

Committee Member Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct

A practical guide for community and voluntary group

1. Purpose of this Guide

This guide outlines the roles, responsibilities and expected standards of behaviour for Committee members.

It is designed to support groups to:

- Clarify what is expected of Committee members
- Support effective and respectful working
- Promote transparency and accountability

This guide can be used by all Committee members, including those serving on an Executive Committee where one exists.

2. Role of a Committee Member

Committee members are responsible for supporting the organisation to operate effectively and in line with its purpose.

In simple terms, Committee members:

- Help guide the direction of the organisation
- Take part in decision-making
- Share responsibility for how the organisation is run

All Committee members have an equal role in contributing to discussions and decisions.

3. Core Responsibilities

Committee members are expected to:

3.1 Participate in Meetings

- Attend meetings where possible
- Read relevant documents in advance
- Take part in discussions

3.2 Support Decision-Making

- Contribute to discussions in a constructive way
- Respect the views of others
- Support decisions once agreed

3.3 Share Responsibility

- Take on tasks where appropriate
- Follow through on agreed actions
- Support the work of the organisation

3.4 Act in the Best Interests of the Organisation

- Focus on the organisation's purpose
- Avoid situations where personal interests conflict with this
- Declare any conflicts of interest

3.5 Support Good Governance

- Follow the organisation's constitution
- Adhere to agreed policies and procedures
- Ensure decisions are made appropriately

4. Key Roles within a Committee

While all members share responsibility, some roles have specific functions.

4.1 Chair / Facilitator

- Guide meetings
- Ensure discussions are inclusive and focused
- Support decision-making
- Ensure actions are followed up

4.2 Secretary

- Prepare and share agendas
- Record minutes and decisions
- Maintain records

4.3 Treasurer (where applicable)

- Support financial oversight
- Track income and expenditure
- Report to the Committee

It is important to note that financial responsibility is shared by the full Committee.

5. Code of Conduct

Committee members are expected to act in a way that supports a positive, respectful and effective working environment.

5.1 Respect and Inclusion

- Treat others with respect
- Listen to different perspectives
- Encourage participation

5.2 Integrity

- Act honestly and in good faith
- Be open and transparent
- Avoid misuse of position

5.3 Accountability

- Take responsibility for actions and decisions
- Be prepared to explain decisions
- Follow through on commitments

5.4 Confidentiality

- Respect confidentiality where appropriate
- Handle sensitive information responsibly

5.5 Collective Responsibility

- Support decisions once agreed
- Avoid undermining agreed positions
- Work as part of a team

6. Managing Conflicts of Interest

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A conflict of interest arises where a Committee member's personal, financial or other interests could influence their role.

Committee members should:

- Declare any conflicts of interest
- Step back from discussions or decisions where appropriate
- Act in the best interests of the organisation at all times

7. Attendance and Participation

Regular participation supports effective committees.

Good practice includes:

- Attending meetings consistently
- Communicating in advance if unable to attend
- Staying engaged in the work of the organisation

Where a member is unable to participate over a sustained period, the Committee may need to review membership.

8. Supporting Effective Working

Committee members contribute to how well the group functions.

This includes:

- Being prepared
- Keeping discussions focused
- Supporting shared responsibility
- Being open to learning and improvement

9. Breaches of this Code

Where issues arise in relation to behaviour or responsibilities, these should be addressed in a fair and constructive way.

This may include:

- Informal discussion
- Clarification of expectations
- Reference to relevant policies

The aim should always be to resolve issues and support effective working.

10. Key Message

Effective committees are built on shared responsibility, clear roles and respectful working.

By understanding and applying these principles, Committee members can support strong and sustainable organisations.

Acknowledgement

Committee members may be asked to confirm that they have read and understood this guide.

Sample Committee Member Declaration

Groups may wish to ask Committee members to confirm that they understand their role and responsibilities.

This can be used as part of induction for new Committee members.

Sample Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the Committee Member Roles, Responsibilities and Code of Conduct.

I agree to:

1. Act in the best interests of the organisation
2. Contribute to the work of the Committee
3. Respect the views of others
4. Support decisions once agreed
5. Follow the organisation's constitution and policies
6. Declare any conflicts of interest

I understand that my role is part of a collective responsibility and I will support the effective running of the organisation.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____