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*For Chairs leading smaller charities*



# Being an Effective Chair

## Beacon Programme – Module 1

#BeaconProgramme

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Association  
of **Chairs**

*Supporting charity and non-profit chairs*

# Association of Chairs



- **We support Chairs and Vice Chairs** of charities and non-profit organisations to lead your boards effectively and ensure delivery of your organisation's mission
- **What we do:** we provide practical guidance and governance support tailored to the needs of Chairs, and enable Chairs to support each other
- **What we believe:** good chairing is key to:
  - Maximizing a charity's impact
  - A well-run organisation
  - Supporting effective decision making
  - Being sustainable and responding to change



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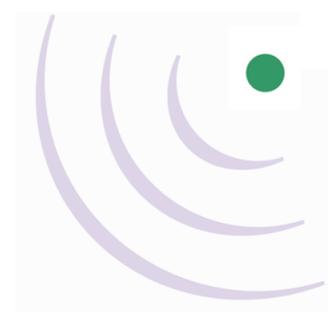
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# About the programme



- Chairs of smaller charities face specific challenges
- **Aim:** to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of Chairs and Vice Chairs of smaller charities in England with an income of under £1 million
- Focus on **four** areas
  - **Being an effective Chair** – Know your role and how to be effective
  - **Strengthening your organisation** – Develop the strategy, resources and processes to succeed
  - **Managing relationships and board dynamics** – Create a productive board culture
  - **Developing an effective board** – Develop a high functioning and effective team

# About the programme



- Each of these four areas will be addressed through a range of activities
  - 4 half day workshops delivered in 9 locations
  - Live webinars for each of the four areas plus a series of short video content
  - Written resources
  - Our monthly Beacon Bulletin
  - Online surgeries
  - Platform for connecting with other Chairs (online and offline)
- You can access all of the resources talked about in this workshop on the AoC website  
<https://www.associationofchairs.org.uk/beacon/resources-for-chairs/>
- The programme is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund till June 2020

# Overview of today's workshop



- Being clear about your legal role and responsibilities
- Understanding what can help you be effective
- Having practical tools to run effective meetings
- Gain insight and top tips from other Chairs of smaller organisations

# Suggested ways of working



- **Stay focused and in the room** – keep mobile phones to designated breaks
- **Contribute and participate** – and allow others to do the same
- **Respect others' thoughts and opinions**, but challenge one another to think more deeply
- **Respect others' confidentiality**
- **No question is a silly question** – if you are thinking it, chances are at least 3 others are!
- **Use the parking space** if you notice discussions wandering off track



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# Getting to know each other

- As Chair, what keeps you awake at night?
- Capture ideas on a post-it – one per post it.



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# The Charity Governance Code



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# The role of Chair



- Leading the trustee board in fulfilling its responsibilities
- Enabling trustees to contribute and add value to the work of the organisation
- Ensuring effective governance and that the charity acts in accordance with its governing document
- Chairing meetings, ensuring all board members contribute
- Legal status – common misconceptions e.g. casting vote (unless stated in your governing document)



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# The role of Chair



- Additional roles that may (but not necessarily) be performed by the Chair:
  - Spokesperson
  - Supporting and supervising the senior staff member
  - Communication link between staff and trustees
  - Leading on board development
  - Ensuring board actions are implemented



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# A Chair's Compass



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# A Chair's Compass – self assessment



- Work through the prompts in your workbook:
  - What are your areas of strength?
  - What limitations or areas for development can you identify?



**What two actions will you take as a result? Add these to your action plan.**



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# What makes for an effective Chair?

## A. Finnegan (2013): Effective Charity Chairs

- Effective Chairs
  - Motivation and style
  - Capacity to lead
  - Personal attributes
  - Ability to relate
  - Ability to advance the organisation externally
- Ineffective Chairs
  - Authoritarian / micromanage
  - Create or avoid conflict
  - Contribute to confusion about the board and its role
  - Don't respect the CEO or other trustees
  - Are not proactive



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# Impact of ineffective chairing



- The impact of good or ineffective chairing can often be felt across an organisation
- What could be the impact of ineffective chairing for:
  - the board
  - the staff team including CEO or equivalent
  - the organisation



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# How effective am I?



- In pairs, discuss the following questions:

- What characteristics you think you have or have others told you, you have?
- Have you identified any areas for improvement?
- How could these be met e.g. by other board members, utilizing development opportunities?



**What two actions will you take as a result? Add these to your action plan**



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# Self-care for Chairs of smaller charities



- Know what support is out there
- Set boundaries for yourself and others
- Support from a mentor could help you navigate aspects of the role
- Attend training and networking events



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# Self-care for Chairs of smaller charities

- Understand your style and way of working
- Celebrate successes
- Remember, we are all on a learning journey!



**Make a commitment to exploring at least two of these options and add your action plan**



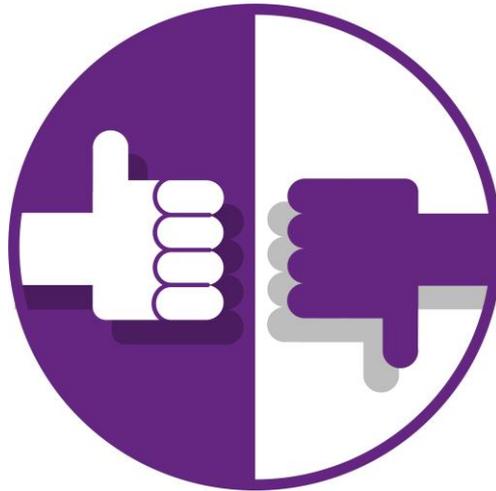
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# Effective board meetings



- What prevents your board meetings being as effective as they could be?



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# Preparing for good board meetings



- Schedule your meetings well in advance
- Make sure you know what your governing document says about your meetings
- Involve your CEO (or equivalent) in planning board meetings
- Ensure the agenda is balanced and focused
- Put estimated timings in for agenda items
- Schedule important items early, on the agenda



# Preparing for good board meetings



- Make sure everyone understands which are decisions for the board to make
- Hold your meetings in a pleasant environment – little things make a difference!
- Ensure good quality papers are circulated in advance.



**Identify two improvements you could make in preparing for your board meetings and add these to your action plan**



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# Case studies

- Review the case studies provided and discuss:
  - What issues do these raise for the Chair's role in ensuring effective governance?
  - What advice would you give to the Chair in each scenario?



# Chairs on chairing



- Know yourself, know your board – and be yourself
  - Know your strengths and areas for development
  - Get to know your trustees, their qualities and skills
- Keep focused on the strategic issues
  - Carefully plan for meetings
  - Ensure good quality papers

- Help others to shine

- Consider pre-board / setting the scene meeting
- Create a culture of support and challenge
- Make meetings enjoyable
- Hold back on expressing your own view



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# Other useful sources of support

- Association of Chairs: [www.associationofchairs.org.uk](http://www.associationofchairs.org.uk)
- Cranfield Trust: <https://www.cranfieldtrust.org/>
- FSI: <http://www.thefsi.org/>
- Local CVS/Voluntary Action: <https://navca.org.uk/find-a-member-1>
- NCVO: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/>
- Small Charities Coalition: <https://www.smallcharities.org.uk/>
- ICSA: <https://www.icsa.org.uk/>
- Locality: <https://locality.org.uk>



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# Review



- Review aims
- Are there any outstanding questions?
- Review your action plan – is there anything you want to add?
- Please remember to complete your feedback form
- Upcoming events
- Become a member of AoC



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