

7 Hints to Chairing Effectively

The role of a Chairperson should be to create a supportive atmosphere that allows discussion and debate to take place at meetings. Here are some key tips that should help.

TIP 1: Be clear

Always be clear about the real purpose of any meeting you chair - if you're not clear, how can you encourage the rest of the committee to participate and make correct decisions? Make sure you know the agenda, and the issues likely to arise, inside out.

TIP 2: Clarify the rules of the meeting

Is the meeting to be formal or informal? If a vote is likely to be needed, what type of voting system will you use?

TIP 3: Always be neutral

Remember that the Chair must be neutral at all times. It helps if you can introduce each agenda item by giving a brief background, but remember to stop talking! Sometimes, there will be an agenda item which you feel strongly about – if that is the case, ask another member of the committee to take the Chair for that item.

TIP 4: Be patient

Remember committees are diverse groups. It is the role of the Chair to make sure that everyone, no matter their experience or skill, has the chance to contribute fully to the debate.

TIP 5: Keep everything in order

Being fair doesn't mean you should lose control of the meeting. Keep the meeting and yourself focused at all times.

TIP 6: Communicate

Always acknowledge members of the committee by name. Listen closely and clarify or summarise points raised when necessary.

TIP 7: Break any deadlock

- Remember to summarise the main points at the end of each discussion, making sure that an agreeable decision is made at the end of any deliberations.

DISCLAIMER: While all care has been taken in the preparation of this material, no responsibility is accepted by WDCVS, its staff or volunteers, for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies. This resource has been prepared to provide general information only. No responsibility can be accepted by WDCVS for any known or unknown consequences that may result from reliance on any information provided in this publication.