4.2 Roles and responsibilities

In any project, different people will have different levels of interest, influence and responsibility. Part of the initial planning process will be to identify who these people are and how they can best be utilised to ensure the best possible project outcome.

One way of doing this is by producing a document which lists everyone involved and details their role and responsibilities. Such documents (sometimes called 'memoranda of understanding' or 'partnership agreements') will act as an official record of roles and keep everyone on track.

There will be a certain responsibilities that will remain constant throughout the process with only the workload changing dependent upon the size and scope of the project. These responsibilities can be divided into three clearly defined roles - the Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

The Chair

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The Chair's job falls into four main areas:

- Chairing the Group Meetings.
- Helping the Group to come together as a team.
- Having an overview of the ongoing work of the Group/Project
- Being the main point of contact for the Group.

Meetings are where the Chair will be most visible. Your job is to help the meeting to run smoothly and effectively, involve everyone and make sure that all the relevant information is passed out.

Here are a few things worth considering when chairing a meeting:

- Try and plan the direction you want the meeting to take in advance.
- Prepare an agenda to ensure that all the relevant business is discussed.
- Ensure that everyone has an input and one person/viewpoint isn't allowed to dominate.
- Make sure decisions are reached and any subsequent action is recorded.

The Chair is an important part of the team but is not there to dictate, only to facilitate the smooth running of the meeting, to ensure the agenda is followed and that someone has an overview of the entire project.

The Secretary

The Secretary's job falls into three main areas:

- Taking the minutes at meetings.
- Making sure that everyone is informed of the group's activities and project developments.
- The administration for the group including the receiving of and response to all communication.

A few points to remember when taking the minutes are:

- Don't try to write everything down – it's impossible and will probably mean that you miss the important points.
- In relation to the above, concentrate on getting down what has been decided, and who is going to do it.

Keeping people up-to-date on decisions and meeting times is important so make sure you have a contact details for everyone and that they have yours. Much of the correspondence can be done electronically (email, social media updates etc.) but keep in mind that not everyone can be reached this way so adapt your methods accordingly.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer's job covers two main areas:

- Recording finances
- Reporting finances

Most treasurers aren't trained accountants and don't need to be. A few basic rules will enable them to keep the project finances under control. The most important thing is to keep records.

Here is quick checklist of the main tasks:

- Keep records of any money going in and out of the group funds.
- Keep bank statements.
- Have a system for dealing with expenses and petty cash.

The Treasurer will need to give financial updates either at every meeting or after project milestones. This doesn't have to be a big task as a simple balance sheet will usually suffice - money in/money out/balance. This should include:

- How much money the group has.
- How much has been spent since the last meeting, and what on.
- Any potential funding shortages

Clearly this isn't an exhaustive list of every possible role there could be but it should give you some idea of the key positions that need to be filled and the responsibilities that are associated with them. There could be as many positions within your group as you see fit but remember to at least fill the roles detailed above.

Other relevant bodies such as contractors and authorities will have their own roles to fill and this is covered in more detail on the More roles and responsibilities (http://www.groundwork.org.uk/more-roles-and-responsibilities-tips) page.

Go to the next section - Community participation (http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/projecttoolkit/pages/community-participation-tips)

(http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/projecttoolkit/pages/community-participation-tips)

Useful links

Who's who within your group (http://www.diycommitteeguide.org/resource/whos-who)

More on roles and responsibilities (http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/community/get_involved/community_groups/forming_a_committee.htm)

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