

# Your village hall management committee





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## **1. Introduction**

Management committees face the constant challenge of change - in community interest and activities, central and local government legislation and in the technique of management. If the village hall is to remain viable the management committee must continually review every aspect of its work: the membership and available expertise, budgeting and programming, the hall's customers and the community it serves, the condition and maintenance of the building, and the effectiveness of its publicity.

The aim of this publication 'Your village hall management committee' is to offer guidance on the constitutional and organisational issues involved in managing a village hall. It describes the key issues concerning constitutions and charitable status and deals with management committees and trustees. This publication will be of value to any management committee responsible for a community building. However, it is primarily aimed at those responsible for buildings that are held on charitable trusts.

It is not within the scope of this publication to give detailed information on all matters that need consideration in managing a village hall. Where appropriate, reference is made to other ACRE publications concerned with village hall matters.

It should also be noted that the law changes from time to time and readers are therefore advised to check all essential information and to seek professional or expert advice as appropriate to specific circumstances.

ACRE provides an information and advice service for village hall management committees through the Network of village hall advisers based within its member organisations. ACRE also publishes a range of village hall publications and information sheets. Specific Information Sheets have been referred to in the text of this publication and a full publication list can be located on the ACRE [website](#). Many ACRE Network members offer training for village hall managing trustees. If they do not offer this training, they may be able to advise of trustee training that is available locally.

The Charity Commission also publish a range of publications and guidance which are available on its [website](#).

## **2. Charity trustees**

### **2.1 Managing charity trustees - the management committee**

It is the governing document of any organisation, for example the trust deed or constitution, which establishes the charity and lays down the manner in which the charity should be managed and organised. This applies to all village halls that are held on charitable trusts. The members of the governing body (often called the management committee) are legally responsible for the management of the organisation.

The ACRE model documents: Lease of Land and Trust Deed, the Transfer of freehold land and trust deed and the constitution for a Charitable Incorporation Organisation (CIO) define the purpose of a village hall as being for '... the use of the inhabitants of the parish of [ ] without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or political, religious or other opinions, including use of the Property for meetings, lectures and classes, or other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants'. The purpose of the village hall is to provide suitable and effective accommodation for the activities within the community; this purpose is basically the same for all village halls and it is the management committee's function to implement this purpose.

The management committee should be appointed under the terms laid down by the governing document. Normally, and this is the case if it is based on the ACRE model documents, the management committee will comprise representatives of local organisations (mostly users of the hall) and elected members appointed at the Annual General Meeting (with, in some cases, the power to co-opt others). Other forms of management not based on the model documents for village halls include a wholly elected committee (where no organisations exist), or (in



an urban area), a community association with members. Once appointed, the management committee are also the managing charity trustees and are responsible for all the day-to-day management of the building and its finances.

The management committee should fulfil its function as laid down in its governing document and within the rules it contains. The committee can issue a separate set of rules if there are none set out in the trust deed or, if additional rules are needed for the smooth running of the committee. However, the rules should be simple, should not restrict the use of the hall, not conflict with the trust deed or have the effect of changing the provisions of the trust deed.

The Charities Act 2011 allows managing charity trustees of a village hall to pass a resolution to alter some parts of their governing document i.e. those parts that are concerned with the general running and administration of the hall. An example of this could be changing the number of trustees needed to form a quorum at meetings. The resolution can be passed using the provisions for voting on resolutions in the charity's governing document and the details of the resolution and the voting should be recorded clearly in the minutes of the meeting. The Charity Commission must be informed of any changes. ACRE advises committee members to consult the Charity Commission or their local ACRE Network member before making any changes to their governing document.

## **2.2 Holding (or custodian) trustees**

It is important to appreciate the difference between the managing charity trustees (i.e. the management committee as referred to above) and holding (or custodian) trustees. Holding/custodian trustees have no legal responsibility for managing the charity.

They can be either:

- a number of individuals
- a corporate body, such as the parish council
- the official custodian for charities (the Charity Commission).

The management committee is an unincorporated body with no legal identity of its own, except as a collection of individuals. It therefore has to appoint holding trustees to act as the legal owners of the property on its behalf. Their function is to hold the property and to act on the lawful directions of the committee in transactions affecting the title of the property. Where individuals are appointed to be holding trustees it must be remembered that these individuals will need to be replaced from time to time, for example, when the present trustees die or wish to retire. For this reason, many charities prefer to choose a permanent trustee to be a holding or custodian trustee, such as the parish council or the official custodian for charities (the Charity Commission). It should be noted that a change of trustee will trigger the requirement to register the land and property with Land Registry.

Misunderstandings sometimes arise between the two types of trustees which is usually due to a lack of understanding of their respective responsibilities. In view of the different role of the two types of trustees, it is recommended that a holding trustee should not also be a managing charity trustee. However, there is no legal restriction against this, unless it is forbidden by the governing document.

## **3. Trustee roles and responsibilities**

A person who has become a member of the managing committee should remember that they are, first and foremost, a managing charity trustee and that their primary duty and responsibility is to the village hall charity. Elected members, co-opted members and user group representatives are all managing charity trustees and should they, at any time, find themselves with a conflict of interest they must declare it. User group representatives are entitled to put their organisation's views, but if there is a clash a decision must be made in the best interests of the charity. Although a user group representative may send a substitute to a meeting that substitute is not entitled to vote on any matter. Trust deeds usually make the provision for a small number of co-opted places on the committee which can be filled at any time during the year. Once co-opted a person is a trustee in the same way as an elected or user group representative. The trust deed will state the number of people who can be elected to the committee. As managing charity trustees of an unincorporated body, members need to remember that they are individually and severally responsible for the day-to-day management of the charity.



Most people over the age of 18 years can become trustees, but there are a few who are not eligible. The Charities Act 2011 lists the conditions under which anyone is disqualified from serving. It is an offence to act as a managing charity trustee whilst disqualified unless the Charity Commission has granted a waiver. For further information see **ACRE Information Sheet 11: The Charities Act 2011**.

Upon appointment every committee member should be given an induction pack which should include copies of any legal documents, such as the trust deed, lease or constitution (see **Appendix 1**). It is also good practice for newly appointed managing charity trustees to sign a declaration stating that they have read and understood the conditions under which they are appointed and that they are not disqualified from becoming a trustee (see **Appendix 4**).

Under normal circumstances, committee members of a village hall charity may not benefit financially from their role. However, the Charities Act 2011 does allow managing charity trustees to receive payment for providing goods or services, providing that certain conditions are satisfied and any payment that is made is a fair price for the work involved. An example may be electrical, plumbing or legal work. There must be a power for such payments to be made in the trust deed, otherwise permission must be sought from the Charity Commission. Managing charity trustees proposing to make such payments should refer to Charity Commission guidance which is available on their website.

### **3.1 Role of committee members**

All members of the management committee have overall responsibility for meeting the village hall's legal obligations, ensuring it is effectively managed and for adopting good practice in all its activities.

The responsibilities of trustees can be summarised as follows:

- acting in accordance with the trust deed
- acting only in the interest of the charity. A trustee who is representing a particular user group is obliged as a trustee, to act in what is the best interest of the organisation, even if the user group might not agree with what is proposed
- a duty of care to exercise such care and skill as is reasonable in the circumstances. Trustees should carry out their duties with the same prudence and vigilance as they would apply to their own affairs
- keeping informed (i.e. knowing what is going on and how things are run)
- responsibility for assets. It is not just the treasurer's responsibility to ensure that the hall's money and other assets are used appropriately.

Trustees have a 'duty of care' by:

- not deriving any personal benefit or gain
- seeking professional advice on matters on which they are not competent
- ensuring that they adopt sound financial practices with full and accurate records being maintained
- ensuring accounts are maintained in accordance with the Charity law
- ensuring bank accounts are operated by more than one person
- ensuring all monies due to the charity are collected including tax and rate relief
- ensuring that income is spent solely for the purposes laid out in the trust deed
- ensuring that the village hall is vested with either holding trustees, custodian trustees or the official custodian, as appropriate
- ensuring that any investments are made in accordance with the trust deed or the Trustee Act 2000
- ensuring the organisation's resources and assets are well managed and used to pursue the objects of the charity
- seeking professional advice where necessary about what investments are most suitable for the charity
- keeping abreast of legislation that may affect the organisation
- ensuring that if staff are employed they have a proper contract of employment and a job description, making clear the extent to which they act on behalf of the committee
- ensuring that the organisation has an effective health and safety policy and procedure which covers all activities, and that it is effectively monitored
- ensuring that any appeals made properly describe what the public's donations will be used for
- approving, in advance, any fundraising or advertising campaign carried out on behalf of the charity (see Charity Commission leaflet 'CC3a : Charity trustee: whats involved?')
- ensuring that adequate insurance is taken out and that the policy is regularly reviewed
- ensuring that the organisation meets any contractual obligations it undertakes e.g. employment, tenancy and/or licence agreements, funding contracts and equipment licences.



In addition, members should individually ensure that they:

- regularly attend committee meetings
- set overall policy with short, medium and long-term objectives
- undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of the charity's work
- promote the organisation
- ensure there is an equal opportunities policy and that its implementation is regularly monitored.

The majority of trust deeds allow for officers of the committee to be appointed at the first ordinary meeting after the AGM. The officers can be appointed from any of the trustees. Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined with regard to an overall policy and day-to-day decision-making. Everyone should have their own role on the committee that takes account of the time they have available and their skills and expertise. Roles should also help people to develop and acquire new skills. Each member of the committee should be clear about their responsibility to the group (both in terms of legal responsibility as well as for their own particular area of work).

Managing trustees are increasingly aware of their responsibilities and liabilities as trustees. However, providing trustees act prudently and reasonably, there should be few concerns about personal liability. We know that personal liability causes worry for existing and potential trustees, even though it is rare for a trustee to suffer actual financial loss. The Charities Act 2011 grants the Commission a power to relieve trustees from personal liability for breach of trust or duty where they have acted honestly and reasonably and ought fairly to be excused.' Further information is available in **ACRE Information Sheet 35: Trustee liability and trustee indemnity insurance**.

### **3.2 Role of the chair**

The chair has two key roles: to act as the representative/figurehead of the charity and to ensure the effective operation of the management committee. This includes:

- ensuring the charity sets and sticks to its policies and priorities
- representing the charity and speaking on its behalf
- making essential/emergency decisions between committee meetings
- planning and running meetings
- keeping order at meetings
- encouraging everyone to participate
- dealing with conflict
- being conversant with the rules of debate and procedure of committee meetings, the trust deed, rules and charity law
- using the chair's discretion on interpreting procedures/issues
- signing on behalf of the charity, personally and with other honorary officers, when entering into contracts or completing official documents
- liaising with the secretary over agendas and minutes, and ensuring meetings are quorate.

### **3.3 Role of the vice-chair**

Although not a necessity, it is worth considering the value of electing a vice-chair. In general, s/he deputises for the chair and assists with decision-making between meetings. Sometimes the vice-chair may take on specific areas of responsibility, e.g. the management of staff and/or volunteers, or chairing some sub-committees. The vice-chair must ensure that they are kept informed of current issues within the organisation so that, should the need arise, they can step in at a moment's notice.

### **3.4 Role of the secretary**

The secretary performs a key role in the organisation. Much of the work of the committee can fall on the secretary and it is, therefore, worth considering the possibility of sharing the responsibility between a number of people. For example, a bookings secretary could be appointed as a contact for hirers; a minute secretary to take the minutes of the meetings; a press/publicity secretary, social/event secretary etc.

The duties of the secretary are set out below.

Before the meeting the secretary:



- consultation with the chair (and treasurer when appropriate) and circulates it
- ensures that minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated and a copy placed in the minute book
- goes through the agenda, collects all relevant papers and correspondence to be brought to the meeting
- checks that members have carried out tasks agreed at the previous meeting
- ensures that the room (and refreshments if applicable) is available and prepared for the meeting
- arrives early in order to:
  - check the layout of the room
  - check that all documents are to hand
  - run through procedures with the chair.

During the meeting the secretary:

- ensures that the minutes are agreed and the chair signs and dates the minutes of the previous meeting
- ensures that the meeting has a quorum present
- takes a note of all present, apologies for absence and minutes the meeting (unless a minute secretary has been appointed)
- records decisions and policy in the minutes
- keeps a check on the progress of work, as agreed by the committee
- ensures that the organisation meets its legal obligations
- reads or refers to individual items of correspondence relevant to agenda items under discussion.

After the meeting the secretary:

- drafts the minutes and checks with the chair before circulating (the minute secretary could do this if appointed)
- deals with the necessary correspondence following decisions made at the meeting and takes other action as appropriate, unless other committee members have taken on the responsibility.

In addition to tasks concerned specifically with the committee meeting, the secretary is also responsible for:

- dealing promptly with correspondence between meetings. If a decision of the committee is required then an acknowledgement should be sent, pending a formal decision
- keeping a well organised and efficient filing system which can be passed on to a new secretary. (Copies should be kept of outgoing letters. Correspondence should be divided up by subject and kept in chronological order)
- ensuring that all original legal documents are kept in a safe place, e.g. the committee's bank or solicitors office, whilst keeping working copies for use at meetings and ensuring that all members of the committee have copies
- sending out publicity and information about the organisation.

### 3.5 Minutes

Minutes should be written up as soon as possible after the meeting, either in a bound book or for insertion in a file and should be circulated promptly. This gives trustees the opportunity to mention any concerns to the chair before they are approved and signed at the next meeting. The minutes are the charity's record of decisions made and it is therefore important that they are accurate and stored appropriately. A minute book needs to be used to keep a hard copy of all the original minutes as signed by the chair. It is best practice if the minute book is a loose leaf folder, to number the documentation so that any lost or missing pages can be identified. It is useful to attach a copy of the trust deed and lease (if the building is leased) to the minute book for quick reference.

It is not necessary for the minutes to list all the points made by individuals at the meeting; only the resolutions agreed by the committee and the main points which led to the decision. Only in very rare cases will it be necessary to record any members' remarks in full. For complex discussions it is sufficient to state, 'Among the points raised in discussion were ...' and then give a brief summary. It is the role of the Chair to sign the minutes after checking with those present that they are a true and accurate record. If after discussion a trustee is unable to agree then this should be formally noted.

Minutes are for people who were not at a meeting, as well as those who were present. They are not open documents and do not have to be made available for public inspection. They are, however, a useful source of information for others who may, in the future, need or want to know what the committee has done. Minutes should record:

- the organisation's name
- the type of meeting held e.g. management meeting, AGM (annual general meeting) etc



- the date and time of the meeting
- where the meeting took place
- apologies for absence
- who attended from the committee
- others present and in what capacity e.g. an employee as an observer
- who chaired and who minuted the meeting (if chairing and minuting is rotated, then the minutes should state who will be doing them at the next meeting)
- any necessary corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting
- whether the minutes were accepted as an accurate record and signed
- matters arising from the previous meeting not being covered elsewhere
- a separate minute for each item or topic being discussed at the meeting.

Minutes are a record of what was discussed and decided, about a particular topic and should also include:

- any decision reached by the meeting (including a decision not to take a decision)
- a summary of the discussion which lead to the decision being made
- any action needed to be undertaken in order to implement the decision
- who is responsible for the action
- the deadline for implementing the action.

### 3.6 Booking secretary

In a large hall, a bookings secretary could be appointed to take responsibility for the use of the hall and as a contact for hirers. There is a useful list of paperwork which should be made available to booking secretaries in **Appendix 5**.

### 3.7 Role of the treasurer

The role of the treasurer is to ensure that money and property are properly managed.

The treasurer acts on behalf of the management committee to safeguard the organisation's finances, and as a 'watchdog' over all aspects of financial management. Like the work of the secretary, that of the treasurer can be shared amongst other members of the committee. It should also be remembered that, whilst the treasurer may give the lead, all members of the management committee are financially responsible for the management of the hall. The main responsibilities and duties of the treasurer are:

- day-to-day effective book-keeping of income and expenditure systems and records
- ensuring there are proper systems for budgeting and financial control
- banking of all cheques and cash; acting as primary signatory (with others) to cheques; invoicing and payments
- the regular preparation of reports on the accounts to the management committee in a format that is easily understood
- the preparation of annual accounts and submission to an independent examiner or auditor as may be required
- ensuring that the management committee have sight of and sign off the annual accounts at a meeting before the AGM
- being responsible to the management committee for the submission of annual accounts for their acceptance and for presentation at the AGM
- being responsible to the secretary for the final submission of accounts to the parish council and Charity Commission, as necessary
- where staff are employed, ensuring that the appropriate payroll systems are operated e.g. PAYE and Employers' National Insurance
- where applicable, to register for VAT purposes and to ensure the maintenance of VAT book-keeping and returns to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- ensuring that, where tax is being reclaimed on covenants and/or Gift Aid deductions, correct procedures are followed and records kept as required by HMRC
- having an input into all matters concerning the finances of the charity
- providing the secretary with all records of accounts to be kept for a minimum period of six years.

Note:

- money should never be paid into a personal account
- cheque books, petty cash and account books should always be kept in a secure place.

For further information about village hall accounts see **ACRE Information Sheet 41: Accounting and village halls**.



## 4. Committee meetings

It is important that the committee meets on a regular basis; some village hall governing documents may stipulate the minimum number of meetings that should be held each year.

Management committees do most of their work through meetings. Therefore, it is important that these meetings are lively and engage all the members, with sound decision-making, for the committee to be efficient and effective.

Well-managed and effective meetings can be a source of inspiration, engendering the feeling that the organisation has a sense of purpose, knows where it is going and what is being achieved. They also enable each individual member to contribute their skills and knowledge effectively, and to feel valued.

The environment in which meetings are held will also affect the proceedings. If possible the room should have:

- plenty of space
- good natural or electric light
- plenty of fresh air, yet be warm in winter
- freedom from noise interference
- freedom from interruption.

The layout of the room can also affect the meeting. The committee needs to decide which layout works best for them. For example an open circle without tables will encourage openness and discussion and allows everyone to see and hear one another. A traditional boardroom style, where members are seated around a table, tends to encourage more formal discussion.

It can be helpful to use a flipchart or other electronic equipment if available. The provision of refreshments also helps the meeting flow.

### 4.1 Agenda

An agenda is an essential tool (see **Appendix 3** for a sample agenda). It ensures that members know the purpose of the meeting, its anticipated length, matters to be discussed and what results are wanted. There should be a clear procedure for putting items onto the agenda. Normally this is done by notifying the chair or secretary in advance of the meeting. Ideally each agenda item should have:

- a title
- date, time and place of the meeting
- approximate timings of items (it may also useful to include an expected time to finish)
- a description of why each item is on the agenda, for example:
  - to give information
  - to be discussed, but not for decision
  - to solve a problem
  - to decide upon a course of action
  - to report back on action(s) previously agreed
- where appropriate, accompanying papers with relevant details
- who will speak on the particular item.

The chair and secretary should prioritise items on the agenda and ensure that they flow in a logical order. The order and timing of items should be agreed at the start of the meeting and it is advisable to tackle important items early on. Whenever possible the agenda should be sent out in advance. This has the dual benefit of allowing people to prepare and acts as a reminder of the meeting.

Often committee members are swamped by the quantity of information they receive. Information needs to be presented as clearly and succinctly as possible and be based on the 'need to know' principle. To keep members focused it can be helpful for the chair to advise the committee on the response required for each agenda item. For example, in the case of reporting on an activity, simply ask the committee to note the progress made or, in discussing financial matters, ask them to focus on the trends and changes and the subsequent effect this might have on the long-term objectives. When sending out information it is useful to ask:



- Why are members being sent this?
- Do all the committee members need this or just the officers? Could it be discussed elsewhere e.g. sub-committee?
- Is it clear and in an easily understandable format?
- Will this help members to fulfil the hall's purpose and function?

## 4.2 Preparing to attend a meeting

Committee members should check that they have:

- actioned any tasks that they agreed to do at the previous meeting
- notified the secretary or chair of any items for inclusion on the agenda
- read through the agenda, minutes and supporting papers and considered the issues and problems that may be raised
- made a note of points that they may wish to raise
- prepared an outline of the main points, in a logical order, of any verbal report that they have been asked to give.

## 4.3 Chairing the meeting

The chair is responsible for steering the committee through the business of the meeting efficiently and effectively. S/he has a duty to understand the trust deed, its aims and objectives, the basic financial position, and current issues and concerns. The chair should know what is on the agenda and why.

At the beginning of the meeting the chair should:

- welcome those present. If there are newcomers, introductions should be made
- seek apologies
- sign the minutes of the previous meeting after checking with those present that they are a true and accurate record
- explain the agenda outlining which items need decisions, which are for information, discussion or consultation
- seek out any other items for inclusion
- state when the meeting is due to finish.

Any new items that do not fit the agreed headings should be included under 'Any other business' (AOB) or held over until the next meeting. It is the chair's right to refuse to add new items, even under AOB, if there is a clear procedure for putting items onto the agenda.

The chair should either introduce each item or the person who is to present it. From time to time the chair should summarise, especially if there is a complex discussion. S/he should encourage everyone to participate.

The chair needs to be firm and sensitive; not afraid to keep the discussion moving and to the point. Irrelevant information or opinions, time-wasting, domineering or aggressive behaviour should be quashed. The chair must be prepared to diffuse difficult situations, calling for a break if necessary.

When it comes to making a decision the chair should summarise the options and ensure everyone understands them. S/he should ensure that the final decision is clearly stated and minuted.

A good chair will use questions to keep a meeting moving in a focused way, such as:

- Has anyone had experience of this type of problem before? (information seeking)
- Does anyone have suggestions as to how this can be dealt with? (problem solving)
- That's an interesting/difficult point. How would the rest of you deal with it? (focussing on the whole committee)
- Have you any ideas? (direct this to an individual) This can be particularly useful to draw out quieter members or new members.
- If anyone is hogging the floor with a problem and being troublesome ask them how they would deal with it. (giving the problem back)

Before the close of the meeting the chair should summarise what has happened, the major decisions that have been



made and agreed, and ensure that all present know what tasks they have to do. Finally, the chair should announce the date, time and place of the next meeting and thank people for attending.

## 5. Sub-committees

Whilst the management committee may delegate tasks, it cannot delegate its decision-making powers. The setting up of sub-committees or working groups to carry out delegated tasks to implement the decisions of the management committee can be helpful. In this way, everyone on the committee need not be involved in every decision. After all, it is unreasonable to expect everyone on the management committee to be an expert in all aspects of the organisation's management. Permanent sub-committees are often referred to as standing committees. Their work is subject to the approval of the management committee and they should be given clear terms of reference. Examples of the sort of work that it can be helpful to delegate include:

- the organising of a programme of fundraising (a fundraising sub-committee) or a particular event e.g. annual fete
- suggesting priorities for maintenance, carrying out maintenance tasks, obtaining tenders for work and supervising maintenance work (a maintenance sub-committee)
- investigating the feasibility and costs of carrying out improvements or rebuilding
- advertising for, and interviewing staff
- volunteer recruitment and support
- publicity and media.

The management committee can authorise a set figure for the sub-committee to spend in order to carry out the agreed work.

Examples of the sort of work that cannot be delegated include:

- the decision to contract (e.g. for building work)
- authorisation to incur expenditure
- decisions to recruit staff and determining rates of pay, hours of work etc.

Having sub-committees and/or working groups means that:

- there is less pressure on the officers (and staff, if any)
- the organisation can draw on and build up areas of specific expertise
- committee members can concentrate on developing their expertise in a particular area of management responsibility and not have to spread themselves too thinly
- good use can be made of committee members' specific interests and skills
- people can become involved for short periods of time and contribute their knowledge and expertise to individual projects, without becoming a member of the management committee
- the meetings of the whole committee become shorter and more effective as the sub-group can present their work in an abridged form.

When establishing any sub-committee it is important to minute their composition and terms of reference, these should state:

- the purpose of the sub-committee
- who is on the sub-committee, how they were appointed and the length of time they will serve
- how often there will be meetings
- who will service the sub-committee and chair it (the latter could be a role for the vice-chair)
- what topic/issue the sub-committee will cover e.g. recruitment, annual fete
- what types of decisions or action the sub-committee can make on their own i.e. their delegated powers and what must be referred back to the main committee for decision or action
- how the sub-committee is funded and its expenditure is authorised
- whether it is permanent or time bound and if the latter, the terms for winding-up the sub-committee.

It is imperative that the terms of reference clearly state the amount of authority the sub-committee has in making and implementing decisions. For example, there is a great deal of difference between a sub-committee that collects information and then makes proposals or recommendations to the main committee, to one which is able to make and implement decisions and simply report back to the main committee. Serious problems can occur if expectations and limits are not absolutely clear from the start. The management committee must exercise reasonable supervision over its sub-committees. All sub-committees should keep minutes of their acts and proceedings, and copies should be passed to the management committee. An example of terms of reference can be provided by your local ACRE Network member



## 5.1 Sub-committees exercising delegated powers

In some circumstances, for example, where the management committee is very large, it can be expedient to set up a sub-committee with delegated powers where some members of the management committee have certain delegated decision-making functions (including engagement and dismissal of staff) and limited financial powers. In order to do this, specific power must be given in the hall's trust deed. Most village halls are unlikely to have this power, and in order to alter the deed, it will be necessary to write to the Charity Commission to ask them to alter the trust deed. The Charity Commission will only permit such a power if it can be demonstrated that it is both reasonable and necessary in the particular circumstances and that there is sufficient overall control by the management committee.

The committee should consider the benefits and drawbacks of delegating decision-making functions before embarking on this course of action. There may be benefits such as quicker decisions, speedier action and shorter, more manageable committee meetings. However, there are disadvantages. Organisations may become less involved in the hall and therefore less inclined to help with projects such as fundraising. Lack of communication between the sub-committee and management committee can lead to minor problems growing out of proportion. Most importantly, if the management committee members only ratify decisions they may cease to attend meetings and forget, that they, as charity trustees, and not the sub-committee exercising delegated powers, have ultimate responsibility for the hall.

## 6. The Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is the culmination of the committee's year in office. It provides an opportunity to publicise the achievements of the past year, to make suggestions for the future and to hear suggestions and criticisms (constructive!) from the public. A well thought out meeting can pay dividends, particularly in stimulating the general public's interest in the hall's activities and potential. To get full value from the AGM it is vital to get as many people as possible to attend. Linking the AGM with a social event can provide an additional incentive/attraction, encouraging people to come. The meeting venue should be open and accessible to all of the community including those with disabilities. Not having some basic provisions in place such as handrails for people with disabilities or induction loops to help the hearing impaired will, even if it is unintentional, send out a message of exclusion to some members of the community. For further information see **ACRE Information Sheet 25: Making your village hall accessible**.

The AGM provides a good opportunity to explain the structure of the organisation; the role and function of the management committee; the role of its officers and that of individual committee members. It is good practice to circulate a brief written explanation of the role of officers, together with their duties and responsibilities and that of committee members, when sending out nomination forms. **Appendix 2** gives a sample letter to representatives of local organisations prior to an AGM.

The AGM must be publicised and held in accordance with the trust deed.

### 6.1 AGM agenda

A sample agenda for the AGM is set out below:

1. Welcome by the chair
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of the minutes of the last AGM (state date)
4. Matters Arising
5. Chair's Annual Report
6. Treasurer's Financial Report
7. Appointment and election of the management committee
8. Appointment of an independent examiner or auditor for the forthcoming year (depending on what is appropriate for the hall)
9. To consider any resolutions and/or recommendations which have been forwarded in writing to the honorary secretary



10. To consider AOB of which due notice has been given in writing to the honorary secretary.

## 6.2 Checklist for an AGM

Before the AGM

- check the governing document to ensure that the AGM is being held within the time period allotted
- check to ensure that the accounts have been independently examined or audited
- check the governing document for details/instructions about the period of notice that needs to be given. If it is not stipulated in the governing document then reasonable notice should be given (the Charity Commission recommend 21 clear days)
- check the governing document for details of how to advertise the AGM and what must be complied with in terms of the agenda items
- check that committee members are fully conversant with the rules for appointing/electing the members of the committee
- check that the management committee have had sight of and signed off the annual accounts
- check that the independent examiner/auditor has been informed of the meeting.

An example of a notice for an AGM is given in **Appendix 2** of the Charity Commission publication, CC48 Charities and Meetings.

At the AGM:

- ensure minutes are kept, as it is legal business that is being transacted the minutes should include:
  - the full text of any motions and amendments
  - names of the proposer and seconder for each motion
  - the result of votes, as announced by the chair of the meeting
- ensure that copies of the governing document and lease (if there is one) are to hand, together with any other documentation relating to the management of the building
- ensure elections are held in compliance with the governing document and that it is known who is eligible to vote
- ensure any resolutions and matters for AOB comply with the due period of notice given.

After the AGM:

- ensure new members of the committee sign a declaration verifying that they are not disqualified (see **Appendix 4**)
- submit copies of the accounts and annual report to the Charity Commission (as required under charity law within ten months of the end of the financial year (Charities with an annual income of less than £10,000 are not required to submit an annual return or submit an annual report)
- ensure the minutes are written up
- induct new committee members
- ensure that contact details are updated to take account of new committee members and changing roles.

## 7. New committee members

Induction and training for new members of the management committee is very important. Often when malpractice occurs it is not through intent but through negligence, or more commonly through ignorance. Often there is an assumption that if someone is 'on the committee' they know all about the organisation; frequently nothing could be further from the truth! One moment an individual is an interested spectator at an AGM, the next they find themselves elected onto the committee and are expected to be an 'expert' overnight.

It is often the case, regrettably, that prospective new management committee members are not given adequate information before joining the committee, either about the organisation itself or their role and responsibilities.

Ideally, at the first committee meeting after the AGM the decision making processes and practices and procedures should be explained to new (or potential) committee members. An induction pack should be given as part of this process. The following are suggested items for inclusion which should be adapted to suit your village hall:

- Contents List - see **Appendix 1**



- Information Sheet - see **Appendix 1**. This is a model and should be adapted to suit the situation in your particular hall
- copy of the governing document i.e. trust deed. (If the lease is separate from the trust deed then a copy of the lease should be enclosed. Members should know, in both cases, where the originals are lodged e.g. bank, solicitor etc.)
- Declaration by charity trustees (see **Appendix 4**)
- a full set of rules (governing its committee procedure and rules and charges for using the hall)
- copy of the hiring agreement
- copy of the annual report and accounts for the previous year
- list of all committee members (including addresses, telephone number and email address)
- latest edition of the newsletter (if the hall has one)
- copy of the Charity Commission leaflet CC3a 'Charity trustee: what's involved'
- copy of the last two sets of minutes
- copies of any contracts e.g. photocopier, if leased
- copies of any policy documents e.g. health and safety, child protection.



## Appendix 1

### **Suggested contents for sample Induction Pack for new village hall management committee members**

This Induction Pack is to help new members of \_\_\_\_\_ Village Hall management committee to understand their role and be informed and effective committee members.

Contents:

1. Information sheet (see pages 15-17)
2. Copy of the trust deed/governing document and lease (if the latter is a separate document)
3. Declaration by charity trustees (see **Appendix 4**)
4. Copy of the hiring agreement
6. A full set of village hall rules
7. Copy of the annual report and accounts for the previous year
8. List of members names, addresses and telephone numbers
9. Latest village hall newsletter
8. Copies of any contracts
9. Copies of any policy documents



## Sample Information sheet for new village hall management committee members

### 1. Welcome and introduction

Congratulations and welcome on becoming a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Village Hall. Our village hall is a registered charity (Number \_\_\_\_\_) and on becoming a committee member you have become one of its charity trustees. The information that follows has been specially prepared to give you a short history of the hall, together with other information which we hope you will find useful and to outline some of your responsibilities. Welcome to the Committee. We hope you enjoy being a member.

### 2. Contacts

Chair \_\_\_\_\_  
Vice-chair \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_  
Booking Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Village Hall history and background

The Hall was built in \_\_\_\_\_ (give brief and relevant history).

### 4. Summarise the Trust Deed/CIO Constitution particularly if this is obscure or difficult to read

For example:

- Highlight whether the hall is owned or rented.
- What are the objects (i.e. aims) of the Charity?
- Specify how long the lease is for and the date when it expires.

### 5. Responsibilities of trustees

The village hall has two sets of trustees:

- the holding or custodian trustees
- the managing charity trustees

#### Holding or custodian trustees

The holding trustees are: \_\_\_\_\_  
or

The custodian trustee is: The Parish Council (or any other corporate body permitted by law to be a custodian trustee)/ the Official Custodian of Charities (the Charity Commission).

The Hall is vested in (or held by) the holding trustees/custodian trustees and their responsibility is simply to hold the legal title of the charity's property and to act on the lawful directions of the committee in any transactions affecting this title.



## The managing charity trustees

The managing charity trustees are the members of the management committee. They are responsible for the day to day management of the village hall charity, in accordance with its governing document. There are approximately 10,000 village halls in England, the majority of which are managed in this way. Few problems are experienced as long as committee members manage the building with all reasonable due care and attention, in the same way that they would manage their own affairs.

As a committee member you will be expected to attend the meetings so as to have a full knowledge of how the committee is run, the financial situation, what decisions are being made and why. More importantly, it affords you the opportunity to express your thoughts and ideas on how we can continue to successfully manage this vital village asset. Although you may have been nominated by a village organisation to become a committee member, you must now act in the best interests of the village hall charity. You are, of course, entitled to put your organisation's views, but if there is a clash you must make decisions in the best interests of the charity. There is no such thing as a 'representative trustee' - you are the trustee and, although a substitute may attend meetings in your place they cannot vote on any matter.

At your first committee meeting you should sign (in the Minute Book) that you have read the Trust deed in order to show you fully understand and accept your responsibilities, and also complete a disqualification declaration (sample attached).

## 6. Committee composition and meetings

The Committee consists of \_\_\_\_\_ members in total \_\_\_\_\_ of whom are nominated by organisations in the village regularly using the hall and \_\_\_\_\_ are elected at our Annual General Meeting. We are allowed to co-opt up to another \_\_\_\_\_ members as the committee sees fit. We meet regularly on \_\_\_\_\_ and our AGM is held in \_\_\_\_\_. We elect a number of officers from within our members and the present incumbents are shown below:

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Vice-chair \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Booking Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

The hall also has the following sub committees \_\_\_\_\_ members of which are \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of the village hall rules and a list of committee members are included for your information.

## 7. Employees

The committee employs the following staff:

List for example:

cleaner

caretaker

## 8. Funding

Our main sources of funding are:

- Income from hiring (give details of the hiring policy)
- List other sources, such as parish council support.

Ideas for raising money are always welcome!

## **9. Licences**

The village hall has a Premises Licence authorising the following regulated entertainment and licensable activities at the times indicated:

List the activities the hall is licensed for and the times for which the activity is licensed.

Ensure that you have seen a copy of the Premises Licence and/or operating schedule. (This might be part of the hiring agreement).

NB: Any licensable activity on the premises or on part of the premises not covered by the hall's Premises Licence will need a Temporary Event Notice (TEN). Hirers need the written consent of the management committee before giving the licensing authority a TEN.

The village hall also has the following licences:

List any additional licences e.g. Performing Right Society Licence.

## **10. Insurance**

The hall is insured with \_\_\_\_\_ and has the following cover:

(Summarise the cover held, in particular the sum insured for rebuilding, public liability and whether the cover is extended to include hirer's liability).

## **11. Regular activities and user groups**

List the groups using the Hall and the activities which take place.

Also detail the committee's policy about accepting bookings.

## **12. Repairs and maintenance**

Give details of the programme for repairs, and maintenance.

## **13. Projects**

List major projects undertaken recently by the management committee and those under way at present, or planned for the future.

## **14. Sources of advice and support**

For example:

- Parish Council
- Local ACRE Network member
- Local Authority
- Youth Worker



## Appendix 2

### Sample letter - AGM

Dear

Village Hall AGM

The AGM of \_\_\_\_\_ Village Hall will be held in the village hall on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ and is open to all local inhabitants. The hall is a registered charity provided for the benefit of local people. Please invite your members to come along to hear what the committee have been doing on their behalf and to discuss ideas and plans for the future.

Your organisation is entitled to appoint a representative to the management committee and, in accordance with the governing document of the village hall, I would be grateful if you would notify me before the AGM who the representative will be. The committee is responsible for the day-to-day management, upkeep and finances of the hall. Representatives of organisations using the hall are full members of the management committee, along with elected members of the public and the committee has power to co-opt up to \_\_\_\_\_ members. For convenience, a form is given below for you to complete and return.

Yours sincerely

To: \_\_\_\_\_ Village Hall Management Committee

Dear Secretary,

The representative of \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ Village Hall Management Committee for the forthcoming year will be:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### Sample agenda

The \_\_\_\_\_ Village Hall  
Main Street, Netheracre, Wessex

The next meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee will be held on Monday 17 October 20.. at 7.30pm in the village hall.

Time	Agenda Item	
7.30	1	<b>Apologies for absence</b>
7.32	2	<b>Minutes of the last meeting held 15 June 20..</b>
7.35	3	<b>Matters arising from the minutes</b> (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)
7.50	4	<b>Correspondence</b>
8.00	5	<b>Treasurer's Report</b> (information)
8.10	6	<b>Reports from the Chairs of sub-committees</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Fund-raising</b> (report back)</li><li>• <b>Events</b> (report back)</li><li>• <b>Repairs and Maintenance (report enclosed for consideration)</b> (to decide upon a course of action)</li></ul>
8.30	7	<b>Arrangements for the AGM</b> (to be discussed and decide action)
8.50	8	<b>Any Other Business</b> (information only)
9.00	9	<b>Date of next meeting and close of meeting</b>



## Appendix 4

### Sample Trustee Declaration

Name of Charity \_\_\_\_\_

Charity Registration No: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Declaration by Charity Trustees

I have received and studied the constitution (or other governing document) of the charity and support its purposes.

I realise that as a member of its \_\_\_\_\_ committee I am one of the organisation's managing or charity trustees, and I understand the duties and responsibilities involved, as explained to me and indicated in the Charity Commission Leaflet CC3a: Charity trustee: what's involved

I am not under 18 years of age and am not disqualified\* from serving as a member of the committee, and in the event of my becoming disqualified, will take no further part in the affairs of the charity whilst such disqualification lasts.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

(This information is required for the completion of the Charity Commission's annual return).

\* The Charity Act 1993 lists disqualifications as:

- an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception
- an undischarged bankruptcy
- an undischarged composition or arrangement with creditors
- having been removed from the office of charity trustee by the Charity Commission or High Court
- being subject to a disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Documentation list for booking secretaries**

This is a suggested list of documentation which could be made available to booking secretaries. It can be adapted to suit your village hall and stored appropriately:

- hiring agreement – general events and regular hirers
- commercial events – special hiring agreement
- appropriate details and forms for the sale of alcohol at the hall
- rules for the use of the hall including the end of session checklist (to be given out on key collection or access to the hall)
- key collection or hall opening/closing arrangements
- information about the hall facilities
- guidance for events primarily for vulnerable children and adults
- receipt book
- hire charges list
- diary
- monthly calendar
- bank paying in book (this depends on the arrangements).



Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the national voice for the 38 rural community councils (RCCs) who make up the ACRE Network. Together, we make up the country's largest rural network, reaching 52,000 grassroots organisations in 11,000 rural communities.

RCCs are charitable local development agencies, generally based at county level, who have a strong history of leading, supporting and enabling community initiatives. From running community transport schemes and oil buying clubs, to assessing housing needs and supporting older people to stay in their homes, the ACRE Network helps people to help themselves.

The ACRE Network collectively:

- employs approximately 90 staff with a variety of specialist skills
- engages with 6,900 different partners
- has over 12,000 fee-paying members and
- supports almost 10,000 village hall committees

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