

Best Practice Booklet For Community and Voluntary Groups.

***All you ever wanted to know about
Community Organisations***

Compiled by
The County Executive of Galway County Community and Voluntary Forum.



**Galway County Community
and Voluntary Forum**

fóram Pobal agus Deonach Chontae na Gaillimhe

Best Practice Booklet for Community & Voluntary Groups

Contents:	Page
Introduction	2
Change is coming for Community Groups	3
Types of Structures within Community Organisations	5
What is an Ad Hoc Committee	6
Committee with Constitution & Rules (the Constitution)	6
Sample Constitution	8
How to Become a Limited Company	12
Directors a Quick Guide to Their Duties and Powers	21
Co- Operative	25
Friendly Society	28
All You Wanted To Know About the Running of Successful Committees	29
Duties of Officers on a Committee	31
Role of Committee Member: Chairperson	31
Role of Committee Member: Secretary	33
Role of Committee Member: Treasurer	35
Public Relations: The Group and the Media	37
Quick Tips for A Successful Meeting	39
Practical Advice for Holding Meetings	42
Company Policies & Procedures	49
Community Development	70
eTenders What are They?	77
The Procurement Process Step by Step for Community Groups	80
Managing Volunteers for Community Organisations	83
Typical Questions at Grant Application Stage	86
Proposed Scoring Sheet for Community & Voluntary Grant Applications	89
Index	91

Introduction

As part of our role on the Executive of County Galway Community and Voluntary Forum we are obliged to deliver on our mission statement which is as follows;

“The County Galway Community & Voluntary Forum (Forám Pobal) acts as a collective voice of community and voluntary groups to ensure that the diverse needs of communities in County Galway are met. It aims to effect change through awareness raising, lobbying and campaigning on behalf of and with community and voluntary groups and those experiencing marginalisation in County Galway. The County Galway Community & Voluntary Forum (Forám Pobal) ascribes to the values of equality, justice, inclusiveness, empowerment and transparency”

County Galway Community Forum (Forám Pobal) aims to promote and lobby for better policies, practices and services for communities and those experiencing marginalisation in County Galway.

Strategic Aim 1: To raise awareness of the diverse of community needs and those experiencing marginalisation in County Galway.

Strategic Aim 2: To provide a network of support and solidarity to community and voluntary groups seeking to affect positive change for communities in County Galway.

Strategic Aim 3: To highlight and influence change on community issues through lobbying policy makers and participation in policy making structures.

Many of the volunteers who occupy executive positions in the 800+ voluntary organizations in County Galway have gone to meetings because they felt strongly about an issue or they just went along to a meeting out of curiosity and ended up in an executive position. Those executive positions are defined as the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and sometimes PRO.

Then by whatever means our volunteer ends up in an executive position. This is where this booklet will become a savior outlining the roles and responsibilities of all the different types of organizations from the parents association of the local school to sitting on the national executive of an organization. This booklet will help you become a better member of your organization by observing the requirements as well as the do's and don'ts of the different roles.

Many of our community groups have out of necessity gone down the Company Limited by Guarantee route for a variety of reasons. With this change our committee member evolves into a director role which brings legal responsibilities that a committee member often is unaware of.

We don't claim to have all the answers for you but we have designed this booklet so that information can be added to it or sections revised as our activities change. Legislation in the Local Government Reform Act 2014 is driving change with the roll out of the Public Participation Networks as the new model for community representation on the various arms of all County Councils.

Vincent Lyons

Chairperson Best Practice Working Group

Change is on the way for Community Groups

Public Participation Networks (PPN)

Statutory basis of PPN

Section 46 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 gives effect to the Framework for Public Participation requiring the establishment of a PPN in each Local Authority area.

The PPN will provide the basis for two-way information flows between the Local Authority and the local community and from 1 June 2014, where community representation is to be provided on appropriate committees of the Local Authority, such as SPCs, the LCDC and other such committees, it must be sourced through the PPN.

Role of the PPN

The role of the PPN is as follows;

- to contribute to the local authority's development for the County/City a vision for the well-being of this and future generations.
- to facilitate opportunities for networking, communication and the sharing of information between environmental, community and voluntary groups and between these groups and the local authority.
- to identify issues of collective concern and work to influence policy locally in relation to these issues.
- to actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities experiencing discrimination, including Travellers to enable them to participate at local and county level and to clearly demonstrate same.
- to encourage and enable public participation in local decision making and planning of services.
- to facilitate the selection of participants from the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors onto city/county decision making bodies.
- to support a process that will feed the broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals of the Network into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers in areas that are of interest and relevant to the Network

- to work to develop the Environmental, Social Inclusion, Community and Voluntary sectors so that the work of the sectors is clearly recognised and acknowledged and the sectors have a strong collective voice within the County/City.
- to support the individual members of the PPN so that they can develop their capacity and do their work more effectively, they can participate effectively in the PPN activities and they are included and their voices and concerns are heard.

Structure of the PPN

- The PPN will be organized at County/City level and at Municipal District level
- Each PPN will have:
 - A County/City Plenary at County/City level which deals with county/city level issues
 - A Municipal District Plenary in each Municipal District which deals with issues at a municipal level
 - Linkage Groups which deal with specific issues
 - A Secretariat at County/City level that is a facilitation and communication mechanism.
- At County/City level the Plenary is the ruling body of the PPN and all registered organisations in the County/City are members of the County/City PPN. In relation to the Municipal District the Plenary is the ruling body of the Municipal District PPN and is made up of all registered community, environmental and voluntary organisations in the District.
- In relation to elections of PPN Representatives for various bodies Member Organisations when joining the PPN at a county level must opt to be a part of one of three electoral colleges within the PPN:
 - Environment
 - Social Inclusion
 - Voluntary

PPN link to Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The LCDC is one of the committees where its community representation will be sourced from the PPN. As per the LCDC regulations (statutory instrument No.314 of 2014) it is prescribed that a minimum of 2 persons representing community and voluntary interests, a minimum of 2 persons representing social inclusion interests and a minimum of 1 person representing environmental interests be included on the committee.

Types of Structures within Community Organisations

Community groups often begin in an informal and co-operative atmosphere. People come together with a common concern about an issue and are well motivated to work together.

When we talk about a legal structure all we are defining is that there are a set of rules which have been adopted by the group as the basis for their modus operandi.

Suggesting the need for a legal structure may seem to doubt people's good faith and trust in each other. Without agreed, written and legally binding rules there can be disagreements about who controls the group, how decisions are made or what the aims of the group are. All the original members may have left or the one remaining original member may be inclined to dominate the group. Having a legal structure can help prevent these problems or provide an agreed procedure for resolving them.

In fact a major reason for having a legal structure is to help maintain that co-operative working atmosphere. It is because of the very dynamic nature of groups, lots of change and growth, that rules are necessary to help maintain consistency and fairness. Verbal agreements are often forgotten and rules which are not legally binding can be overturned very easily causing disharmony within the group.

Before a final decision is made the group should ensure that the proposed structure is discussed and agreed to by as many active members as possible. The ideal forum for this discussion is at the AGM. Once the structure and rules of the organisation have been agreed it is up to all members of the management committee to know what type of legal structure the group has, why it was chosen and what it actually means.

Other reasons may include:

- It may protect members from being sued for debts or injuries.
- It may give a group more credibility.
- It can be easier to get funding.
- It may be easier to get recognition as a charity or to get tax exemption.
- It can increase a group's accountability because they have to prepare annual accounts.
- It can help the group develop a sense of identity – the process of deciding on a legal structure can help a group clarify their aims and ways of working.

Types of Structures within Community Organisations

- ***What is an Ad Hoc Committee***
- ***Committee with Constitution & Rules***
- ***Company (Becoming a Limited Company)***
- ***Co-Operative***
- ***Friendly Society***

What is an Ad Hoc Committee?

Such committees are usually formed by a concerned group to resolve a particular issue. They initially would have no structure, no rules and no organisational structure. Quiet often the roles of chair and secretary are imposed on people with no experience of such a role. This booklet draws on the knowledge gained by people experienced in their roles and guided by best practice drawn from a variety of sources.

Committee with Constitution and Operational Rules:

The Constitution:

A constitution is a document that brings a structure into legal existence. A constitution regulates what a group may or may not do and what procedures it must follow – e.g. for nominations, voting, quorum for meetings etc.

Once adopted a Constitution must be firmly adhered to.

There are no laws that govern a constitution.

Generally the Constitution will set out

- The name of the group
- The aims and objectives of the group
- The way those aims are to be achieved
- Membership
- Committee structure
- Officers
- Management of finances
- The proceedings for amending the constitution
- Meetings
- Voting
- Disciplinary procedures
- Anything else the group wish to include

If the group is to be effective, its objects-clause (objectives) must be realistic, yet wide enough to allow the group to take on tasks incidental to its main objectives.

The group should think clearly about its policy in regard to committee membership and officers. For example, if it believes that committee members and officers should only serve continuously for a limited period, then this should be stated.

All Constitutions must make provision for the removal of officers or members. This provision should allow for both sides of the story to be heard. This provision ensures that if a problem does arise, it is much easier and less offensive to act within the terms of the Constitution.

It is up to every group to develop a constitution that will suit its particular need. Usually a small group of members (a working group) are given the responsibility for devising a constitution for the group. They work out the details and bring it back to a general meeting for discussion and then adoption. It should be noted that unless procedures for changing the constitution are included, no changes will be possible without unanimous decision because the contract that the constitution creates is between all the members of the group.

When drawing up the constitution it is advisable to look at a few examples of similar groups constitutions. An important tip is to imagine the sorts of things that may go wrong in a group and provide rules for such circumstances. It is also important to get the right balance between drawing up a constitution which sets out the rules for the organisation clearly but which does not restrict initiative.

For many groups the finance section is very important. It should state clearly who controls the funds. How many signatures are required for signing cheques etc., how decisions about spending are to be made, how often a record of accounts must be produced and whether accounts are to be audited?

Copies of the constitution should be available for all members. In particular members of the management committee should be familiar with it.

We have included a sample constitution that is commonly used as a template for groups starting out. As the organisation develops, the operational rules or constitution can get more complex, driven by the particular needs of the group.

Sample Constitution

NAME]

CONSTITUTION

1. Name

1.1. The name of the committee is the **[name]**

2. Vision

2.1. To “-----”

2.2 Aims

3. Objectives

3.1

3.2

3.2

4. Membership

4.1 Membership is open to all of **[name]**

5. Committee

5.1 The committee will have minimum of **(x)** members

5.2 One third of the Committee will resign at each AGM to be replaced.

6. Officers

6.1 The committee will have a Chairperson, A Secretary and A Treasurer. Other officers may be chosen as deemed necessary

6.2 One third of the Committee will resign at each AGM to be replaced.

7. Election of Officers

7.1 Officers will be elected by the **[name]** Committee at the first meeting after the AGM.

7.2 Nominations will be made at the meeting.

7.3 People seeking nomination will have due regard for the **[name]** Committee’s policies in relation to Officers.

7.4 The Officers will serve for a period of one year. Retiring Officers will be eligible for re-election.

7.5 An Officer may not serve for more than 3 consecutive terms.

8. Representation

Meetings

- 8.1 The **[name]** Committee will hold minimum of **(x)** meetings per year at regular intervals.

Quorum

- 8.2 The quorum for the meetings shall be **(x)** members with a stipulation that at least one Officer must be present.

Agenda

- 8.3 The Agenda will be drawn up by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson.
- 8.4 Items for inclusion on the agenda must be submitted to the Chairperson at least 2 days before the meeting.

Annual General Meeting

- 8.5 The AGM will be held annually not more than fourteen months after the previous AGM.
- 8.6 Written notice of the AGM will be sent to each member 2 weeks prior to the AGM.
- 8.7 Each member of **[name]** will be entitled to a vote at the AGM
- 8.8 The AGM will elect the committee.

Extraordinary General Meeting

- 8.9 An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called if required.
- 8.10 An EGM may be called by submitting the reason for the EGM to the Chairperson in a letter signed by not fewer than three members of the **[name]** Committee.
- 8.11 In such an event the Committee will be obliged to organise an EGM within fourteen days. This task may be designated to the Chairperson if appropriate.

9. Decision Making

- 9.1 The **[name]** Committee will endeavour to reach consensus on decisions. In the event of this not being possible, decisions will be taken by a vote.
- 9.2 Each member of the committee will be entitled to one vote.
- 9.3 In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson will have a second or casting vote

10. Subcommittees and Task Groups

- 10.1 The **[name]** Committee may establish subcommittees and/or task groups when required. These structures may include people external to the committee if appropriate.

11. Accounts

- 11.1 The **[name]** Committee will cause proper books of accounts to be kept according to the Financial Policy of the **[name]**

12. Disciplinary Procedures & Codes of Practice

- 12.1 Issues that will require the implementation of disciplinary proceedings include:

- Persistent non-attendance at meetings
- Misrepresentation of the **[name]** Committee
- Misuse of funds
- Misconduct including:
- Breaching the rules of the Constitution
- Offensive, abusive behaviour

Procedure

1. *In the event of a representative missing three consecutive meetings of the **[name]** Committee:*

A letter will be written to the representative in question, outlining the reason for the disciplinary procedure. The representative will be given the opportunity to discuss the issue at the following meeting of the **[name]** Committee.

A vote may be taken as to whether the person will be permitted to remain on the Committee, In the event that the representative does not reply it will be assumed that they are no longer a member of the **[name]** Committee.

2. *In the event of misconduct or misrepresentation of the **[name]** Committee:*

A written warning will be sent to the representative in question outlining the reason for the grievance and offering the opportunity to discuss the matter with the **[name]** Committee.

In the event of a second offence membership of the **[name]** Committee will be withdrawn from the representative.

3. The **[name]** Committee reserves the right to withdraw membership from a representative for reasons other than those outlined above on a vote of a majority of two-thirds or more of the members present & entitled to vote.

4. **Dignity & Respect at Work Policy.**

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the **[name]** committee's commitment to implementing and promoting measures to protect the dignity of employees and volunteers and to encourage respect for others at work. The committee aims to create a work environment free from discrimination, harassment, racism and disrespectful behaviour, by dealing effectively with any complaints of such conduct and also by welcoming diversity and promoting employment equality. This policy applies to staff, members and other volunteers.

5. Anti-Racist Code of Practice.

[name] Committee understands racism as oppression experienced by Black and minority ethnic communities (including Travellers). Racism involves individual practices that discriminate against these groups. This discrimination can be unintentional and without intent. At times, it is only visible in the unfair outcomes for these groups relative to outcomes for the majority population from the provision of institutions and organisations.

13. Amendments to the Constitution

- 13.1 Motions to amend the Constitution must be submitted to the Secretary of the **[name]** Committee in writing four weeks prior to the date of the AGM.
- 13.2 The proposer of an amendment will be invited to speak for the motion of the AGM. The **[name]** Committee will have the opportunity to respond if necessary.
- 13.3 Motions to amend the Constitution will be carried on a majority vote of two-thirds or more of those present & entitled to vote at the AGM.
- 13.4 An EGM may be called to amend the Constitution if required. The same rules will apply to the EGM as apply at the AGM.

How to be Become a Limited Company

A company limited by guarantee not having a share capital is a public company used primarily for non-profit organisations that require a legal status because it secures the benefit of separate legal personality and of limited liability without the need to raise funds from Members. As this is a public company there must be a minimum of seven Members. The member's liability is limited to the amount they have undertaken to contribute to the assets of the company in the event it is wound up, not exceeding the amount specified in the Memorandum of Association. A guarantee company does not have a share capital, but has Members who are guarantors instead of shareholders. It cannot distribute its profits to its Members, and is therefore eligible to apply for charitable status if necessary.

Formation of a Company

The process of forming a company is known as "incorporation". In order to form a company certain documentation must be submitted to the Companies Registration Office (CRO). The CRO registers all companies formed in the State. These documents form the constitution of the company. The Memorandum of Association sets out the basic parameters of its corporate existence including, very importantly, its powers. A company is prohibited from engaging in activities it is not empowered under the Memorandum of Association to do. The Articles of Association set out the rules under which the company proposes to regulate its affairs. On incorporation both documents must be delivered to the CRO for registration and retention. All forms relating to the activities of a company can be found on the CRO website.

<http://www.cro.ie/ena/downloads.aspx>

It is advisable for voluntary and community organisations which receive funding, hold property and/or employ staff to have a legal structure. The legal structure which best suits the circumstances of non-profit making organisations is the company limited by guarantee. This guide aims to provide answers to the questions commonly asked about a company limited by guarantee:

- What is a company limited by guarantee?
- What are the benefits of becoming a company limited by guarantee?
- How to become a company limited by guarantee?
- Duties of a Company under "The Companies Act"

What is a Company Limited by Guarantee?

A company limited by guarantee is a legal structure for non-profit making organisations. It gives the organisation a legal identity which is separate from that of the individual members.

An organisation which is registered as a company limited by guarantee is recognised as having a separate legal identity as distinct from that of its members. This means that it can:

- buy and own property in its own name;
- enter into contracts in its own name;
- employ people in its own name;
- may take, or defend legal proceedings in its own name;
- protect members of the management committee from personal liability;
- borrow money in its own name;

This legal structure was designed specifically for non-profit making organisations which are working for social or political purposes. As it is non-profit making there are no shareholders and any profits are reinvested in the company. All members must guarantee to

pay a nominal sum (usually €1-€5) if the organisation should run into debt. Each member's liability is limited to that amount.

What are the benefits of becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee?

The main benefits of becoming a company limited by guarantee are:

- To protect individual members from legal liability for the organisation; and
- To have a legal identity

If a community or voluntary organisation does not have a legal identity the individual members of the management committee can be held responsible for the payment of the organisation's debts or can be sued on behalf of the organisation. This is obviously a high risk situation for management committees particularly if the organisation has a substantial budget, employs staff and rents or owns property. The organisation which is a company limited by guarantee has a legal identity and as a result, the individual members of the management committee are protected from suing for debts on behalf of the organisation. The company is responsible and held liable in court.

There are other benefits to being a company limited by guarantee. Generally it increases an organisation's credibility with funders, banks, landlords and even the general public. This may help the organisation to get funding & to get recognition as a charity and in most financial dealings, e.g. borrowing money, getting a bank overdraft, leasing a building. Many funders now require all organisations who are given substantial grants to be a limited company by guarantee.

Other benefits of this legal structure are the ways in which it suits the needs of community and voluntary organisations who want to encourage their members to participate in all aspects of the organisation. There is no limit to the number of members and the structure works equally well for any size of organisation. It is democratic in that every member can be given equal voting power (one vote per member) and there is a requirement to have a membership with the power to elect and remove the board of directors.

However there are some difficulties for organisations in adopting this legal structure. The rules are complicated, the language is very difficult to understand and the process of registration is expensive. There is also increased administration duties involved in meeting the legal requirements of a company limited by guarantee structure.

How to Become a Company Limited by Guarantee:

The Companies Registration Office regulates the set up and on-going life of companies limited by guarantee according to the rules set down in the Companies Acts, 1963-1990. In order to become a company limited by guarantee the organisation must do the following:

- Check with the Companies Office that the proposed name of the company is acceptable, i.e. that it is not the same as or too similar to the name of another company;
- Draw up a constitution for the company in the form of two documents, the Memorandum and the Articles of Association;
- Get the signature of seven subscribers (see below); and
- Send the signed memorandum and articles of association (see below), the signatures of the subscribers and the registration fee of the Companies Office.

The Companies Office will check that your documents are in keeping with the regulations for companies limited by guarantee. If everything is correct your organisation will be registered as limited company.

Duties of a Company under “The Companies Act”

- Duty to maintain proper books of account (Section 202 Companies Act 1990).
- Duty to prepare annual accounts.
- Duty to have an annual audit performed.
- Duty to maintain certain registers and other documents including Register of Members/ Register of Director’s & Secretaries & Minutes Books.
- Duty to file certain documents with the Companies Registration Office e.g. Annual Return.

Getting Help and Advice:

Even though the steps above may sound very straightforward it is important to get a solicitor or accountant to help your organisation become registered as a company limited by guarantee. It is recommended that the management committee meet the solicitor or accountant to make sure they are clear about the process.

Cost:

The process of becoming a company limited by guarantee usually costs between €400 and €800. This includes the fees of the solicitor or accountant and the Companies Registration Office registration fee. (Check www.cro.ie for up to date fee information)

The constitution of a limited company consists of two parts. The Memorandum governs the relationship between the company and its external environment while the Articles govern the internal affairs of the company.

1. Memorandum of Association:

The Memorandum of Association sets out:

- the ‘objects’ of the company, i.e. the aims of the organisation; the general powers of the company to carry on whatever other activities it needs in order to achieve these aims. This can be done through one all-inclusive clause (*e.g. To do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects.*) or by listing a range of activities which the company is legally allowed to do, e.g. to purchase equipment, to raise money, to borrow money
- a clause stating that the liability of members is limited and specifies the nominal amount which all members will contribute, anything from €1- €5
- the names and addresses of the subscribers. The subscribers are the first members of the company. There must be at least seven subscribers. There is nothing else involved in being a subscriber.

2. Articles of Association:

The Articles of Association list the rules of the organisation including:

- electing the board of directors
- keeping accounts
- roles of officers
- running meetings
- number of meetings
- who are the members

It is advisable to keep the rules in the Articles of Association as broad as possible so that you will not have to change them if and when your organisation changes. Each organisation can add as many rules as they like to the Articles as long as some unavoidable legal requirements are included, see below.

Alteration to the Memorandum and Articles of Association:

If the company makes any changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies office must be informed with a copy of the amended Memorandum and Articles of Association. The change must be in keeping with the requirements of company law and the rules as set down in the Articles of Association.

What is the On-Going Requirements of Companies Limited by Guarantee?

A Company Limited by Guarantee not having Share Capital must have a minimum of 7 Members at all times. There is no maximum number of Members required. The initial subscribers to a company's Memorandum of Association are deemed to have agreed to become "Members" of the company. These names will be the first seven names on the Register of Members. Any other person who agrees to become a member of a company and whose name is entered on its Register of Members will become a member of the company. The Members exercise control by way of General Meetings. The Board of Directors is appointed by and is answerable to the Members.

The Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that the organisation keeps to rules of the limited company as described in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Under the Companies Act all companies are obliged to fulfill the following on-going requirements. The Companies Office provides standard forms for the various requirements.

Board of Directors:

The board of directors is normally elected by the members of the company at the AGM. Each organisation can decide how the committee will be elected and how many places there will be on the committee. Each organisation also decides the term of office for the members of the committee and how the membership will be changed.

The Board of Directors are legally required *to act in the best interests of the company, its members and its employees*. They must ensure that the company is run responsibly and according to its aims. It must also ensure that the company fulfils all its legal obligations as a company limited by guarantee. Companies and/or directors are liable to be prosecuted or struck off the Companies Register by the Companies Registration Office if they do not fulfill these legal obligations.

It is important to note that employees *can* be on the board of directors, unless the company wishes to get tax exemption as a charity. It is also important to note that although the board of directors is usually in effect the management committee this is not necessarily so. For example the board of directors may have an overseeing role, meeting once or twice a year, and may delegate responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation to a management committee.

(See Next Section for more info. on the Duties & Powers of Directors)

Meetings:

All members of the company are entitled to attend general meetings of the company (including the AGM). It is through the general meetings that the members control the overall management of the company.

The company must give due notice (as specified in the Articles of Association) of all general and board meetings. General and board meetings should be run according to the Articles of Association. The company must also hold general meetings at the request of directors and/or members, according to the rules in the Articles of Association.

Annual General Meetings (AGM & EGM):

General Meetings are an opportunity for the Board to report to the Members on the activities of the company and to get sanction from the Members for certain matters. General Meetings are also an opportunity for Members to exercise control over the company through, for example, the election or removal of Directors, the passing or rejection of ordinary or special resolutions etc. All Members of the company are entitled to attend General Meetings.

The company must have an AGM within eighteen months of becoming a company which is the formal General Meeting which must be held in every calendar year and not more than 15 months must elapse between them.

The company must give notice in writing of the AGM as set out in the Articles of Association. The notice may not be less than 21 days, except where a shorter notice period has been agreed by the auditors of the company and all members entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.

Any meeting of a company i.e. a Members meeting, which is not an AGM, is known as an Extraordinary General Meeting. Directors may call an EGM where they deem it to be necessary, for example in obtaining approval for a certain course of action. Members who together make up at least 10% of the membership of the company can request Directors to convene an EGM. Where the Members requisition an EGM the Board of Directors must convene one within 2 months. If they do not the Members may convene an EGM themselves within three months of the date of their request.

General Meetings are to be chaired by the Chairperson of the Board.

Minutes of Meetings:

The company must keep minutes of all:

- General meetings;
- Board meetings; and
- Sub-committee meetings of the board of directors

The minute book for general meetings must be kept at the registered office of the company and be open for inspection by members.

Resolutions:

Resolutions which have to be passed by not less than three quarters of the votes cast at a general meeting are called special resolutions. The company must notify the Companies Office within 14 days of a special resolution being passed. (Form 16)

Annual Returns:

The company must make an annual return to the Companies Office after its first AGM and in each calendar year after that using (Form B1). The form includes:

- The address of the registered office;
- The address where the register of members is kept, if it is not the registered office;
- The names and addresses of the company directors; and
- The name and address of the company secretary

The annual return must be completed within 60 days of the AGM. A copy must be signed by a director and the company secretary and sent to the Registrar in the Companies Office.

Accounts:

The annual return must be accompanied by the company's audited accounts, auditor's report and director's report. Proper books of account with records of all income and expenditure must be kept.

Auditors:

The company must appoint auditors to audit the company accounts at the AGM. The auditor cannot be a company director or secretary or a close relative, employee or spouse of either. The principal duty of the Auditor is to report to the Members on the company's financial statements. Therefore, an Auditor's report should be read out at the Annual General Meeting and a copy made available to every member of the company. The Auditor's report provides reasonable assurance to the Members that the financial statements reflect the state of the company's affairs at a particular point in time. If the statements are not true or if the Auditor did not obtain all the information and explanations necessary to form an opinion then they must also report this. If the Auditor thinks that accounts are not being maintained properly they have a duty to report this to the company and if this is not rectified within 7 days then they must report this to the CRO. Auditors must also report acts of fraud, gross negligence etc. to the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement

Auditors have the right to attend any general meeting of the company and to receive the notices and communications the Members receive.

Removal of Auditors:

An Auditor may be removed by ordinary resolution of the company at a general meeting. Where it is proposed to remove an Auditor, extended notice of 28 days must be given and the Auditor is entitled to contest the proposed removal. Notice of removal of an Auditor must be notified to the CRO within 14 days of the resolution being passed.

An Auditor can also resign from office prior to the expiry of his/her term of office by serving notice in writing to the company. The Auditor must send a copy of this notice to the Companies Registration Office within 14 days of service of notice.

Donations:

Furthermore a company may apply to the Revenue Commissioners for authorisation as an “eligible charity” which enables limited companies or individuals to get tax relief on donations to the “eligible charity”. The Revenue Commissioners consider an organisation for this exemption if its objectives are entirely charitable and come under one of the following headings:

- Advancement of education;
- Advancement of religion;
- Relief of Poverty;
- Other works of a charitable nature beneficial to the community.

Charitable Tax Exemption

The Revenue Commissioners will, however, under certain circumstances grant organisations exemption from certain taxes. The Office of the Revenue Commissioners maintains a database of organisations to which charitable tax exemption has been granted on their website. A body, which is granted charitable tax exemption, will be issued with a charity reference number or “CHY” number.

The income and property of the charity must be applied solely towards the promotion of its main object as set out in its Memorandum & Articles of Association.

In all instances a copy of the first year’s financial accounts together with a report on activities **must be submitted to Charities Section within 18 months of the date that exemption was granted.** In the case of a body with income in excess of €50,000 per annum audited accounts must be submitted. Furthermore, it should be noted that a body holding exemption may be reviewed periodically towards ensuring that the income of that body continues to be applied for charitable purposes only.

If it is proposed to make any changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association, advance notice, in writing of the proposed changes must be given to the Revenue Commissioners for their approval.

If upon the winding up of the organisation any funds or property remain they must be transferred to some charitable body having similar objects, or failing that, to some other charitable body. Notification of winding up should be forwarded to the Revenue Commissioners together with a final set of accounts and details of how any residual funds at the time of dissolution were distributed.

Prior permission must be obtained from the Revenue Commissioners where it is intended to accumulate funds over a period in excess of two years specifying the reasons why such funds are being accumulated rather than applied for charitable purposes.

No Director /Trustee/ Officer shall receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money’s worth from the exempted body. (This condition prevents staff from taking a Directorship on the Boards of Companies with charitable tax exemption).

The Revenue Commissioners may make the name and address of any charity which has been granted exemption from tax publicly available.

The Revenue Commissioners are to be notified in writing of any change of address of the organisation.

Tax Exemptions:

If granted, the tax exemption includes certain income taxes, corporation tax, DIRT, capital gains tax and stamp duty on the transfer or lease of land. Furthermore under the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 a scheme of tax relief is available in respect of donations received on or after the 6th of April 2001. There is no general exemption in respect of Value Added Tax.

Register of Members and Directors:

The company must keep two registers:

1. A list of the names & addresses of all company members, date when they joined company and also date of their membership of the company ceasing
2. A list of the names and addresses of all company directors and details of other directorships that they hold.

These registers must be kept up to date. The registers should be kept at the registered office of the company. If for some reason it is kept elsewhere the company must notify the Companies Office of the address using (Form B3).

Changes in the Directors or Company Secretary:

The company must inform the Companies Office of any changes of directors or of the company secretary or change of their home address within 14 days using (Form B10).

Registered Office:

The company must have a registered office from the date when it starts its work or within 14 days of becoming a limited company, whichever is the earlier. The company must give the address of the registered office to the Companies Office along with the Memorandum and Articles of Association using form A1. If the address of the registered office is changed the company must inform the Companies Office within 14 days using (Form B2).

The company must display its name outside the registered office. The company must also display the Certificate of Incorporation (i.e. the certificate from the Companies Office stating that this is a registered company limited by guarantee) in the registered office.

Stationery:

The company stationery must show:

- The full company name;
- The names of its directors;
- The place of registration (address); and the registered number of the company

Changes in Company Law:

It is important to note that there can be changes in company law which will affect companies limited by guarantee. Each organisation needs to keep up to date with any changes and possible implications for them. This may also be part of the role of the company secretary.

Electronic Filing:

Over the past number of years the Companies Registration Office has been developing its online services. All Companies Registration Office Forms are downloadable from their website at www.cro.ie. The following forms can be filed electronically, free of charge:

- Change of registered office (Forms B2);
- Change in registered addresses (Form B3);
- Change in secretary/Director details (Form B10);
- Special resolutions (Form G1) and any document lodged in connection with it;
- Ordinary resolution (Form G2) and any document lodged in connection with it.

All that is needed is access to the internet, a valid e-mail address, printer and up to date Adobe Acrobat Reader software. A signature sheet is printed, signed and forwarded to the Companies Registration Office to complete the filing of these forms. Instructions are provided throughout the process.

The Companies Registration Office has also put in place a system, which allows annual returns (Form B1) to be signed and filed electronically, however, an approved secretarial software package is required. A Secretary or Director who wishes to file returns electronically must apply to the Companies Registration Office for a Company's Registration Office identification and PIN for use as a signature. An account should also be opened with the Companies Registration Office and it must be in credit.

Further Information:

For Further information on any aspect of being a company limited by guarantee consult your solicitor or auditor. The Companies Registration Office produces an information manual about companies limited by guarantee.

There is also detailed information in *A Guide to Legal Structures for Voluntary and Community Organisations* by Mel Cousins, published by the Combat Poverty Agency.

Summary:

1. A company limited by guarantee is a legal structure for non-profit making organisations such as community and voluntary groups. It gives the organisation a legal identity which is separate from that of the individual members
2. The most important benefit of becoming a company limited by guarantee are: - to protect individual members from legal liability for the organisation and to have a legal identity.
3. An organisation can become a company limited by guarantee by registering with the Companies Office. It is important to get the help of a solicitor or accountant for this.
4. There are on-going requirements for companies limited by guarantee. The role of the company secretary is to ensure that the organisation keeps the rules as set down in the Articles of Association.

Directors

A Quick Guide to their Duties and Powers

Introduction:

We have produced this information to explain the role of company directors under the Companies Acts.

What is a company director?

Company directors control and direct a company in the interests of its owners (known as members). They also have particular responsibilities under the law and the company's constitution. A company must have at least two directors.

Who can be a company director?

People do not need any particular qualifications or experience to be directors. Company directors will often not work for the company in question or own shares in it.

To protect the public, some people cannot be directors at certain times. These include bankrupts, who are prohibited from being directors while their debts remain unpaid or until a court excuses them from paying those debts. People whom a court has found guilty of fraud or serious misconduct may also be disqualified from acting as directors for a certain period. If a person is found by a court to have acted dishonestly or irresponsible in a company that failed to pay its debts, the court may restrict them. A restricted director can only act as a director in certain companies in which the members have invested a significant amount of money. Restrictions are normally for a period of five years.

Are there different types of director?

There are five types of company director.

- Executive directors are directors who are involved in managing the company. Examples include the company's managing director or its sales director.
- Non-executive directors are not involved in the company's management. They may be knowledgeable and experienced people who are appointed to the board to give independent advice. Companies do not have to appoint non-executive directors.
- Alternate directors are chosen by directors to act for them in their absence.
- De facto directors perform the duties of a director even though they are not formally appointed and registered. They have the same duties as appointed directors.
- Shadow directors are not formally appointed as directors but give instructions that are usually followed by the company's directors. A shadow director has many of the legal responsibilities of an appointed director.

What are the duties of directors?

Directors are trustees or minders of the company's assets and their duties reflect that responsible position. Executive and non-executive directors have the same duties.

Directors do not have to do everything themselves. They may give appropriate tasks to company executives who will report back to the board.

Each Director is required to exercise his/her duties to the best of his/her ability. In order to do this a Director needs to, at a minimum, familiarise himself/herself with relevant legislation, the Memorandum and Articles and other relevant documentation pertaining to the company, keep informed of the business being conducted by the board and seek further information and professional advice if unclear on any matter.

Common law duties of directors (the duties created by the courts):

The common law duties require that:

- Directors must act in good faith and in the company's interest and not use their powers for personal gain or for the benefit of others at the company's expense – for example directors should pay the market value for company assets;
- Directors must not profit from being a director and must account for any profit secretly obtained – for example a director who is also a director of a second business cannot use any confidential information they receive as a director of the first company to benefit that second business; and
- Directors must act with due care, skill and diligence – for example, directors need to meet regularly to review the company's finances and take action to correct any problems.

Statutory duties of directors (the duties created by legislation):

On their appointment, directors must give the company their name, address, date of birth, nationality and occupation. They must also give details of any shares or debentures (written acknowledgements of a debt) in the company or in related companies that they own or in which they have an interest. They must also give details of any other companies of which they are a director. For as long as they are serving as a director, they should keep the company up to date on any changes to this information. They should also inform the company if they have any interest in a company contract or proposed contract.

Directors must ensure that the company keeps proper books of account that record and explain the payments to or from the company or its customers and suppliers and accurately identify its assets and liabilities. Every year, directors must prepare financial statements that give 'a true and fair view' of the company's affairs. These financial statements must be audited (unless the company can decide not to have an audit).

Directors must also write a report for the members of the company. This report should include details of:

- How the company is doing;
- How its business has developed during the year;
- Any important events affecting the company since the end of the year; and
- Any likely developments in the business.

Directors must arrange to call the company's annual general meeting (AGM) and circulate a draft agenda to the members in good time along with other relevant documents, including the financial statements, the directors' report and any auditor's report. Occasionally, directors will have to call an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of the members to deal with special or urgent business.

Directors must arrange to keep minutes of what is said and decided at general meetings and at meetings of the board and its sub-committees. They must ensure that the company

keeps certain documents up to date, including the registers of members, directors and secretaries and the interests of the directors and secretaries in the company.

Directors must ensure that the company promptly sends certain documents and information to the Companies Registration Office (**www.cro.ie**). These include, for example;

- The company's annual return and associated financial statements;
- Notice of a change of registered office, director, secretary or their details;
- Notice of the creation of a mortgage or charge on the company's property in return for its receiving a loan; and
- A memorandum of satisfaction of a charge (a statement that a loan has been repaid).

Directors can be penalised if they or the company are found to have breached the Companies Acts. In cases of serious default, they can be made liable for the company's debts.

What are the powers of directors?

In general, directors may do anything that is legal and is allowed by the company's constitution. However, the members have the responsibility to make some company decisions at a general meeting. These include the decision to appoint or reappoint the company's directors or auditor.

What other issues should directors be aware of?

Transactions between the company and its directors:

A company may engage in a property sale or purchase with a director or connected person in certain circumstances. Key conditions are that the directors must justify the merits of the proposed transaction to the members and that a majority of the members approve of it at a general meeting before the transaction can take place.

Solvent Liquidation:

If a company is wound up on the basis that it can pay all of its debts, the directors must make an accurate statement to this effect.

Trading Difficulties:

If a company finds it difficult to pay its debts, the directors must favour the interests of the people to whom the company owes money (creditors).

Reckless Trading:

If directors help to create a company debt knowing that the company will not be able to pay the creditor, they may have to pay some or all of the company's debts themselves if this is ordered by a court.

Insolvent Liquidation:

If a company does not have enough money to pay creditors and the company is later wound up, the directors must prepare a statement of its assets and liabilities and co-operate with the liquidator.

Struck Off Insolvent Companies:

If directors fail to arrange for the liquidation of a company that owes a large debt to one or more creditors, the High Court may disqualify them from acting as directors if the company is later struck off the Companies Register for failing to file its annual returns.

Conclusion:

A more detailed information book on directors is available under Decision Notice D/2002/1 from (**www.odce.ie**)

Co- Operative

What is a Co-operative?

A co-operative is a business which involves the voluntarily coming together of a group of people to meet their common economic needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

What is the purpose of a Co-operative?

The purpose of a co-operative is to enable individuals to come together so that they can pool their resources in order to reach a common goal, which would otherwise be difficult for them to achieve as individuals.

Different types of Co-operatives?

There are a number of different co-operatives ranging from community, worker, and producer to consumer based businesses. For example, a **worker co-operative** provides employment for its members who are also the owners of the business. For more on the best type of co-operative to suit your needs visit www.tsa.ie Whatever form of co-operative you decide on, co-operative members are expected to maintain certain **core values** and in so doing uphold **seven key principles**.

Co-operative Ethical Values:

The core values of self-help, equality, equity and solidarity epitomise what co-operatives are about, members are expected to view honesty, openness, social responsibility and the care of others as key business traits.

Seven Key Co-operative Principles:

- Membership Is Open And Voluntary
- Democratic Membership Control
- Member Economic Participation
- Autonomous And Independent
- Education/Training & Information
- Co-operative Networking
- Concern For Community

Agreement based on the seven principles can act as a framework in helping to guide co-operative members as they acquire new skills and abilities in the development of their business.

For further information on the principles visit the **Statement of Co-operative Identity** on the International Co-operative Alliance website www.ica.coop/coop/principles.html

Overall Co-operative Approach:

Treating people as origins of action, not as objects to be manipulated or serviced;

Encouraging people to work together and help one another solve mutual problems;

Designing useful structures, processes, products and services so as to meet people's needs rather than for profit-making purposes alone.

People who are more inclined to hold these views would be well suited to set up a co-operative.

In applying this approach members are moving beyond the narrow confines of individual self-interest.

Steps in Establishing a Co-operative:

A group of people must come together before a co-operative can be formed.

You can register a co-operative under the Industrial & Provident Society Acts (1893-1978) via the Office of Friendly Societies, Parnell House, Dublin 1. Telephone 01 8045499.

The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) can provide model rules and a registration service for those wishing to set-up a co-operative.
For further details visit www.icos.ie

Should you wish to register a co-operative business under the Industrial & Provident Society Acts (1893-1978) a minimum of seven members are needed.

You can register a co-operative business under company law. The co-operative principles and rules are set-out in the registered memorandum and articles. For an example of these general rules visit the Galway City Partnership website www.gcp.ie

A postal address for correspondence must be organised

Training supports are available in relation to gaining the necessary business skills to operate a co-operative business.

If you are interested in meeting common economic needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise, then why not take part in a **Business Co-operative Training Course?**

Courses provided by Galway City Partnership deal with a number of key aspects in how best to establish a co-operative business:

Start Your Own Co-operative Business:

Business Planning;	Marketing/Selling;
Team Building;	Overcoming Challenges;
Social Responsibility;	Book-keeping/Cash Flow;
Income Tax;	Community Development;
Customer Service;	On Going Training

Courses are free to those claiming a social welfare payment and living in Galway City and are usually delivered for half a day per week over an eight week period. Contact Galway City Partnership for more information.

Advantages of Co-ops:

A co-operative has the potential to provide for a number of things; greater job satisfaction, variety of tasks to be completed, and to encourage a strong work commitment. Members also have the capacity to be far more responsible and responsive to the customer when compared to other traditional companies. When considering setting up a co-operative it may be useful to keep the following points in mind as this type of business can:

- Act as an example of 'participatory democracy' due to their mutually agreed decision making process.
- An inclusive and open membership.
- Facilitate up-skilling and capacity building due to the principle of 'education, training and information' provision.
- Greater generation of ideas and debate due to the existence of multiple owners.
- The capacity for relatively superior productivity rates that result from a greater sense of ownership.
- Lead to a high level of self-supervision amongst members.
- Adversarial nature of many traditional companies gives way to an atmosphere of co-operative problem solving.

Friendly Society:

Friendly Societies now fall under the remit of the Companies Registration Office (cro.ie)

Friendly Societies are registered under the Friendly Societies Acts 1896-2014. They are established for various purposes, mostly to provide small life assurance benefits, sick benefits and death benefits to members, to provide benefits to non-members or to promote particular activities or interests.

Registration of a Friendly Society:

It is no longer possible to register a new Friendly Society as per Section 5 of the; [Friendly Societies and Industrial Provident Societies \(Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2014\)](#)

Annual Return

After registration, a society must have its accounts audited each year by a registered auditor. A society must make an annual return, made up to 31 December, to the Registrar by the following 31 May and the return must be accompanied by the audited accounts.

Failure to submit an annual return leaves a society liable to prosecution and also to having its registration cancelled. A society whose registration has been cancelled can only have it restored by applying to the High Court, which can be a costly process.

Amendments to Registered Rules

If a society amends any of its rules, it must apply to the Registrar to have the amendment registered. The Registrar will register the amendment when he is satisfied that it is in accordance with statute. An amendment to rule is not valid until it has been registered by the Registrar. Application forms to register amendments to rule are available from the Registry.

Change of Registered Office

If a society changes its registered office it must notify the Registrar within 14 days. The appropriate form for notifying the change is available from the Registry.

Change of Name, Amalgamation, Transfer of Engagements and Conversion

A society may by special resolution change its name, amalgamate with or transfer its engagements to another society or convert itself into a company. Each of these processes requires that the society applies to the Registrar to have the process registered. The appropriate forms are available from the Registry

There are a large number of forms relating to friendly societies found under the following link <http://www.cro.ie/ena/friendlysocietyforms.aspx>

All You Wanted To Know About the Running of Successful Committees

Members of a Committee:

A group usually elects a number of people to run the business of the group for a fixed period of time.

This group, normally called a Committee, runs the business of the group for that period of time.

The Committee, in turn, usually elects a number of people who have a particular role in the running of the group for the term of the committee.

These people, called Officers, are usually a Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, Communications Officer or PRO.

Confidentiality:

It is important that everyone in the group is secure that information shared in the group remains within the group.

Some of the group's business may also be confidential, especially if it concerns funding or sensitive issues. It is important that each member of the group is loyal to this confidence.

Confidentiality Policy has to be clearly spelled out as sometimes members may not be aware of the consequences of leaking sensitive information, this especially true of new committees who may lack experienced members.

Communication:

Good communication is the key to a good group. Where the quality of communication is poor, the consequence is nearly always a fall in motivation and lessening of support from outside bodies, including funders.

Communication is the means by which the aims and objectives of the group, its culture (ethos and philosophy), its resources and needs can be made known both internally and externally.

Internally:

- Between members of the group
- Between management committee members
- Between management committee and other members
- Between management committee and staff
- Between the group and those it serves.

Externally:

- Between the group and its funders
- Between the group and other groups in the association
- Between the group and other agencies working in the field

- Between the group and statutory bodies
- Between the group and the general bodies
- Between the group and the media

If the group as a whole is aware of its vision, its aims and objectives from the start a lot of this can be avoided. However, very often in groups different people perceive the group, its purpose and the roles of those in the group differently. It is important to work this out.

It is important for each member of the group to be aware of all the workings of the group. Sometimes people are prepared to trade blessed ignorance to avoid the hassle of getting familiar with the dealings of the group. But, if something goes wrong it is vital that each member understand how and why that happened.

Duties of Officers on a Committee

Chairperson, Secretary & Treasurer

The Chairperson

The Chairperson's role is two-fold, firstly as leader and spokesperson for the organisation and secondly as facilitator, planning and running meetings.

The Chairperson should have certain characteristics:

- The ability to conduct meetings with impartiality and in a pleasant and tactful manner
- The ability to speak clearly and succinctly
- The ability to think objectively and to always to control temper
- A friendly disposition and a sense of humour
- The ability to arrange delegation so that as many members as possible will be involved and gain experience.

Role/General Duties:

- To act as spokesperson or representative of the Group
- To be thoroughly familiar with matters of procedure and the rules of the Group.
- To guide the meeting and to enable the members to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team
- To conduct meetings with impartiality and in a pleasant and tactful manner
- To arrange delegation so that as many members as possible will be involved and gain experience.

Before the Meeting:

The Chairperson should

- consult and work with the Secretary to ensure that
 - a) suitable premises and facilities for the meeting have been arranged
 - b) the Agenda is prepared
- be familiar with issues that are likely to be discussed, and with actions taken at the previous meetings

At the Meeting:

The Chairperson should:

- arrive in good time before the meeting and start on time
- ensure there is a quorum present, according to the rules
- declare the meeting open clearly
- receive apologies for those who are absent and sign the minutes of the last meeting
- if necessary, s/he will sum up the points of members clearly and concisely – those in favour and against the motion

- when a proposal has been voted upon, s/he will ensure that the Secretary has recorded that decision

Chairpersons Do's & Don'ts

Do's:

- Develop a pleasant and friendly manner
- Treat everyone the same way
- Listen attentively and impartially
- Be sensitive to the general feeling of the meeting
- Start on time
- End at a reasonable time

Don'ts

- Be long-winded
- Appear to be disinterested
- Fidget

GOLDEN RULE

Remember that above all s/he is there to guide the meeting and to enable the members to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team

The Secretary

The Secretary should have certain characteristics

- Attention to detail
- An orderly mind and a methodical way of working
- Recognition of the importance of dealing promptly with correspondence
- An ability to absorb information and to summarise it in written form

Role/General Duties:

- To be responsible for the administration of the group
- To keep an up-to-date list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all the Group members.
- To keep careful, orderly records of the Group's work, including:
 1. Writing the Minutes
 2. Filing all correspondence received and copies of replies sent, in their date order
 3. Filing reports received and made
- To compile lists of any names and addresses that may be useful to the Group
- To keep a record of past activities and decisions of the Group and to keep a diary of the future events
- To prepare a report of the Group's activities for the year, for the Annual General Meeting

Before the Meeting:

The Secretary should

- Collect together all the business of the meeting and consult with the Chairperson on the order and the way it should be dealt with on the agenda
- Ensure that the notice of the meeting has been given, that suitable accommodation has been arranged, and that copies of the Agenda have been prepared.
- Ensure that the Minutes of the last meeting have been prepared and that they are available
- Ensure that any reports or information requested at the previous meeting are available

At the Meeting:

The Secretary should

- Arrive in good time before the meeting with the Minutes and all relevant correspondence and business matters for that meeting, in good order
- Record the names of those who are present and convey and record the apologies of those who are absent
- Read the Minutes of the previous meeting and, if they are approved, obtain the Chairperson's signature on them
- Report on any action or matters arising from the Minutes
- Take notes of the meeting for the Minutes

After the Meeting:

The Secretary should

- Write/Type up the Minutes It is important to do this as soon as practical after the meeting while the proceedings of the meeting are fresh in your mind
- Send all correspondence, as decided by the Group, promptly
- Keep a record of all telephone, postage and stationary expenditure, and present it regularly
- Write up the Minutes and deal with all correspondence promptly after the meeting
- Keep a checklist so you don't arrive at the meeting without an essential item

Company Secretary:

Limited companies by guarantee are legally required to have a company secretary. The company secretary is appointed by the board of directors and his/her role is to make sure that the company keeps to the rules set out in the Articles of Association, which includes the requirements of the Companies Office as well as the rules of the organisation.

Generally the role of the company secretary includes:

- ensuring that all the requirements of the Companies Office (as listed above) are fulfilled;
- ensuring that the rules of the company as outlined in the Articles of Association are kept;
- ensuring that the company's registers are kept up to date; notifying the Companies Office within fourteen days of any change of directors or change of their home address;
- ensuring that the AGM is held within eighteen months of becoming a company and at least every fifteen months from then on;
- ensuring that proper notice is given of general and board meetings and that they are run according to the Articles of Association; calling general meetings at the request of the directors and/or members, according to the rules in the Articles of Association;
- ensuring that the minute books are properly kept; ensuring that the income and expenditure account and balance sheet are properly prepared and audited; sending in the annual returns to the Companies Office; keeping copies of all annual returns and accounts;
- ensuring that the certificate of incorporation is prominently displayed in the registered office;
- ensuring that a name plate is prominently displayed outside the registered office;
- ensuring that the company name and registered number is shown on the organisation's letterhead;
- notifying the Companies Office of any changes in the Memorandum and Articles of Association;
- ensuring that all legal agreements or contracts are properly discussed and agreed by the directors; and
- ensuring that all legal documents are kept in a safe place

This is an important role which involves being very familiar with the Articles of Association. The company secretary can be a member of the board of directors or a member of staff. The company secretary does not have to do all the practical work him or herself (e.g. keeping the registers up to date) but must ensure that the rules are followed and that the requirements of the Companies Office are fulfilled.

The Treasurer

All groups have to keep up to date accounts for a number of reasons:

- To have up-to-date information on the financial situation.
- To be able to provide financial accountability (that the money is being properly spent) to the community or to the funding agency.
- To be able to work out the tax situation with the Revenue Commissioners.
- To be able to give funders this information or to use it in funding applications.
- Any groups that have legal status (e.g. limited companies) will be required to keep accounts.
- Ideally all expenditure should be approved in advance by one or more officers or at committee level as appropriate. This eliminates problems later on.

Every organisation should have a system of accounts. This is:

- a way of keeping written records of all income and expenditure and
- a set of procedures for dealing with money

This system would deal with things how all monies coming in and going out are handled, and things like the authorisation of cheques, approval of expenditure (different levels of expenditure may require different levels of approval), expenses, etc.

The Treasurer is responsible for all the financial transactions of the Group. Ideally the Treasurer is a person capable of handling figures and cash.

Role/Duties of a Treasurer:

- To present a record of the current financial state of the Group at meetings
- To prepare a Statement of Accounts for the Annual General Meeting.
- To be one of the signatories of cheques
- To present a list of accounts for payment
- To prepare a budget (financial plans for activities, programmes or the total organisation).
- To file all receipts, monies and Account Statements in order of date.
- To always follow these fundamental rules
 - a) Give receipts and retain duplicates for all money received, however small the amount.
 - b) Lodge all money received in the Bank, ensure that the lodgement slip is stamped and record the lodgement in the Cash book.
 - c) All expenses including drawings from Petty Cash must be by cheque that will be recorded.
 - d) Obtain a receipted Invoice or voucher or Petty Cash document for all cash paid out, however small.

Banking:

A bank account should be opened in the Group's name and sample signatures of the members of the Group authorised to sign cheques provided.

Grants:

Details of the way grants are spent should be recorded according to the regulations of the grant-making body

Books/Forms Required

1. **Book** with counterfoils, numbered consecutively. The name of the Group should be rubber-stamped on each page or books may be printed.
2. **Voucher or Petty Cash** docket pads, numbered consecutively. These vouchers would be used for all cash payments. These should be small items and should show the nature of the expense incurred
3. **Cheque Payments Book** (expense or expenditure) – this is a record of all cheques paid out. It should record the date, cheque number, amount paid and what it was for.
4. **Cash Book**. The information from the receipt book, cheque payments book and vouchers is entered in the Cash Book to make a complete record in one book, of money received and paid. Entries of the money paid should be on the left side, and entries of payments made should be on the right side.
5. **Bank Lodgements Book** – This is a book available from the bank, in which all the lodgements to the account are recorded. These figures are also put in the Receipts and Payments Books.
6. **Bank Statements** – Keep them all!!!!!!

Cheque Books and Cheque Payments Book:

The Treasurer must always complete the stub for each cheque that is paid out, giving the date, the payee, the reason for the payment and the amount of the cheque.

These stubs should be regularly checked with the bank statement.

Cheque book stubs and cheques which have been passed through the account should be kept for six years

Quarterly Statement of Accounts:

The Statement should simply show money received and money paid out in the previous three months. This makes the preparations of the annual Statement of Accounts much easier.

Annual statement of Accounts:

This must be submitted to members once a year at the annual general meeting.

These accounts must be checked, audited and found correct by a person other than the Treasurer and preferably someone who is a general member rather than someone who is a member of the Committee.

All account books should be available for general inspection at the Annual General Meeting. All financial records must be kept for a period of six years.

Never make cash payment from cash received. Income must always be recorded and paid in into the group account and expenses must be recorded and paid out by cheque.

Public Relations / the Group and the Media

When talking about publicity for an organisation, there are two issues.

1. Before a group launches a publicity campaign – setting an agreed image of the group etc.
2. The practical aspects of launching a campaign – how much money to spend etc.

Public relations is

- A deliberate, planned and sustained activity to establish mutual understanding and two-way communication between an organisation and its public.
- A way of educating the public of the aims and objectives of the group.

Setting an Agreed Image:

- *The image or position that the group wants to portray publicly must be agreed by the entire group/committee before:*
 - 1) Embarking on a publicity campaign
 - 2) Agreeing to participate in a, for example, radio debate
 - 3) Issuing a press release.
- It is the task of the designated PR person or subcommittee to implement or make public this position.

Public Relations Officer/Subcommittee:

It is important that the Public Relations Officer of the Subcommittee is skilled in handling public relations. This includes:

- Knowing how to agree an image or position with the committee
- Being able to portray this image or position in a number of formats, such as radio, television, print, etc.

Key questions to be asked when a publicity campaign is being planned:

- WHO – Target group
- WHY – The reasons for trying to reach a certain group of people.
- WHAT – You need to make it clear what you want from people.
- HOW – How do you go about doing this publicity
 - Leaflets
 - Press Releases
 - Advertising
 - Using existing newsletter

Creating an Image:

An organisation needs to know what kind of an image it wants to present to the public so that it can plan its publicity.

Finance / Budget:

- Finance must be considered when planning a publicity campaign, even though publicity does not necessarily cost money.
- The more active an organisation is the more it will attract free publicity.
- However, even leaflets and simple posters cost money to produce so it is important for your organisation to decide on a budgetary allocation for publicity.

GOLDEN RULE

It is important the public face of the group is agreed on and everyone in the group is aware that publicity is taking place.

Quick Tips for a Successful Meeting

- Start on time
- The Chairperson should act as a Facilitator. Everybody should be given an opportunity to participate. It is the task of the Chairperson to ensure that one or two people do not dominate the discussion.
- It is the task of all members of the Group to be courteous and to allow their colleagues adequate time to speak.
- Remember that even though you may be nervous, chances are everybody around you is feeling the same way.
- You have a right to speak and a right to be heard – what you have to say is every bit as important as what anyone else is saying.
- Avoid the traditional structure of sitting in rows before a top-table. Put chairs into a circle. When everyone can see everyone else people can communicate (and listen) better.
- **If you are going to speak**
 - Decide what you are going to say in advance
 - be clear and concise.
 - Avoid waffle.
 - Be prepared to defend your case
 - Avoid arguing
 - Do not be defensive
- **If someone else is speaking**
 - Listen attentively;

If you have a point to make, make it in the most constructive way possible.
Be encouraging and supportive, not disparaging.

- Everyone on the group has an equal right to information.

Retaining information or selected sharing of information is not conducive to efficient group work.

The Agenda:

The agenda is basically a list of things that will be discussed at the meeting. It should be prepared by the Chairperson and the Secretary.

If possible, it should be sent to all members with the notice of the meeting. If this is not possible it should be circulated at the beginning of the meeting.

Items on the Agenda:

1. Apologies:

It is customary that all members who are unable to attend the meeting send their apologies to the Secretary.

2. Minutes:

These are the permanent records of all Committee/Group meetings, activities and decisions. The minutes should be a summary of the proposals and decisions of the previous meeting. The minutes should be kept by the Secretary and read out or circulated at the meeting.

If it is decided that they are a correct record the Chairperson will sign the Minutes. If an inaccuracy is specified and agreed upon, alterations should be made before the Chairperson signs them.

GOLDEN RULE

Once they are signed the minutes become the official record of the decisions of the Group

3. Matters Arising:

This gives an opportunity to report on progress made in carrying out decisions which were taken at the last meeting.

4. Correspondence:

The Secretary should read out any correspondence which requires a decision or which contains information

5. Chairperson's Report:

This gives the Chairperson the opportunity to report to the Group on any matter s/he considers important and relevant.

6. Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer should give an account of the present financial position and of the money spent or received since the last meeting.

7. Items of Main Business:

If people have been delegated different tasks, this gives them an opportunity to report back on their progress. This can also include any business that may have arisen between meetings that members feel should be discussed.

8. Any Other Business:

This item is intended to give members an opportunity to raise matters of major interest. This may be carried over for discussion at the next meeting or it may be important enough to require a discussion at this meeting.

9. *Date of the Next Meeting:*

The date, time and place should be specified, whenever possible.

Agenda Plan Template:

The Chairman/Secretary will be responsible for drawing up and circulating the agenda. The following provides a template for the agenda:

Time Allocated	Item	Lead Person
2 minutes	Apologies	
15 minutes	Minutes	
10 minutes	Matters Arising	
10 minutes	Correspondence	
10 minutes	Treasurer's/Chairperson's Report	
20 minutes	Item of Main Business 1	
15 minutes	Item of Main Business 2	
10 minutes	Item of Main Business 3	
10 minutes	AOB	
2 minutes	Meeting close (to include time, date and location of next meeting)	

Start at 8pm – finish at 9.35pm – total of 95 minutes

Recording & Circulating the Minutes:

The Secretary will be responsible for recording and circulating the minutes. The following provides a template for minute taking:

Number	Item	Who	By When
Item 1	Summary of the item discussed and the decision taken	Who is to carry out an action	By when does the action need to be carried out?
Item 2	Summary of the item discussed and the decision taken	Who is to carry out an action?	By when does the action need to be carried out?

Etc...

The minutes will be circulated promptly after the meeting.

Practical Advice for Holding Meetings

Role of Chairperson:

The chairperson exercises many and varied roles within the organisation. The chairperson has a representative function of representing the organisation at a variety of events and functions. In addition the chairperson is the leader of the organisation and chairs the meetings of the organisation.

These meetings will include small sub-group meetings, regular monthly meetings and AGM's. A variety of skills and competences is required for each of these types of meetings and activities. It is important that all members of an organisation understand and accept that its chairperson may not have the skill and competences to fulfill all the roles required of a chairperson to the highest standards. It is also important that each organisation supports its chairperson and ensures that where necessary adequate training and/or support structures are put in place not only for the chairperson but also for the membership of the organisation.

A chairperson should ensure that the discussion at meetings is focused on the specific agenda item, topic or motion under discussion. The chairperson should rule out of order any discussion relating to an agenda item, topic or motion on which the discussion has concluded.

- ***The Chairperson requires multi-skills as s/he performs the various duties of chairperson such as representative, leader, chairperson at meetings, negotiator, etc.***
- ***Each Organisation and its membership should support its chairperson.***

The chairperson should ensure that discussions are focused on the specific topic under discussion.

Meetings:

There are many and varied types of meetings to which members of an organisation may be required to attend. These can involve meetings of a few people to gatherings in the hundreds. The preparation required will vary with the meeting type and the role or position a person has at a meeting.

Whatever the purpose or type of meeting, it is important that one arrives in time for the meeting. If one is organising the meeting it is important that the venue is suitable and that clear directions are given to those who will be attending the meeting.

Each person should bring whatever documentation they have which may be necessary for /or required at the meeting. Never act on the assumption that another person will bring the documentation. *Each person should prepare for every meeting. It is good practice for each person attending a meeting to take notes at the meeting.* It is important to report accurately the proceedings of meetings one has attended, while observing confidentiality, to groups/meetings where such information may be relevant and/or useful.

Information exchanged and contacts made during the informal periods of meetings may be of great importance.

- ***Each member should be prepared for and punctual in attendance at meetings.***
- ***Each member should take relevant notes at meetings.***
- ***The venue for meetings should be suitable.***
- ***Where necessary precise directions should be given as to the meeting venue.***

Types of Meetings:

The effective work of each organisation will require it to hold a variety of meetings. Meetings may vary from the very formal to informal meetings. It is important that a written record is kept of all such meetings. It is important that such recorded records be agreed as an accurate account of the meetings by those who attended the meetings.

- ***A written record should be made of the proceedings of all meetings.***

Location:

Meetings should take place in locations which are suitable. User friendly access should be available to the meeting venue. This requires that parking, universal accessibility and convenience to public transport when it is available are considered when a decision about a location is taken. The locations should be comfortable, capable of seating those who attend and providing audio/visual support when required. It may be necessary if the venue has more than one meeting room. The provision of refreshments may be expected or required at meetings. If this is so, then it is important that such facilities are available. The venue selected should be free from external intrusion such as noise, lack of privacy etc... In selecting venues it is essential to take account of the cost factor.

- ***Ensure that the meeting location and venue are suitable for the purpose for which the meeting is taking place.***

Time Duration and Schedule of Meetings:

It is good practice that meetings start and finish on time. Thus the punctual beginning of meetings is a responsibility of all. Since a meeting cannot begin without a quorum, all members should aim to be present at the meeting venue a least five minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting. Members should be aware of the finishing time of meetings. The yearly schedule of meetings should be agreed and circulated to all members. When the schedule and time duration of meetings is agreed, members should as a matter of courtesy, respect and commit to attend and not schedule any other events to coincide with meetings.

Meetings should begin promptly at the designated time. The duration of meetings, as far as possible, should be decided in advance. Meetings should be held in places which are suitable. This requires proper seating, tables as necessary, proper temperature level, ventilation, proper acoustics, availability of audio/visual supports where necessary, awareness of location of fire exits and the room layout which is most suitable for the type of meeting taking place.

- ***Meetings, as far as possible, should start and finish on time.***
- ***A quorum is required for each meeting. In many instances a quorum is fixed at next whole number above 1/3 of the membership. Such a figure should be stated in the constitution.***
- ***A yearly schedule of meetings should be agreed and members should avoid as far as possible having other engagements which clash with arranged meetings.***

Conduct of Meetings:

Each person who attends a meeting has a responsibility to ensure that the meeting is conducted in such a manner that the business of the meeting is carried out efficiently and effectively. The secretary has the responsibility of ensuring that each member receives the appropriate documentation before the meeting. The chairperson has the responsibility of ensuring that the meeting is kept focused on its tasks and that each individual who wishes to

make a contribution to the meeting has the opportunity to do so. It is important in conducting the meeting that the chairperson ensures that there is sufficient balance between the times assigned to agenda items so that all items on the agenda are discussed sufficiently. On occasions it may be necessary to postpone discussion on some items to a later meeting.

- ***Meetings should be held in suitable venues.***
- ***Each person attending a meeting has a responsibility for the good running of the meeting.***
- ***The Chairperson should ensure that the discussions are focused on the specific topic under discussion.***
- ***The Secretary should ensure that all relevant documentation is circulated to members.***
- ***The time duration of meetings should be fixed in advance.***

Agenda & Items on the Agenda:

The agenda for each meeting should be circulated in advance of each meeting. For meetings which occur on a regular monthly basis it is recommended that the agenda date, time and place of meetings are circulated no later than five days before the meeting. This should allow each person sufficient time to prepare for the meeting and also to be re-informed as to the time, location and date of the meeting. It is now common practice with many organisations to send text reminders to members on the day of meetings.

The agenda for a meeting should be drawn up by the secretary in consultation with the chairperson. It is very important that the chairperson is fully acquainted with the background to each item on the agenda. It may be of assistance to the chairperson that a specific maximum time is assigned to each item on the agenda. The Chairperson can choose to include such time guidelines with the agenda as circulated to those entitled to attend the meeting. It is essential that it is also made clear to members that the assigned time is just a guideline and discussion on items may be concluded at an earlier time than that assigned. Otherwise members who arrive late may wish to discuss matters which, according to the time guideline, should not have been discussed before they arrived but due to less time being spent on earlier items on the agenda were reached before the assigned time to them and the discussion on such items concluded.

- ***The agenda should be drawn up by the secretary in consultation with the chairperson.***
- ***Each member should be entitled to submit agenda items to the secretary for inclusion on the agenda.***
- ***The agenda should be circulated at least five days before the meeting and a text reminder given the day before the meeting to members.***

A.O.B. as an Agenda Item:

The inclusion or exclusion of A.O.B. (Any Other Business) as an agenda item for meetings should be agreed. Some groups will exclude the item and others see it as an essential agenda item. The processes which are adopted for placing items on the agenda have a significant bearing on the importance attached to the A.O.B. item. It is important that each member has the right and opportunity to have items placed on the agenda for meetings. It is also important that the agenda is ordered, circulated in advance of meetings and that each of its items will be discussed adequately. It is good practice that the Chairperson is aware in advance of any item which will be raised under A.O.B. Some organisations adopt the policy that when a person wishes to raise an item under A.O.B. that the permission of the chairperson is sought and granted in advance. In some instances it is accepted practice that such permission should be sought at least three days before a meeting. It is important for the good running of meetings that the introduction of non-stated agenda items is kept to a minimum.

- *Items under A.O.B. should be kept to a minimum at meetings.*
- *The chairperson should be aware in advance of any item which is to be raised under A.O.B.*

When each member has the opportunity and right to place items on the agenda, then the need for A.O.B. as an agenda item is used less frequently.

Reaching All Items on the Agenda:

Time management of meetings is important, so that each item on the agenda is reached and that sufficient time is given to consider and debate each item. The final item on the agenda may be the most important item for some members. The skilled chairperson will ensure that the meeting is business like and that the sufficient time is given to each agenda item within the overall time constraints of the meeting. It may be necessary to refer some items on the agenda to sub-committees or to postpone further discussion of them to the next meeting.

- *Time management of the discussion at meetings is important.*
- *The skilled chairperson should ensure sufficient time is given to each item on the agenda.*
- *Items on the agenda may need to be referred to sub-committees.*
- *Further discussion on some items may need to be postponed to a later meeting.*

Sample Agenda for Meetings:

Apologies

1. Minutes
2. Matters Arising (These should only be minor matters, as significant matters should be individual agenda items.)
3. Correspondence
4. Chairperson's Address (Updating of activities/meetings in which the chairperson was involved, highlighting future developments, showing leadership, etc.)
5. Reports (Written and circulated in advance as far as possible. Policy issues arising from reports maybe agenda items for successive meetings.)
6. Significant items from the previous meeting (These would include current activities.)
7. Treasurer's Report (This should be written and include monthly and accumulated spending for the year and comparison with budget projections.)
8. Planning/Developments (These would include projects/tasks which are planned and in progress.)
9. Training (Current and/or future needs.)
10. A.O.B. (It is important that this item is well regulated. It is a good practice if items under A.O.B. are agreed with the chairperson at least two days before the meeting.)
11. Agreed Report (This ensures that after the meeting each member is sure as to the material which may be communicated to others.)
12. Date of Next Meeting.

Minute Taking and Circulation:

The effective taking of minutes at meetings is an important activity. All decisions taken at meetings should be recorded. Most organisations would expect that their minutes record

more than just the decisions reached. An accurate summary of the discussions at meetings is often of great importance so that members are aware of the context of decision making and the basis for possible future decisions. It is of great importance that minutes are accurate. It is the signed minutes which are the legal record of what happened at the meeting. If minutes are inaccurate then they should be corrected before they are adopted and signed by the chairperson. Once the minutes have been proposed, seconded, adopted and signed then a discussion on matters arising may take place. Only those who were present at the meeting may propose and second the minutes of the meeting.

To allow members to have an opportunity to check the accuracy of minutes and be prepared for meetings, the draft minutes should be circulated in advance to all members. The minutes should be confidential to the members.

- ***The minutes should accurately record any decisions taken by the meeting.***
- ***The minutes should include an accurate summary of the discussions of the meeting.***
- ***Signed minutes are a legal document.***
- ***The minutes should be confidential to the members.***

Correspondence:

This is another agenda item under which unexpected items may be raised on an agenda. It is good practice, where possible, if an item of correspondence warrants discussion and/or decisions, that it is listed as a specific agenda item. This will enable all members to be acquainted with the content of the correspondence and take an active part in the meeting.

- ***List important items of correspondence as specific agenda items.***

Reporting:

It is important that the reporting processes at organisation meetings are business like and avoid time wasting. Reports should be presented at each organisation meeting from those members who serve on other bodies and reports should be available from persons who represent the organisation but are not members of the organisation Executive. As far as possible, such reports should be written and in ideal circumstances should be circulated to members prior to the meeting. Such a practice would enable members to ask appropriate questions and the representative to elaborate where necessary. In some circumstances it may not be appropriate to have written reports hence a verbal report which is concise should be given.

Decisions at Meetings:

It is important that the process and method of decision making at meetings is agreed. (See constitution or articles of association regarding quorum for meetings) Reaching agreement by consensus is often the preferred option of many groups but if this is not possible then decisions are often made by each person present having one vote and the chairperson having an additional casting vote in the event of a tied vote. Such a vote may be by a show of hands or by secret ballot. When more than one person contests a position and a ballot has to be taken it is appropriate that such a ballot should be secret. If there is a tied vote in such a case it is important that an agreed procedure for choosing a winner is decided in advance. The normal process of decision making at AGM's is by voting. Elections should be by secret ballot. Votes on motions are generally by a show of hands unless there is agreement for secret ballots. Once decisions are made it is important that the responsibility for carrying out decisions is assigned to the appropriate person(s).

- ***The decision making process of meeting should be agreed.***
- ***Secret ballots should be used when appropriate***
- ***Where possible decisions should be by consensus.***

Annual General Meeting:

The structure and format of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) is significantly different from that of the regular meeting of an Organisation. It is necessary to notify all those organisations who are entitled to have representatives attend the meeting of the date, location and time of the meeting. It is necessary to specify the process by which motions may be taken at the meeting. It is good practice that motions are submitted in writing a specific time before an AGM. It may be a requirement that all motions and/or amendments to the constitution are submitted a fixed period of time in advance of the meeting. (Such a detail can be found in the Constitution). The process by which elections take place, are also specified in the constitution.

The role of the Chairperson at an AGM is central to the good running of the meeting. At an AGM there may be a very large attendance compared to ordinary meetings. Much of the business of an AGM is formal and involves reports from various officers on the progress of the previous year. If it is possible the minutes of previous meetings and the various reports should be circulated in advance of the meeting. In many cases this may not be possible. At an AGM each person should sign the attendance register as they enter the meeting room. Thus an accurate list of those attending the meeting is available. Any relevant documentation which has not been circulated in advance of the meeting should be given to each person who is entitled to attend and vote at the meeting as they arrive and sign the attendance register.

- ***Once the minutes of the previous meeting have been proposed, seconded and adopted by the meeting as the true record of the previous meeting, they are signed by the chairperson.***
- ***The membership must indicate their adoption of the minutes. This is usually done by a show of hands. Then matters arising from the minutes may be discussed.***
- ***Then the individual reports from the secretary, treasurer and other officers should then be proposed and seconded and when the specific report is adopted by the meeting it is then open for discussion.***
- ***The chairperson's address does not need to be proposed or seconded.***

Standing orders should be adopted at each A.G.M.

If there is a large attendance at meetings, then tellers should be appointed whose function is to count the various votes when requested to do so by the chairperson.

Motions for discussion at an AGM should be submitted in the proper motion format. Thus each motion should begin with the word ***That***. If the proposer of a motion is not present, then the motion does not have a proposer. Each motion should be proposed and seconded and then opened to the floor for further debate. If an amendment to a motion is proposed then the amendment must be properly proposed and seconded and only when it is accepted by a majority vote is it then attached to the motion and the amended motion is then put to a vote.

The chairperson should make the attendance aware of the implications passing any motion may have on the organisation. This is a very serious responsibility for the chairperson who in preparing for the AGM needs to be familiar with the content of motions and the effect their passing may have on the organisation and its activities. Hence it is important that motions to be submitted in advance of the meeting.

Sample Agenda for AGM:

1. Apologies
2. Checking of list of attendance
3. Minutes of previous meeting their adoption and matters arising
4. Adoption of Standing Orders
5. Secretary's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. PRO's Report
8. Other Officers' Report
9. Chairperson's Address
10. Elections (if elections take place at the AGM)
11. Motions
12. Conclusion

Items which are not strictly AGM business such as guest speakers making presentations and/or discussions on chosen topics may be included in the items for the day.

- ***Proper notification of an AGM should be given in writing to all entitled to be represented.***
- ***AGM's should be conducted in accordance with the constitution of the organisation***
- ***The minutes of the previous AGM and all Officers reports should be properly proposed and seconded and then a vote for their adoption taken at the meeting before discussion on them takes place.***
- ***The conduct of the meeting should be in accordance with the adopted standing orders.***
- ***Each person entitled to attend should sign the attendance register.***
- ***Tellers, where necessary, should be appointed.***

Follow up from Meetings:

It is important that there is clarity from meetings as to who is responsible for carrying out any task decided at the meeting. Such decisions should be clearly recorded in the minutes. It may be necessary for the chairperson, secretary or another individual to contact those to whom tasks were assigned to and enquire of their progress. If sub-committees are established it should be clearly stated who is responsible for convening such groups.

- ***There should be clarity at each meeting as to who is responsible for carrying out tasks assigned at the meeting.***
- ***When sub-groups are established its tasks should be clear. In addition it should be clear as to who is the convener of the group and a date and venue set for its initial meeting.***

Company Policies & Procedures

The following section details policies and procedures that make running an organisation with employees in line with best practice for both for employer and employee. Ideally this section should be incorporated into an employee handbook so that each understands their roles and responsibilities. In the event of issues arising this section details problem resolution process that defines a roadmap for problem resolution.

New legislation as it is enacted will dictate changes to this document and both employers and employees will be bound by these changes.

<i>Company Policies and Procedures</i>		
General Safety Statement	Equality Policy	Objectives
Responsibilities	Structures	Recruitment & Selection
Career Development & Training	Promotion	Complaints & Redress
Harassment & Bullying	Positive Action	Review & Monitoring
<i>Terms & Conditions</i>		
Health & Safety Policy	Hours of Work	Lunch Periods & Breaks
Overtime Policy	Absence	Hygiene
Tobacco Policy	Alcohol & Drugs	E-Mail & internet use
Confidentiality	Resignation & Termination	Lay-off/Short Time
Redundancy	Emergency Evacuation	
<i>Leave & Benefits</i>		
Annual leave	Compassionate Leave	Maternity Leave
Paternity Leave	Parental Leave	Force Majeure Leave
Careers Leave	Relevant Person	Adoptive Leave
Jury Duty	Pension Policy & Plans	Training & Personal Development
<i>Disciplinary Procedures</i>		
Purpose of Procedure	Operation of Procedure	Informal Procedure
Formal Procedure	Disciplinary Interview	No Disciplinary Action
Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Final Written Warning
Dismissal		

Company Policies & Procedures

General Safety Statement:

All **[name]** Employees, contractors & visitors are required by law to take reasonable care for their own safety, health and welfare and that of others who may be affected by their actions. **[name]** will take all necessary steps to discharge the duties laid down by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 and any other relevant legislation. You must report without delay defective tools and equipment that may involve danger to you or a fellow employee. The Company will take responsibility for:

- Providing safe and healthy conditions.
- Providing training and instruction, where necessary, to enable employees to perform their work safely and efficiently.
- Supplying all necessary Protective Equipment.
- Maintaining a constant and continuing interest in Safety matters, particularly by consulting and involving employees.

Equality Policy: Introduction:

[name] is an Equal Opportunities Employer. As such it is committed to Equality of Opportunity for existing and potential employees. The purpose of this Equal Opportunity / Diversity Policy is to create a workplace which provides for Equal Opportunities for all staff and potential staff and where their dignity is protected and respected at all times.

All persons regardless of Gender, Marital status, Family status, Race, Religious beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age or Members of the Travelling Community will be provided with equality of access to employment and also encouraged and assisted to achieve their full potential. We will continue to foster a genuine culture of Equality.

Objectives:

The aim of the policy in terms of employment is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This applies to Recruitment and Selection, Training, Promotion, Pay and Employee Benefits, Employee Grievances and Discipline procedures and all Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Responsibilities:

The responsibility for ensuring the provision of Equality of Opportunity rests primarily with **[name]** as an employer. Managers and Supervisors have particular responsibility to engender respect for difference and to accommodate Diversity where appropriate.

All staff have an important role to play in ensuring Equality of Opportunity throughout the organisation. It is also recognised that individual employees on behalf of **[name]** have responsibilities in law.

They are required to co-operate with any measures introduced by the company to promote Equal Opportunities and accommodate diversity as covered in legislation.

They have a responsibility to ensure that no one is discriminated against by virtue of their gender, family status, marital status, religion, age, race, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation or disability

Must not themselves, either directly or indirectly, discriminate against fellow employees or harass or intimidate them in any way.

Structures:

The Company is committed to resourcing an Equality Officer who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective implementation, monitoring and review of the policy.

This policy should be communicated at every level within the organisation in a range of formats through various media. An Equality review should be undertaken & an action plan be prepared & monitored and prepare an action plan on foot of this and maintain a monitoring system.

Recruitment and Selection:

The organisation may require a potential employee to undergo a pre-employment medical examination prior to commencing employment. Any false or inaccurate information deliberately given by applicants/employees for the pre-employment medical examination will result in withdrawal of employment or may result in dismissal of an employee.

[name] will select those suitable for employment solely on the basis of merit. Job advertisements, application forms and publicity material will encourage applications from all suitable candidates and will not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual on any unjustifiable grounds.

The objective is to target the widest possible pool of potential applicants and to ensure that all candidates have Equality of access to all job vacancies.

[name] will seek to ensure a creative approach to our advertising that affirms Diversity and attracts the widest pool of candidates.

Where possible and practicable an effort will be made to ensure that interview panels are from diverse backgrounds. This will ensure that interviewers are trained to conduct interviews in a non-discriminatory way and that questions will relate to the requirements of the job

Relevant questions will be asked of all candidates and evaluated in the same way and interviewers will be careful not to ask questions which might be taken as discriminatory.

Selection must always be on merit and those who are successful shall demonstrate their suitability for employment according to pre-determined job-related selection criteria which will be consistently applied throughout the recruitment process.

Equality of Opportunity will also include accommodating where possible the special needs of individuals to facilitate their participation in the Recruitment & Selection process.

Career Development and Training:

Opportunities for Career Development and Training will be open to all and will not discriminate directly or indirectly on any of the grounds outlined in the 1998 Act. All employees will be provided with every opportunity to acquire the range of Training, Skills and experience necessary for their career development.

Opportunities for training will be based on the requirements of the job and career development will be based on people's abilities and merit. The Company/Organisation is committed to a relevant training and career development policy for all staff irrespective of background.

Promotion:

All categories of staff will be encouraged to prepare, plan and consider themselves for promotion. All eligible employees will be made aware of promotional opportunities and encouraged to compete. Conditions governing access to promotion competitions will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on any of the nine grounds. Unnecessary barriers to promotion will be removed and employees facilitated to compete by all means possible. Promotion and Re-grading will be decided on objective criteria to the requirements of the job and will not be influenced by any other issues.

Complaints and Redress:

All complaints from employees in relation to Employment Equality or alleged discrimination will be handled in accordance with grievance procedures.

Any person who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination or unfairness should do so in the first instance by contacting the Equality Officer.

The Company/Organisation must be committed to ensuring that all issues concerning alleged breaches of this policy will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

Harassment and Bullying:

[name] is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment that is free of harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying and within which all members of staff will be treated with dignity and respect. All employees have an obligation to prevent and eliminate Bullying & Harassment. A specific Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure should be in place.

Positive Action:

[name] will take practical measures to facilitate the integration of the following categories into employment:

- Gender
- Persons over the Age of 50
- Persons with a Disability
- Membership of the Travelling Community

Review and Monitoring:

Progress in the areas of Equal Opportunities and Diversity will be gauged through the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Equal Opportunities/Diversity strategy. All aspects of this Equality Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Equality Officer.

Terms & Conditions

Hours of Work:

The Company will use appropriate means to record attendance. Employees should be at their place of work, ready to start work at normal starting time. The Company attaches great importance to punctuality. Disciplinary action should be taken against late comers.

Lunch Periods and Breaks:

Normally from 1.00pm to 2.00pm on each working day unless specifically organised otherwise by the employer/organisation.

Overtime Policy:

This Policy is designed to assist the company to meet deadlines and clear any backlog of Work. It will also ensure that employees are adequately compensated for working overtime.

Overtime is defined as work performed outside the normal work schedule that has been approved in advance by your manager. You are selected for overtime work at the sole discretion of the manager.

If you are working 1 hour overtime, and your shift ends at 5.00p.m., then you continue working until 6.00p.m.

If you are working 2.5 hours of overtime, you are entitled to a 15 minute paid break at the end of your normal shift.

If you work overtime at the weekend, break periods follow the same pattern as during normal work days.

In line with the organisation of working time Act (1997), employees must have a minimum of 11 hours rest between shifts. It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with this legislation.

At no time is overtime neither guaranteed nor should overtime be construed as an integral part of earnings, working conditions or terms of employment.

Emergency Evacuation:

Your Supervisor/Manager as part of your induction should make you aware of the evacuation procedure and identify the emergency exits in the workplace. Emergency Exits are clearly marked. Signs indicate the exits to be used in each area. Employees should familiarise themselves with the location of the nearest Emergency Exit to their work place. The procedure to be followed in the event of a fire evacuation is:

- On hearing the fire alarm proceed to the nearest fire exit in an orderly manner. (Use break glass to exit if door is locked)
- Assemble at designated assembly points.
- Respond loudly and clearly as the Roll Call is carried out.
- Return to work in an orderly manner when advised. (Do not re-enter the building while the alarm is still sounding.)

First Aid facilities are available for the treatment of minor accidents. If you have an injury however small, you must report it immediately to your Supervisor/Manager who will arrange for the necessary treatment. All accidents/incidents must be recorded on the relevant Accident/Incident Form. Common sense should be used and the following requirements observed:

- Do not use broken or damaged equipment, but report them to your Supervisor/Manager to be replaced.
- Do not neglect any cut or injury however trivial it may seem.

Absence:

Employees absent from work without prior permission must notify the company within 2 hours of their scheduled starting time. All absences other than certified illness, compassionate, annual or written leave-of-absence approved by management, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the procedures outlined.

An employee absent through illness or injury for more than three consecutive working days must provide a doctor's certificate not later than the third day of absence. This certificate must cover the period of illness and contain a declaration as to when the employee will be fit to resume normal duties.

In the case of prolonged illness or injury, or a series of intermittent illnesses, the company reserves the right to have the employee examined by a doctor of its choice.

Hygiene:

The highest standards of hygiene must be maintained at all times. All employees must comply with company requirements with regard to hygiene standards.

Tobacco Policy:

Smoking is both a health hazard and a fire hazard. The company is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for employees. The company is concerned about the substantial and growing evidence on the adverse effects of passive smoking on health and in the interests of all staff has limited smoking to designated smoking areas. These restrictions also apply to visitors and contractors.

Alcohol & Drugs:

Consumption of alcoholic beverages or possession of opened alcoholic beverage containers on company premises at any time is strictly prohibited and may lead to immediate dismissal. To ensure a safe and healthy working environment, The company prohibits the distribution, possession, use or sale of any illegal drug and or the abuse of legal drugs. Any violation of the policy will result in dismissal.

It is Company policy that reasonable measures are taken to ensure that drug or alcohol abuse by employees at work or on Company business does not jeopardise the safety of employees. These measures include prohibition of substance abuse on the job, reasonable suspicion substance abuse testing and corrective action up to and including dismissal for employees who violate this policy.

The law imposes significant obligations on the Company to ensure a safe system of work both under statute and at common law. In addition, under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 it is the legal duty of every employee to ensure that he or she is not under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that he or she is in such a state as to endanger his or her own safety, health or welfare at work, or that of any other person. The possession, use or supply of scheduled drugs (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Act (1984)) by any employee is strictly prohibited unless prescribed by a duly qualified, registered medical practitioner. Possession or consumption of scheduled drugs constitutes gross misconduct, resulting in summary dismissal.

The unauthorised use and/or abuse of alcohol by any employee is strictly prohibited and constitutes gross misconduct, resulting in summary dismissal. The use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform their job effectively and the employee poses no danger to other individuals in the workplace.

E-Mail and Internet Use:

Electronic mail enables the company to communicate promptly and efficiently with customers and suppliers. While e-mail brings many benefits to the company in terms of its communications, it also brings risks to the company. For this reason, it is necessary for the company to set down specific rules for the use of e-mail and internet within the company.

Every employee has a responsibility to maintain the company's image, to use electronic resources in a productive manner and to avoid placing the company at risk of legal liability based on their use. E-mail is not to be used for private purposes and should not be used for any purpose other than company business.

The Company provides access to the internet which enables staff to obtain information specific to their role within the company. Employees requiring access to the internet will need the approval of management. Internet connections are intended to support company business or the professional development of employees. General internet access will only be provided with the permission of management.

Confidentiality:

Employees must be required not to divulge secrets or any information, which is regarded as confidential by the company or any associated companies or their business during

or after your employment, except in the proper course of your employment or as required by law.

You may not remove any documents or things belonging to the company or which contain any confidential information from the Company's premises at any time without proper advance authorisation.

You must return to the Company upon request and, in any event, upon the termination of your employment, all documents and things belonging to the Company or which contain or refer to any confidential information and which are in your possession or under your control.

Resignation and Termination:

An employee may terminate his/her employment by giving notice as per the terms and conditions outlined in the contract of employment. The company reserves the right to pay the appropriate payment in lieu of notice and may require the employee not to work the notice period.

The minimum period of notice to be given to an employee depends on the length of the employee's computable service.

Notice to an employee will be in accordance with the minimum notice and terms of employment acts 1973 to 2001 as follows.

Length of Service	Notice
13 Weeks to Less Than 2 Years	1 Week
2 Years To Less Than 5 Years	2 Weeks
5 Years To Less Than 10 Years	4 Weeks
10 Years To Less Than 15 Years	6 Weeks
More Than 15 Years	8 Weeks

Lay-Off/Short-Time:

While it is the Company's intention to provide continuity of employment, there may be circumstances outside the company's control which necessitates short-time working or lay-off. Should the need arise to put staff on short time or lay them off, the company will give as much notice as is reasonable in the circumstances. Employees will only be paid for actual hours worked during such periods.

Redundancy:

It is recognised that circumstances may arise which leave the Company with no alternative but to declare redundancies.

Where employees are made redundant, the prime consideration will be to protect the employment of as many people as possible, consistent with maintaining a fully efficient operation. Therefore, selection will be on retaining key employees required to maintain an efficient operation. All else being equal, a policy of last-in, first-out will apply. Should the need for redundancy arise, appropriate consultation with employees will take place.

Leave & Benefits

Annual Leave:

Annual Leave will be as per the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997. The Company has the discretion to nominate up to 5 working days in each calendar year, upon which employees will be required to take a day's holiday. Generally these nominated days fall during the Christmas shut down period. The company also has the discretion to nominate operational shut down periods during which an employee may be required to take annual leave.

Employees will be given reasonable notice of any shut down periods. The nominated days are normally set by the company at the beginning of the calendar year.

Holidays must be taken in the calendar year in which they are due. At management's discretion, an employee may be allowed to carry over days into the following calendar year.

Employees are also entitled to nine public holidays per year. These days are as follows:

1. New Year's Day
2. St Patrick's Day
3. Easter Monday
4. May Bank Holiday
5. June Bank Holiday
6. August Bank Holiday
7. October Bank Holiday
8. Christmas Day
9. St. Stephens Day

Scheduled holidays are agreed between management and employees, subject to the business needs of the company.

Compassionate Leave:

Compassionate leave days are at the discretion of the company. In all cases of personal tragedy, please inform management who will help arrange your absence from work. You are allowed up to three days to attend to personal affairs following the death of an immediate family member. An immediate family member is defined as; mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, child, grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law and sister in-law

Maternity Leave:

Employees who request a leave of absence due to pregnancy are entitled to twenty six weeks' statutory Maternity Leave during which a social welfare benefit is available (subject to PRSI contributions) and sixteen weeks unpaid leave in accordance with the Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act of 2004.

Absence from work while on Maternity Leave or additional Maternity Leave will not be treated as part of any other leave entitlement, such as sick leave or annual leave. Employees maintain their public holiday entitlements under the Organisation of Working Time Act.

Those employed under a fixed term contract are also protected by the Act, except where such a fixed term expires in the normal course while an employee is absent under the Act, the protection ceases on the expiry of the contract.

Employees must notify the company of pregnancy as early as possible so a risk assessment of the work area can be carried out. Be assured the information will be handled discreetly and confidentially.

An employee, who is pregnant, has recently given birth or who is breastfeeding, will not be placed in any job that is a risk to her Health & Safety or that of her child. If such a risk exists the company will remove the risk, re-assign the employee or place her on Health & Safety leave.

There are two Breastfeeding Arrangements in place.

Option 1 allows an Employee who is breastfeeding to reduce her hours by 1 hour per day for the purposes of breastfeeding other than in the workplace.

Option 2 allows an employee who is breastfeeding, to work breaks equivalent to 1 hour per day for the purposes of breastfeeding in the workplace.

The Company reserves the right to refuse payment for time-off to Employees where there is an abuse of this procedure, and any such abuses will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

State Maternity Benefit:

Employees must apply for state maternity benefit at least 6 weeks before they intend to start maternity leave. Complete form MB10, available from the Department of Social and Family Affairs or from the Department's website, <http://www.welfare.ie>. Before sending the form MB10 to the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Finance Department needs to complete a section of the form.

Please contact the Finance Department prior to sending them the form and allow adequate time for this section to be completed. Please note that from July 2013, maternity benefit is taxable.

Paternity Leave:

Fathers of the newborn children are entitled to 3 days paid leave to be taken within 30 days of the birth.

Parental Leave:

Parental Leave provides for unpaid leave from work for parents to look after their young children to a maximum age of 8 years. All employees who have completed one year's continuous service on the date the parental leave is due to commence are entitled to 14 weeks unpaid Parental Leave.

An employee must give written notice to the Company of their intention to take parental leave, not later than 6 weeks before the commencement of the leave. Employees may be required to provide evidence of his or her entitlement to parental leave. Once notification of the intention to take parental Leave has been made, a confirmation document must be prepared which must include:

- The date on which the leave will commence
- The duration of the leave
- The manner in which the leave will be taken
- The signatures of employer and employee.

Management may decide to postpone the parental leave, for up to 6 months, if satisfied that granting the leave would have a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the business. Parental Leave may be terminated if there are reasonable grounds to believe that it is being used for a purpose other than taking care of the child concerned.

Force Majeure Leave:

Employees may avail of Force Majeure Leave with pay for unplanned, extreme and urgent family reasons, where an immediate family member suffers an illness or injury and the employee's immediate presence with the injured party is absolutely indispensable.

Force majeure leave is to a maximum of 3 days in a consecutive 12-month period and a maximum of 5 days in a 36 month period. Absence for part of a day is counted as one day of Force Majeure Leave. Family members are defined as:

1. Child/Adoptive Child
2. Spouse or partner (only where partner is living with employee)
3. Brother/Sister
4. Parent/Grandparent

Force Majeure Leave will only apply in cases where the employee's personal presence is indispensable. If an alternative person (other family member, friend, babysitter) can be found to deal with the situation then this will not apply.

Carer's Leave:

Carer's leave will be granted in accordance with the terms and provisions of the Carer's Leave Act 2001.

Relevant Person:

A care recipient will be considered a "Relevant Person" if they need continual supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day in connection with normal bodily functions or need continual supervision in order to avoid danger to themselves or others.

Employees will be considered eligible to apply for Carer's leave if:

1. They have completed 12 months continuous employment with the company.
2. The person they wish to look after is considered a "Relevant Person"
3. The Employee will be providing full time care to the relevant person.
4. The Employee has provided the company with a decision from a deciding officer from the department of Social, Community and Family Affairs.

The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs will be responsible for ascertaining the validity of applications to avail of Carer's Leave. Leave will be taken in either one continuous period of 104 weeks, in one or more periods, the total of which amounts to no more than 104 weeks.

An Employee who proposes to avail of Carer's Leave must give written notice that they will be taking leave not later than six weeks before the date they are due to leave. This notice must include:

- The proposal to take Carer's leave.
- The date when Leave will commence.
- The manner in which it is intended to take the leave.
- Confirmation that an application has been made to the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs that the person to be cared for is a "Relevant Person".

An Employee while on Carer's Leave will be regarded as still being in Employment and none of their rights relating to employment will be affected.

Adoptive Leave:

This policy covers employees who are adopting mothers, a sole male adopter or adopting fathers working in the company where the adopting mother has died.

The employee must give the company at least four weeks written notice of their intention to take Adoptive Leave and also forward to the company any documentation confirming the adoption and specifying the expected week of adoption. The employee must give the company in writing at least four weeks' notice of their intention to return to work. If they do not notify the company of this intention, the company may presume that they are not returning to work. They are entitled to return to their normal or equivalent job role where reasonably practicable.

Entitlements

- is entitled to 24 consecutive weeks Adoptive Leave.
- During Adoptive Leave, the employee is deemed to be in employment and their employment rights with the exception of remuneration are preserved as if they were present at work.
- Absence from work while on Adoptive Leave or additional Adoptive Leave will not be treated as part of any other leave entitlement, such as Sick Leave or Annual Leave. Employees will maintain their public holiday entitlements under the Organisation of Working Time Act, by virtue of the fact that they remain an employee, which (apart from non-regular part-time workers) is the only qualification for public holiday entitlements.

Additional Adoptive Leave

Adopting mothers and sole male adopters are also entitled to take additional Adoptive Leave of up to 16 weeks commencing immediately after the end of the Adoptive Leave. In the case of a foreign adoption, all or part of the additional Adoptive Leave can be taken before the placement of the child.

- The employee must inform the Company in writing of their intention to take the 16 week's additional leave not later than four weeks before the end of the 24-week leave period.
- The employee must give the company in writing, at least four weeks' notice of their intention to return to work.

Payment during Leave

The amount payable will be 80% of current P60 or Sick Pay rate, whichever is higher. The employee must apply to the Department of Social Welfare for their Maternity allowance two weeks before their Adoptive Leave commences. Payments will be made from the commencement of the leave period, for a maximum of twenty four (24) weeks. Failure to apply for, or return Social Welfare cheques due under the State Maternity Scheme the Company will be entitled to proceed for the recovery of any Adoptive payments made. From July 2013, adoptive leave payments are taxable.

State Adoptive Benefit

Employees must apply for State Adoptive Benefit 5 weeks before starting Adoptive Leave. Complete form AB1, available from the Department of Social and Family Affairs or from the Department's website, <http://www.welfare.ie>. Before sending the form AB1 to the Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Finance Department needs to complete a section of the form. Please contact the Finance Department prior to sending the form and allow adequate time for this section to be completed.

Jury Duty:

Time off with full pay is provided to employees who are required to serve on a jury. To effect payment, please present to the Company a certificate of attendance from the authority presiding over the jurors. If court sessions do not continue throughout the entire day, you are expected to return to work immediately.

A member of the public called for jury service does not receive any payment of any nature from the State for carrying out their civic duty and pursuant to Section 29 of the Juror's Act, 1976 employers have a statutory obligation to pay an employee who is called to service on a jury

An employee who is required to attend court as a witness will be required to take the time as either unpaid leave or vacation. If the court sessions do not continue throughout the entire day, the employee is expected to return to work

Pension Policy and Plans:

Membership of the plan is available once an employee is over the age of 21 and upon successful completion of their probationary period employees can become members of the company's retirement savings plan.

Training and Professional Development:

Training and Development is a management responsibility and is an ongoing process aimed at fulfilling organisational needs and individual growth. A company should ensure that all employees appointed to a job are correctly selected, inducted and trained. Employees are obliged to co-operate fully with company training programmes.

Company Policy endeavors to provide career opportunities for employees whenever possible and to encourage employees who wish to progress. Promotion should be at the discretion of management and will be based on suitability of the position to be filled.

Where possible a company will make every effort to facilitate any employee who wishes to participate in further education and training opportunities to enhance their skills, career development and occupational mobility.

Disciplinary Procedures:

Disciplinary Procedures:

This disciplinary procedure is intended to be used in situations where an employee's work or conduct at work is unsatisfactory. In many instances, disciplinary matters can be dealt with on an informal basis by the supervisor discussing the situation with the employee concerned and agreeing any necessary corrective action.

Inevitably, there will be times when disciplinary matters need to be formalised. When such situations arise, it is of the utmost importance that the formal disciplinary procedure is followed.

Purpose of the Procedure:

In order to provide for the wellbeing of staff, a company may require a number of systems and procedures. A disciplinary procedure is essential to assist the company to operate effectively and create a fair, efficient and caring working environment.

The first aim of this procedure is to ensure consistency in the manner and circumstances in which disciplinary action will be taken. The second aim is to make clear the rights and responsibilities of employer and employees when such action is being taken. The procedure will apply to all employees whether full-time or part-time, permanent or temporary, with the principle of ensuring fair treatment for all.

Operation of the Procedure:

The work rules and standards of conduct at **[name]** are important, and a Company should regard them seriously. All employees are urged to become familiar with these rules and standards. In addition, employees are expected to follow the rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting the Company's business.

Please note that any employee who deviates from these rules and standards will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

While not intended to list all the forms of behaviour that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of rule infractions or misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

- Stealing from the organisation or a client;
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace.
- In the course of employment, inflicting bodily injury on another person;
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace;
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of company-owned or customer-owned property;
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct;
- Violation of Health & Safety regulation;
- Smoking in the workplace;

- Word, gestures or actions contravening the principles set out in the Equal Opportunities Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Excessive absenteeism without leave or reasonable excuse.
- Failure to meet conditions governing hours of duty.
- Using company equipment for purposes other than business.
- Lack of cleanliness which fellow employees might reasonably consider to be offensive;
- Breach of confidence not amounting to gross misconduct;
- Failing to perform duties to an acceptable standard where the duties are normally performed by that person or are known to be in the capacity of that person; and
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct.

Informal Procedure:

When a disciplinary matter arises, the supervisor/manager will seek to establish the facts promptly before recollections fade, taking into account the statements of any available witnesses. After establishing the facts, the supervisor/manager may consider that there is no need to resort to the formal procedure and that it is sufficient to talk the matter over informally with the employee.

Formal Procedure:

As soon as a complaint or allegation of misconduct has been made against an employee, the supervisor/manager will initiate an investigation into this complaint to form an initial judgement on the facts of the case. The employee will be informed in writing of the nature of the complaint or allegation (with his/her representative) and any witnesses will be interviewed to gather any information pertaining to this. Following a full investigation, the manager/supervisor will make a decision as to whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

In the event of a breach of the disciplinary rules constituting gross misconduct, the supervisor/manager may take the decision to suspend, with or without pay, during the initial period of the investigation. The completion of the investigation shall be followed by the reinstatement of the employee, if it is decided that no disciplinary action is required, or by arrangement of a disciplinary interview to consider the case.

Following an initial investigation, it may transpire that due to certain circumstances, disciplinary action against an employee would be inappropriate. In such cases the supervisor/manager may need to provide support and guidance to enable them to improve without the need to invoke formal procedures.

Disciplinary Interview:

If it becomes clear that formal disciplinary action is appropriate, a disciplinary interview will be arranged in line with the following procedure.

1. The employee must receive a formal letter requesting attendance at the disciplinary interview, clearly stating the nature of the complaint against him/her. The employee will be given 5 working days' notice of the interview and be offered the opportunity to have representation.
2. The person conducting the interview shall explain to the employee (and their representative, if appropriate) the procedure for the interview, and that a decision on disciplinary action will be taken once all the facts have been presented.

3. The nature of the complaint and any supporting evidence will be then outlined to the employee. Any witnesses or other members of staff will be interviewed independently to corroborate this information as appropriate.
4. The employee concerned should then be allowed to state their case and call in any other members of staff to the interview to substantiate this. The manager/supervisor may ask further questions of the employee or any other participant at the interview in order to arrive at the full facts.
5. If, during these discussions, new facts emerge, the manager/supervisor may decide that further investigation is required and, if so, adjourn the interview and reconvene when such investigations have been completed.
6. It is the responsibility of the person hearing the interview to decide the appropriate penalty. In deciding the appropriate action to be taken, the following will be taken into account.

- The gravity of the offence.
- The penalty applied in similar cases in the past.
- The individual's disciplinary record.
- Any mitigating circumstances
- Whether the proposed penalty is reasonable in all circumstances.

1. The disciplinary interview will then be reconvened to:

- Inform the employee of the decision and disciplinary penalty if any
- Explain the employees right of appeal
- In the case of a warning, explain what improvement is expected, how long it will last and what the consequences of failure to improve may be.

2. This decision will be confirmed in writing. If an improved level of performance or conduct is expected over a particular timescale, the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing this will be made clear to the employee.

Following a disciplinary interview and consideration of all the relevant facts, the following courses of action will be considered. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, action can be taken at **any** of the stages during an initial disciplinary hearing:

No Disciplinary Action:

The manager/supervisor considers the complaints against the employee are false or unproven or of such a minor nature that no disciplinary action should be taken. All reference to the investigation will be removed from the employees' file. The employee will receive a letter confirming that no action will be taken.

Verbal Warning:

The manager/supervisor considers that, on account of the facts presented during the course of the investigation and disciplinary interview, the complaints against the employee are upheld but the nature of this misconduct is of a sufficiently minor nature that a verbal warning is most appropriate.

The employee will receive a plan for improving their work performance and/or conduct. All reference to the warning will be removed from the employee's file after 6 months, provided the employee's conduct and performance have improved.

Written Warning:

A written warning should be given if the employee's performance or conduct remains unsatisfactory during the period set out in the verbal warning, or the misconduct or poor performance of which the employee is guilty is of a more serious nature.

Such a warning should be confirmed in writing to the employee and will detail the complaints against the employee, the improvements required and the expected time scale. It will also indicate that further disciplinary action will be taken if the employee fails to improve his/her behaviour. The employee will be informed of his/her right of appeal.

Final Written Warning:

A final warning may be given to an employee who persists with conduct or performance for which they have previously been given a written warning or for conduct of a more serious nature regardless of whether previous warning have been issued.

A final written warning will be confirmed in writing to the employee and will detail the complaint and the improvements in conduct/performance required and if such improvement is not forthcoming, further disciplinary action, including dismissal, may take place.

Dismissal:

If all previous warnings produce no improvement in an employee's conduct/performance, the decision to dismiss the employee may be taken.

Following a disciplinary interview at which a decision to dismiss an employee has been taken, a letter confirming the reasons for dismissal and the effective date of the dismissal will be sent. Employees may receive either notice in accordance with their contract of employment or, if more appropriate, payment in lieu of notice.

Where a disciplinary hearing finds that an employee has committed an act of gross misconduct he/she may be dismissed without notice.

Grievance/Disputes Procedure:

Grievances will occur in the normal course of interaction in any organisation or workplace. It is accepted that failure to provide a procedure to deal adequately with these grievances, as they arise, will inevitably led to disputes affecting not only the aggrieved party but all those employed in the organisation/workplace.

It is the company's intention to settle amicably, at all times, any disagreements between it and individual employees or groups of employees, or between employees themselves.

All grievances will be dealt without undue delay and at the earliest possible stage of this procedure. A senior member of management will ensure that all grievances will be dealt with consistently and fairly having regard to:

- Company Policy
- Custom and Practice within the company
- Labour Court and Third Party precedents.

Stage 1:

You should first raise the matter with your Supervisor/Manager who will make every effort to solve the problem as quickly as possible. The matter will be discussed informally by the employee or employees concerned, with their immediate supervisor and agree any corrective actions.

Stage 2:

If you feel the problem has not been solved within a reasonable time or if you feel the solution is unsatisfactory, the matter will be referred to senior management. A meeting will take place within seven working days.

Stage 3:

Should the matter remain unresolved, it will be referred to the Labour Relations Commission or for a hearing by a rights commissioner. If still unresolved, it will be referred to the Labour court for investigation, or, to, the Employment Appeals Tribunal, under the relevant acts.

During the period in which the above procedure is being followed, no form of industrial action designed to bring pressure to bear on either party will take place, until all avenues as prescribed have been followed by both parties and at least 14 days have elapsed following the issuing of a Labour Court Recommendation or a determination of the Employment appeals tribunal.

In the event of any issues arising which cannot immediately be disposed of and which are being processed in accordance with the above disputes procedure, normal working-under protest if necessary will continue, pending a settlement.

Bullying & Harassment Policy and Procedure:

Purpose:

The company/organisation is committed to providing all of its employees with a work environment free from bullying/harassment and sexual harassment. The aim of this policy is outline what constitutes bullying and harassment and what action the company will take in dealing with an offence of this nature.

Scope:

This policy is applicable to all employees (temporary and permanent) both in the workplace and at associated events such as meetings, conferences, and Company functions whether on or off site.

It also applies to contractors, customers and other business contacts with which employees might reasonably expect to come into contact within the course of their employment.

Policy:

The company/organisation acknowledges the right of all employees to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect and to a work environment free from bullying and harassment. Every employee has an obligation to be aware of the effects their behaviour has on others.

Any instances of bullying /harassment must be dealt with in an effective and efficient manner.

Cases where the behaviour is proved to be repeated and consistent causing unnecessary stress and anxiety will be considered as gross misconduct and must be subject to disciplinary procedures up to an including dismissal.

It is imperative that all employees respect the dignity of every colleague and be conscious of behaviour which may cause offence.

Definition:

Bullying/Harassment are defined as any form of repeated, unwelcome and unacceptable conduct that can be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidation.

An individual can be harassed on grounds of race, religious belief, national ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability or membership of the traveller community.

The Harassment can include conduct offensive to a reasonable person e.g. oral or written slurs, physical contact, gestures, jokes, displaying pictures, flags/emblems, graffiti or other material which state or imply prejudicial attitudes which are offensive to fellow employees.

Other examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Personal insults and name calling.
- Persistent unjustified criticism and sarcasm.
- Public or private humiliation
- Shouting at employees in public and/or private sneering.
- Instantaneous rage, often over trivial issues.
- Unfair delegation of duties and responsibilities.
- Setting impossible deadlines.
- Unnecessary work interference.
- Making it difficult for employees to have access to necessary information.
- Aggression
- Not giving credit for work contribution.
- Continuously refusing reasonable requests without good reason.
- Intimidation and threats in general.

Sexual Harassment can be defined as conduct towards another person that is sexual in nature or has a sexual dimension and is unwelcome to the recipient.

Examples of this type of Harassment include.

- Sexual Gestures
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, calendars or sending suggestive or phonographic correspondence (including e-mail)
- Unwelcome sexual comments or jokes
- Unwelcome physical contact such as pinching, unnecessary touching etc.

The above examples are not exhaustive and only serve as a guideline to employees. Each case will be taken in isolation and dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Complaints Procedure

This policy adopts a two tiered approach (the informal and formal procedures) in dealing with issues of Bullying and Harassment in the workplace.

Informal Procedure:

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints of bullying/harassment are dealt with informally whenever possible. This approach is likely to produce solutions, which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality.

Thus, in the first instance a person who believes he/she is the subject of harassment/bullying should ask the person responsible to stop the offensive behaviour.

The person responsible should also be informed of the Company's bullying/harassment policy and advised that a further occurrence of this nature will result in a formal complaint

In an instance where a person is unsure whether the behaviour constitutes a form of bullying/harassment, he/she should discuss this with a supervisor or manager.

It is recognised that it may not always be practical to use the informal procedure particularly where the bullying/harassment is of a serious nature or where the person(s) concerned are at different levels in the company. In such instances, the employee should use the formal procedure.

Formal Procedure:

Where a formal complaint is being made, the employee should contact his/her supervisor/manager as soon as possible. An employee making a complaint will be required to put his/her allegation in writing.

In the interests of natural justice, the alleged harasser will be made aware of the nature of the complaint, his or her right to representation can be invoked and the alleged harasser will be given every opportunity to rebut the allegations made.

While it is desirable to maintain utmost confidentiality, once an investigation begins it may be necessary to interview other employees. If so, the importance of confidentiality will be stressed to them and any statements taken will be circulated to both the complainant and the alleged harasser for their comments before any conclusion is reached in the investigation.

When the investigation has been completed both parties will be informed as to whether or not the complaint has been upheld.

All complaints will be treated seriously, confidentially and dealt with as soon as is practicable. Strict confidentiality and proper discretion will be maintained as far as is possible to safeguard both parties from innuendo and harmful gossip.

A record of all relevant discussions which take place during the course of the investigation will be retained on file.

Action Post Investigation:

Where a complaint is upheld, a disciplinary hearing will take place in line with the company's/organisation disciplinary policy.

Should a case of bullying/harassment be proven then the company/organisation will take appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Records of any warning for bullying/harassment will remain on an employee's file and will be used if any further allegations of a similar nature occur in the future.

Regular checks will be made by the person responsible for investigating the complaint to ensure that the bullying/harassment have stopped and that there is no victimisation.

Retaliation of any kind against an employee for complaining or taking part in an investigation concerning bullying/harassment is a serious disciplinary offence.

In cases where it is established that a person made a false allegation against an employee, then he/she will face serious misconduct charges resulting in an immediate disciplinary hearing.

Community Development

Introduction:

Community Development and the many organisations that fall into this category have one common purpose and that is, it gathers people together who have a common interest in either bettering themselves or making a difference in their community. This can encompass many different strands of activity whether it is educational, social or with the aim of helping others in the community who don't have a voice for whatever reason. The past 15 years in Ireland have seen some achievements in the area of community development.

Community Development-; A Way Forward:

Strength is found in collaboration with others, and it would seem that community development will gain from further collective action, alliance building and shared analysis. Such an approach will help to rebalance policy making in favour of those who are marginalised. It will also help to make individual groups and organisations less vulnerable to the potential withdrawal of funds.

Investment in the Acquisition of Skills:

To ensure the optimum impact of the voice and experience of community activists on policy making, continuous and systematic investment is required in the acquisition and development of the necessary skills knowledge and competencies, e.g.

- The development of community work skills, knowledge, principles and methods
- The development of strategies to enable empowerment, participation and representation
- The building of management, organisational and programme development skills
- Training in policy development, social analysis, influencing strategies and lobbying
- The acquisition of communication, networking, media and PR skills
- Access to technical skills and knowledge, including research, evaluation, legal issues and information technology
- The agreement of and adherence to quality standards in relation to the way work is carried out.

Building Relationships with Political System:

The development of models of participative democracy that can strengthen the policy influence of those living in poverty can complement and deepen representative democracy. Government is where policy decisions are taken and the Dáil is where they are enacted.

A Balance between Political Action and Service Delivery:

The White Paper Supporting Voluntary Activity describes community development thus;

.....an interactive process of knowledge and action designed to change conditions which marginalise communities and groups and is underpinned by a vision of self-help and community self-reliance.

Current community development practice is struggling to maintain a balance between a focus on process, where 'the way the work is carried out is as important as the programme of

development being undertaken' and the development and delivery of services to communities. It is important that this balance is found.

The development of the voice of people who experience exclusion, who live on low incomes, in poorly resourced communities, is a key to the achievement of effective social change. But the development of the quality of their daily lives is also important. They need to have access to reasonably paid work; to live in a community where they feel safe; to have accessible and competent support to ensure their inclusion.

Achieving this balance is challenging and is made difficult by the demands of programme and service management and the related 'bureaucratisation' of community development organisations.

Positive changes have occurred, and even if they fell short of the expectations of those seeking radical social change, they would not have happened without the identification of issues by the community development sector.

However, the partnership consensus models involving the sector have failed to deliver the social changes that might have been expected in the continuing strong economy. While community development has empowered people, it has failed to change the balance of power in their favour.

The Place of Policy Work in Community Development

Community Development and Policy Work:

This section emphasises the fact that involvement in public decision-making is fundamental to community development work. It outlines the four levels at which community groups in Ireland are already involved in influencing this process.

The Place of Policy Work in Community Development:

Policy work is an essential element of community development practice at all levels. The principles and processes at the core of community development as an approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion distinguish it from other forms of work in and with local communities.

What is Public Policy?

Policy is a statement of values, aims and objectives that a government, a community organisation, a political party, or a private corporation wishes to realise, together with strategies and instruments for achieving them. Most community organisations have already engaged in a policy-making process, for example to decide and define their aims and objectives and the general principles upon which the organisation is guided in its activities. These decisions are incorporated in the organisation's Memorandum and Articles of Association or Constitution

Public Policy is commonly understood as the combination of basic decisions, laws, regulatory measures, commitment's, courses of action and funding priorities that are made, in public's name, by those who hold or affect government positions of authority.

In most instances these arguments result from interactions among those who demand change, those who make decisions and those who are affected by the policy in question. Many

community organisations are actively involved in this process, in various ways and at various levels.

- **At Local Level**, groups are actively engaged in trying to get much needed services delivered locally or delivered more appropriately, or attempting to refocus regeneration initiatives so that these can have a sustainable impact on their currently disadvantaged communities. Many are engaged in local development partnerships, where they try to sharpen the partnership's focus on the social and economic inclusion of particularly marginalised groups. Many are engaged in encouraging the local development partnership to take on a more active policy-influencing role.
- **At National Level**, community organisations in the Community Platform are actively engaged in trying to influence policy that will, for example, by using a variety of means to get their message across whether be it through the media at local or national level through their national umbrella organisation or by utilising the political process to lobby and gain access to key decision makers. For most organisations the route to Europe is one that they would not countenance unless all avenues at national level have been either blocked or exhausted. Most local organisations can never see themselves on the international stage influencing or defining policy as invariably they do not have the financial resources to engage at this level.

How is Public Policy Made?

This section stresses the importance of community organisations becoming involved in the complex process of decision-making, and outlines the actual stages of that process.

Public policy is generally made by government, or initiated by government. Policy development is one of the key functions of government. The structure of government and public administration very much determines how policies are formulated and implemented. In Ireland the system of government is highly centralised. Policy design is primarily at the national level. Implementation is handed over to the local administrations and they deliver services within the overall national policy framework.

Public policy development and decision-making, however, involves a complex interplay of interests and expertise between:

- Ministers
- Key civil servants in government departments
- Politicians/political interest
- A whole range of diverse interest groups, e.g. local or regional interests, international corporate interests, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), small and big business, cultural and religious interests

The policy development and decision-making process also often engages semi-state agencies, local authorities/government, the social partners, expert working groups, and consultative, advisory and monitoring bodies established by government.

Influencing decision-making successfully involves working with many of these different groups and bodies.

Decisions taken at EU level, impact on public policy in Ireland, the 'Europeanisation' of policy across a wide range of government responsibilities results in modern governance becoming more co-ordinated across the Member States. However, some aspects of state responsibilities, including the eradication of poverty and social exclusion, are not within the competence of EU institutions.

The Importance of Having Your Say:

Policy-making can be a complex process, but there are many reasons why community organisations need to engage in this process and integrate policy into their planning. These include the following;

- Power imbalances exist in the decision-making arenas and, as community organisations are very well aware, the farther you are from decision-making process, the more difficult it is to have your voice and concerns heard and addressed. The genuine participation of marginalised groups can address power imbalances and advance social inclusion.
- When the voice of those rooted in knowledge and experience on the ground is brought into policy-making process, this allows local-level reality to inform policy-making and improve the quality of the decision-making. It can result in more relevant, realistic and focused programmes to address those deficiencies. It can identify appropriate roles for the community organisations in delivering effective programmes. Communities can monitor the implementation and evaluate and draw lessons about the impact of particular policies on their special interests.

Stages in the Policy-Making Process:

There are a number of stages in the policy-making process, e.g.

- Policy design and formulation
- Policy implementation
- Policy review and evaluation.

Community organisations are often engaged at all of these stages in the policy cycle. Policy-making, however, is not always a clear-cut process. Problems may be quickly identified but sometimes solutions may only emerge over time. A decision taken at the end may not be quite what was expected. Sometimes policy is made by the non-decision of government, decisions can be shelved, or a policy decision is taken but the systems and budget are not put in place to ensure its proper implementation.

It is generally accepted that there are a number of basic steps in policy making.

There needs to be an understanding of the problem to be addressed:

- Defining the problem
- Resolving tensions
- Identifying stakeholders and deciding their roles

Solutions need to be developed:

- Collecting information and evidence
- Appointment of committees, task forces, working groups etc.
- Consulting widely, working with other involved individuals and organisations
- Developing options/choices
- Estimating the cost of each option

Policy requires a decision/non-decision by government.

- Implementing solutions
- Communicating policy
- Supporting service providers (training, advice)
- Testing different options

Testing success:

- Evaluating
- Adjusting to changes

Decide on the Strategy for Influencing Policy:

There are many to influence policy. Some may be more effective than others, depending on the issues the organisation wants to advance.

Depending on the circumstances, groups and organisations might try:

- Engaging in social partnership arrangements
- Low-key discussions, e.g. with key officials in local authorities, government departments
- Policy submissions
- Advocacy campaigns
- Political lobbying
- Media campaigns
- Protests and demonstrations

Or they may try to use a combination of all these. The exact nature of the issue being addressed, the openness or not of the policy makers who have actual decision-making responsibility, the human and financial resources available to the organisation, timeliness and other factors should influence their choice of strategy. The following is an elaboration on a number of these strategies.

(a) Engaging In Local Social Partnership Arrangements:

If the organisation decided that engagement in local social partnership processes would help the organisation to achieve change, it needs to figure out the most appropriate arenas that that it wants to engage with. This would involve making choices that might be informed by the following:

- The role and remit of the local social partnership structures in the particular area
- Who is represented on each one
- How much time the organisation will need to give
- What kind of resources will be needed
- What kinds of resources are available to support the organisation's participation
- What the organisation wants to achieve
- What the organisation needs to do to get a place at the table
- What the organisation will do when it gets to the table
- The most appropriate person to represent the concerns of the organisation
- How the organisation will support that person

The next step is to make the case for participation and a place in the relevant fora, using the appropriate processes, i.e. nomination from a local platform election, etc.

Local Development Partnerships – These are partnership arrangements within which statutory agencies, representatives of the employer organisations, trade unions, farming organisations in rural areas, and the community organisations, along with designated locally elected representatives come together as partners and contribute their expertise to develop and implement a plan for integrated local social and economic development that is specifically focused on the social and economic inclusion of particularly named target groups.

(See website listing: www.pobal.ie)

Strategic Policy Committees – These are policy-oriented committees, whose role is to advise and assist the county/city council in the formulation and development of policy for the county in the areas in which the county council has specific duties, e.g. roads/infrastructure, cultural/heritage. It gives councillors an opportunity for full involvement in the policy-making process from the early stages, and it gives other interests, e.g. community, business, farming sectors, an opportunity to input into policy at local level

(b) Policy Submissions:

Organisations can suggest alternations or amendments to draft plans and policies that are presented by officials. They may also wish to make submissions in response to invitations by government departments, task forces, expert working groups, etc. They can draw on their experience and social analysis and present the reality of the everyday lives of local communities to inform the policy process.

Organisations may also engage in a consultation process pertaining to policy reviews. Networking with local community organisations and national networks can be very beneficial in keeping up-to-date on community sector campaigns, proposed policy developments, or proposed policy reviews so that they are in a position to respond.

To facilitate local communities to participate in and contribute to policy reviews, it is always helpful if a designated person (usually the community worker) prepares an overview of the policy in question and of the issues that have arisen in its implementation, along with a series of questions that the community can reflect on. These questions would be related to the policy's effectiveness, relevance in addressing needs and the adjustments etc. required to produce more positive outcomes.

To conduct a consultative process with the local community it will be important to prepare for the event with facilitators and note takers. The latter will have an important role in feeding back on these issues that are raised. The organisation should make it clear to the community that it will be making a submission and outline how it will try to influence developments. It should also commit to give feedback on progress.

What should go into a Policy Submission?

Information about the community organisation

- What the organisation does
- When it was established, how long it has been around
- The activities of the organisation

What the problem is (the view of the organisation)

- The organisation's view of its extent and nature
- The reputable and independent sources of information that the organisation relies on
- The negative consequences of the problem (pain, suffering, hardship)

What can be done about it?

- The various proposals under consideration (if any)
- What the organisation thinks should be done
- What the solution would look like
- The benefits of solving the problem
- The costs of not solving the problem
- The organisation's vision of the solution.

(c) Media Campaigns/Using the Media:

Community organisations wishing to influence policy know that media attention can intensify concern about an issue and can add considerable weight to their work in other areas to influence decision makers. The level of media interest in an issue has come to be seen as an indication of the level of public concern about an issue.

It is good practice for community organisations to develop good contact with a number of journalists in the local and regional print media, in local radio and indeed in national radio. As is the focus with all policy work, the purpose of engaging with the media is not just to raise awareness of the issue/problem, but also to ensure that policy makers feel obliged to respond and do something about the problem.

Organisations should try to ensure that the issue they want addresses is well aired in the media, that it is portrayed sympathetically, and that a climate of public opinion, which favours change, has been created. Representatives of the organisation should be well prepared with the facts of their case – the extent of the problem, the impact of the problem on the local communities, the cost of not doing anything about the problem. They should be able to outline what precisely should be done to address the problem and by whom. They should be confident and be ready for questions.

Remember local radio and local newspapers will be also interested in local responses to proposed policy development or policy reviews.

eTenders What are They?

Introduction:

For Community organisations who depend on Leader and other state funding. It is becoming more desirable that they should become familiar with the eTenders process as it provides a countrywide or EU wide shop window for the many companies offering services that maybe essential to your project. Simply eTenders is a government website that matches customers (community group) with service providers. Whether it is companies delivering feasibility studies to construction companies and all the different service providers necessary for the delivery of your project. Generally where there is an outlay of greater than €25,000 supported by state funding then the community group will have to follow the eTender process or engage the services of a competent professional who will manage this process for you.

Public Procurement Definition:

Public Procurement can be defined as the acquisition, whether under formal contract or not, of works, supplies and services by public bodies. It ranges from the purchase of routine supplies or services to formal tendering and placing contracts for large infrastructural projects by a wide and diverse range of contracting authorities. It is very important that the public procurement function is discharged honestly, fairly, and in a manner that secures best value for public money. Contracting authorities must be cost effective and efficient in the use of resources while upholding the highest standards of probity and integrity.

Procurement practices are subject to audit and scrutiny under the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 and Accounting Officers are publicly accountable for expenditure incurred. Management in Government Departments and Offices should ensure that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and, where there is a significant procurement function that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines.

In general, a competitive process carried out in an open, objective and transparent manner can achieve best value for money in public procurement. This is in line with EU Treaty principles and EU Directives on public procurement. Essential principles to be observed in conducting the procurement function; include non – discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, mutual recognition, proportionality, freedom to provide service and freedom of establishment. The Directives impose legal obligations on public bodies in regard to advertising and the use of objective tendering procedures for contracts above certain value thresholds.

Subsidised Contracts:

Most works and related services contracts awarded by a private entity, which are subsidised 50% or more by a public body, must be awarded in accordance with the EU Directives if they exceed the EU thresholds. It is the responsibility of the subsidising body to ensure that this provision is observed. For contracts below the EU thresholds funded or part-funded from public funds, awarded by private sector entities, the funding authority should ensure that they are awarded in accordance with the process set out in the flow diagram to the extent that this is practical and proportionate. Where appropriate, this requirement should be included among the conditions attached to the grant of funds to private sector entities.

Low Value Requirements:

For contracts or purchases below the EU threshold values and not part of a 'draw down' or framework contract, less formal procedures may be appropriate. For example:

supplies or services **less than €5,000** in value might be purchased on the basis of written quotes from one or more competitive suppliers; supplies or services contracts between **€5,000 and €25,000** in value might be awarded on the basis of responses to specifications sent by fax or email to at least three suppliers or service providers.

Values and procedures outlined above are indicative only and should be adapted as appropriate to suit the type of contracting authority and the nature and scale of the project. Reasons for procedures adopted, including procedures where a competitive process was not deemed appropriate, should be clearly recorded. *All contract award procedures should include a verifiable audit paper or electronic trail.*

Advertising:

Contracts **above €25,000** and up to the value of EU thresholds for advertising in OJEU (Official Journal of E.U.) not part of a 'draw down' or framework contract, should normally be advertised as part of a formal tendering process. Publication on the *etenders.gov.ie* website generally meets national advertising and publicity requirements and significantly reduces the need for expenditure on advertising. Notices can be placed by registering online. The site is a key reference point for potential suppliers and service providers and the service is currently provided at no cost to contracting authorities. It is also acceptable to supplement advertising by issuing details of a competition directly to particular suppliers or service providers after publication of notices.

If the number of suppliers in the market is unknown, or known to be relatively small, it is recommended that requirements below €50,000 be published on the website to ensure adequate competition, and allow new opportunities for suppliers and service providers.

Tax Clearance Certificates & Insurance:

All contractors need to have a current Tax Clearance Certificate & an appropriate level of Insurance cover.

Time for the Submission of Tenders:

For contracts below the EU thresholds there are no prescribed time limits but sufficient time must be allowed for preparation and submission of tenders. The complexity of a project and other relevant factors relating to the preparation of tenders should be taken into account.

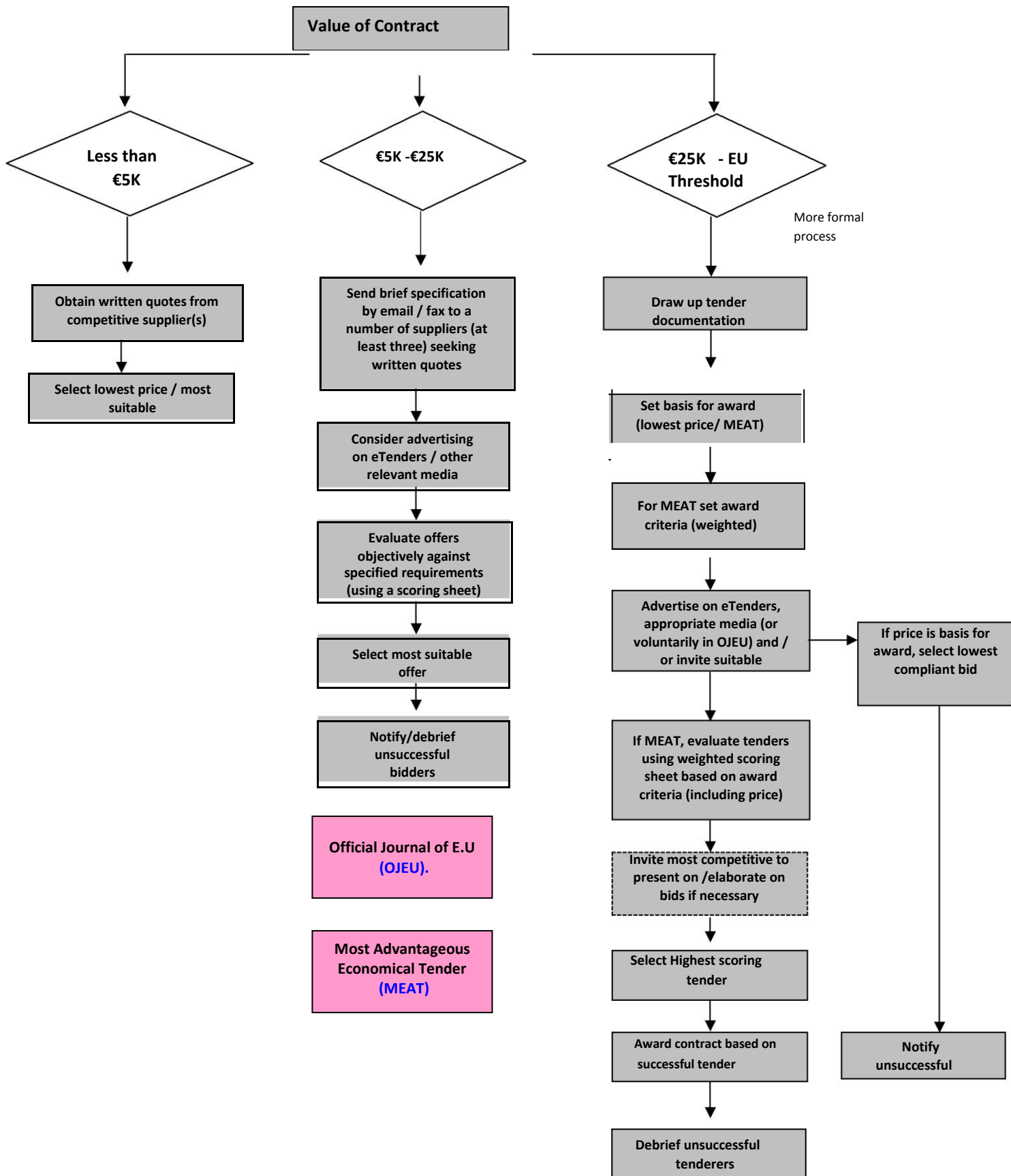
Request for Tenders (RFT)?

A sample RFT can be viewed on *www.etenders.gov.ie* Contract notices on the website will also have tender documentation attached which can be viewed for guidance.

Debriefing of Unsuccessful Tenderers:

At a minimum, unsuccessful candidates and tenderers should be informed of the outcome of their application or tender. It is good practice to give tenderers the reason for the unsuccessful bid by reference to their relative performance under the relevant evaluation criteria used in the competition, for example, uncompetitive on price. Feedback by telephone should normally be sufficient for smaller procurements. For larger contracts a debriefing meeting should be offered to unsuccessful tenderers to outline the strengths or weakness of their tender against the *evaluation criteria*. Two officers of the committee should be present for this meeting and proceedings should be documented in case of issues arising.

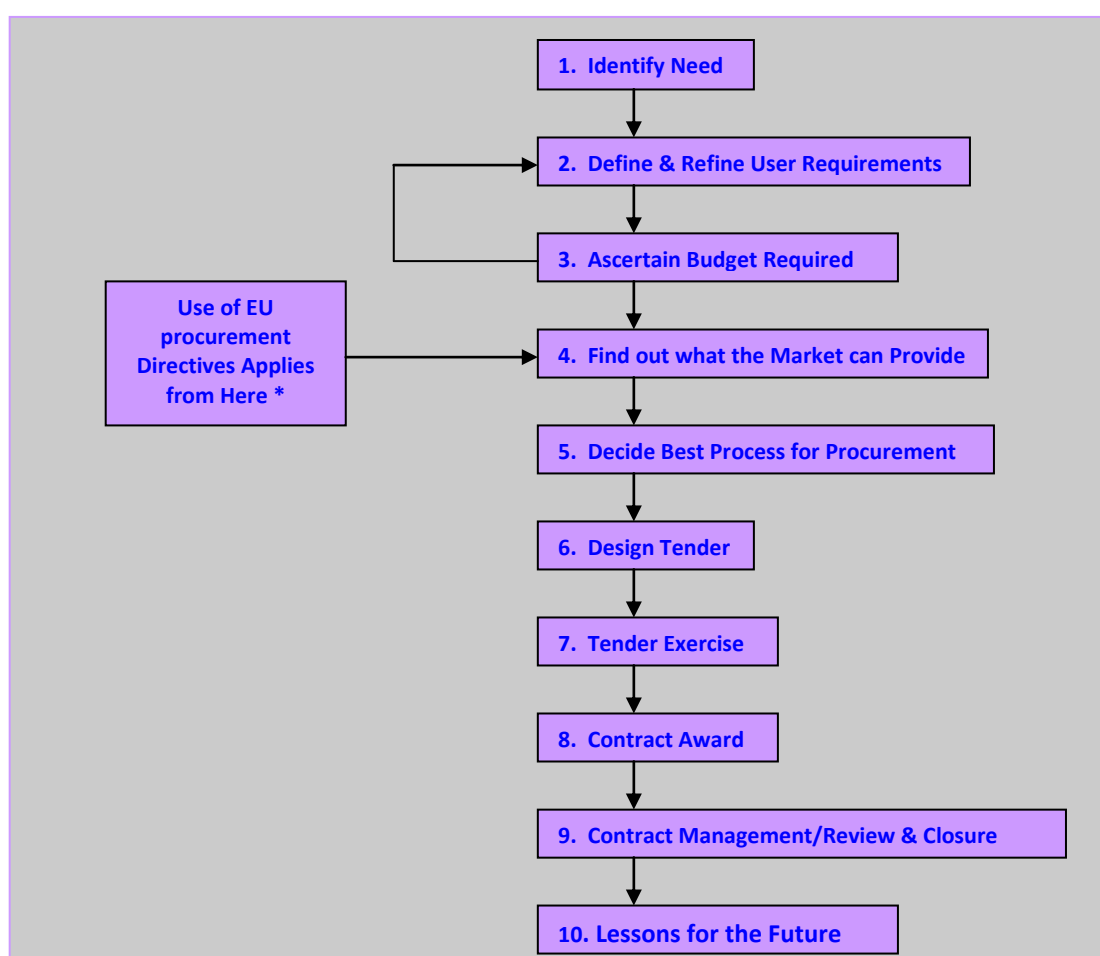
Steps in Conducting a Competitive Process for Contracts Above & Below E.U. Thresholds



The Procurement Process Step by Step for Community Groups

The following is a step by step guide to proper procurement. The key message for this process to work is to conduct extensive consultations with as many groups and individuals as possible even if they may not be end users of the service or utility. Do not rush into hasty decisions as they may cost the group dearly in the long run. This is the point emphasised in the loop between stages **2** and **3**. Following the 10 steps sequentially will provide you with a roadmap to follow and should ensure best practice being followed. It is also very important to document all your actions as in the event of an audit you will have a paper trail of your actions and decisions.

It is important to remember that the internet will provide you with much more comprehensive information than can be captured here.



1. Identify Need:

“Act as Intelligent Customer” Handling the public procurement of innovative solutions requires intelligent organisation, and well-trained staff with a range of skills such as procurement, project and contract management skills. A purchaser needs access to technological knowledge to draw up specifications, evaluate proposals and follow through and learn from the purchasing process. If you don’t have these skills find someone in the community that has these skills.

2. Define and Redefine user Requirements:

“Involve Key Stakeholders throughout the process”. It is important to ensure the active participation of all internal key stakeholders throughout the procurement lifecycle. In particular, the users of the service, technical experts and legal advisors should be involved if required.

Early dialog between stakeholders is essential in the procurement process and helps to get a clear definition of requirements. It may be too late when you go to tender to make changes and it can be very expensive post tender to make changes.

3. Ascertain the Budget Available:

All organisations pre-plan their expenditure. It is critical at this stage that an organisation has conducted an initial market analysis to determine initial costings for the project they are embarking on. The question to be answered will the project be viable long-term.

4. Engage with the Market prior to Tendering:

“Find out what the Market can provide”. This is a critical step in the procurement process as it enables the procurer understand and identify what is available on the market and whether alternative solutions are available, engagement with the market prior to tendering can be carried out if it takes place in a structured and open manner.

Consulting the market before tendering makes it possible to obtain the views of the market before starting the tendering process. If contracting authorities want to achieve broad market coverage, they could formally publish the market consultation. This gives the market the opportunity to better understand the problem to be addressed and to offer optimum solutions. To allay any concerns of suppliers that sensitive information might be disclosed to other parties, procurers can provide an assurance of confidentiality, stating that this kind of information will not be disclosed. A non-disclosure clause can be invoked to protect supplier information.

5. Decide the Best Process for Procurement:

There are a number of different options open to public sector bodies and those bodies partially funded by the state when procuring supplies, works and services. Under the EU Directives and the Irish legislation there are different types of “procedures” operated by public bodies in awarding contracts. These are known as *the “open”, “restricted” and “negotiated”* and *“competitive dialogue”*. If the budget is below threshold other procedures may apply. See www.e-tenders.gov.ie for further details.

6. Design the Tender:

Designing the tender is another critical aspect in the procurement of innovation process as it encompasses a number of different steps each of which are individually important in their own right.

“Stop looking for the right answer – look for many right answers” The way in which the specification is drawn up determines the variety and quality of the offers. The foundation of a good specification is laid in the planning and research undertaken **before** writing begins [Steps 1 – 4 in this Guide]. Allow sufficient time to create the specification as the quality of the tender will also determine the volume of questions that you are likely to receive.

The specification should be written in “**performance**” terms, which focus on the function of the product or service required. It builds the specification around a description of what is to be achieved rather than a fixed description of exactly how it should be done

*“Seek value for money, not just the lowest price “; when purchasing for the community it is imperative to ensure that value for money is achieved, while also delivering cost savings and more efficient services. Public procurement of innovative solutions provides the ideal mechanism through the *Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT)* as the first choice for selection and awarding criteria. It should be preferred over lowest cost criteria. In the framework of MEAT, the awarding criteria should take into account not only the current but the whole life- cycle costs of a project.*

Whole life cycle costs comprise all costs including acquiring, owning, maintaining, updating (in the case of software) and disposing of goods, services or works. These life-cycle costs are also influenced by such conditions as maintenance patterns, including potential downtime; reliability; lifetime maintenance costs; and of course, timeliness of provision. The product with the lowest purchase price will therefore not always prove to be the cheapest, the most advantageous, or the most innovative, when all these conditions are taken into account

7. Tender Exercise:

This step in the process includes all the steps from the point of publishing the Request for Tender (RFT), to receiving and evaluating the tenders and notifying the successful and unsuccessful renderers. If the preceding steps have been designed and effectively managed this part of the process is simple. *The key to success is to have defined the award criteria that deliver upon the functional outcomes of the project.*

8. Contract Award:

Contracts can yield substantial savings and improvements and are therefore important for innovation. They set the scene for the delivery of whatever goods, services or works are being procured. It is therefore essential that the contract specifies how conditions influencing the price – such as liability and warranties – will be handled.

9. Contract Management, Review & Evaluation:

Even when the contract has been signed, the process has not finished. Time and resources need to be allocated to *managing the contract*. It is therefore essential to have a robust contract management regime planned as early as possible in the procurement process, so that both parties understand their respective obligations.

10. Lessons for the Future:

It is important to draw lessons for the future from the procurement process. It is essential that lessons learned be well documented for those in the community who will continue to manage this project into the future and undertake new projects in the future (*no need to re-invent the wheel*). Success in delivery of one project builds credibility with funding organizations for the next project to be undertaken by the community.

Managing Volunteers for Community Organisations

Introduction:

There are many community organisations who wish they had lots of volunteers to carry out their program of activities. The following information should help you in putting proper structures in place so that volunteering will be a positive experience for your organisation and also for the volunteer.

The Citizens Information Board have put together a guide to assist organisations to put structures in place so that volunteers get maximum benefit from their involvement with the organisation and that the organisation achieve their goals also. We have taken some extracts from the document to illustrate the process.

Who is the guide for?

This guide is aimed at people with responsibility for managing volunteers, specifically those who have limited specialist knowledge in this area, or none at all. You may not have a formal title or job description which says you “manage” volunteers, but if you are involved in recruiting, training or roistering volunteers, that means that you have a management role.

What is volunteer management?

Management in general can be described as ***making the most effective and efficient use of resources in order to achieve your goals.*** Good people management ensures that everyone involved helps the organisation to achieve its goals in the most effective way possible.

So how does this apply to volunteer management?

Once an organisation has a clear mission and goals, it has to decide what resources it needs to succeed. Whatever the initial reason for choosing to involve volunteers, organisations which address the following are far more likely to have volunteers who give their best to the organisation and in return, receive satisfaction and a sense of well-being from their volunteering.

You need to develop:

- A **mission statement** which says why volunteers are involved
- A shared vision of why the organisation exists and what volunteer involvement brings to it
- Short and long term **goals and objectives** which everyone understands
- A statement outlining the **scope** for volunteer involvement
- Ring fenced financial and human **resources** to support volunteering
- Effective **monitoring and evaluation** of volunteer involvement

Having clear and short statements on each of these will provide a solid foundation for good volunteer management. Volunteer management is about ensuring that the organisation benefits as much as possible from volunteer involvement and that the volunteer benefits by being part of it.

The benefits of managing volunteers:

There are a number of benefits to managing volunteers including:

- Clarity for the organisation and volunteer.
- More likely to attract the right volunteers, hold on to volunteers and benefit from their involvement.
- A standardised approach to dealing with volunteers which provides organisations with direction and ensures that volunteers get treated fairly and equally.
- Volunteer management practices continue even when people leave.

Let's start by looking at what needs managing:

- The overall organization
- Day-to-day activities
- The budget
- The people working there
- The material resources
- Internal and external communications and information
- Strategic Planning for the future

What is a Volunteer Management Programme?

Having a volunteer management programme in place is the most straight-forward way to ensure effective volunteer management. It is about having a system which manages the volunteer process; it's the way it's done. Regardless of the structures or size of a volunteer involving organisation, volunteer management generally follows the cycle illustrated in the diagram.

Volunteer Management Cycle:

If you follow the flow diagram starting at planning you will have a robust process that will deliver a sustainable ongoing volunteer management process for your organization.



Putting a Management Program in Place:

Start by discussing the following questions with others involved.

- *Why you have volunteers in your organisation?*
- *What roles do volunteers do?*
- *Do you limit the role of volunteers and, if so, why?*

Once you can answer each one of these questions, then you can write a clear statement on volunteer involvement. This will form the basis of your volunteer policy. *Getting started is never easy and the idea of starting to draft your volunteer management programme can seem overwhelming.* The following tips are intended to keep you motivated for what lies ahead.

- You, your organisation and the volunteers all benefit by having a volunteer management programme in place.
- The programme is essential in developing and maintaining a positive volunteer environment
- Volunteer management is often about formalising what you are already doing. You'll be surprised how much you can write in an hour about what you already do.
- The size and detail of your volunteer management programme should reflect what you need at a particular time so don't be put off by the size of some of the documents you see.
- It doesn't have to be done as a single task. Break it into manageable tasks, based on what is needed most.
- Introduce, implement or use what you've agreed as you go along.
- Involve others. Delegate
- Recruit a volunteer(s) to help you or see if an existing volunteer(s) is interested
- Get advice from organisations who already have programmes in place
- Get help from the local volunteer centre
- Organise an information sharing meeting with organisation involving volunteers and pool and exchange materials.

The Path Forward:

Now that we have given you some pointers to start you in a structured way you can put in place proper processes to deliver the best outcome for your organisation. This will enhance the experience for the volunteer in delivering your project no matter how big or small it is from managing 1 or 2 volunteers to hundreds of volunteers. The Link to the Citizens Information Board "Managing Volunteers" is

http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/publications/providers/downloads/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf

Galway Volunteer Centre (**GVC**) is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. The Centre is based in Galway city and covers both the city and county. For more information on registering as a community organisation and from there you can progress to looking at the available volunteers and their skills profile which may benefit your organisation.

Check their website for full information on their activities
<http://www.volunteergalway.ie/>

Type of Questions Asked at Grant Application Stage:

General

1. Name & address of group
2. Name & address of person to whom correspondence is to be sent
3. What is the main activity of your group
4. What is your project proposal/Please give a description of your project proposal
5. Please indicate your groups capacity to carry out the project proposal
6. Specify who will benefit from this project proposal and how they will benefit i.e. general community or priority groups such as the elderly, youth, unemployed, persons with a disability, unemployed to name but a few
7. Where will this project proposal be delivered
8. When will the project proposal be delivered and when will you be in a position to draw down this support should the application be successful.
9. Can you give a brief outline of the general activities of the group
10. What is the aim of the project proposal
11. How will the project proposal impact positively in the local community both socially and economically (e.g. potential job creation)
12. What permissions/consents such as planning and fire safety cert are required for this project proposal and have they been obtained
13. If your project proposal involves development of lands or buildings does your group own the lands concerned
14. Please state who will manage the project/facility/service on completion
15. In relation to the question above if it is other than the group stated on the application form, have they been consulted
16. What will be the outcomes of this project proposal
17. Start and completion dates of the project proposal
18. This project proposal is unlikely to proceed without funding from ????? the following reasons
19. Is your project proposal located in a designated RAPID, CLÁR, Drugs Task Force or DEIS area
20. Describe the need for your project proposal
21. Please outline any programmes or courses your group has put in place to help disadvantaged groups and individuals participate in your initiative

Bank Details

- Bank Account Details (required for payment of grant if successful)
- Bank Name & Address: _____

- Bank Account Number: _____
- Sort Code: _____
- Account Name: _____
- Bank Account Signatory 1: _____
- Bank Account Signatory 2: _____

Cost/Financial Details

- Financial Details (Details of financial expenditure for which grant aid is sought)
- Itemise all elements of expenditure relating to project costs as per attached quotes
- Total cost of the proposal: € _____
- Amount requested: € _____
- Sources of Finance to match fund any grant received
- Any other grant aid received in conjunction with this project proposal

The following documentation must be included with your claim

1. Original receipts for all costs associated with the proposal. Receipts must be dated, addressed to your group and clearly state what the purchased items are. Original paid invoices will also be accepted if evidence of payment is given for example a bank statement.
2. Evidence of public liability insurance, for example, a copy of the applicant's policy or a letter from the insurance company. It must state that public liability insurance is in place for a minimum of €6.5million for one single incident and that the funding body in question is named as an indemnified party.
3. Please note that the funding body applied to accepts no responsibility or liability for any accident, incident, injury or damage to property or person(s) or for any future claim which may take place.
4. The groups Tax Reference number, If you do not have a tax reference number, please apply for one through your local Tax Office.

5. Evidence of title to the land in question, if applicable
6. In the case of any construction, building work or renovation, your Engineer or Architect must certify in writing that all work is complete, that it represents good value for money and that any planning conditions, building regulations, environmental law requirements and health and safety requirements have been complied with.
7. If you receive payments of €10,000 or more from a statutory agency in a single tax year, you must include a **current Tax Clearance Certificate**.
8. **The funding body applied to must be acknowledged** for this support in any publicity associated with the project. **(photographs/promotional literature)**
9. Payment of this financial support is subject to the premises complying with the Local Authority's **Chief Fire Officer** Requirements from a safety point of view (if applicable).
10. **Memorandum & Articles of Association/Constitution** of the applicant
11. **Financial returns** for the applicant
12. **Relevant licences** such as planning permission

Proposed Scoring Sheet for Assessment of Grant Applications (Community & Voluntary)

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Project involves Social Inclusion Activities
_____ | max? pts. |
| b) Greater range of services provided to the community
_____ | max? pts |
| c) Provision of Universal Access within community facilities
_____ | max? pts |
| d) Improved Fire Safety of facilities
_____ | max? pts |
| e) Improved sustainability of facility/project (Energy measures)
_____ | max? pts |
| f) Evidence of matching funding from other agencies
_____ | max? pts |
| g) Level of matching funding from community
_____ | max? pts |
| h) Documentation on planning/insurance/rights of way included
_____ | max? pts |
| i) Priority Groups – The elderly, Youth and Children addressed
_____ | max? pts - |
| j) Project in the area of IT training and services provision
_____ | max? pts |
| k) Quality of application
_____ | max? pts |
| l) Employment creation elements
_____ | max? pts |
| m) Lack of funding alternatives
_____ | max? pts |
| n) Greater Participation in Sport
_____ | max? pts |
| o) Tourism activity
_____ | max? pts |
| p) Capacity of Group
_____ | max? pts |

q) Commonality with Strategic Plans of State Agencies

max? pts

TOTAL SCORE

max?? pts

- Is your project proposal located in a designated RAPID, CLÁR, Drugs Task Force or DEIS area
- Describe the need for your project proposal
- Please outline any programmes or courses your group has put in place to help disadvantaged groups and individuals participate in your initiative

Bank Details

- Bank Account Details (required for payment of grant if successful)
- Bank Name & Address: _____
- Bank Account Number: _____
- Sort Code: _____
- Account Name: _____
- Bank Account Signatory 1 _____
- Bank Account Signatory 2: _____

Cost/Financial Details

- Financial Details (Details of financial expenditure for which grant aid is sought)
- Itemise all elements of expenditure relating to project costs as per attached quotes
- Total cost of the proposal: € _____
- Amount requested: € _____
- Sources of Finance to match fund any grant received
- Any other grant aid received in conjunction with this project proposal

Index

<i>Introduction</i>	2
<i>Change is coming for Community Groups</i>	3
<i>Types of Structures within a Community Organisation</i>	5
<i>What is an Ad Hoc Committee</i>	6
<i>Committee with Constitution & Rules: The Constitution</i>	6
<i>Sample Constitution</i>	8
<i>How to Become a Limited Company</i>	12
Formation of a Company	12
What is a Company Limited by Guarantee?	12
What are the benefits of becoming a Company Limited by Guarantee?	13
How to Become a Company Limited by Guarantee:	13
Duties of a Company under “The Companies Act”	14
Getting Help and Advice:	14
Cost:	14
1. Memorandum of Association:	14
2. Articles of Association:	15
Alteration to the Memorandum and Articles of Association:	15
What is the On-Going Requirements of Companies Limited by Guarantee?	15
Board of Directors:	15
Meetings:	16
Annual General Meetings (AGM & EGM):	16
Minutes of Meetings:	16
Resolutions:	17
Annual Returns:	17
Accounts:	17
Auditors:	17
Removal of Auditors:	17
Donations:	18
Charitable Tax Exemption	18
Tax Exemptions:	19
Register of Members and Directors:	19
Changes in the Directors or Company Secretary:	19
Registered Office:	19

Stationery:	19
Changes in Company Law:	19
Electronic Filing:	20
Further Information:	20
Summary:	20
<i>Directors a Quick Guide to Their Duties and Powers</i>	21
Introduction	21
What is a company director?	21
Who can be a company director?	21
Are there different types of director?	21
What are the duties of directors?	21
Common law duties of directors (the duties created by the courts)	22
Statutory duties of directors (the duties created by legislation)	22
What are the powers of directors?	23
Transactions between the company and its directors	23
Solvent Liquidation	23
Trading Difficulties	23
Reckless Trading	23
Insolvent Liquidation	23
Struck Off Insolvent Companies	24
Conclusion	24
<i>Co- Operative</i>	25
What is a Co-operative?	25
What is the purpose of a Co-operative?	25
Different types of Co-operatives?	25
Co-operative Ethical Values	25
Seven Key Co-operative Principles:	25
Overall Co-operative Approach:	25
Steps in Establishing a Co-operative	26
Start Your Own Co-operative Business	26
Advantages of Co-ops	26
<i>Friendly Society</i>	28
Registration of a Friendly Society	28

Annual Return	28
Amendments to Registered Rules	28
Change of Registered Office	28
Change of Name, Amalgamation, Transfer of Engagements and Conversion	28
<i>All You Wanted To Know About the Running of Successful Committees</i>	29
Members of a Committee	29
Confidentiality	29
Communication Internally	29
Communication Externally	29
<i>Duties of Officers on a Committee</i>	31
<i>The Chairperson</i>	31
Role/General Duties	31
Before The Meeting	31
At The Meeting	31
Chairpersons Do's & Don'ts	32
<i>The Secretary</i>	33
Role/General Duties	33
Before The Meeting	33
At The Meeting	33
After The Meeting	34
Company Secretary	34
<i>The Treasurer</i>	35
Role/ Duties of a Treasurer	35
Banking	35
Grants	35
Books/Forms Required	36
Cheque Books and Cheque Payments Book	36
Quarterly Statement of Accounts	36
Annual Statement of Accounts	36
<i>Public Relations: The Group and the Media</i>	37
Public Relations Is	37
Setting an Agreed Image	37
Public Relations Officer/Subcommittee	37
Key Questions to Be Asked When a Publicity Campaign Is Being Planned:	37

Creating an Image	38
Finance / Budget	38
<i>Quick Tips for A Successful Meeting</i>	39
The Agenda	39
Items on the Agenda	39
Apologies	39
Minutes	40
Matters Arising	40
Correspondence	40
Chairperson's Report	40
Treasurer's Report	40
Items of Main Business	40
Any Other Business	40
Date of the Next Meeting	41
Agenda Plan Template	41
Recording & Circulating Minutes	41
<i>Practical Advice for Holding Meetings</i>	42
Role of Chairperson:	42
Meetings:	42
Types of Meetings:	43
Location:	43
Time Duration and Schedule of Meetings:	43
Conduct of Meetings:	43
Agenda & Items on the Agenda:	44
A.O.B. as an Agenda Item:	44
Reaching All Items on the Agenda:	45
Sample Agenda for Meetings:	45
Apologies	45
Minute Taking and Circulation:	45
Correspondence:	46
Reporting:	46
Decisions at Meetings:	46
Annual General Meeting:	47
Standing orders should be adopted at each A.G.M.	47

Sample Agenda for AGM:	48
Follow up from Meetings:	48
<i>Company Policies & Procedures</i>	49
General Safety Statement	50
Equality Policy Introduction	50
Objectives:	50
Responsibilities:	50
Structures:	51
Recruitment and Selection:	51
Career Development and Training:	52
Promotion:	52
Complaints and Redress:	52
Harassment and Bullying:	52
Positive Action:	52
Review and Monitoring:	53
<i>Terms and Conditions</i>	53
Hours of Work	53
Lunch Periods and Breaks	53
Overtime Policy	53
Emergency Evacuation	53
Absence	54
Hygiene	54
Tobacco Policy	54
Alcohol & Drugs	55
E-Mail and Internet Use	55
Confidentiality	55
Resignation and Termination	56
Lay-Off/Short-Time	56
Redundancy	56
<i>Leave and Benefits</i>	57
Annual Leave	57
Compassionate Leave	57
Maternity Leave	57
State Maternity Benefit	58

Paternity Leave	58
Parental Leave	58
Force Majeure Leave	59
Carer's Leave	59
Relevant Person:	59
Adoptive Leave:	60
Jury Duty:	61
Pension Policy and Plans	61
Training and Professional Development	61
<i>Disciplinary Procedure</i>	62
Disciplinary Procedure	62
Purpose of the Procedure	62
Operation of the Procedure	62
Informal Procedure:	63
Formal Procedure:	63
Disciplinary Interview:	63
No Disciplinary Action	64
Verbal Warning	64
Written Warning	65
Final Written Warning	65
Dismissal	65
Grievance/Disputes Procedure:	65
Stage 1	66
Stage 2	66
Stage 3	66
<i>Bullying & Harassment Policy and Procedure</i>	66
Purpose:	66
Scope:	66
Policy:	67
Definition:	67
<i>Complaints Procedure</i>	68
Informal Procedure:	68
Formal Procedure:	68
Action Post-Investigation	69

Community Development	70
Introduction	70
Community Development-; a Way Forward	70
Investment in the acquisition of skills	70
Building relationships with political system	70
A balance between political action and service delivery	70
The Place of Policy Work in Community Development	71
Community Development and Policy Work	71
The Place of Policy Work in Community Development	71
What is Public Policy?	71
How is Public Policy Made?	72
The Importance of Having Your Say	73
Stages in the Policy-Making Process	73
Decide on the Strategy for Influencing Policy	74
(a) Engaging in local social partnership arrangements	74
(b) Policy Submissions	75
What should go into a Policy Submission?	75
(c) Media campaigns/Using the Media	76
eTenders What are They?	77
Introduction	77
Public Procurement Definition	77
Subsidised Contracts	77
Low Value Requirements	78
Advertising	78
Tax Clearance Certificates & Insurance	78
Time for the Submission of Tenders	78
Request for Tenders (RFT)?	78
Debriefing of Unsuccessful Tenderers	78
Flow Diagram for the Steps in Conducting a Competitive Process	79
The Procurement Process Step by Step for Community Groups	80
Flow Chart of Procurement Process	80
Identify Need.	80
Define and Redefine user Requirements	81
Ascertain the Budget Available	81

Engage with the Market prior to Tendering.	81
Decide the Best Process for Procurement	81
Design the Tender	81
Tender Exercise	82
Contract Award	82
Contract Management, Review & Evaluation	82
Lessons for the Future	82
<i>Managing Volunteers for Community Organisations</i>	83
Introduction	83
Who is the guide for?	83
What is volunteer management?	83
So how does this apply to volunteer management?	83
The benefits of managing volunteers	84
Let's start by looking at what needs managing:	84
What is a Volunteer Management Programme?	84
Volunteer Management Cycle	84
Putting a Management Program in Place	85
The Path Forward	85
<i>Type of Questions asked at Grant Application Stage</i>	86
<i>Proposed Scoring Sheet for Assessment of Grant Applications (C & V)</i>	89
<i>Index</i>	91