

7.2

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; DECISION MAKING

- Committee Members Roles And Responsibilities
- Key Skills Checklist For Committee Members
- Decision Making By Consensus - The Desert Survival Problem

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Duties Of All Committee Members

Legal Duties

- Ensuring the organisation meets its objectives as set out in the constitution
- Ensuring the organisation complies with the rules set out in its constitution and acts legally in all its activities (getting advice when necessary)
- Acting in the interests of the organisation and its beneficiaries, and not for personal benefit
- Informing meetings of any interest in a contract which could lead to conflict of interest
- Providing proper accounts of the organisation's activities to its members, funders (and the Charity Commissioners, Companies House and other regulatory bodies as appropriate), producing annual reports and directors' reports as required by law and ensuring that accounts, annual returns and other required information is filed on time
- Seeking professional advice where relevant
- Ensuring the organisation's resources and assets are well managed and used to pursue its objects
- Keeping up to date with the organisation's activities to ensure informed decision making at all times
- As far as is reasonable, keeping abreast of legislation that may affect the organisation's work and direction
- Ensuring that the organisation has effective health and safety policies and procedures covering all its activities and that they are effectively monitored
- Ensuring that necessary insurance policies are taken out and periodically reviewed
- Ensuring the organisation meets all its contractual and other obligations, including employment contracts, tenancy and/or licence agreements, funding contracts and equipment licences
- Ensuring the organisation does not discriminate unlawfully in employment or service provision
- Regularly attending management committee meetings and working jointly with other members

Managerial Tasks

- Setting overall policy and short, medium and long-term objectives
- Identifying and discussing new areas of work
- Ensuring there are systems for regularly monitoring and evaluating the organisation's work
- Being a good employer
- Supervising and supporting senior staff and ensuring other employees and volunteers are properly supported
- Ensuring the organisation's equal opportunities policy is implemented and monitored
- Promoting the organisation

Main Duties Of The Chair

The tasks of a chair can be divided into five key areas, some of which could be delegated to a vice-chair.

Acting As A Spokesperson

Representing the organisation at external events; liaising with the press on behalf of the organisation (this could be delegated to a press officer); taking an active role in fundraising campaigns.

Dealing With Matters Relating To Membership, Other Officers And Users

Ensuring members' rights as stated in the constitution are met; helping to deal with disciplinary action against members and other officers; helping to deal with disputes between members, users and the organisation.

Planning And Running The Organisation's Meetings

Including the AGM, any other members or general meetings and committee meetings.

Planning meetings involves:

- Ensuring the organisation holds the meetings required by its constitution
- Ensuring compliance with the procedures for giving notice of meetings
- Helping to plan the agendas for each meeting, checking the minutes of previous meetings and ensuring that these and any background papers are distributed beforehand
- Being briefed about each item on the agenda
- Ensuring outstanding matters are followed up

Running meetings involves:

- Ensuring the meeting is quorate
- Gaining agreement of the minutes of the previous meeting and then signing them
- Making sure all relevant items on the agenda are discussed
- Ensuring all participants have the opportunity to make a contribution
- Making sure voting procedures are complied with
- Clarifying key decisions that are made
- Ensuring proper minutes are taken

Supervising Senior Staff

Including supervising and supporting the work of the senior member of staff.

Helping With The Management Of The Organisation

Including making decisions and taking action between committee meetings, if this is allowed by the constitution or has been authorised by the committee; acting as a sounding board for senior staff; signing cheques and liaising with the treasurer; helping to deal with any staff problems; involvement in staff recruitment.

Main Duties Of A Company Secretary

Directors of companies limited by guarantee must appoint a company secretary, whose post requires meeting certain legal obligations under company law. Some of the tasks may be delegated to paid staff (and a member of staff can be the company secretary).

Maintaining And Updating The Company Registers

Including maintaining a register of members and a register of directors and company secretaries; notifying the Registrar of Companies within 14 days of any changes of directors, changes in directors' home addresses, other companies of which they are directors, or any of the other information company directors are required to provide; if the company has a seal, keeping the sealing register - the list of documents on which the company seal has been used; where relevant, maintaining a register of 'charges', i.e. loans made to the company where the bank has a form of security, such as a mortgage.

Ensuring Meetings Are Called And Recorded

Including ensuring that an AGM is held within 18 months of incorporation and then at least every 15 months; ensuring that 21 days' written notice is given to members and auditors and that business is transacted in accordance with the constitution; calling other general meetings as required by the constitution, ensuring that 14 days' written notice is given and business transacted according; ensuring minute books are kept for general meetings and directors' meetings.

Administration Of Annual Returns And Accounts

Including ensuring an income and expenditure account and balance sheet are prepared or submitted for a compilation report and where necessary properly audited; circulating audited or examined accounts to members at least 21 days before the AGM; submitting accounts to the Charity Commissioners within ten months of the end of the financial year; submitting the income and expenditure account, balance sheet and directors' report to the Registrar of Companies within ten months of the end of the organisation's financial year; submitting an annual return to the Registrar of Companies by the due date; keeping copies of all annual returns and accounts for at least six years.

Supervising Legal Agreements

Including ensuring all legal agreements or contracts are properly discussed, recorded and agreed by the directors.

Meeting Other Registration Requirements

Including notifying the Registrar of Companies of changes to the organisation's registered address within 14 days; ensuring the organisation's stationery includes its registered name and address, the fact that it is a registered company and its registration number (and where relevant the fact that it is a registered charity); if the organisation is registered for VAT, ensuring the VAT number is printed on its invoices; having custody of the company seal, if there is one, and ensuring it is properly used.

Main Duties Of A Committee Secretary

'Company Secretary' is a legal position, required under company law. Many organisations, both companies and non-companies, also have an elected Committee Secretary.

Companies

In a company the elected secretary might help the company secretary to prepare for and administer meetings and with other administration.

Unincorporated Associations

In unincorporated associations, the secretary takes on responsibilities similar to those of the company secretary - specifically in relation to meetings, maintaining lists of members' and management committee names and addresses, and ensuring annual reports and accounts are submitted to the relevant agencies.

Unless required by the constitution there is no obligation to have an elected secretary, and the relevant tasks can be undertaken by staff.

Preparing For Meetings

Including sending notices of all meetings to members; making arrangements for meetings, for example organising refreshments, booking rooms, ensuring appropriate facilities for participants with disabilities or other special needs; preparing the agenda, in consultation with the chair, and distributing the agenda with any background papers; checking that members have carried out tasks agreed at the previous meeting.

Helping In Meetings

Including making sure the meeting agrees the minutes of the previous meeting and they are signed by the chair; taking and producing minutes of the meetings, recording names of those attending and apologies, major decisions, any votes taken and agreed further action.

Other Administration

Including dealing with incoming correspondence; keeping records of outgoing correspondence; keeping records of membership subscriptions; ensuring members are provided with the organisation's constitution, annual report and policies; sending out publicity about the organisation.

Main Duties Of An (Honorary) Treasurer

In small organisations, the Treasurer may play a 'hands-on' role controlling spending and supporting staff in making financial decisions. In larger organisations and many social enterprises, the Treasurer chiefly provides oversight and manages the role of ensuring the committee of Board of Directors get regular reports.

The role of the Treasurer is, broadly:

- To provide general financial oversight
- To have knowledge of all funding agreements, contracts and other legal agreements with a financial aspect to them (for instance leases)
- To undertake or commission financial planning and budgeting
- To make financial reports
- To ensure that banking, book-keeping and record-keeping systems are being followed
- To control the use of fixed assets and stock

General Oversight

Includes ensuring funds are used in accordance with committee decisions or policies; that funding is spent according to agreements with funders; that committee members understand the organisation's finances; drawing up or developing financial policies and procedures; making financial decisions between committee meetings and reporting actions taken; liaising with funders, banks or lenders; preparing accounts for audit.

Knowledge Of Funding Agreements And Contracts

Including knowing about funding sources and their terms and conditions; drawing up funding applications; liaising with funders; drawing up and submitting tenders or ensuring staff do so in compliance with tender specifications; ensuring funding is spent for the purposes given; ensuring goods and services are provided/sold at an appropriate price.

Budgeting And Planning

Including preparing budgets and financial projections like cash-flow forecasts; presenting and explaining budgets and forecasts to the committee or other stakeholders; controlling and monitoring income and expenditure and adjusting budget forecasts; broadly defining the priorities for spending.

Financial Reporting

Including making regular reports to the committee or ensuring it receives reports from staff; ensuring that committee members and ordinary members at the AGM understand financial information and reports; preparing financial reports and accounts; ensuring the committee and members receive and end-of-year financial report; ensuring accounts are audited and presented to the AGM (if required).

Banking And Book Keeping

Including choosing and opening accounts; acting as a signatory on accounts; drawing up and monitoring financial systems and procedures; ensuring money owing is collected and payments owing are made; ensuring proper records are issued and kept; ensuring all income is paid into the bank and monitoring financial accounts and records to detect theft or fraud.

Controlling Assets

Including that materials are not stolen or wasted; that major assets are being used properly and their value maintained as much as possible; keeping records of leases or titles to property; and that property is properly insured and protected from loss.

KEY SKILLS CHECKLIST FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Sector	Existing Skill	Required Skill
Knowledge Of other local social enterprise		
Ability to identify opportunities		
Knowledge of funding sources		
Experience of making funding bids		
Experience of assessing funding bids		

Legal Knowledge	Existing Skill	Required Skill
Legal responsibilities of committees		
How charities work		
Responsibilities when employing someone		
Leases and contracts		

Financial Skills	Existing Skill	Required Skill
How to read an income and expenditure account		
How to present financial information		
How to prepare a budget		
How to keep simple accounts		

Personal Skills	Existing Skill	Required Skill
Ability to understand complex issues		
Good at listening		
Able to say what you think		
Ability to see pros and cons of a proposal		
Taking the lead/being a leader		

DECISION MAKING BY CONSENSUS - THE DESERT SURVIVAL PROBLEM

A problem-solving activity to test the ability of a group to reach consensus.

The Situation

It is early morning and a light plane you have been travelling in has crashed in the Sonora Desert, USA killing the pilot and co-pilot. No-one else has been injured. No SOS was sent out but you know that you are about 50 miles off your flight plan and the nearest town is 70 miles away to the north-east. The area nearby is flat but barren and it is likely the temperature will reach 110°F or even higher at ground level. You are dressed in lightweight clothing, each have a handkerchief, a total of \$43.53 in coins and notes, a pack of cigarettes and a ball-point pen.

The Problem

One participant is to act as an observer and report on what they see/hear. The others must tackle the following problem:

You managed to salvage 15 items before the plane caught fire. Individually, rank the 15 items in order of importance for your survival with '1' most important, '15' least important. **Do not discuss your ranking with other survivors yet.** You have 10 minutes.

When you have assigned all fifteen items discuss your rankings as a group. You may elect a chairperson or not. Try to come up with an agreed ranking for the items. You have twenty minutes. Once you have decided, one person should report and the observer should comment (if necessary) on the group's performance.

The Items

- A pair of sunglasses per person
- Brightly coloured parachute
- Flashlight
- 1 quart of water per person
- 1 top coat per person
- Magnetic compass
- Kit for cuts
- Air map of the area
- 2 quarts of vodka
- Cosmetic mirror
- Book : Edible Desert Animals
- Salt tablets
- Jack-knife
- 45 calibre pistol
- Plastic raincoat

Decision Sheet

Item	Your Priority	Group Priority	Answer
A pair of sunglasses per person			
Brightly coloured parachute			
Flashlight			
1 quart of water per person			
1 top coat per person			
Magnetic compass			
Kit for cuts			
Air map of the area			
2 quarts of vodka			
Cosmetic mirror			
Book : Edible Desert Animals			
Salt tablets			
Jack-knife			
45 calibre pistol			
Plastic raincoat			

Desert Survival : The Answer

- 1 : **Cosmetic Mirror** - Absolutely vital, the best means to communicate your position.
This one item gives you an 80% chance of being found within 24 hours.
- 2 : **Top Coat Per Person** - Coat decreases air flow across body and hence dehydration.
Increases survival chances by one day.
- 3 : **1 Quart Of Water Per Person** - Would not significantly lengthen survival time but would delay dehydration and let you stay clear-headed longer.
- 4 : **Flashlight** - For night signalling. During day lens could be used to start a fire and the jacket could be used to catch distilled water.
- 5 : **Brightly Coloured Parachute** - Shelter (night and day) and signalling device.
- 6 : **Jack-knife** - Useful for cutting parachute or opening up tough cacti for moisture.
- 7 : **Plastic Raincoat** - Useful for distilling small amounts of water from a solar still.
- 8 : **45 Calibre Pistol** - Again, a signalling device particularly if you can't walk anymore.
- 9 : **Pair Of Sunglasses** - Desert blindness could be a problem Day 2 onwards so sunglasses are useful, though taking cover under the parachute would help.
- 10 : **Kit For Cuts** - Dehydration thickens blood and reduces risk from cuts but materials could be used as rope or covering areas exposed to dehydration.
- 11 : **Magnetic Compass** - Not much use since no-one should be trying to walk out of the desert.
- 12 : **Air Map Of The Area** - Useful to start a fire, as toilet paper or a head covering.
- 13 : **Book : Edible Desert Animal** - Dehydration is problem not starvation.
Hunting would use up massive amounts of water as does eating.
- 14 : **2 Quarts Of Vodka** - Lethal, alcohol increases dehydration. Could be used to start a fire.
- 15 : **Salt Tablets** - Physiology has proved salt tablets useless at best.