

WHAT DO CHAIRMEN DO?

1. Plan the meeting with the clerk and ensure that everything on the agenda is legal.
2. Brief themselves and prepare fully - study all relevant information and anticipate the needs and interests of the members. The Chairman can then answer questions or deal with requests for information.
3. Be punctual - the Chairman should set a good example by arriving early to check the arrangements and welcome members, the public and any visiting speakers.
4. Conduct the meeting
 - Check there is a quorum (minimum number of members needed to make the meeting legal)
 - Call the meeting to order and declare it open
 - Welcome members, the public and visiting speakers to the meeting
 - Introduce the standard items on the agenda – apologies; declarations of interest; confirmation of minutes of previous meeting
 - Introduce the agenda items and ensure that all members know what they have to achieve and how they might do it
 - Encourage participation
 - Stimulate an exchange of ideas and experience
 - Ensure that all have a chance to express their views freely
 - Keep the members aware of objectives
 - Maintain focus
 - Guide and progress discussion towards achieving the objectives
 - Manage conflict
 - Be fair and balanced
 - Preserve order
 - Enforce rules of procedure
 - Rule on disputed matters.
5. Participate, but do not dominate!
 - Ask questions
 - Clarify misunderstandings
 - Correct mistakes
 - Reject irrelevancies and stop the meeting going on a tangent
 - Co-ordinate the views of members
 - Give information if needed
 - Summarise the meeting's views and conclusions and confirm what has been decided/voted on
 - Listen and analyse the meaning and relevance of members' contributions.