

COMMUNITY ACTION: MK

The role of Chairperson

What does it involve?

The Chairperson is elected to lead the committee towards achieving its main aims. The Chairperson steers the committee through meetings, by following a pre-agreed agenda, and has casting vote when decisions are tied.

A good Chair will allow everyone to have their say, but keep the meeting focused on the topic at hand. They will have good organisational skills and are able to form good working relationships.

What are the main tasks?

A Chair's duties are not immediately obvious but include:

- Representing the group as a whole, upholding the views of the members and speaking on their behalf where and when necessary.
- Preparing the agenda with the Secretary before each meeting, whether it is of the executive committee or an open meeting.
- Introducing sufficient formality in the meetings to ensure that all business is dealt with efficiently.
- Giving all members in a meeting an equal chance to express their views, handling the overconfident tactfully, and giving encouragement to the timid.
- Keeping a balance in meetings, trying always to reach unanimous decisions. Frequent votes only result in the formation of sub-groups and a loss of unity; so, after all the facts have been presented and all views expressed, the Chair should try to voice the felling of the majority in such a way that the dissenters are satisfied that the decision is the best for the group as a whole.
- Checking after every item of business that the Secretary knows what to record in the minutes.

- Ensuring that the decisions of the Committee are carried out.
- Constantly looking out for suitable people to take the places of present officials and committee members when their term of office comes to an end. Whenever possible, such people should be given the opportunity for some form of training to do these jobs in future.
- Helping to interview and induct new staff and volunteers (if any).

Can this work be shared?

For most volunteers this is too much work and yes it often needs to be shared. It can also be good to share it as it is important to use the skills of others on the committee. So it may be appropriate that, for example, a person other than the Chair acts as the contact person with the 'outside world'. Some organisations elect a deputy chair.

The most important thing is for the Chair to keep an overview of the organisation and they should choose to do tasks that will help with that.

For Further Support:

Contact Support@CommunityActionMK.org or call 01908 661623.

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