

Main duties of the chairperson

The responsibilities of a Chairperson can be summarised under five areas:

1. To provide leadership.

The overarching role of the chairperson is to provide leadership, they must be an effective strategist and a good networker.

2. To ensure the Management Committee functions properly.

The Chairperson is responsible for making sure that each meeting is planned effectively, conducted according to the constitution and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner. The Chairperson must make the most of all his/her committee members, building and leading 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.

3. To ensure the organisation is managed effectively.

The Chairperson must co-ordinate the Committee to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the effective management of the organisation.

4. To provide support and supervision to the centre manager.

The Chairperson will be the direct line manager for the centre manager.

5. To represent the organisation as its figurehead.

The Chairperson may from time to time be called upon to represent the organisation and sometimes be its spokesperson at, for example, functions or meetings.

Main duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer has a watchdog role over all aspects of financial management, working closely with other members of the Management Committee to safeguard the organisation's finances.

It is important to note that although the Treasurer **ensures** that these responsibilities are met, much of the work may be **delegated** to a finance sub-committee and paid staff or volunteers.

In summary, the Treasurer is responsible for:

1. General financial oversight
2. Funding, fundraising and sales
3. Financial planning and budgeting
4. Financial reporting
5. Banking, book keeping and record keeping
6. Control of fixed assets and stock

Given these responsibilities, the Treasurer typically acts as an information and reference point for the Chair and other committee members: clarifying financial implications of proposals; confirming legal requirements; outlining the current financial status; and retrieving relevant documentation.

The following points outline the typical financial responsibilities of a Treasurer:

1. General financial oversight

- Oversee and present budgets, accounts and financial statements to the management committee
- Liaise with designated staff about financial matters
- Ensure that appropriate financial systems and controls are in place
- Ensure that record-keeping and accounts meet the conditions of funders or statutory bodies
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

More on financial oversight

2. Funding, fundraising and sales

- Advise on the organisation's fundraising strategy
- Ensure use of funds complies with conditions set by funding bodies
- Ensure fundraising and sales complies with relevant legislation and is bound by effective financial systems and controls
- Ensure effective monitoring and reporting

3. Financial planning and budgeting

- Prepare and present budgets for new or ongoing work
- Advise on financial implications of strategic and operational plans
- Present revised financial forecasts based on actual spend.

4. Financial reporting

- Present regular reports on the organisation's financial position
- Prepare accounts for audit and liaising with the auditor, as required
- Present accounts at the AGM
- Advise on the organisation's reserves and investment policy.

5. Banking, book-keeping and record-keeping

- Manage bank accounts
- Set up appropriate systems for book-keeping, payments, lodgements & petty cash
- Ensure everyone handling money keeps proper records and documentation

6. Control of fixed assets and stock

- Ensure proper records are kept
- Ensure required insurances are in place.

In all of these areas the Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that effective financial systems and procedures have been established, are being consistently followed and are in line with best practice and legal requirements.

Delegating financial responsibilities

It is not good practice for all tasks associated with the finance function to be performed by one person (whether a management committee member or staff) without supervision from others. For this reason, it is good practice for both small and large organisations to set up a finance sub group to manage and monitor their finances (see below).

How this happens will depend on the size and dynamics of your organisation. For example:

Even if the Treasurer and finance sub-committee carry out much of the work, final responsibility for the organisation's finances rests with the Management Committee as a whole. All members are accountable.

The Secretary's Role

The Secretary is crucial to the smooth running of a Management Committee meeting. This involves activities before, during and after Committee meetings.

In order to be effective, the Secretary of the Management Committee should ensure that they carry out the following activities:

Before the Meeting

- Consult with the Chairperson on the order of business for the meeting, and the way in which it should be dealt with on the agenda. Decide what business requires discussion and what requires a decision by the Management Committee;
- Ensure that the notice of the meeting is given, that suitable accommodation is arranged and confirmed, and that copies of the agenda is prepared;
- Circulate to all members (a) any papers to be discussed at the upcoming meeting and (b) a copy of the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting; and
- Make sure that any reports or information requested at the last meeting is available or that there is a good reason why not.

At the Meeting

- Arrive in good time before the meeting with the minutes and with all the relevant correspondence and business matters for that meeting, in good order. Record the names of those who are present, and convey and record apologies received from those who are absent;
- Read the minutes of the previous meeting, and if they are approved, obtain the Chairperson's signature on them;
- Report on action or matters arising from the previous minutes. Read any important correspondence that has been received;
- Unless there is a Minutes Secretary, take notes of the meeting, recording the key points and making sure that all decisions and proposals are recorded, as well as the name of the person or group responsible for carrying them out. Make sure action points are clear; and

- Make sure that the Chairperson is supplied with all the necessary information for items on the agenda, and remind the Chairperson if an item has been overlooked.

After the Meeting

- Prepare a draft of the minutes (unless there is a minutes secretary) and consult the Chairperson and most senior staff member (where relevant) for approval;
- Send a reminder notice of each decision requiring action to the relevant person; this can be done by telephone, or by an 'action list' with the relevant action for each person duly marked; and
- Promptly send all correspondence as decided by the Management Committee.

Committee members

As committee members, they will make decisions as a collective group and hold joint responsibility for decisions and actions taken by the management committee, even in their absence. They are responsible for ensuring that all decisions are taken in the best interests of the organisation and that their role is carried out effectively. Individual members should demonstrate selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Management committee members should have access to relevant information to support them in carrying out their responsibilities. This clarity should commence during the recruitment process, with provision of:

- a written role description;
- confirmation of the commitment required; and
- confirmation of the legal status of committee members and their personal liability.

CHECKLIST FOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

The Management Committee should:

Please tick

	Yes:	No:	Needs work:
• understand the responsibilities of their role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• understand and comply with the organisation's governing document (e.g. constitution)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• understand the organisation's legal structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• manage conflicts of Interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• provide sound financial oversight and ensure that resources are properly managed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• ensure that all potential risk is assessed and dealt with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• be able to account for everything the organisation does	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• ensure the organisation pursues its purpose (as defined in the governing document)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• safeguard the name and values of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• take decisions as a collective group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• understand the role and responsibilities of honorary officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• understand the role and delegated authority of any sub-committees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• differentiate between the role of Management Committee and staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• hold meetings as necessary to properly fulfil their role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• seek expert and professional advice when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The role of a Trustee

Trustees ensure their charity has a clear strategy, and that its work and goals are in line with its vision. A trustee's role in a charity is to be the 'guardians of purpose', making sure that all decisions put the needs of the beneficiaries first.

They safeguard the charity's assets – both physical assets, including property, and intangible ones, such as its reputation. They make sure these are used well and that the charity is run sustainably.

Trustees don't usually do the day-to-day running of the charity. They delegate this to the staff, led by the Chief Executive. Instead, they play the role of a 'critical friend' to the Chief Executive by giving support and by challenging – in a supportive way – to help them manage effectively. However, in smaller charities with few staff, trustees may take hands-on roles too.

Most trustee boards meet four to eight times a year. Many boards have sub-committees that focus on particular areas of work or projects. Where they do, trustees are often expected to get involved with one or more sub-committees, as well as having a good understanding of their charity's work overall.