Transparent and inclusive decision-making

Document owner: Committee ·

Approval: Committee or membership, as required by the constitution ·

Review: Annually

1. **Purpose**

The group is committed to transparent, inclusive and accountable decision-making.

Every committee member should have a meaningful opportunity to contribute their skills, ideas and concerns.

Decisions should be based on the group's purpose, relevant evidence, available resources, potential impact and the views of those affected.

The process should avoid decisions being controlled by the most confident person, the longest-serving member or a small informal group outside committee meetings.

This reflects OSCR guidance on informed, recorded and constitutionally valid decisions.

2. **Types of decisions**

The committee should distinguish between three categories.

Type	Examples	Process
Routine operational Posting an approved event reminder	ordering previously agreed supplies	Delegated to the responsible role within agreed limits
Significant committee decision	New activity, partnership, spending outside routine limits, changes to volunteer arrangements	Shared proposal, discussion and formal committee decision

Reserved decision	Changes to the constitution, election or removal of office-holders, matters reserved to members	Follow the constitution and any required membership vote

The committee should maintain a written list of delegated decisions and spending limits so everyone understands what they can decide independently.

3. **Bringing forward ideas and proposals**

Any committee member may propose an idea or request that an issue be considered.

Where possible, proposals should be circulated before the meeting and include:

- The issue or opportunity being addressed.
- The intended benefit to LGBTQ+ people and the wider community.
- The skills, resources and volunteer time required.
- Likely costs and funding implications.
- Potential risks, accessibility considerations and privacy implications.
- Alternative approaches.
- A proposed next step and the person who could lead it.

A proposal does not need to be fully developed before it can be discussed. Members should be able to raise early-stage ideas and request help developing them.

4. **Preparing for decisions**

The Secretary or meeting organiser should circulate an agenda and relevant papers in good time (ideally 7+ days), with a clear indication of which items require a decision.

Members should have a reasonable opportunity to ask questions or request further information.

Where an issue is complex, the committee may defer the decision until the necessary information is available.

For a small island group, participation should not depend on being able to attend every meeting in person. The committee should consider remote participation, written comments and accessible meeting arrangements where compatible with its governing document.

5. **How meetings will support equal participation**

The Chair or facilitator will:

- Invite contributions from members who have not yet spoken.
- Prevent interruptions, personal attacks or repeated domination of discussion.
- Allow members time to reflect before responding.
- Consider written input from people who find speaking in meetings difficult.

- Make reasonable adjustments for access needs.
- Distinguish between factual questions, personal preferences and material risks.
- Ensure that disagreement is heard before a decision is taken.

No member should have to disclose their LGBTQ+ identity, personal history or health information to justify an opinion or demonstrate their commitment to the group.

6. **Decision-making process**

Clarify the decision.

The Chair states the question to be decided, the options available and whether the committee has authority to decide it.

Hear contributions.

Members discuss the proposal, raise concerns and share relevant knowledge.

Explore agreement.

The committee seeks a workable consensus where possible, without pressuring members to pretend they agree. (A hidden vote is the best solution)

Decide formally.

If consensus is not reached, the Chair uses the voting procedure in the constitution or agreed standing orders. (Currently the Chair has the deciding vote inna tie)

Record the outcome.

The minutes capture the decision, any vote required to be recorded, the rationale where useful and the actions agreed.

Review implementation.

The committee assigns responsibility, sets a realistic deadline and checks whether the decision achieved its intended result.

Consensus is a preferred approach, not a requirement for unanimity. A member should not be pressured into withdrawing a legitimate concern simply to create the appearance of agreement.

7. **Voting, quorum and conflicts of interest**

1. The committee must follow the voting, quorum (currently 4) and meeting requirements in its constitution.
2. It should not invent a new voting rule for a particular disagreement.
3. Where the constitution allows a majority vote, (ours does) the committee should use that procedure when consensus cannot be reached.
4. If a vote is tied, the outcome must be determined by the constitution or previously agreed standing orders, rather than by an improvised rule.

5. Members with a relevant conflict of interest must declare it and follow the applicable procedure. The minutes should record the declaration and any required withdrawal from discussion or voting.

8. **Decisions between meetings**

Where a decision cannot reasonably wait until the next meeting, the committee may use an agreed written or electronic procedure if permitted by its governing document.

The procedure should:

- Clearly state the question and deadline for responses.
- Give all eligible committee members a reasonable opportunity to contribute.
- Use the voting threshold required by the constitution.
- Record the decision, responses and any relevant declarations of interest.
- Report the outcome at the next committee meeting.

Urgent decisions should not become a routine way of bypassing discussion or excluding members.

9. **Transparency and records**

The committee will maintain proportionate records of decisions, including:

- What was decided and when.
- Who had authority to make the decision.
- The main reasons for the decision, where useful.
- Any relevant conflicts of interest.
- Who is responsible for implementation.
- Any review date or conditions.

Minutes should be circulated to committee members (preferably within 7 days when meeting are monthly) and approved at the next appropriate meeting. They should be clear enough to support accountability without unnecessarily recording sensitive personal information.

A suitable summary of decisions may be shared with members or volunteers where appropriate.

Confidential case details, safeguarding information, sensitive personal data and commercially sensitive information should be restricted to those who need access

OSCR specifically recommends following the governing document, recording decisions and keeping appropriate meeting records.

https://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-a-charity/managing-charity-trustees/being-a-charity-in-scotland/charity-trustee-duties/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

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10. **Reviewing or challenging a decision**

A committee member may request that a decision be reconsidered where:

- Material information was missing or incorrect.
- The agreed process was not followed.
- A significant new risk has emerged.
- The decision conflicts with the group's aims, constitution or legal obligations.
- The outcome has created an unintended harmful effect.

The committee will decide whether to reopen the matter using the same fair process.

A request for review is not automatically a refusal to cooperate.

Where a member believes a decision is unlawful, unsafe or inconsistent with a charity trustee's legal duties, the concern should be recorded and addressed appropriately rather than dismissed on the basis that a majority has voted.

11. **Learning and improvement**

At least annually, the committee should review whether its decision-making is working well.

It should consider whether members feel heard, whether tasks are shared fairly, whether decisions are being implemented and whether informal practices have excluded anyone. (A members / attendees satisfaction survey should ask these specific questions)

The committee should be willing to change its processes when experience shows that they are not working