



East Riding Voluntary Action Services (ERVAS) Limited

Community Accountancy Service

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Good Practice Guide:

14 – The Role of the Management Committee



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Introduction

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 etc
- ⊗ 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 East Riding Voluntary Action Services. 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 role of the chairperson 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 or 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 (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 become 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 role of the secretary is to:

- ⊗ prepare the agenda (with the chairperson)
- ⊗ produce and circulate the agenda
- ⊗ ensure that appropriate information is obtained and provided for committee members before the meeting
- ⊗ take, write and circulate minutes
- ⊗ inform members who were absent of any action 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 minutes and other records in a safe place
- ⊗ produce a written annual report, if needed.
- ⊗ ensure the organisation has adequate insurance
- ⊗ ensure that necessary documents are completed e.g. for the Charity Commission, Companies House or funders.

The Treasurer

A summary of the treasurer's role is shown below (please see GPG15 - The Role of the Treasurer for a more in-depth analysis):

- ⊗ keep accurate, up-to-date financial records (records 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/ current account book on a regular basis.
- ⊗ 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)
- ⊗ 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 e.g. 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, e.g. Over the budgets)
- ⊗ chase committee members e.g. for receipts.



For further information please contact:

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