

Role: Chair/President

The President or Chairperson must ensure that the Committee functions properly, there is full participation during meetings, all relevant matters are discussed, and effective decisions are made and carried out.

The President or Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that each meeting is planned effectively and that matters are handled in an orderly, efficient manner.

The President or Chairperson must make the most of all his/her committee members and 'lead the team'. This also involves regularly reviewing the Committee's performance and identifying and managing the process for renewal of the Committee through recruitment of new members.

The President or Chairperson must coordinate the Committee to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for effective committee management.

The President or Chairperson may occasionally be called upon to represent the committee and sometimes be its spokesperson at external functions or meetings.

A good chairperson will:

- Speak clearly and succinctly;
- Be sensitive to the feelings of members;
- Be impartial and objective;
- Ensure meetings start and finish on time;
- Be approachable;
- Be tactful;
- Be able to delegate;
- Show interest in member's viewpoints;
- Have sound knowledge of the committee's work;
- Have an ability to respect confidences;
- Ensure decisions are taken and recorded

Before the Meeting

- Plan the agenda, including items brought to you by other members. Decide the order and timing of the schedule/agenda, and who will present each one.
- Identify which agenda items are for information, discussion, or a decision.
- Be briefed about each item and actions taken since the last meeting.
- Ensure all necessary background papers (including the last meeting's minutes) are sent out with the agenda beforehand.
- Check all relevant practical arrangements have been made, e.g., room layout, visual aids, etc.
- Arrive in good time before the meeting is due to start.

During the Meeting

- Start the meeting, welcome new members, and make necessary introductions.
- Receive apologies for the absence.
- Ensure that additions or amendments to minutes are recorded.
- Set the scene. State the objectives of the meeting and each item.
- Maintain control. Set out any time limits and ensure time is used effectively.
- Allow flexibility and freedom of expression.
- Keep to the agenda.
- Ensure quorum is present.
- Ensure full participation and draw out quieter members, and discourage those who are monopolizing the meeting.
- Be prepared to highlight issues that no one else will and to be the one who always has to ask the awkward questions.
- Weigh up contributions impartially.
- Summarize discussions and ensure everyone understands what is being discussed.
- Ensure that if jargon and abbreviations are used, all present understand them.
- Ensure that decisions are taken in the context of the committee's aims and that they are recorded, together with who will implement them.

- Steer members to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team.
- Agree on a date for the next meeting - it is usually best to set dates for the year's meetings well in advance.

After the meeting

- Agree on what items will be put on the agenda of the next meeting and what work needs to be done, by whom etc.
- Ensure that the minutes are written up, checked, and sent out in good time.