Management Committee
Roles & Responsibilities – a brief introduction

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1. The Management Committee – a brief introduction

A management committee – by whatever name it is known is an important designation *('Management committee' is a broad term, being the most likely term in use regarding the persons appointed to oversee management of a group/club or other organisation*). As the name suggests, its role is to manage the group it is associated with. The means in which members of a management committee are appointed should be agreed by the group – where the group is constituted or has a similar governing document, that document may well determine management committee appointment and membership (often referred to as 'Terms of Reference' for the management committee).

A management committee may be known by various titles, all having a broadly similar meaning: it may simply be known as 'the committee', the management committee, or in the case of an organisation that is recognised as a charity or Trust, the Trustees. It is very important to note that regardless of how the committee is known, the responsibilities and roles of its members are equal, in terms of group management, finances etc.

The composition of the Management Committee is determined either by the establishing group (at the outset), by the group's constitutional document, or by some other agreed means. Ideally, the means of determining the composition of the committee, terms of office both for all members and the appointed officers, as well as the Terms of Reference (the operational direction and restrictions) of the committee will be set down in a formal, binding document.

Within a management committee, it is normal practice to designate a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, though other roles specific to the group may also be assigned. Regardless of role, **ALL** members of a management committee share **equal rights and responsibilities**; appointment as an officer (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer etc.) bring additional specific tasks and responsibilities.

2. Main Duties & responsibilities for all Committee members

Regardless of title, **every** member of a Management Committee has certain, clear responsibilities. Candidates for a Management Committee should be aware of these from the outset, and prior to applying for or nomination to the committee. These responsibilities include:

- Acting in the best interests of the organisation at all times
- Maintaining an awareness of the organisation, its aims, purpose, goals and operational methodology
- Regularly attending and taking a full, constructive part in meetings
- Monitoring the financial position and ensuring that it operates within its means and that there are clear lines of accountability for financial management
- Maintaining confidentiality about any sensitive or confidential information received in the course of committee duties
- Actively contributing to setting a clear, positive strategic direction, recognising any third party commitments such as affiliation with an external governing body
- Taking responsibility for own learning and development – though ongoing training related to committee work or specific roles is always advisable

- Awareness and understanding of the group's management documentation, such as a Constitution, rules, policies and procedures or other relevant documents.

3. Personal skills and qualities for all committee members

- Willingness to act effectively and in the best interests of the organisation over and above personal interest, as part of a team (the committee)
- Commitment and availability to attend meetings
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate appropriately in discussion whilst respecting other people, their own comments and opinions
- Willingness to gain knowledge of local needs and resources
- Ability to understand and accept responsibilities and liabilities as committee members and employers (*where relevant*)
- Good numeracy skills, to the extent required to understand your accounts with the support of an appointed Treasurer or other person with suitable financial experience
- Willingness and ability to learn, develop and examine own attitudes of the Organisation

4. Role Profiles

CHAIRPERSON

An effective chairperson will enable the committee to demonstrate its leadership of the organisation. The chairperson needs to be diplomatic, charismatic and have an ability to lead, whilst respecting the equality of all committee members.

The chairperson will lead meetings, ensuring that everyone who wishes to has a reasonable chance to speak and take part, without dominating the meeting or conversation.

The chairperson should manage conflict in a diplomatic but decisive manner. They should be able to listen to and understand a wide range of views, present information clearly and concisely and get clarification of relevant points, thus enabling the committee to make effective decisions.

Main duties and responsibilities

It is advisable that, in some cases, these are delegated to or shared with other committee members – one person cannot do everything!

- Planning the annual cycle of committee meetings, chairing or designating a chair and facilitating these to ensure their smooth running
- Planning the agenda for meetings with the secretary
- Developing membership of the committee to ensure that it contains the diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge needed to operate effectively, with due consideration for organisational or member representation
- Ensuring that successors for key posts – chair, treasurer etc. are identified and inducted in good time
- Ensure committee members receive induction and ongoing relevant training to enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities
- Monitor the calibre, level of commitment and attendance of all committee members

- Ensure that the committee reviews its own work and how effectively it Check that decisions taken at meetings are being implemented
- In conjunction with the treasurer, ensure proper management, control and reporting of finances
- Providing or arranging for support and supervision for staff (where applicable), including annual appraisal
- Representation in the community at public events
- Representation in relationships with funders and negotiating for funds
- Ensuring that the committee plans for the recruitment and turnover of paid staff and volunteers

Personal skills and qualities *(items marked * are ideal – though opportunity to develop should always be present and encouraged)*

- An active listener, able to listen to and heed comments, opinions, criticism and able to 'read the room'
- Tact and diplomacy
- Leadership skills
- Facilitation skills
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidence
- Knowledge of the type of work undertaken by the organisation and a willingness to keep ahead of the changes to the organisation that take place
- Experience of chairing meetings and committee work *

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Similar to the Chairperson, and often considered to be the Chairperson designate, i.e. the natural successor to the current chair. Not all vice-chairs wish to adopt the role of chair, which is to be respected.

- Carrying out the chair's duties in their absence, with the acknowledgement of the committee as being capable and suitable to do so
- Providing support and assistance to the chair in carrying out their responsibilities, acting as a 'critical friend' and sounding board
- Taking on specific responsibilities from the chair, such as inducting new committee members
- Being open to approaches, where appropriate, from other committee members about the work or judgement of the chair. The vice-chair will then diplomatically discuss any issues arising with the chair

Personal skills and qualities

- An active listener, able to listen to and heed comments, opinions, criticism and able to 'read the room'
- Tact and diplomacy
- Leadership skills
- Facilitation skills
- Experience of committee work *
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences
- Knowledge of the type of work undertaken by the organisation and a willingness to keep ahead of the changes to the organisation that take place.

SECRETARY

The secretary is the administrative officer of the organisation, the person who calls, administers and minutes the committee and general meetings, and is the first point of contact for all admin purposes.

- Ensure committee members are correctly appointed according to the articles of association/Constitution or other governing document and all relevant checks are made and recorded
- Arrange and administer meetings, prepare and circulate agendas, ensuring the meetings are properly convened, constituted and quorate according to the articles of association/Constitution or other governing document (as appropriate)
- Ensure all necessary documentation is completed and securely recorded within relevant deadlines set
- Keep minutes and ensure that proper records are kept
- Confirm what decisions and actions have been made and record their implementation, ensuring the relevant committee officers are aware
- Provide committee members with additional information to facilitate adequate, informed discussion and decision-making
- Ensure that insurance requirements are fulfilled
- Develop and implement a periodic 'legal health check' to monitor the articles, review property leases and other mandatory documentation.
- Ensure that stationery, invoices and other documents include all details required

TREASURER

The role of the treasurer is to ensure that all finances and the supporting financial control systems are kept in order

The treasurer may be the bookkeeper. He/she holds, maintains or oversees the financial records, but does **not** have sole access to or control of the organisation's finances. The treasurer should be a co-signatory to any bank accounts, as well as any payments made on behalf of the organisation.

Where possible and facilities are adequate, the treasurer should delegate day-to-day financial management to any suitable staff, whilst maintaining oversight.

- Guiding and advising the committee in the approval of budgets, accounts and financial statements, within a relevant financial policy framework
- Keeping the committee informed about its financial duties and responsibilities
- Advising on the financial implications of the organisation's strategic plans and key assumptions in the operational plan and annual budget
- Ensuring that all committee members have a clear understanding of the accounts presented at meetings and any implications that they reveal
- Understanding the accounting procedures and key internal controls to be able to assure the committee that the charity's financial integrity is sound
- Understand and apply any relevant external financial requirements such as SORP where relevant, and ensure full compliance

5. Liability

The Management Committee is ultimately accountable for the organisation. They are therefore responsible or liable for the consequences of actions taken or not taken by the organisation, its staff or volunteers and other Management Committee members.

What this means is that the Management Committee *may* be held responsible for making good any loss or damage (financial or otherwise) to the organisation or to third parties and may be held personally responsible, where relevant.

However, **it's important to keep this in perspective**. Very few Management Committee members who act honestly and diligently in carrying out their responsibilities suffer any financial loss as a result of their involvement.

Nevertheless, it is important for all members to be aware of the extent of their potential legal liabilities and how their personal risks can be minimized.

Where do liabilities arise?

The Management Committee may have **legal liabilities** arising from:

- ***Contracts*** (e.g. with suppliers, funders, staff or landlords)
- ***Statutory obligations*** (i.e. as dictated by legislation relating to health & safety, child protection, staff conditions etc.)
- ***Duty of Care*** (i.e. the responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure that others do not suffer loss or damage through what you do or fail to do)
- Should the organisation, its staff, volunteers or Management Committee members fail to meet their obligations in any of these areas, the Management Committee may be held to account by any external individual or body.

Personal liability

Are you likely to be held personally liable?

In many cases, the financial implications of this liability will be carried by the organisation, but in others Management Committee members can be held individually responsible and obliged to cover any loss from their own resources.

The key factors in this are:

- **The legal structure of the organisation**
  Management Committee members of incorporated organisations (e.g. a company limited by guarantee) have greater protection against personal financial loss.
- **Whether the Management Committee members acted reasonably, honestly and with due diligence**
  If the Management Committee or its members have not acted responsibly, they can potentially be held individually and collectively responsible, regardless of the legal structure or any insurance provisions.

***Disclaimer**: this document is intended purely as a brief introduction to Management Committees; it is not an exhaustive guide, nor does it compromise a legally binding form of words. You are advised to seek further support which is tailored to your own, or your organisation's own particular circumstances.*