

1.3. The Management Committee and its functions

The information below is an overview of requirements and for further more detailed information, support and guidance plus associated templates etc please contact the BVA Group Development Team via telephone 01256 423816 or email admin@bvaction.org.uk (please quote "BVA Group Assistance" on title). www.bvaction.org.uk

If the group is a branch of a national organisation, it may be required to affiliate and conform to a recognised pattern to use the national name.

If the group is purely local and autonomous it will need to formulate its own pattern of work. This can be done by a simple statement of intent, which should include a reference to the status of members.

Commitment expected of Members

Possible members will want to know how much time they will be expected to give to the affairs of the group. It is helpful to be realistic about this, taking into account action that will be expected to be taken outside actual meetings and to include any expenses that may be incurred.

Forming a Working Party or Committee (Trustees)

The right number of people with the right balance of expertise, skills (and time) is crucial to the success or failure of a working party or committee. If a group is too large it may be difficult to accommodate everyone's opinions and ideas and if too small it may not have the appropriate skills to solve problems.

It is helpful for a new group/committee/working party to define the duties and responsibilities of its Officers—Honorary or otherwise.

Settling Down

Any new group will need some time to settle down to a good working relationship and it is important to allow time for this process before undertaking any major project. It is therefore helpful to review progress and make adjustments after a period of time.

Any new group usually starts with some sort of public/general meeting which allows a general discussion of the idea or problem—if the next step is a working party or steering committee this provides an opportunity to define working guidelines for the future. Another public/general meeting gives the opportunity for slight adjustments or changes to the membership of the group to be made.

BE CLEAR ABOUT

Purpose of Group
Powers of members and their responsibilities
Commitment expected from members

PURPOSE OF THE GROUP MAY BE TO PROVIDE:

A service to a particular type of people
A focus for an interest or concern
A solution to a particular problem

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Committee Members

Individual committee members are essential to the success of a group. It is important that there should be a number of people with different skills and abilities to provide a balance of expertise and opinion, which under the guidance of a skilful Chairman forms a happy team working together to carry out the purpose and aims of the group.

Committee Members should:

- ✓ Make sure they are aware of the aims of the group and what is expected of them
- ✓ Be willing to make a definite commitment to attend meetings
- ✓ Be punctual and meticulous in sending apologies if they are unable to attend so that a number of people are not kept waiting
- ✓ Even in an informal setting and using Christian names, direct their contributions to the chair and stick to the business under discussion
- ✓ Use their votes when a formal decision is asked for, there are three choices, FOR, AGAINST OR ABSTAIN
- ✓ Abide by the majority decision once it has been taken, even if they voted against it
- ✓ Be willing to undertake a fair share of the work of the committee BUT not take on more than they can accomplish

All Committee Members should aim to help the Officers of the Group in their endeavours on behalf of the Group as a whole.

The Charity Commission has a very informative document '[The Essential Trustee – What you need to know](#)'

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Chairperson

It is the responsibility of the Chairman to:

- ✓ ATTEND MEETINGS, make sure they start punctually and are conducted pleasantly but firmly
- ✓ BE PREPARED, plan the Agenda of the meeting in advance with the Secretary, consider carefully the order in which items should be discussed so that there is a progressive build up of knowledge and agreement
- ✓ PLAN, a timetable for the meeting and agree a finishing time with those present
- ✓ GET TO KNOW the membership of the committee to encourage discussion and to make sure that all points of view are heard and considered
- ✓ PUT ANY QUESTION, that needs a vote clearly and concisely; take votes "against" as well as "for" even when it seems clear that a proposition has been carried
- ✓ HELP THE SECRETARY, take proposals slowly, mention proposers' and seconders' names clearly. Summarise decisions taken to enable an accurate record for the Minutes. Agree Minutes with Secretary before they are circulated.

A Happy Partnership

The Chairman has an important role to play. It is usually regarded as an honour to be elected by the membership to be, if only for a limited time, the leader of the group on public occasions.

The Chairman and Secretary should establish a mutually convenient working relationship for the benefit of the group they both serve. A happy working partnership between these two key members provides a firm base for the group to take positive and effective action.

CHAIRPERSON'S RESPONSIBILITIES AT A GLANCE:

Overall responsibility for the smooth running and development of the group
Chairs meetings
Co-responsible for finance (*see Treasurer*)

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Secretary

It is the responsibility of the Secretary to:

- ✓ Make arrangements for meetings; book the venue, making sure it is suitable and accessible for the number of people entitled to attend
- ✓ Send out notices of meetings in good time
- ✓ Prepare the **Agenda**, in consultation with the Chairman, and all appropriate accompanying papers; ensuring that they are available in sufficient time to allow members to undertake any relevant research prior to the meeting

*The **Agenda** is a list of the items to be considered at a meeting. (It is helpful to both the Chairman and the Secretary if all papers relating to an agenda item are clearly marked with the appropriate number and kept together with a strong paperclip or in a clear folder). **Reports** may be made verbally at meetings or presented as a written paper. If presented as a written paper they are usually circulated with the Agenda and then highlights are referred to and amplified on at the meeting or the presenter of the report is available to answer questions*

- ✓ Keep a record of the business discussed at meetings and the decisions taken (**Minutes**). Undertake any correspondence or take any action agreed at a meeting. Write up and distribute the Minutes of a Meeting

*The **Minutes** are a precise account of the business conducted at a meeting. It is helpful if they are written up as soon as possible after a meeting, agreed with the Chairman and distributed to members. A useful practice is to leave a margin on the right hand side for the initials of those who are to take action before the next meeting*

- ✓ Keep a Formal Record of the activities of the group in a Minute Book with copies of all relevant papers
- ✓ Maintaining agreed Reserves

The Secretary co-operates with the Chairman to ensure that no points are overlooked. This does not mean that the Secretary undertakes ALL the work of the Committee.

When the Committee makes a decision to take certain action it should at that time be agreed who will undertake the work to execute the decision.

SECRETARY'S RESPONSIBILITIES AT A GLANCE

Maintains the minutes of the committee meetings
Informs members of the committee meetings - supplies agenda
Manages general correspondence
Maintains database of members, once permission has been sought to keep electronic data

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Treasurer

The Treasurer is the person responsible for the financial affairs of the group and should inspire confidence in members and the public that they will act in a responsible and trustworthy manner. Usually someone used to handling cash or dealing with money is chosen as Treasurer but this is not an essential qualification. However, the Treasurer should be someone who:

- ✓ is QUICK and accurate with figures
- ✓ is CONFIDENT in handling cash and dealing with the bank
- ✓ can keep a cool head and always work methodically
- ✓ can keep ACCURATE and detailed records

The Treasurer is responsible for:

- ✓ Checking all monies received
- ✓ Issuing receipts
- ✓ Paying bills
- ✓ Keeping an accurate record of all monies received and paid out and reconciling the account book with the bank statement
- ✓ Reporting regularly to the committee on the current financial position
- ✓ Preparing the books ready for audit at the end of the financial year

Depending on the activities undertaken by the group and the amount of financial transactions involved the Treasurer may also be expected to:

- ✓ advise on investment of any sums of money not required for day to day running expenses
- ✓ Prepare and present a budget for a year/event and then monitor the progress of transactions against this forecast

TREASURER'S RESPONSIBILITIES AT A GLANCE

Primary responsibility for finance
Organises subscriptions
Day-to-day management of accounts
Pays bills

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Other appointed members

Depending on the size and resources of the group, there may also be scope for the appointment of an:

Events Officer

- Organises events
- Books venues and speakers (where appropriate)
- Co-ordinates catering etc.

Publicity Officer

- Produces a newsletter/regular events listing
- Responsible for publicity of the group's events

Management Committee / Trustees Checklist

- Trustee board / committee have defined role descriptions
- Trustee / committee members are known to staff and volunteers
- Trustee code of conduct or values document is signed and enacted
- Trustees /Committee members have signed trustee conflict of interest and it has been reviewed annually
- Trustee / Committee member induction process is in place
- Volunteers and staff records held must be updated annually
- Organisational chat is available and maintained
- Equipment inventory if applicable is maintained
- Risk assessments are conducted and stored
- Secure file archiving and storage system is in place
- Centralised system for recording and managed access is in place
- Data sensitive information is stored appropriately

See Also - Charity Commission – [What's involved being a Trustee](#) includes guidance on Reporting a serious incident, Making decisions and voting, Rules around payments to trustees, Trustee resignation and removal, Trustee skills, Trustee disqualification and Public benefit rules for charities.