



scottishathletics 



COMMITTEE

GUIDANCE

**GUIDANCE FOR GETTING THE
MOST FROM YOUR COMMITTEE**

www.scottishathletics.org.uk

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INTRODUCTION

This is a guidance document prepared by **Club Development Scotland** for athletics clubs in Scotland. Many sports clubs are governed by voluntary members and use committees and meetings to assist in the effective governance and management of their club. This resource has been developed to support clubs in getting the most from their committees.

ABOUT COMMITTEES

Every athletics club should have a group of people who manages its affairs. This is often called the management committee. Within incorporated entities, including charities, this group might be the board of directors or trustees, however, this paper will focus providing guidance for the governance of unincorporated associations (although some of the issues may be similar). A dynamic and effective committee is a critical component in any thriving community club and any club's success will largely be down to the committee's work. The committee sets the tone for many of the important relationships a club has including, most significantly, with the members.



Please note this publication is a general summary produced by Club Development Scotland. It should not replace legal advice tailored to your club's specific circumstances.

FEATURES OF AN EFFECTIVE COMMITTEE



An effective chair

An effective chair will have experience relevant to the work of the committee as well as leadership and people skills. The chair should be well organised, be able to motivate, and be confident in managing committee members to accomplish tasks in a timely manner. Committee members should have confidence in the chair and vice versa.



Effective committee members

Members are often appointed at the AGM under the terms of the club's constitution. Ideally candidates should volunteer, rather than needing to be coerced into taking on a role, and should have a skill set relevant to the tasks for which the committee is responsible. Identifying the tasks required to keep the club running smoothly will help to identify the types of people who should be nominated to the committee.



Committee role descriptions

Committee members should be given a role description, outlining their role, responsibilities and time commitment. As good practice, new committee members should be given an induction into the committee and, where possible and as part of succession planning, allow for potential new committee members to shadow existing members.



Structure and accountability

Committees (and sub-committees) must have clear accountability. Ideally, this begins with clear terms of reference for the committee together with a club plan which the committee work towards completing and which has also been communicated to club members. These all help to ensure that the committee is focussing on strategic issues.



Well run meetings

A combination of the right people on the committee, an effective chair and timely decisions should ensure meetings are well run. Minutes from committee meetings should be made available to club members.

WHAT DOES THE COMMITTEE DO?

The committee exists to serve the club and to ensure that its members receive the best possible service and experiences, acting as custodian for the club's assets. This means your club needs the right people with the right skills and experience, and lots of enthusiasm.

Although the role of management committee members may vary according to the size and nature of the club, all committee members should be individually committed to:

1

DEVELOPING CLUB VISION

Developing the vision, mission and values of the club.

2

PROVIDING DIRECTION

Providing strategic direction, including agreeing and monitoring strategic plans.

3

STAYING INFORMED

Staying informed of the activities of the organisation and the wider issues that affect its work.

4

ENSURING MONITORING

Ensuring the work of the organisation is monitored and evaluated.



WHO DO YOU NEED ON A COMMITTEE?



The next page below provides an example of a very basic committee structure.

To help your committee to be as successful as possible, make sure it adopts an effective structure and is made up of a diverse mix of people with the right skills and experience.

A committee should operate as a team, drawing on the skills and talents of each member and working towards common goals to ensure the club thrives.

Beyond the four essential roles presented on the next page, a club may have non-specific committee members who take shared responsibilities for the organisation's activities.

Ideally, a committee should comprise 5 – 9 members to achieve a balance between having a range of expertise and being an effective forum for decision making.



Chairperson

The person who governs club committee meetings



Treasurer

The person responsible for handling and accounting for the money



Secretary

The person who deals with administration



Welfare Officer

The person responsible for promoting safeguarding within the organisation

Clubs can have other named roles and they do not have to be a formal member of the committee; they can give monthly reports or attend when it is suitable to do so, for example:

- Competitions Officer
- Fundraising Officer
- Volunteer Co-ordinator
- Press / Social Media Officer
- Team Captain
- Youth Representative



Please refer to Club Development Scotland's specific guidance documents in relation to the roles of Chairpersons, Treasurers, Secretaries and Welfare Officers.

FORMING YOUR FIRST COMMITTEE

Electing a committee may sound rather complicated but is actually relatively straightforward. Before recruiting your committee, it's a good idea to identify the roles your club needs.

Once you have a better idea of how your committee will be structured and the key roles to be filled, make sure the duties and responsibilities for each role are clearly outlined.

1

Decide on the right committee structure that meets the needs of your club now and in the future.

5

Consider the make-up of your club membership to ensure your committee represents the diversity of your members.

2

Consider creating sub-committees with responsibility for specific issues.

6

Be open about what the role is, what is expected and, where possible, the time commitment expected.

3

Note what skills or experience would be suitable for each role to help identify the right people. Sometimes all you need are enthusiastic and committed people!

7

Ensure that people have agreed to stand for designated roles before the meeting, it can prevent embarrassing silences!

4

Think about who the right people to be on the committee are. Who has the right skills and experiences for the committee roles? Invite them to stand for election.

8

Where possible make sure each committee member only has one role so they are not overloaded.

DEVELOPING YOUR COMMITTEE

It is important that your committee is made up of people with a range of skills and expertise in order to support your club's governance and development needs. A club should always be thinking of ways to develop and improve its committee.

FINDING AND RECRUITING NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Finding and recruiting new committee members to meet the organisation's changing needs in relation to skills, experience and diversity is an important role played by existing committee members.

Keeping a management committee fresh, focused and effective should involve regular renewal of its membership. This enables the committee to periodically review what skills or attributes the committee requires to meet the changing challenges and demands of the organisation. It can also help to strengthen the commitment and enthusiasm of individual committee members, by introducing mechanisms for ensuring their term of office is subject to periodic re-election.

KEEPING IT FRESH

Your club should be regularly inviting club members to stand for election to develop or bring in new skills, experiences and perspectives.

New committee members are typically elected at your club's Annual General Meeting (AGM). Your constitution should define rules for the recruitment of officers. For example, procedures might include whether nominations for new committee members have to be taken in advance or at the meeting (most AGMs require a proposer and a seconder for each nomination).

You might also look for new committee members in the following circumstances:

- Some committee members have resigned or are intending to;
- The committee needs further skills and experience, e.g. in areas such as governance, finance or marketing;
- There is a sense that the committee needs reinvigorating.

The committee might consider undertaking a periodic skills audit to identify gaps in the expertise of the existing committee. When appointing new committee members, you should make sure that you take skills and diversity into consideration.

Recruiting new committee members may not be as straightforward as recruiting for other voluntary roles:

- Committee Members must be recruited in line with procedures laid down in the club's constitution;
- It is essential to attract people with the necessary skills or attributes;
- Potential volunteers may be reluctant to take on the responsibilities; and
- New members may struggle to get up to speed with the breadth of their responsibilities.

However recruiting new members provides a great opportunity to strengthen and diversify your Management Committee, increasing its overall effectiveness and ability to achieve its goals, while some of the challenges identified can be mitigated by adopting the procedures recommended in this guidance.

Given the key role that the Management Committee plays in the success of the organisation, it is worth spending a little time planning your recruitment and reviewing how you attract, select and involve new members.



KEEPING A HEALTHY TURNOVER OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

It is challenging for committees to maintain a balance between ensuring continuity and being a 'closed shop'. However, succession planning enables committees to anticipate and manage turnover when members resign or reach the end of their term of office. Such healthy turnover helps to ensure openness and accountability and is underpinned by effective succession planning.

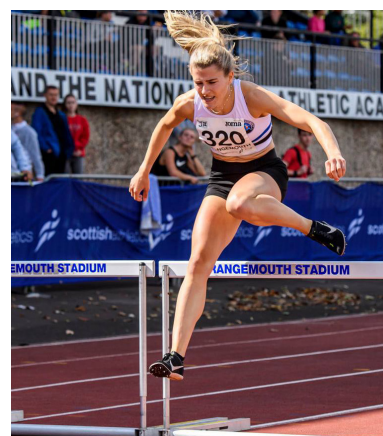
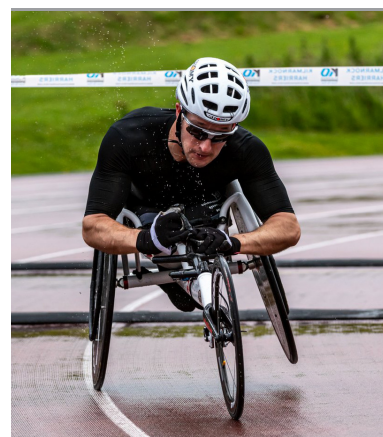
There is a wide variation in the size of committees and in the election process. Small community groups often think they should have 12 or more committee members while some large organisations have far fewer people on the committee. Similarly some organisations think they have to re-elect the entire committee each year, while others have the same people on the committee for years with little opportunity for others to get elected. In order to ensure fair and consistent practice that is in line with your governing document, it is important to consider what procedures you will use in recruitment and selection for committee membership.

Small groups may adopt a fairly informal approach in the early stages of application and selection, but they will still need to consider the same issues:

- Which committee members are retiring and standing for re-election?
- How will new candidates stand for election?
- What are eligibility criteria and who determines these?
- What are the formal procedures for nomination and/or election to the committee?

Your answers to all of these questions should be based on:

- Requirements outlined in the club's constitution;
- Additional procedures or criteria agreed by the committee



KEEPING A HEALTHY TURNOVER OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS (CONTINUED)

When appointing new committee members, it's important to take their skills and experience into account for the role they're going to take on. You may find that you need to reach out to the wider membership, rather than relying on your current volunteer base. You should aim for a diverse committee, as having a variety of viewpoints will push your committee to challenge each other and reach the best decisions for the club as a whole.

Use a skills matrix

- Listing your members' skills and experience will help you identify your club's strengths and fill any gaps when electing new committee members.
- Ask people when they join what their skills are and what they enjoy doing or survey your existing members to find this out.

Development

- Don't forget that committee members, just like any other volunteers, will operate most effectively if they are provided with regular support and supervision.
- Consider what training or support volunteers will need to improve or maintain their skills and experience or boost confidence, and improve the overall effectiveness of your club.

Diversity

- If all committee members share the same demographic profile (for example, are all the same age, gender or race) they are more likely to have common viewpoints and not be reflective of your club in its entirety.
- Club members who don't fit that profile may feel that the club is not inclusive or that their opinions are not being considered at a committee level.
- A committee comprising a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints will stimulate the committee and create a more sustainable club for the future.



SUBCOMMITTEES



The following pages offer some guidance on structuring subcommittees

Subcommittees are set up so that a small group can be given delegated responsibility for a specific area, i.e. finance/funding, volunteer recruitment or a specific project such as a new building or a merger.

This allows the committee to focus on major issues without one topic dominating the committee agenda.

The main committee is responsible for all decisions taken by the sub-committees

so members should satisfy themselves that the reporting process is effective. As with any delegation it is also essential that the members of the sub-committee have relevant expertise and that they are given sufficient information and appropriate support in carrying out their duties.

The club constitution should set out the criteria for sub-committees.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SUBCOMMITTEES

Each sub-group should have clear terms of reference agreed by the committee and regularly reviewed. Terms of reference are written guidelines that clarify the role, purpose and responsibilities of the sub-committee. Most importantly, an effective reporting mechanism should be put in place.

Terms of reference should be in writing and reviewed annually by both the sub-committee and the committee.

Contents of terms of reference:

- Name of group.
- Membership and appointment: Who can be a member (e.g. committee members, co-opted members, etc.) How and when are they appointed? What is the duration of the appointment?
- Chairing: Will this be by appointment from within the sub-committee membership or dictated by the main committee?
- Frequency of meetings and quorum: How often will the subcommittee meet? This will depend on the role of the group.
- Reporting mechanism: How will they report to the Management Committee? This might either be a written report or minutes of sub-committee meetings.
- Functions and delegated authority: Specify the role and purpose of the sub-committee. Specify limits to its authority, i.e. is it advisory only? Specify when it can make decisions or take action without the specific approval of the Management Committee.



CLUB MEETINGS

All sports clubs require a structure under which their club meetings are organised. The club's meetings should be referred to in the constitution in which there are usually three types of meeting:

- Committee Meetings
- Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

The latter two will be meetings open to the entire membership of the club and the rules for these general meetings will be set out in the constitution, i.e. matters to be discussed, quorum for a meeting, minimum number of days' notice required etc. The frequency and format for meetings will not be the same for all clubs, so just make sure that it is right for your club and all that are involved.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

These are meetings where committee members meet to discuss routine club business and related matters on a regular, recorded basis. It is vital to make sure that these meetings are kept short, to the point and are completely necessary, in order to retain committee members.

Your club constitution should state how often the committee meets and the minimum number of committee members needed in attendance (quorum). It is recommended that a club committee should meet at least once every 3-4 months.

The club secretary is generally responsible for the meeting time and venue and for giving notice to committee members. The secretary is also usually the individual responsible for taking minutes at committee meetings to make sure all key discussion points and decisions are captured and recorded. These should be reviewed and approved by committee members and, if possible, made available to the wider club, perhaps on the club website, so that they know what was discussed.



COMMITTEE MEETINGS (CONTINUED)

The business undertaken during committee meetings can be divided broadly into:

1. Items for information: This relates to events that have already happened or decisions already made, and may comprise financial reports or reports, verbal or written, to inform other members who then have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification.
2. Items requiring decisions: This relates to future events and enables the whole committee to discuss the issues and develop options for their resolution. Consultation with committee members often results in a better outcome and commitment to and ownership of the action to be taken.

Committee meetings can be less formal than general meetings but the Chairperson must ensure that meetings remain orderly, focussed on the agenda and do not overrun. Many successful meetings are run in a low-key way, with informal ground rules although larger clubs may need more formal rules for conducting a meeting.



THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR A WELL-RUN COMMITTEE MEETING

1

Agenda and any other relevant information:

- The agenda sets out the matters to be discussed. That agenda needs to be emailed out in advance of the meeting to all committee members, along with any other additional reports, sub-committee minutes and other papers for review. Bring extra copies to the meeting for anyone who has forgotten to bring their documents.

2

Clarify the decision-making process which should be consistent with the club constitution.

- At the outset, the chairperson should confirm the decision making process to committee members.
- Committee members must abide by decisions taken, whether they agree with them or not.
- Where a committee member has declared a conflict of interest on a specific agenda item, they should be invited to absent themselves from the meeting while that item is being discussed and voted on.

3

Start on time and endeavour to end on time:

- The chairperson might indicate how long the meeting is expected to last
- The chairperson should also seek to allocate approximate times for each agenda item as this will help keep the discussions focused

4

Allow people to share their views:

- Listen to who is talking.
- Learn from other people.
- Allow people to speak up when they have something to say.
- Allow time for questions.
- Consider all the options and share your views.
- If there is a subject that is confidential, it should not be discussed with anyone outwith the committee.

5

End of meeting:

- Close your meeting with a list of action items and assignments that need to be completed before the next meeting or within a set time frame.
- Decide who is responsible for each action.
- The secretary should take minutes of the meeting including all actions, time frames and whose action it is.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGM)

As the name suggests, Annual General Meetings are held on a yearly basis. These meetings are open to all club members and are held to make decisions that affect what your club does and how it is run.

The main reasons for holding an Annual General Meeting are:

- To consider the club's annual report
- To elect officers
- To discuss and vote on amendments to the constitution or club rules
- To approve the annual accounts
- To review the chairperson's annual report.

AGMs also present an opportunity to highlight the progress and achievements of the club over the past 12 months.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS (EGM)

Extraordinary General Meetings are called when a group of committee members or minimum number of club members (specified in the constitution) wish to:

- Replace officers who have resigned mid-term
- Amend the constitution
- Discuss any other important or urgent matters which cannot wait until the AGM

The club's constitution should detail why, when, and how an EGM can be called, the notice required and how it should be managed.



DEVELOPING POLICIES

As your club grows and develops its range of activities, you will probably find it necessary to establish some club policies that set out in more detail how the club and its members should operate. For example, Health and safety, Safeguarding, GDPR, Financial and Disciplinary/grievance.

Policy development involves identifying need, gathering information, drafting, consulting and review. The following steps summarise the key stages involved in developing policies:

1

IDENTIFY NEED

Policies can be developed:

- In anticipation of need (e.g. child protection policies should be in place once an organisation starts to work with children or young people); and
- In response to need (e.g. a policy position on a government strategy may be developed in response to a consultation paper).

The organisation needs to constantly assess its activities, responsibilities and the external environment in order to identify the need for policies.

2

IDENTIFY WHO WILL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Delegate responsibility to an individual, working group, sub-committee or staff members, according to the expertise required.

3

GATHER INFORMATION

Matters to be addressed will include the following.

- Do you have any legal responsibilities in this area?
- Is your understanding accurate and up to date?
- Have other organisations tackled the same issue?
- Are there existing templates or examples that you could draw on?
- Where will you go for guidance?

4

DRAFT POLICY

Ensure that the wording and length or complexity of the policy are appropriate to those who will be expected to implement it.



5

CONSULT WITH APPROPRIATE STAKEHOLDERS

Policies are most effective if those affected are consulted, are supportive and have the opportunity to consider and discuss the potential implications of the policy. Depending on whether you are developing policies to govern the internal working of the club or external policy positions, you may wish to consult, for example:

- Club members;
- Staff and volunteers;
- Committee members;
- Service users or beneficiaries.

6

APPROVE POLICY

Who will approve the policy? Is this a strategic issue that should be approved by the committee or can this be dealt with effectively by staff? Bear in mind that, ultimately, the committee is responsible for all policies within the organisation.

7

CONSIDER PROCEDURES

Procedures are more likely to be required to support internal policies. Consider whether there is a need for clear guidance regarding how the policy will be implemented and by whom (e.g.

a policy regarding receiving complaints will require a set of procedures detailing how complaints will be handled). Who will be responsible for developing these procedures? When will this be done? What will be the processes for consultation, approval and implementation?

8

IMPLEMENT

How will the policy be communicated and to whom? Is training required to support the implementation among staff and volunteers? Should the club produce a press release?

9

MONITOR, REVIEW & REVISE

What monitoring and reporting systems are in place to ensure that the policy is implemented and to assess usage and responses? On what basis and when will the policy be reviewed and revised?



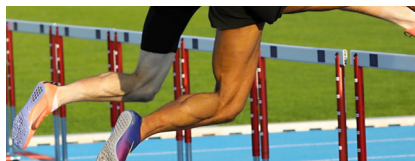
SCOTTISH ATHLETICS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Following the information affiliated clubs received regarding the updated Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and Affiliation Policy, please find attached the following documents.

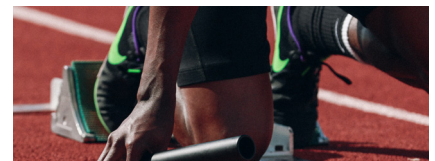
These individual policies have been outlined in the overarching Affiliation Policy as a requirement for Affiliation. scottishathletics recommend that clubs adopt the attached templates, replacing your existing documents, and make the new documents available to your members.



Template Equality Policy



Template Disciplinary Policy



Template Conflict of Interest Policy

WELFARE AND SAFEGUARDING

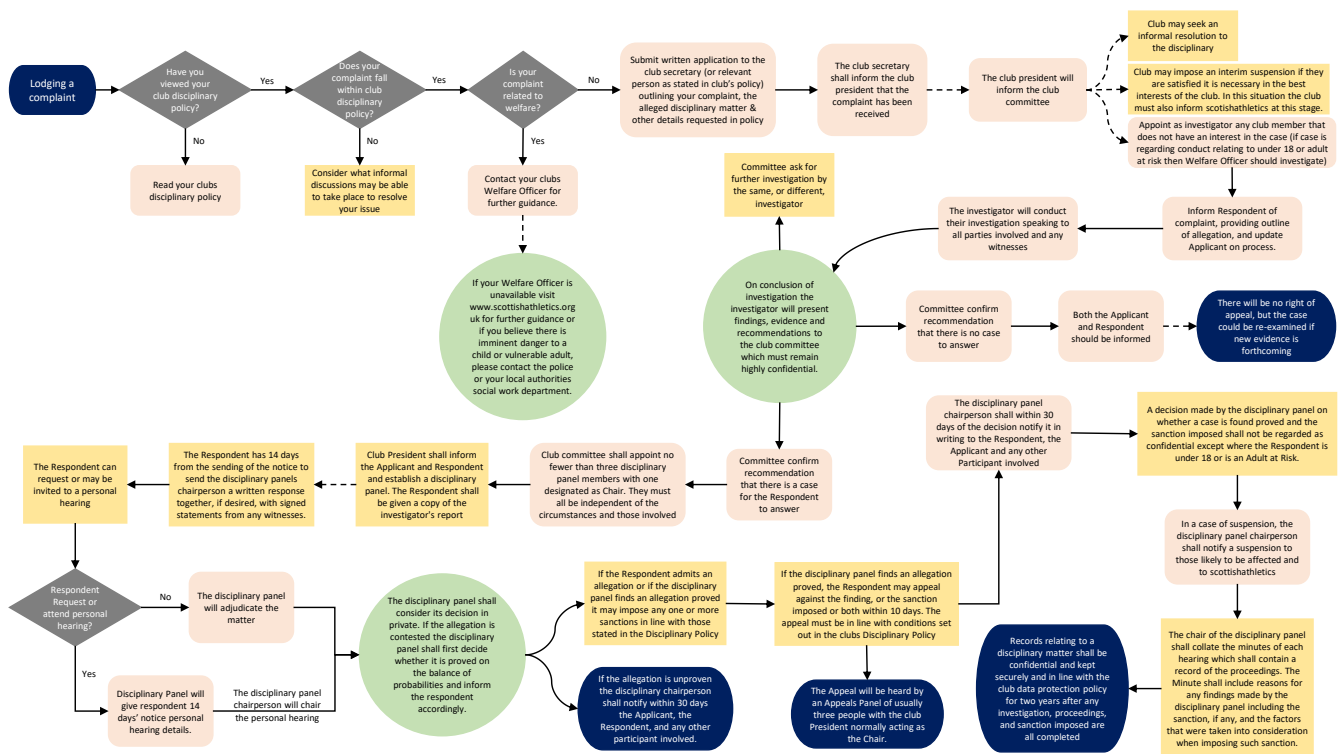
scottishathletics recommend all Committee Members participate in the UK online safeguarding training course, accessible [here](#).

This document offers guidance on the safe recruitment of volunteers into committee positions within athletics clubs. PVG membership is not required unless the role involves working with protected groups (Children under 18 and protected adults). Within a club committee setting PVG membership will generally only apply to the welfare officer.

Welfare Officers in clubs with children and/or protected adults should apply for a PVG by contacting pvg@scottishathletics.org.uk Welfare Officers are also asked to complete the Sport Scotland Child Welfare & Protection in Sport Training (CWPS), a list of course dates is available on the Sport Scotland website Training courses (sportscotland.org.uk)

Welfare Officers in clubs with adults, over 18s should complete a [self-declaration](#) form with SA

All other positions on club committees should follow the safe recruitment guidance where applicants complete the following self-declaration form. References are an important step in the recruitment process for everyone, two references should be completed for each applicant and returned to the club welfare officer/president as appropriate.



FREQUENTLY ASKED Q&A

1

Question?

How do we avoid the Committee relying upon one or two individuals?

Answer :

Unfortunately, clubs often end up relying on one or two people to take on a lot of the work. It's a good idea to spread the workload and ask others to take on more responsibility. That way, you are more likely to avoid burnout and retain volunteers for longer.

Ensure your Committee Members do not become overburdened. Are they responsible for tasks that could be carried out by another committee member or a club volunteer?

It can be a useful exercise to review the roles of your committee members, especially if one person is taking on much of the work, perhaps coaching as well as undertaking committee work, and others could be encouraged to take on more responsibility.

2

Question?

Should we have some independent members on the committee?

Answer :

To follow good governance practices, some (the number may depend on the size of your overall committee) of your club's committee members should be independent, which in this case means not related or living together. This reduces the risk of decisions being made or swayed by a group that has a common interest that doesn't necessarily reflect the club's best interests.

3

Question?

Does the committee have the power to do whatever they wish?

Answer :

No. The committee has certain powers that are clearly laid out in the club's constitution. The committee can only act within these powers.

CHECKLIST FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Does your committee do the following things:

Overview	YES	NO
Understand the responsibilities of their role		
Understand and comply with the organisation's governing document		
Understand the organisation's legal structure		
Manage conflicts of Interest		
Provide sound financial oversight & ensure that resources are properly managed		
Ensure that all potential risk is assessed and dealt with		
Be able to account for everything the organisation does		
Ensure the organisation pursues its purpose		
Safeguard the name and values of the organisation		
Take decisions as a collective group		
Understand the role and delegated authority of any sub-committees		
Differentiate between the role of committee and staff (if relevant)		
Hold meetings as necessary to properly fulfil their role		
Seek expert and professional advice when needed		

If you answered 'Yes' to ten or more questions, you are actively supporting the committee and ensuring it is well governed and productive...Well Done! If you answered 'Yes' to less than ten questions, try to address these areas and reflect upon these areas in the future.