

Forming Sub-Committees

Running a voluntary organisation can be a time consuming activity. Meetings can easily become bogged down in small details, leaving topics which need to be properly discussed behind. When a community organisation decides to take forward a particular activity or service, it is often best if the detailed planning and work involved is delegated to a sub-committee appointed for the purpose.

Often, sub-committees are established to help organise fundraising activities, employ staff or support services which the organisation is planning to provide as part of its general work. Some constitutions use the headings "Special" or "Standing" committees. – the former being "one-off", such as a Silver Jubilee Celebrations Sub-Committee, and the latter continuing - e.g: a Social Sub-Committee.

It is vital that both the organisation and the members joining sub-committees know exactly what are powers and responsibilities they have to the full committee. A statement of the powers and responsibilities should be drawn up and issued to the officers of the sub-committee for their guidance. The sub-committees role should also be noted in the minute of the committee meeting which establishes it. A suitable forms of words would be:

"With effect from (insert date) the management committee agreed to form a (insert subject) sub-committee, elected and appointed to (insert a brief description of the sub-committee's role). Membership of the sub-committee shall comprise (insert number) of members of the association, and up to a further (insert number) members chosen for their relevant skills and knowledge. Unless the management committee determines otherwise, member of the sub-committee shall serve until the Annual General Meeting of the association, at which time they shall be eligible for re-election. In the event of a vacancy arising, this may be filled by election of a member of the Association. The sub-committee shall maintain records, both financial and in the form of minutes, as is deemed appropriate by the general management committee and will be governed by any existing standing orders of the Association."

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