

Management Committees

The management committee of an organisation is the committee or group of people who are ultimately responsible for running the organisation.

If the organisation becomes a registered charity, the committee members will also become trustees of the charity. It manages the group's affairs on behalf of the members and is responsible to the members.

The overall **aims** of the organisation are listed in the constitution and the committee has to put them into effect. The members of the committee have a responsibility to work together and to take decisions. They share the responsibility for decisions and actions.

The work of the committee will include:

- meeting regularly
- ensuring members are kept informed
- managing the finances
- agreeing a budget, and a fundraising strategy
- making sure the organisation is properly insured
- making sure the organisation stays within the law
- developing policies in areas such as equal opportunities, health and safety, and recruitment, induction and supervision of volunteers and employees
- managing volunteers and employees and making sure they are treated properly
- monitoring and evaluating performance

In order to manage well, committee members need:

- a shared vision and agreement about why the organisation exists
- clear roles and responsibilities
- clear short and long term goals
- an ability and willingness to plan, work together and set targets

There are also several useful sources of advice and support available. You don't have to reinvent the wheel! To begin with, it is worth contacting

Voluntary Action Sheffield. As well as the services we offer, we can direct you to other people who may be able to help.

Most committees include members with special responsibilities and roles - usually a chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

It is important that these jobs are agreed and written down, so that people with these positions know exactly what they are supposed to do.

The Chairperson

The job of the chairperson is to:

1. 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
2. chair committee meetings and the Annual General Meeting
3. represent the group and speak on its behalf
4. have an overview of the organisation and its work
5. sign and write letters (only sometimes and usually with the secretary)
6. lead, produce ideas and keep the organisation on the right lines
7. support and encourage other members (and 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 to work together so that they leave the meeting feeling that something has been achieved.

The chairperson should be able to:

- clarify and explain
- lead and control
- summarise
- 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 chairperson should:

- arrive early and allow time for people to socialise before the start
- start the meeting on time
- make sure introductions are made
- 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 and discussions, 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:

1. prepare the agenda (with the chairperson)
2. produce and circulate the agenda
3. ensure that appropriate information is obtained and provided for committee members before the meeting
4. take, write and circulate minutes
5. after meetings, to inform members who were absent of any action they need to take
6. maintain the membership list
7. receive correspondence and report about it to the committee

8. write letters on behalf of the organisation - these may need to be checked/signed by the chairperson

9. book rooms, arrange meetings and organise refreshments
10. keep the organisation's constitution, a copy of minutes and other records in a safe place
11. produce a written annual report, if needed.
12. ensure the organisation has adequate insurance
13. ensure that necessary documents are completed eg. for the Charity Commission, Companies House or funders.

The Treasurer

The job of the treasurer is to:

1. keep accurate, up-to-date financial records (records should be kept for 7 years)
2. 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.
3. 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
4. check bank statements and reconcile them with the cash book/current account book on a regular basis.
5. ensure that understandable systems are in place and operated by all members, staff and volunteers, eg for petty cash claims (the treasurer need not necessarily handle every item of cash themselves)
6. ensure that bills are paid promptly and all income is banked on a regular basis
7. report regularly to the committee on the financial situation
8. be able to give an accurate picture of the organisation's financial position at any given time
9. report to the Annual General Meeting on the end-of-year accounts
10. prepare an annual budget for the committee
11. 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
12. keep an inventory of equipment eg. computers.

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 Committee to:**

- agree the budget
- make decisions about allocating money
- fundraise
- make grant applications (though the treasurer should be involved in this, eg. over the budgets)
- chase committee members eg. for receipts.

Rules about Money

- There should be a separate bank account for the organisation - money should never be paid into a personal account.
- Cheque books, petty cash and account books should be kept in a secure place.

Cheques

- All cheques should be signed by at least two people. Cheques should not be signed by the person to whom the cheque is payable. Avoid a situation where relatives sign cheques together.
- When cheques are signed, the person signing should see the appropriate invoice.
- No-one should ever sign blank or partly completed cheques.
- Wherever possible, payments should be made by cheque rather than cash.
- There should be an agreed limit to the amount that can be signed for by the signatories - amounts larger than this should be authorised by the management committee.
- Get a receipt for any payment, whether cash or cheque.
- Do not pay bills without an invoice. Each bill paid should be filed, with the date and cheque number written on it.

Money received

- All cash and cheques received must be paid into the bank. Keep a record of the date and the amount paid in.
- Give a receipt for any money or cheque received.
- If cash is collected, for example from a fundraising event, at least two people should be there when the money is counted and they should sign a slip certifying the total amount.

Recording

- Enter all items into the cash book regularly. Make it clear whether payments and receipts are cash or cheques. You could use separate books, or separate columns.
- Check the bank statement against the cash book entries every time it is received -or at least monthly.
- Keep files of all bills and invoices sent out, all receipts, etc. If possible, give them a number, and write that number in the books as well.

Petty Cash

- Agree on a maximum figure for the petty cash float. All cash payments should be made from this float, which should be regularly replenished from the bank account.
- No petty cash should be given out without a petty cash voucher being completed. Receipts (eg bus tickets) should also be produced where possible. The petty cash voucher should be signed by the person receiving the money and the person authorising the payment.
- Petty cash should be handled by only 1 or 2 people.

Volunteers and employees

- Volunteers should be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses only, and should provide a receipt if possible eg. bus ticket, receipt for sandwich.
- Where a volunteer is paid anything other than reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, this may have implications for their benefits, their tax and National Insurance liability, and the organisation itself. As committee members you are responsible for this.
- If the organisation employs workers there is a legal responsibility to deduct tax and National Insurance and pay this over to the Inland Revenue. If you want advice and information about this, do ask Voluntary Action Sheffield.

Organisations that can advise and help

Voluntary Action Sheffield

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield S1 4FW
Tel: 0114 253 6600
Fax: 0114 253 6601

Useful Publications

- **The Charity Trustee's Handbook** by Mike Eastwood
- **Codes of Conduct for Trustees** by Claire Farmer
- **Good Trustee Guide** published by NCVO

- **Voluntary but not Amateur** published London Voluntary Service Council
- **Just About Managing?** Published by London Voluntary Service Council
- **The Russell-Cooke Voluntary Sector Legal Handbook**

All available from the Directory of Social Change:

<http://www.dsc.org.uk/>

Tel: 08450 77 77 07

Fax: 020 7391 4804

Email: publications@dsc.org.uk

INFORMATION SHEETS available from VAS:

Accessible Organisations
Acquiring and Managing Premises
Action Planning
Business Planning
Campaigning and Lobbying
Charitable Incorporated Organisations
Closing Down
Community Interest Companies
Constitutions
Contracts and Procurement
Data Protection
Disciplinary and Grievance
Procedures
Due Diligence
Employing a Worker
Equality and Diversity
Guarantee Companies
Handling Redundancies
Health and Safety
Incorporated Charities
Insuring your Organisation
Involving Volunteers
Legal Structures
Management Committees
Monitoring and Evaluation
Parents and Carers at Work
Quality Assurance
Safeguarding Vulnerable People
Sickness Absence Management
Starting Up
Trading and Fund-raising



The Circle
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Registered charity no: 223007
Company limited by guarantee no: 215695