



Community Group Guidelines: Establishing a Committee and Constitution



Forming a Committee

A committee is elected by the members of the group to carry out work on their behalf between normal meetings.

Depending on the type of group you are setting up, it is normal to form a committee.

Purpose of a Committee

- It helps to formalise the group (which helps get it recognised by relevant bodies)
- It ensures that the work involved in running the group is shared between a few people, rather than all falling to one person.
- It tends to make a group more organised
- Improves access to funding pots

Standard Committee roles

Required roles are:

- Chair – leader and coordinator of group
- Secretary – does the paperwork, keeps members informed, keeps up to date mailing list, takes minutes etc
- Treasurer – looks after financial affairs of group - bank account, petty cash, financial reports etc.

Other potential roles:

- Publicity and marketing officer
- Events organiser
- Fundraiser
- Someone to organise practical tasks



Sometimes some of the tasks are dealt with by sub-groups e.g. funding, publicity, events.

Committee members are usually elected at an annual general meeting (AGM) at which a review of the year will also be discussed.

Writing a constitution

A constitution is a set of rules that defines how a group is run.

Purpose of a constitution

It is useful to create a constitution fairly early on in the development of the group as it will focus the group on why you are forming it and what you would like to achieve.

A constitution usually contains the following information:

- Group name (i.e. Friends of ... Park)
- Geographical area covered by the group
- Aims and objectives
- How the aims and objectives will be achieved e.g. fundraising, practical
- Tasks
- Membership – fees, who can become a member
- Management committee – structure of committee, roles of members, how members get elected to posts etc
- Equal opportunities statement
- Meetings – how they are arranged
- Finances
- Relevant rules that group members should abide by
- Ending the group - How and why the group can be dissolved and what happens to any funds.

We can provide a model constitution from another site if required.

Bank account

It is important to have a bank account, even if you will only be handling small amounts of money at first. Several banks offer accounts for community groups where you pay small or no bank charges.

Ask to see an adviser who knows what they are talking about and stress that you are a voluntary group with charitable objectives (but not a registered charity).

What you will need:

- Proof of identity and addresses of officers
- Evidence that the group exists and has a constitution
- An initial deposit.

You will need two signatures to authorise cheques. The normal arrangement is to have three or four 'named' signatories which the bank or building society recognises, with just two needed to authorise cheques.

How can we support?

We will work with your group to:

- Achieve aims and objectives and ensure that they are reflected in any management plans for the area
- Provide explanation for current practices
- Promote the group to encourage new members
- Support with funding bids and organising events
- Link you with other community groups and volunteers that can assist with your projects, including corporate groups.

What we need from the group

Please keep us updated with progress within the group and of any funding applications, activities, events that you wish to organise. Although we will be unable to attend all meetings please forward copies of the minutes on to us and we will act where required.

Contact details

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