



The Role of Members of the Committee

To serve as a member of the committee of NNWFHS:

- You need to have been a paid-up member for a full subscription year prior to nomination at an Annual General Meeting.
- You should meet the necessary requirements set out by the Charity Commission for eligibility to be a trustee.
- Your name should be submitted in advance of the General Meeting, as set out in the constitution.
- You should work towards the aims and objectives as set out in the Society's constitution.

Members of the committee are regarded as being trustees of NNWFHS:

- You should read the basic information for trustees available from the Charity Commission (currently, leaflet CC3 is the least you should read).
- Before accepting to be a member of the committee, you should read the NNWFHS constitution – the “governing instrument” of the Society.

Being a relatively small committee, most members have a role to undertake; the person doing the work often shapes such role - within the parameters set by the committee and the constitution.

All members of a committee are obliged to honour and work within the decisions taken by that committee providing the overall circumstances affecting that decision have not changed.

The “executive officers” (chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, membership secretary, minutes secretary and editor) may make decisions for the committee in the case of an emergency.

Ideally, you should be able to communicate by electronic means, as email is the preferred method for circulation of committee material.

General notes taken from other publications in the voluntary sector

Election: If accepting election for the committee, make sure you wish to serve and are capable of doing the job. Know the hours involved, not just to attend meetings, but to prepare. You must have an interest in the committee's work.

The work: Know your committee's terms of reference and it's authority. Be familiar with its previous work and, if necessary, ask the committee secretary to explain such background information.

Representative: A committee member should bring the views of the members he/she represents to the place where the decisions are made. When all the background facts have been considered, take a collective decision that represents the members' views. It is the responsibility of the committee members to support and help implement the action that follows that decision.

Agenda: Study the agenda and supporting papers well before the meeting. Be “on the ball” and arrive with ideas of your own.

Advice: Consult widely to obtain opinion, but weigh the advice according to its source. For example, did the person know the background to the problem they were discussing; did the person have any particular axe to grind.

Notes: Write notes on each agenda item to remind yourself of the points you wish to raise.

Attendance: Be prompt at meetings and respect the authority of the chairman by speaking through the chairman. Do not form cliques within the committee.

Be constructive: Make your contributions logical and to the point. Respect the point of view of others. Be constructive rather than pick holes in the finer details.

Decisions: Stay until the end of the meeting. Once a decision is made, support it unless the background facts have changed.

Standards: Committee members *set standards* by the example they give. Make your example one that other members can follow with pride.

Developments: Try to keep in touch with developments between meetings.

Communication: Remember the main function of a committee member is skilful two-way communication. Committee members must communicate members' views to the committee and pass back to members the views of other people and the background information. This two-way communication with members often needs relaxed discussion outside formal meetings.

Reporting: Reporting on committee decisions must be concise and limited to the amount of information the recipients can absorb. This will depend on the method of "putting it across". Read minutes and other papers as soon as possible and prepare a SHORT written note on the main points on which you intend to report. Ask for discussion on the critical items so as to obtain a specific view but not to "ramble on". You will not only bore the audience but you bring yourself and your committee into disrepute.

Dates: Put meeting dates in your diary for a full year ahead. Attend every meeting you possibly can, but if you cannot attend, always send your apologies.

Effectiveness: Anything less than 100% success is a partial blockage of the system and is costing members their opportunities. Take your responsibilities seriously and you will be a good committee member.

These notes apply to any person undertaking the role of a Committee Member in any organisation.
