the agenda
- ensuring outstanding matters are followed up
- ensuring compliance with the procedures for giving notice of meetings (although this is more likely to be a duty of the secretary).

Running meetings involves:

- ensuring the meeting is quorate
- gaining agreement of the minutes of the previous meeting and then signing them
- making sure all relevant items on the agenda are discussed
- ensuring all participants who wish to do so have the opportunity to make a contribution, or in large meetings deciding who is chosen to speak
- making sure voting procedures are complied with
- clarifying key decisions that are made
- ensuring proper minutes are taken.

Dealing with matters relating to the membership, other officers and users

This involves:

- ensuring members' rights as stated in the constitution are met
- helping to deal with disciplinary action against members and other officers
- helping to deal with disputes between members, users and the organisation.

Supervising senior staff

The chair is often responsible for supervising and supporting the work of the senior member of staff.

Helping with the management of the organisation

This involves:

- making decisions and taking action between committee meetings (taking 'chair's action') if this is allowed by the constitution or has been authorised by the committee
- acting as a sounding board for senior staff
- signing cheques and liaising with the treasurer
- helping to deal with any staff problems
- assisting with staff recruitment.

Other duties

The chair may also act as a spokesperson, which could include:

- representing the organisation at external events
- liaising with the press on behalf of the organisation (this could be delegated to a press officer)
- taking an active role in fundraising campaigns.

Main Duties Of A Secretary

The secretary takes on responsibilities in relation to meetings, maintaining lists of members and committee members' names and addresses, and ensuring annual reports and accounts are submitted to the relevant agencies.

Preparing for meetings

This involves:

- sending notices of all meetings to members, within the time required by the constitution
- making arrangements for meetings, for example organising refreshments, booking rooms, ensuring appropriate facilities for participants with disabilities or other special needs
- preparing the agenda, in consultation with the chair, and distributing the agenda with any background papers
- checking that members have carried out tasks agreed at the previous meeting.

Helping in meetings

This involves:

- making sure the minutes of the previous meeting are agreed and that they are signed by the chair
- taking and producing minutes of the meetings, recording names of those attending and apologies, major decisions, any votes taken and agreed further action.

Other administration

This involves:

- dealing with incoming correspondence
- keeping records of outgoing correspondence
- keeping records of membership subscriptions
- ensuring members are provided with the organisation's constitution, annual report and policies
- sending out publicity about the organisation.

For further information:

Dudley Council for Voluntary Service
7 Albion Street
Brierley Hill. DY5 3EE
01384 78166

www.dudleycvs.org.uk

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

In a small group, the treasurer may deal with all aspects of financial management including keeping records. In organisations with paid staff, the day-to-day management of the finances could be delegated to a paid finance worker or another staff member, who would report to the treasurer.

However, in all cases final responsibility for financial matters always rests with the committee as a whole.

The treasurer's responsibilities may include the following:

- general financial oversight
- managing income – funding, contracts, fundraising and sales
- financial planning and budgeting
- financial reporting
- banking, bookkeeping and record keeping
- control of fixed assets and stock
- investments
- insurances
- possibly premises, if there is not a premises sub-committee.

Use the following checklist to decide which tasks should be carried out by the treasurer or finance staff and which need the involvement of the finance sub-committee or whole committee.

General Financial Oversight

This covers broad responsibility for the organisation's financial decision making and may include:

- ensuring workers and committee members know enough about financial administration, bookkeeping and the accounts to make decision for which they are responsible
- advising on financial policies, for example what expenses can be claimed and the procedures for claiming them, financial implications of new activities, or the organisation's policy on charging for its services
- advising on employment and other contracts
- making day to day financial decisions on behalf of the committee, if given delegated authority, and reporting such decisions to the committee
- liaising with the bank or other financial institutions
- preparing accounts for audit and liaising with the auditor
- deciding on measures to ensure security of cash and cheques.

Continued overleaf

Managing Income

This involves ensuring the organisation has enough money to carry out its activities. The sources of income can be divided into funding (grant aid), contracts or service agreements (to provide activities or services), fundraising (for example membership drives, appeals, jumble sales or special events undertaken to raise money for the organisation) and sales of goods or services.

Responsibilities include:

- developing and implementing an income-generating strategy
- coordinating fundraising activities
- running fundraising activities
- collecting information on funding sources
- completing, submitting and coordinating funding applications
- liaising with funding agencies
- ensuring money received for a special project is spent for that purpose and if necessary is separately accounted for
- drawing up tenders or proposals for contracted services
- ensuring appropriate pricing of goods or services

Financial Planning and Budgeting

This includes:

- preparing budgets and cash flow forecasts in consultation with workers and funders
- presenting budgets to the committee for approval
- keeping track of how actual income and expenditure compares with budgeted income and expenditure and adjusting financial forecasts as appropriate
- in the case of cash flow problems, deciding priorities for paying, pursuing any money owed to the organisation and negotiating for late payment if necessary

Financial Reporting

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring the committee has enough information to make its decisions. This means:

- reporting regularly, in writing, to the committee on the organisation's financial position
- preparing and presenting financial reports and accounts when required
- presenting the end of year financial report (draft annual accounts) to the committee
- presenting the audited or examined accounts to the annual general meeting (AGM)
- ensuring members at the AGM or other general meeting understand the annual accounts and the budget for the current year.

Continued overleaf

Banking, Bookkeeping and Record Keeping

The treasurer is responsible for:

- advising on which banks or other financial institutions the organisations should use and the type of bank accounts it should have (note that every decision to open, close or change bank or other accounts must be approved by the committee)
- serving as a signatory for the organisation's bank accounts (all changes of signatory must be approved by the committee)
- ensuring there are proper systems for receiving and paying out cash and cheques
- setting up appropriate bookkeeping and petty cash systems, and ensuring related documentation is kept
- ensuring membership records are kept and subscriptions collected
- ensuring other money due to the organisation is collected, that there are procedures for non-payment and that such action is taken if required
- ensuring all bills are paid and receipts are received for all payments
- ensuring payment of wages, income tax, national insurance, statutory sick pay, pensions, statutory maternity pay, tax credits and student loan repayments and that records are kept of these payments
- ensuring everyone handling money for the organisation keeps appropriate records and documentation.

Control of Fixed Assets and Stock

The treasurer has broad responsibility for ensuring proper control of fixed assets (major equipment, vehicles, buildings and other property owned by the organisation), its materials or supplies (goods required for running the organisation) and its stock (goods such as publications waiting to be distributed or sold). This responsibility includes:

- ensuring the organisation keeps records of material and supplies used
- establishing systems for stock control and reorders
- undertaking or overseeing regular stock checks
- ensuring the organisation keeps records of its equipment and vehicles, including date of purchase, supplier, value, model and serial number (sometimes called an inventory)
- ensuring the organisation has all necessary insurances and keeps them up to date.

Investments

The treasurer will:

- ensure the organisation takes proper financial advice in relation to any investments
- ensure the organisation complies with its constitutions and charity law in relation to its investments
- ensure all decisions about investments are properly made and minuted
- monitor the progress of investments.

Taken from '**Voluntary But Not Amateur**'

By Jacki Reason, Ruth Hayes & Duncan Forbes

Published by London Voluntary Service Council – October 2000 – Sixth Edition