



FACT SHEET 006

FORMING SUB-COMMITTEES

Running a voluntary organisation such as a Show Society can be a time consuming activity. Meetings can easily become bogged down in small details, leaving topics which need to be properly discussed behind. When a community organisation decides to take forward a particular activity or service, it is often best if the detailed planning and work involved is delegated to a sub-committee appointed for the purpose.

Often, sub-committees are established to help organise fundraising activities, employ staff or support services which the organisation is planning to provide as part of its general work. Some rules (constitutions) use the headings "Special" or "Standing" committees. – the former being "one-off", such as a 100 year Celebrations Sub-Committee, and the latter continuing - e.g.: a Livestock Sub-Committee.

It is vital that both the organisation and members joining sub-committees know exactly what are the powers and responsibilities they have to the full management committee. A statement of the powers and responsibilities should be drawn up and issued to the officers of the sub-committee for their guidance. The sub-committee's role should also be noted in the minutes of the management committee meeting which establishes it. A suitable form of words would be:

"With effect from (insert date) the management committee agreed to form a (insert subject) sub-committee, elected and appointed to (insert a brief description of the sub-committee's role). Membership of the sub-committee shall comprise (insert number) of members of the association, and up to a further (insert number) members chosen for their relevant skills and knowledge. Unless the management committee determines otherwise, members of the sub-committee shall serve until the Annual General Meeting of the association, at which time they shall be eligible for re-election. In the event of a vacancy arising, this may be filled by election of a member of the Association. The sub-committee shall maintain records, both financial and in the form of minutes, as is deemed appropriate by the management committee and will be governed by any existing standing orders of the Association."

As noted above, sub-committees can generally be classified further by the adjectives: "Executive", "Standing", "Steering" and "Working":

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

A sub-committee which has well defined executive powers usually spelled out in the [by-laws](#) and which meets frequently to manage the affairs and further the purposes of an organisation. For organisations where the Management Committee or Board of Directors is large - say 20 people or more - it is common to have an Executive Committee — an executive subcommittee of Management Committee members, which is authorised to make some decisions on behalf of the entire Board.

STANDING COMMITTEES

A sub-committee established by an official and binding vote of the society's management committee providing for its scope and powers. Examples of standing committees are:

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| a. Livestock, | e. Grounds, |
| b. Ring, | f. Showgirl, |
| c. Pavilions, | g. Safety, and |
| d. Entertainment, | h. Finance. |

Standing committees meet on a regular or irregular basis dependent upon their enabling act, and retain any power or oversight claims originally given them until subsequent official actions of the management committee (changes to rules or by-laws) disbands the sub-committee.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee is a committee that provides guidance, direction and control to a project within an organisation. The term is derived from the steering mechanism that changes the desired course of a vehicle. The functions of the committee might include building a business case for a project, planning, providing assistance and guidance, monitoring progress, controlling a project scope and resolving conflicts.

WORKING COMMITTEES

An ad hoc sub-committee established to accomplish a particular task or to oversee an ongoing area in need of control or oversight. Many are research or co-ordination committees in type or purpose, and can be temporary. Examples of working committees are:

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| a. Celebration Ball, | d. Strategic planning, and |
| b. Grant, | e. Sponsorship. |
| c. New infrastructure, | |

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