

Good Club Guide for a Club Chairperson

Welcome

You have either been appointed, or are considering, a role as a Club Chairperson.

We wish you a fulfilling and enjoyable experience in your role. We greatly appreciate the time and commitment that you are giving to support the development of aquatics.

How this resource will help you

This resource is intended to assist you in your role by providing:

- A guide to your roles and responsibilities as a Club Chairperson.
- Templates and resources to save you time.
- Top tips and good practice advice from experienced volunteers.
- Useful links and information about additional learning opportunities.

Role of the Club Chairperson

The Club Chairperson is seen as a figurehead, ambassador and a principal officer for a club. A Club Chairperson is an elected member of the committee with responsibility for overseeing the running of the club.

Duties of the Club Chairperson

- Provide direction and leadership to the club.
- Be one of the signatories on the club's bank account, as per the club constitution.
- Chair and control the meetings of the management committee.
- Be involved, where appropriate, in the coordination of all club activities.
- Oversee decisions made by the management, sub committees, officers and other club personnel.
- Present the annual report in conjunction with the Secretary.
- Present the annual accounts in conjunction with the Treasurer.
- Consult with the Secretary on the content of the agenda and minutes of meetings.
- Help ensure the correct and smooth running of all aspects of the club in accordance with its rules, constitution and by-laws and also ASA law and UK law.
- Ensure that statutory documents and other returns are filed on time.
- Maintain a good working relationship with the pool providers(s).
- Advise the Treasurer on the use and investment of club funds. Report to the officers of the management committee at the first opportunity of any instant decisions taken, and ensure that all policy decisions are ratified by the management committee.
- To deal with issues as and when they arise
- To fulfil any club requirements, i.e. events and club management meetings.

Skills and qualities required

- Enthusiastic with a good knowledge of the sport and club.
- Be well organised and able to delegate.
- Have the ability to control meetings.
- Be a confident public speaker.
- Be unbiased and impartial.
- Demonstrate strong leadership skills.
- Be approachable, diplomatic and helpful.
- Have the ability to maintain harmony between the club and committee.

Level of commitment required

This will vary from club to club, but will include attendance at club meetings and could include attendance at meetings with the Local Authority, pool operators, and ASA and County Sports Partnership staff. There will be other time commitments in addition to this in order to fulfil the above criteria.

Term of office

This will vary according to club constitutions and club election processes. Some clubs have rules stipulating that a new Club Chairperson should be appointed each year, or impose a limit to the number of times a person can be re-elected, to prevent one person remaining in post for too long.

Getting started

This resource should be read in conjunction with the other ASA Good Club Guides produced, particularly the Good Club Guide for the Club Secretary, Treasurer and Workforce Coordinator.

Club committee meetings

Meetings can be a valuable management tool for planning, discussing, evaluating and communicating. Holding club meetings is normally a constitutional requirement too. Please see ASA Club Constitutional guidance for further information.

A meeting could provide opportunities to plan for the future, and save time by communicating information to a number of people who all get the same information. It can enable people to meet and work with others, to share ideas and information, debate concepts and ideas, and make group decisions. Within a club constitution, it may state for a meeting quorum to be present, to ensure a minimum number of members are present for a meeting.

The club committee is a group of elected people who meet regularly to discuss and make decisions on the operation of a club. The business undertaken at a committee meeting is normally split into two key areas:

- **Items for information.** This relates to events that have already happened or decisions that have already made. Verbal and/or written reports are given to inform members, who then have an opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification.
- **Items for debate.** This relates to future events and enables the whole group to discuss the issues and develop options.

Some clubs have formal procedures in place for committee meetings. The ASA has produced 'ASA Region Recommended Club Constitution' (September 2008, Re-Issue June 2013), further details of which can be found at www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/constitution. This ASA guidance provides information on how to conduct committee meetings, including guidance on voting and elections and how often they should be held.

Top tips for committee meetings

1. Start and finish meetings on time. This will promote a message that business is important, and so is the time that volunteers give.
2. Allocate rough timings to each agenda item. This ensures good timekeeping, and allows time on the agenda for discussions where needed.

3. Allow everyone has the opportunity to contribute. This ensures certain people do not dominate discussions, and encourages others to express their viewpoint. The ASA has issued guidance for clubs in adopting rules for debate (please see useful links section). Some people may hardly speak during meetings, this could be because a number of reasons:
 - a. They have no interest or understanding of the discussion.
 - b. They do not wish to make a personal contribution, preferring to evaluate the arguments and reach their own conclusions.
 - c. They are nervous or shy.
 - d. They do not agree with the consensus but prefer not to say at the meeting.

Try to engage these individuals.

4. Keep discussions focused. Should people become sidetracked or stray off the point, try bringing someone else in to discussions to refocus, or move on. Some clubs do this by presenting written reports in advance of the meeting in order to save time.
5. Involve everyone with decision making at the meeting. Ask the whole group a question or to confirm a decision, e.g. ask the group “Are we all in agreement to (the decision)?” as this will give those that may not have contributed the time and opportunity to disagree or ask further questions.
6. Set up the meeting space to get the best out of the group. Could the meeting room be set up in a different way to be less formal and more inviting? Remove tables which act as a barrier, encourage people to sit in a different place than last time, encourage small group discussions, etc.
7. Try to allow time and space for people to chat, exchange ideas and socialise before and after the meeting. But do balance this with ensuring you get business done too.
8. Keep meetings productive. Could reports be done in a written format and circulated prior to the meeting to save time? Are meetings too frequent meaning there is not enough to discuss, or are they so infrequent that people lose momentum and focus?
9. Keep records. Ensure minutes are kept at each meeting. Make a record of points on flip charts or stick notes onto the walls.
10. Harness creativity. Embrace committee members coming forward with new ideas. Encourage creative thinking/problem solving.
11. Ensure meetings are equitable/representative and inclusive. Ensure the club committee represents the club’s membership, i.e. age, race, gender, ability.
12. Have an athlete as a representative on the committee. This will provide great input from the club’s athletes and provide a young person’s viewpoint on behalf of the membership.

Annual general meetings (AGMs)

This is an annual open meeting for any club member to attend. The purpose of an AGM is to:

- Present key information about the club, such as the finances and achievements throughout the year.
- Elect officers for the club.
- Discuss and vote upon amendments to the constitution or rules.

- Consider the previous year's annual report.
- Hear the views of club members regarding the way the club is being managed.

Prior notice should be given to matters that members wish to discuss. AGMs are also an ideal opportunity to combine an annual awards event, a club social event, or a thank you to all the volunteers, teachers, coaches and athletes.

The ASA has produced guidance on procedures for AGMs in the document *Recommended Club Constitution Guidance Notes (January 2015)*. Further details follow at the end of this resource.

Special (extraordinary) club meetings

These may be called at any time by the club committee, or a specified number of members, to discuss issues that require consultation with, and decisions by, the club membership. For example, changes to the constitution which cannot wait until the AGM. Further details are provided in the ASA club constitution document.

Taking minutes

At all meetings, someone should be appointed to record minutes. This would normally be the role of the Club Secretary, or a designated minutes secretary within a club, but could be a nominated person should a secretary not be in attendance. Meeting minutes should be clear and concise and be a true reflection of discussions. Decisions and actions should be clearly recorded and agreed by members of the committee.

Minutes of a meeting should be typed and circulated to all members of the committee. The minutes are normally agreed and corrected at the next meeting when members have had the opportunity to review them. Minutes and reports from meetings can often be used as a method of communication to the rest of the club to inform members of actions and decisions the committee have made. Some clubs display meeting reports on club notice boards, others communicate key information via club newsletters.

Please see the Good Club Guide for a Club Secretary for further information on minute-taking.

Moving on from your role

When you decide it's time to move on, it's important to think about how you will ensure that all your knowledge and experience is passed on to the person taking over from you.

Here are some suggestions to help ensure a smooth transition, and to ensure the person taking over from you has the information and resources they need:

- Try to give as much notice as you can that you are moving on, in order to allow the club to recruit or elect another Club Chairperson.
- Where possible, try to build up or be part of a small team of Chairpersons in your local area in order to share workloads, ensure others can take over when you move on and are able to offer training to new volunteers.
- Assist in developing an up-to-date role description and advert for the post based on your experience, and think of any people that may be interested.
- Think about the type of information you would like to receive if you were to volunteer for this position again and the format you would like to receive it in, e.g. an e-mail, paper file, face-to-face handover meeting, etc.

- Prepare an information pack for the new Club Chairperson to assist them in their role, including a list of any outstanding work/issues, a list of key contacts and any 'top tips' that may help.
- Hand over hard copies of any files or important correspondence and pass on any electronic information by saving it on a USB stick.
- Offer to mentor the new Club Chairperson for an agreed period of time.

Summary

We hope you have found this guide informative. We wish you a great experience in your role and thank you once again for all the time and commitment you are giving to the sport.

swim21

swim21 is the ASA's quality mark for the development of effective, ethical and sustainable clubs. The opportunity to gain swim21 accreditation is available to all ASA affiliated clubs, across any of the aquatic disciplines, regardless of size or activity delivered. swim21 is about creating the best possible aquatic experience for all and raising the quality of aquatic provision across all areas. The swim21 programme enhances club management, strengthens the structures and unites the club with shared goals to ensure the best environment is available for all swimmers.

To find out more about swim21 and the associated benefits, please visit <http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation/>.

Equality and diversity

Is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does your club truly reflect the local demographics? Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone, to the greatest extent possible. Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability, add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent, in many different forms, where you least expect it.

Read more about the ASA's commitment to equality and diversity and find further support for clubs at this link: www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality/.

Further information

The ASA accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource. Further, whilst it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by the ASA or the club.

This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or the ASA.

ASA Volunteering Hub

Did you know that the ASA has a dedicated hub for volunteers? To access this hub, go to www.swimming.org/volunteering or email us at volunteering@swimming.org.

Acknowledgements

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Useful links

The ASA
www.swimming.org/asa

Governance and Constitution guidance from the ASA
<http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/constitution/>

Sport England Club Matters
www.sportenglandclubmatters.com

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations
www.ncvo.org.uk

Sport and Recreation Alliance
www.sportandrecreation.org.uk

Volunteering England
www.volunteering.org.uk

English Federation for Disability Sport (EFDS)
www.efds.co.uk

Sport Leaders UK
www.sportsleaders.org

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)
<https://thecpsu.org.uk/>

Youth Sport Trust (YST)
<http://www.youthsporttrust.org/>