

Template

Role Description

Chairperson

The Chairperson Chairing is a key role. The chair is expected to provide leadership to the managing committee but should not dominate meetings. At Committee meetings the chair's role is to ensure full communication and effective decision-making.

- ❖ Communicate – start the meeting, set the scene, state the objectives.
- ❖ Control – but not dominate, allow freedom of expression, keep to the agenda.
- ❖ Co-ordinate – highlight areas of common agreement.
- ❖ Compare – weigh up contributions impartially.
- ❖ Clarify – ensure everyone understands what is being discussed, explain any 'jargon', summarise.

The role of the Chair 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 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 (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:

1. Make sure the business of a meeting is completed.
2. Help members work together.

The Chair should be able to:

- Clarify and explain.
- Lead and control.
- Summarise Management Committee Roles and Responsibilities.
- 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 Chair should:

- Arrive early and allow time for people to socialise before the start.
- Start the meeting on time.
- Make sure introductions are made if needed.
- Set the tone by being friendly but business-like.
- 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 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.