

# The Role of the Chairperson at Meetings

- Brief themselves and prepare fully – study all relevant information and anticipate the needs and interests of the members.
- 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.
- Conduct the meeting properly
  - Check there is a quorum
  - Call the meeting to order and declare it open
  - Welcome members, the public and visiting speakers
  - Introduce the standard items on the agenda (e.g., apologies, declarations, minutes)
  - Introduce other agenda items and *ensure that all members know what they have to achieve and how they might do it*
  - Ensure everyone has a chance to express their views freely
  - Keep members aware of objectives
  - Maintain focus, guide and progress discussion towards objectives
  - Manage conflict
  - Be fair and balanced
  - Preserve order
  - Enforce rules of procedure
  - Rule on disputed matters
- Participate but do not dominate
  - Ask questions
  - Clarify misunderstandings
  - Correct mistakes
  - Reject irrelevancies and stop the meeting from going off at 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
- Lead the council
  - Plan, organise and control discussion
  - Develop harmonious relationships
  - Motivate individuals by encouraging and rewarding their efforts and supporting them in difficulties.

# The Role of Members at Meetings

While it is the role of the chairperson to run the meeting, the participation of all members is also fundamental to the success of the meeting.

To ensure an effective meeting, all participants should:

- Undertake any necessary preparation prior to the meeting.
- Arrive on time.
- Keep an open mind.
- Listen to the opinions of others.
- Participate.
- Ensure their remarks are addressed through the chair.
- Not interrupt each other.
- Accept the majority decision.
- Avoid dominating the proceedings.
- Avoid conflict situations.
- Avoid side conversations which distract others.
- Ask questions to clarify understanding.