

The Role and Responsibilities of the Chair

Overall it is the responsibility of the Chair to act as a spokesperson and figurehead for the Club, and to lead the Management Committee and the Club to enable it to fulfil its objectives, by ensuring an effective relationship between the Management Committee, the other Post Holders and the wider Club membership. :

Specifically, that will entail: -

- planning and preparing committee meetings and the AGM with others as appropriate
- chairing committee meetings ensuring:
 - A balance is struck between time-keeping and space for discussions
 - Business is dealt with and decisions made
 - Decisions, actions and deliberations are adequately minuted
 - The implementation of decisions is clearly assigned and monitored
- Ensure that a successor is found before the term of office finishes

The qualities required are: -

- a willingness to lead the organisation
- tact, diplomacy, powers of persuasion and relevant knowledge
- the relevant skills to run meetings well

A good Chair ensures Club meetings to run smoothly and efficiently. With regard to the Management Committee meetings the Chair will: -

- consider the meeting overall, not just the topic under discussion, which can make it difficult for them to participate in the discussions
- always aim to draw a balance between hearing everyone's views and getting through the business
- *never* use their position as Chair as an opportunity to put forward their views to the exclusion of others, or to dominate the meeting
- not allow other individuals to dominate discussions and ensure quieter members are encouraged to express their views

Before the meeting: -

To chair a meeting well, the Chair with other appropriate officers will consider: -

- why are you having the meeting?
- what end result do you want from it?
- what will you discuss at it?
- do non-committee Post Holders need to attend?
- do you need to get more information to inform the discussion?
- do you want to ask someone to prepare an introduction?
- do you want to distribute any information in advance of the meeting, in addition to the regular papers?

OFFICER, COMMITTEE MEMBER AND POST HOLDERS

ROLE GUIDANCE: MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - CHAIR

During the meeting: -

While the aim is to hold friendly, informal meetings, to ensure they are efficient, it is best to follow rules, such as: -

- asking people to speak 'through the chair' by putting their hand up if they want to speak, and waiting for their turn
- don't interrupt other people
- stick to the item on the agenda
- don't talk amongst yourselves
- respect other people's views, wait until they've finished and then put your point of view
- keep contributions short and to the point
- start and finish the meeting on time

The Chair should: -

- keep an overview – make sure all viewpoints get heard – including those you disagree with
- not use the position to impose their views. The Chair should facilitate the meeting, not dominate it, but don't be afraid to speak out either
- listen to other people and encourage others to do the same
- restrain those who are dominating the discussions and encourage those who are quiet, nervous, or new to meetings

Good meetings reach decisions by consensus and the need to vote on issues should be the exception. The Chair has a personal vote, and in the event of a tied vote on a topic, also has a 'casting vote'. This should be used to retain the status quo, not to introduce changes that – at that point – are not well supported.

Club Meetings

In addition to the role the Chair has in overseeing the smooth running of Club business, he/she frequently acts as the host or MC at Club events, or ensures these roles are adequately filled and those undertaking the role are properly briefed. This includes Club weekly meetings, the Annual Exhibition, the North Mundham and Spring Exhibitions and when the Club hosts inter-club competitions. In these instances the Chair is the public face of the Club and should be well prepared to represent the Club effectively, providing a warm welcome and courteous treatment of all guests.

This will include:

- welcoming the speakers and/or judges, and introducing them to the meeting/ exhibition, having been briefed on the speaker/ judge's background, interests and qualifications by the Programme Secretary
- welcoming guests to the meeting/ exhibition
- ensuring agreed timings are adhered to
- managing information (notices) given by others and questions raised
- deliver, or arrange for, a vote of thanks to the speaker, judges or organisers as appropriate

For further information about the roles and responsibilities please refer to *Good Governance: A Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector (Second Edition, Version for Small organisations November 2011)*. Published by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, with the ACECO, Small Charities Coalition and ISCA, downloadable at <http://www.governancecode.org/>