



HOME STUDY FOR TENANTS
Chairing Meetings
Part 1

Course Description

An Introduction to Chairing Meetings Effectively

AIM:

The aim of this self - study pack is to assist you to enhance your skills in chairing meetings

WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR:

This course is designed for tenants and residents who:

- ❖ Wish to further develop their knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the chairperson
- ❖ Already hold the position of chair and who wish to enhance their practice
- ❖ Are interested in becoming a chairperson

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN IN THIS COURSE:

When you complete this course you will be able to:-

- ❖ Identify the roles and responsibilities of the chairperson
- ❖ Compare and contrast aspects of good and bad chairing
- ❖ List the key attributes of a good chairperson

HOW TO GET STARTED:

Phone or write to us at The Tenants Information Service and we will send you the free workbook straight away.

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HOME STUDY FOR TENANTS
Chairing Meetings
Part 1 - An Introduction

Workbook

AIM:

The aim of this course is to assist you to identify the roles and responsibilities of a chairperson, to compare and contrast aspects of good and bad chairing and to consider the key attributes of a good chairperson.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN IN THIS WORKBOOK:

- ❖ Roles and responsibilities of the chairperson
- ❖ Aspects of good and bad chairing
- ❖ The key attributes of a good chairperson

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Go through it at your own pace. Stop for a break whenever you want or at times suggested in the workbook - whichever suits you best. When you start up again, look back at the section you have just completed.

As you go through the workbook you are asked to carry out tasks.

Do not look ahead in the workbook for answers. These are given in the correct place in the workbook. You will come to them at the correct stage.

If you get stuck on something, try the following:

- ❖ Leave aside and try again later
- ❖ Turn back pages in the workbook looking for clues and ideas
- ❖ Phone TIS for assistance

Hello and welcome to this Introduction to Chairing Meetings Workbook. It is hoped you will find the workbook informative, enjoyable and easy to use. Take your time and carry out the tasks at your own pace, but remember to follow the order of the book and don't miss sections or jump ahead to others too soon.

Have Fun and Good Luck!

INTRODUCTION

As a member of a tenants / residents group you may at some time be called upon to chair a meeting either of the association itself or as a member of a sub group, or you may already hold this position of chairperson within your organisation. Whatever your situation we all know that chairing a meeting is often not as easy a task as we would first think.

As you work through this workbook it will hopefully become clear that not only is the role of chairperson important to the effective running of association meetings, but that there are specific responsibilities and tasks which a good chairperson must carry out in order assist the effectiveness of the association.



SECTION 1 - THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Activity 1

In order to further develop our skills in chairing meetings effectively, we must first be clear of what the roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson are and how they are distinct from those of other committee members, although vitally linked: -

Although the chairperson may carry out numerous tasks with and on behalf of the association, there are two main underlying tasks that the chairperson should do, can you identify what they are?

Insert your ideas below.

1.
2.

Activity 2

In order to ensure the smooth running of a meeting, a chairperson has certain duties to carry out at different times, can you identify when these times are?

Fill in the blanks

1. B_f_r_ the meeting

2. Du_i_g the meeting

3. _f_er the meeting

As you have shown above, chairing a meeting is not just about turning up at the meeting and working through the agenda - the chairing of an association should be seen as a responsible job involving quite a lot of work, *before, during and after* meetings.

Activity 3

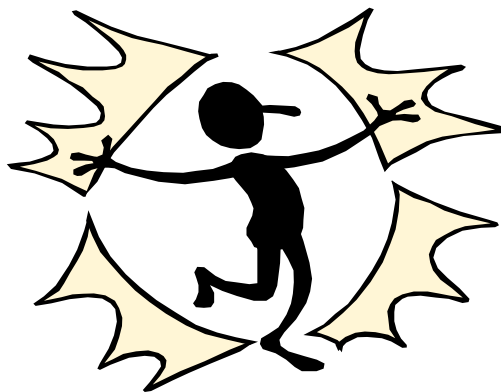
Can you think of some of the responsibilities of the Chairperson and whether they should be done before, during or after a meeting?

Insert your ideas below.

Responsibility	Before, during, after meeting
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

As previously stated, chairpersons can do numerous things with or on behalf of the association, however the main tasks are: -

- ☺ To guide the association to achieve its aims
- ☺ To chair the meetings of the association



Some of the responsibilities of the chairperson are as follows

Responsibility	Before, during, after meeting
<i>1. to know the constitution</i>	<i>before</i>
<i>2. to understand the objectives of the committee and its terms of reference</i>	<i>before</i>
<i>3. to liaise with the secretary on the agenda and meeting arrangements</i>	<i>Before</i>
<i>4. to welcome members and introduce new members & guests</i>	<i>during</i>
<i>5. to ensure fair discussion</i>	<i>during</i>
<i>6. to stop anyone taking over or dominating discussions</i>	<i>during</i>
<i>7. to sum up points, problems & decisions</i>	<i>during</i>
<i>8. to keep order and ensure everyone has a chance to have their say</i>	<i>during</i>
<i>9. to get through the agenda on time</i>	<i>during</i>
<i>10. to help prepare agendas</i>	<i>before and after</i>
<i>11. to ensure decisions are carried out</i>	<i>after</i>
<i>12. to represent the association in other arenas & to "embody" the committee in between meetings</i>	<i>after</i>

You may have come up with other responsibilities that suit the needs of your association or have been agreed by your committee.

POINT TO REMEMBER!

The Chairperson is the person who makes sure things get done - not the person who does everything!

SECTION 2 - CHAIRING STYLES

Activity 4

As a member of a tenant's organisation, you will have experience of at least one chairperson; you may also have experience of previous chairpersons within the association or from other committees or groups. From this you will probably have become familiar with a variety of styles of chairing meetings. You may like some styles more than others. Indeed if you hold the position of chairperson yourself, you may have a style of your own.

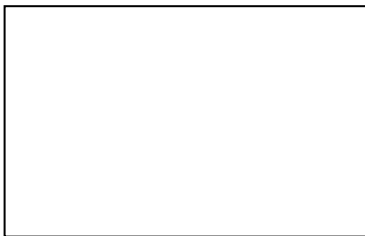
Whilst completing the activities in this section think of how these styles can benefit or obstruct the successful running of meetings.

In order to assist us identify what makes an effective chairperson, we will look at following three distinct styles; -

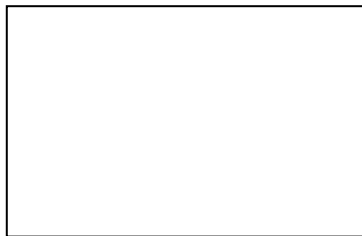
Passive / Assertive / Aggressive

The following words can be associated with passive, assertive and aggressive behaviour. please insert them in the relevant box.

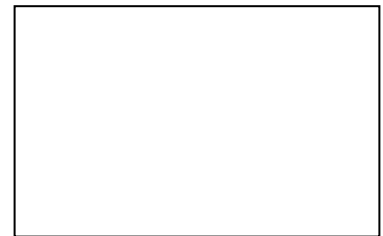
**Direct, Hostile, Vague, Confident, Domineering, Inactive,
Positive, Combative, Avoiding, Depending, Honest, Offensive**



Passive



Assertive



Aggressive

Activity 5

Can you identify 3 problems that may occur when a chairperson behaves in a Passive way?

1.
2.
3.

Can you identify 3 problems that may occur when a chairperson behaves in an Aggressive way?

1.
2.
3.

Can you identify 3 advantages that may occur when a chairperson behaves in an Assertive way?

1.
2.
3.

Dominating the Discussion

One of the most common complaints made against chairpersons is that they tend to dominate the discussion. This is not the job of the chairperson. A chairperson should assist the discussion and the decision making process. When chairing meetings, the chairperson should respect everyone around the table, as everyone has the potential to contribute purposefully to the discussion.

POINT TO NOTE

The chairperson's job is not to get everyone to agree with his or her own view - but to ensure that the best decision is taken for the benefit of the association and its membership, within the terms of the group's constitution.

The type of behaviour we experience from the chairperson usually plays a major factor in how effective the meetings are run, how well members participate and how successfully decisions are reached.

The aggressive personalities can often dominate discussions, whilst passive personalities will allow the meeting to get out of hand. Either way, this is not how to get the best out of people *or* reach the best decisions *or* agree action.

If you seek to improve your own practice, this is one area where you have to be completely honest with yourself. If you can identify that you are either a domineering or passive chairperson, then you can begin to try to improve.

It is usually easier to identify the behaviour traits of others than it is within our selves. The next task therefore asks you to focus on some of your own experiences. This will assist you to think about how your behaviour affects your actions.



Activity 6

Think of some recent meetings you have attended.

1. Do you think you are mainly passive, assertive or aggressive?

2. How do people usually react to you?

3. Do they always agree with you?

4. Can people easily approach you?

Write down the last time that you were aggressive. Think about why you were aggressive, is there any way you could have acted more assertively?

Last time you were aggressive	Why were you aggressive?	How could you have acted differently?

Now do the same for the last time you were passive

Last time you were passive	Why were you passive?	How could you have acted differently?

You may wish to use this type of method yourself in practice to assist you to deal with situations you encounter whilst chairing meetings. Reflecting on your experiences can be a valuable way to develop your chairing skills. It is often easier to come up with solutions to problems once you are out of the heat of the situation. By reflecting in this way, you may find yourself more ready to act in a more productive and assertive way if a similar situation occurs again.

Don't be embarrassed to practice your assertiveness skills. Many politicians and television / radio personalities will have at some time made a conscious effort to improve their assertiveness.

Practice on your family, friends, and even the dog. Note changes in the tone, pitch and intonation of your voice - you do not always need to shout to be heard!!

Now is probably a good time to take a break!



SECTION 3 - TIME MANAGEMENT

Effective time management is fundamental if a meeting is to be successful. Often it is too easy to dwell on one subject and not have time for another. The agenda for any meeting should be realistic about what can be achieved within the allotted timescale.

Activity 7

There are three main features of effective time management.

Try and work out what they are from the clues given below: -

P _ _ N

P U _ C _ _ A _ _ _ Y

P R _ P _ R _ _ _ _ N

In turn the 3P's refer to : - **Plan, Punctuality and Preparation.**

PLAN

Plan a realistic agenda. You should have a rough idea how long each agenda item will take. If you can't fit it all into your meetings timescale, you will have to arrange either for a longer meeting, or for a separate one on another date.

PREPARATION

Preparation is important. Once you know your agenda items you should also know if there is anything you need to learn up before the meeting. Also, when you know your stuff, you will feel and act a lot more relaxed and in control.

PUNCTUALITY

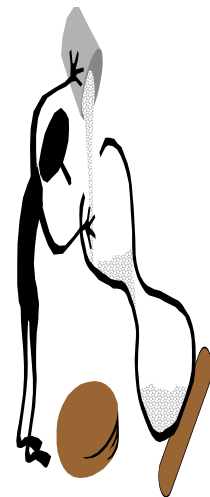
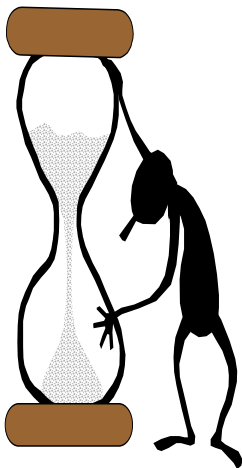
If you want your planning and preparation to be worthwhile, then everybody must be punctual. If your meeting starts late you will either not finish on time, or not finish at all.

Time management is unquestionably a skill that improves over time. Be realistic about what you can do in any given amount of time.

POINT TO NOTE!

It is an important role of the Chairperson to ensure that as many of the items on the agenda are covered as possible. All members at the meeting should agree the priority attached to each item.

It is not the job of the chairperson to decide which items are given the most priority - the chairperson needs to ensure that the agenda items of all members are covered at the meeting while recognising that some items are more urgent than others.



SECTION 4 - DECISION MAKING

Reaching decisions that reflect the majority opinion is an absolute key function of a chairperson. Indeed, in practice it is a difficult skill to master. Reaching decisions is not just about taking a vote and moving on. A good decision should reflect the general will of the group. Voting for or against something will only serve to cause divisions. Wherever possible the chair should try and find an alternative solution that will appeal to all.

Activity 8

Read the following passage:

During a meeting of the Arcacia Tenants Association, Gordon raised an issue on behalf of a tenant. The tenant wanted to raise an Anti Social Behaviour Order on his next door neighbour for nuisance behaviour. Gordon explained the neighbour leaves for work at 4.30am every morning, leaving the front door to slam shut loudly behind him. This has left the tenant on the ground floor suffering from lack of sleep and stress.

Of the eleven tenants at the meeting, five were good friends with the ground floor tenant, and said that they would support seeking an ASBO against the early rising tenant. However, the remainder of the group did not consider this an Anti Social Behaviour issue.

If you were the chair of this meeting, what would you do?



You might have chosen to put it to a vote. In this situation a vote would split the group.

OR

You might have opted for a different solution to the problem, possibly offering some form of compromise or uniting views in some way. For example: -

The chair might suggest tackling the problem as a repair issue rather than an Anti Social Behaviour Issue. Perhaps a mechanism could be fitted to the door of the close, which would make the door shut slowly. This solution would hopefully satisfy both parties and prevent the group from splitting over such a minor issue.

This illustrates how important it is for a group to have a good chairperson. Using the type of approach described above is of course more taxing when discussing more complex issues, but it can be done. The best way to improve is through practice.

SECTION 4A - SUMMARISING THE DECISION

Once the group has reached a decision, or preferred course of action, it is good practice to quickly summarise the decision and confirm that everybody is in agreement.

When summarising you are only confirming the decision and stating when any action will be carried out and by whom.

PONT TO NOTE!

It is good practice to ensure that the person taking the minutes notes:

- 📄 Details of the subject discussed**
- 📄 Details of the decision taken**
- 📄 Details of the action agreed**
- 📄 Details of who is responsible for carrying out the action agreed**

SECTION 5 - SUMMARY

The main things you have learned in this workbook are:

- 4 The roles and responsibilities of a chairperson
- 4 Aspects of good and bad chairing
- 4 The importance of listening skill when chairing a meeting
- 4 The key attributes of a good chairperson
- 4 Why you need to be assertive and ways to help you become more assertive
- 4 The importance of positive decision making
- 4 The main components of effective time management



Now to round off the workbook!

This section gives you a chance to check over what you have covered in the workbook. It takes the form of a quiz. All you have to do is insert your answers in the spaces provided.

1. What are the two main tasks a chairperson should do?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
2. To ensure the smooth running of a meeting, the chairperson has certain duties to carry out B_____, D_____, and A_____, the meeting. (complete the words)
3. The Chairperson is the person who makes sure _____ not the person who does _____ (fill in the blanks)
4. What words would you associate with an assertive chairperson?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
5. When talking at a meeting or to others in general, your voice can indicate whether you are passive, aggressive or assertive. This is reflected in your T____, P____ h and I__ o____n. (fill in the blanks)
6. In terms of time management, the 3P's refer to
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
7. List 2 things a chairperson should do when summarising a decision
 - 1)

2)

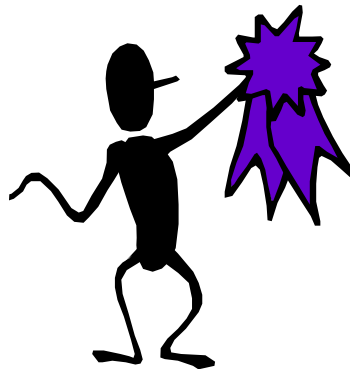
What Next?

Phone or write to TIS to ask for the Checkback pack for this workbook. We'll send it to you straight away.

In it you will get: -

- The answers to the quiz
- A list of other courses in the TIS "Home Study for Tenants" series
- A questionnaire to allow you to give us feedback on how well or how badly this course worked for you
- **A Certificate of Completion**

For the moment - Congratulations in completing this workbook. We hope you enjoyed learning this way and that you will go on and do more of the courses in the series.



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