



# What does the Chair do?

## What are the Chair's main responsibilities?

### How to chair a meeting

1. Getting the meeting through all the business in the time allotted.
2. Making sure it is clear what decisions have been made
3. Making sure it is clear who is going to do what tasks.
4. Keeping the meeting in order - stopping interruptions and irrelevancies, and allowing everyone to be heard.

### The Agenda

1. You will need an agenda to help you organise the business to be discussed at the meeting.
2. If the meeting is very small and informal, you could simply agree the agenda at the start of the meeting.
3. If the meeting is larger and more formal, or you want to let people know in advance what you will be discussing, you will need to prepare an agenda before the meeting. Sometimes the Chair and Secretary do this together.

The sample agenda below shows you what items are usually included in an agenda.

### **Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last meeting—agree these are a correct record
3. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
4. New matters
5. Correspondence
6. Treasurers report
7. Any other business
8. Date of next meeting

It is useful to have a record of everyone who was at the meeting, so pass around a piece of paper for people's names and addresses.

### Keeping the meeting in order

How well the meeting runs depends on the people at the meeting, as well as the Chair. It makes a Chair's job easier if the group has agreed some basic rules about how they want the meetings to work—think about discussing this in your group.

### **Making sure everyone's view is heard**

- In larger and more formal meetings it is usual to ask people to speak 'through the Chair'. This means they put their hand up when they want to speak, and then wait until the Chair tells them it is their turn. The Chair keeps track of whose turn it is.
- In a smaller you may want to be more informal, but you still need to make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak. Be aware that some people find it more difficult to talk at meetings than others, and try to make it easier for them. On the other hand, some people like to talk all the time, any you need to be firm about stopping them.

# What does the Chair do?

- It can help to say something like “is there anyone who hasn’t talked yet who would like to say something about this...” or “Clifford has spoken several times already so I’m going to let Doris go next...”
- Sometimes it works well to go round everyone in turn asking them what they think about a particular issue.
- Before a decision is made, or you move on to another item, check that everyone has had their say.
- Don’t let people interrupt all the time, This is really frustrating for the person trying to talk, and leads to frayed tempers. Politely ask people to wait until the person speaking has finished.

## Getting through the business

- Keep an eye on the time and remind the rest of the meeting—eg “ we need to move on if we are going to cover all the other business. We need to make a decision about... our options are.....”
- If it is clear you are not going to get through all the business, suggest that some items are left until next time.
- It is always better, if possible, to give a clear suggestion, rather than say something vague which leads to endless debate.

## Drawing it all together

- At the end of a discussion, summarise the main points and what has been decided.
- If the meeting has agreed to do something, make sure you’ve also agreed who is going to do it.
- Make sure the minute taker has had time to take down the decision and who will do it.

## Some things to avoid

- Don’t use your position to push your views
- Don’t talk too much yourself
- Don’t let someone talk a lot because they are your friends or you are a bit wary of them.
- Don’t ignore people who want to speak.

***If you require further information or support on this topic please contact  
Evesham Volunteer Centre***

## **Disclaimer**

The information provided in this sheet is for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it.

**Acknowledgement: Resource Centre, Brighton**



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