

# Constituting your organisation

## Main features of a constitution

- Name of the group.
- Aims and objectives.
- Membership.
- Committee: its composition, officers, powers and duties.
- Annual General Meeting (AGM): when it is to be held, its purpose (e.g. to elect a committee for the next year); the numbers required for a meeting to be valid.
- Special General Meetings (SGM): who can call them, how many members need to be present.
- Control of funds.
- Dissolution: how to wind up the group when the time comes.
- Alterations to the constitution: how these can be made (e.g. only by an AGM or by an SGM).

## Constitutional and organisational checklist

- You have a constitution that all members have agreed
- Your committee members know their responsibilities
- You organise trustee/directors/committee members' training
- You have checked whether you are required to register as a charity
- You have the right legal agreements on your building, and they are up to date
- If you have a significant trading activity, for example, a bar, this is separated off from the main organisation

## Who does what?

**THE CHAIR** - runs meetings and may act as a spokesperson or representative of the group.

### Responsibilities

- Plans and prepares meetings (usually with the Secretary).
- Begins the meeting; asks for apologies for absence and welcomes new members.
- Introduces each agenda item with a brief summary including what is needed by the end of the item, for example - 'we need to reach a decision on X'.
- Runs the meeting so that everyone has a chance to contribute.
- Encourages the group to reach clear decisions.
- Summarises decisions made and action to be taken.
- Announces the date of the next meeting.

**THE SECRETARY** - does the administration and liaises between members between meetings.

### Responsibilities

- Taking accurate notes and producing minutes, getting these agreed by the Chair and circulating them to members as soon as possible.
- Drawing up the agenda with the Chair.
- Sending reminders of the date and time of the forthcoming meetings to members.
- Writing letters and receiving correspondence for the group - and keeping a record of these.
- Keeping a file with copies of all minutes and papers relating to the group.
- Keeping members informed of what is happening between meetings.

**THE TREASURER** - handles the group's money and financial affairs

### Responsibilities

- Drawing up budgets to be presented to the group for approval.
- Paying bills and banking money.
- Recording all financial transactions, keeping receipts.
- Reporting on the financial position.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Has your organisation carried out the following finance tasks this year?

- Prepared a budget?
- Set down a detailed activities Programme?
- Agreed procedures for action?
- Tried all possible sources of income?
- Developed a fund raising strategy?
- Ensured that your budget headings and account books are consistent?