



How to be a great Foróige Chairperson

Contents

The Club Committee	Page 2
The role of the Chairperson	Page 3
Knowing about Foróige	Page 4
Role of other officers	Page 5
Meeting agenda	Page 6
Main business if the meeting	Page 7
Good chairperson lines	Page 8
Evaluating an Activity	Page 8
Hints for great chairpersons	Page 10
The Nine Point Plan	Page 11



Congratulations on being elected as a Foróige Club Chairperson

Being a club Chairperson can be a huge learning experience, developing your life, leadership and employability skills. Nearly every organisation has a Chairperson. They are a key part of a committee of people who together ensure that the club operates effectively.

We hope that you really enjoy this challenging but rewarding role.

This book will help get you underway with support from a leader but should be accompanied by training provided normally through the District Council and the Regional Youth Officer.

The Chairperson and the Committee

As Chairperson, you are part of the Club Committee which consists of the Club Leader, Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer and up to two other members. Each officer has specific duties to perform: Yours are in this guide.

The Committee is responsible for planning and running the club meeting and getting tasks needed for the day to day management of the club carried out on behalf of the members.



The Committee Meeting

The committee meets separately from the club, either before the main meeting or on a different night, to plan the next meeting including drawing up the agenda. The Club Leader or her/ his nominee must attend.

The Chairperson calls and chairs this meeting with support from the Leader. The Chairperson ensures that the committee is prepared for the club meeting, including having an agenda. The committee meeting also discusses problems or difficulties in the club and how best they might be tackled. From time to time, it will review how the club is achieving Foróige's purpose and how it is meeting the needs and interests of the members.

Every Club Officer...

- ➡ Asks for help when needed, from a leader or someone who has done the role before
- ➡ Attends the club each week
- ➡ Has with her/him everything s/he needs for the role
- ➡ Takes an active part in committee meetings
- ➡ Supports the other committee members
- ➡ Acts as a good example to other club members

The Role of a Foróige Chairperson

It's an important job! The Chairperson leads the committee and ensures the club operates democratically so all members can participate equally in the decisions, plans and activities of the club.

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- ➡ **Take an active part in Committee Meetings**
 - ➡ **Chair Club meetings**
 - ➡ **Take a leading role in having a good club programme**
 - ➡ **Organise action to follow decisions taken at club meetings**
 - ➡ **Welcome Guests and new members**
 - ➡ **Cooperate closely with the Adult leaders**
 - ➡ **Promote good working relationships amongst the members and between members and leaders**
 - ➡ **Support members to follow the agreed club behaviour rules**
 - ➡ **Cooperate with the Club Leader in affiliating the Club**
 - ➡ **Uphold the purpose, constitution and policies of Foróige.**

A Chairperson needs to have:

Note book and pen
This guide to being a Chairperson
Access to the Club Leader
Information on the purpose and rules of Foróige

What a Chairperson needs to know about Foróige

You are a key figure in your club, along with the adult Club Leader. It is important that you know what the club is about.

The Name:

Foróige means Development of Youth (Forbairt na hÓige).

The Purpose:

Foróige exists to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of the community.

Put simply – Foróige is about the members developing themselves and contributing to the community.



The Scale:

Foróige is one of Ireland's largest youth organisations. It operates in every county in the state, and reaches some 50,000 young people each year, with about 5,300 volunteers and over 400 paid staff.

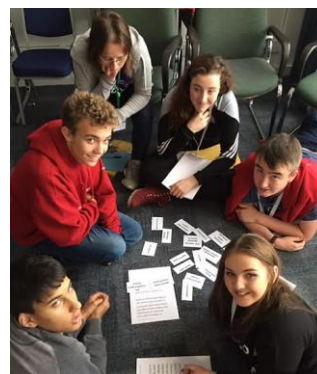


The Role of the Adult Leaders:

Leaders want club members to learn by doing. They are trained not to do for members what they can appropriately do for themselves. They assist the club members develop their talents, plan ahead and work through difficult situations. They act as examples, advisors and supporters. They listen and encourage. They challenge negative behaviour. They ensure the club is a safe inclusive place. The club cannot meet without them, nor make decisions that they aren't in agreement with.

The Role of Members

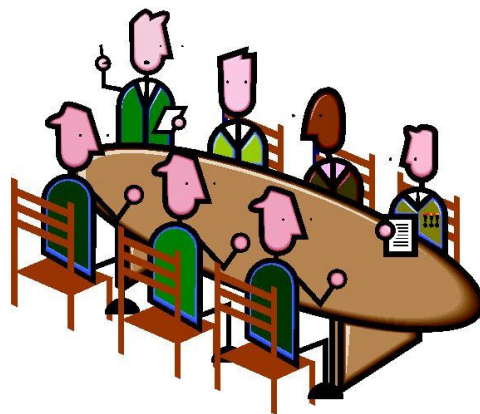
All club members jointly control the club with the adult leaders. Members take an active part in meetings, volunteer for tasks, get involved in activities and programmes, participate in club elections, volunteer for sub committees, draw up club rules and, we hope, enjoy the club!



The roles of the other Officers

Secretary

- Take part in the committee meetings
- Take meeting minutes
- Read the minutes
- Deal with club correspondence
- Keep an attendance book
- Cooperate closely with adult leaders
- Notify the club of meetings



Treasurer. This role is shared with an adult treasurer.

- Take part in committee meetings
- Keep proper club accounts
- Inform members of the financial situation of the club
- Pay bills and give receipts
- Take a leading role in fundraising
- Cooperate with adult leaders
- Open and manage the club bank or credit union account (leaders)
- Sign cheques or pay by card (Leaders)

Communications Officer

- Photo and video of club events
- Press releases for local papers, websites and radio
- Operate club social media sites in line with Foróige social media guidelines
- Scrap book of publicity
- Send club news and photographs to Foróige HQ and the District Council Communications officer.
- Get good media coverage for Foróige events
- Promote use of Foróige name and branding.

Other officers

The club can elect 2 other officers. These are usually a vice chairperson and an assistant to another role; or they could be a games officer or Citizenship officer.

The Meeting Agenda – a Chairperson's unique role

Chairperson opens the meeting

I declare the meeting open. I'd like to welcome everyone, especially our new members (names) new leaders (names) guests (names).

Reading the minutes

The Chairperson asks the Secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting (Minutes are a written record of the main points of a meeting). Thank the secretary and then ask the club if the minutes are correct. This is in case an error was made or something left out.

Adopting the minutes

After any changes are made the Chairperson asks the club if a member will "propose that the minutes are in order". The Chairperson then asks the club for a member to "Second the minutes". Both members are effectively declaring that they believe the minutes are correct. The secretary writes down both names. They must have been present at the previous meeting. The chairperson then signs the minutes. After that, no one can question their accuracy because the club has formally adopted them.

Matters arising

Now the Chairperson asks if there are "any matters arising from the minutes". This is a formal way of asking do we need to continue or follow up on anything from the last meeting unless it is on the agenda anyway. E.g. if someone was to book a bus for the club, the Chairperson might ask if it was done.

Correspondence

Correspondence is information received by the club such as invitations, notices about training etc. Even if it went to an adult leader, it is for the club and the Secretary should read it out. The Chairperson then decides if it is to be discussed or postponed to another meeting. It may depend on how full the agenda is or how urgent the correspondence is.

Treasurer's report and Communications Officer's report

The Chairperson calls on these officers in turn to present their report. S/He thanks them and asks if there are any questions. S/He may reinforce something they said.

Main Business (see next page)

AOB (Any other Business)

The Chairperson asks if anyone has any other business to be raised. These are usually brief questions. If it might need a longer time the Chairperson can postpone it to the next meeting.

The Chairperson closes the meeting and calls on whoever is running the next activity – e.g. TAB time or games etc.

Main Business

Usually there would only be a few main items but they take most time. This is where your role as chairperson is most important. For each item you should;

1. **Introduce the topic briefly**– so you must have thought about it and discussed it with the committee and leaders in advance of the meeting.
2. **Involve the members in giving opinions and ideas as needed on each agenda item**
 - **In a small club you can have all club giving ideas together**, but be sure to ask if anyone who hasn't spoken yet wants to say something.
 - **Buzz groups** – this means getting members to discuss the issue with the few people sitting near them
 - **Brain storm** – everyone gives ideas which the secretary writes down. Then the committee can go through them to see which might work and put those to the club for discussion and decision
 - **Ask individuals directly for their opinion.**
 - **Include leaders in the discussion**

All comments and suggestions are made by permission of the chairperson. Hence they are made **“Through the Chair”** It means only one person should be talking at a time.

3. Get decisions taken democratically

After the discussion, the chairperson sums up the arguments on both sides, but remains neutral. Then the Chairperson asks the club to make a decision either by consensus (general agreement without a vote) or by calling for a vote of a show of hands. Leaders don't vote, but if they disagree, the proposal can't go ahead.

4. Plan to implement the decision.

What is going to be done? Who? When? How? Budget? You can get a member to volunteer for do it or if it is a bigger task, set up a sub-committee (a group of members and a leader). Use the 9 point plan.

5. Reports

The chairperson asks members leading particular programmes or activities for regular updates. This might include the group working on a citizenship project, doing leadership, a games committee or a trip planning group. This is to keep the club informed on all activities going on.

Remember: You are Chairperson for everyone – not just your friends.

Involve others,

Listen,

Sum up fairly,

Get a decision made.

Good lines to use at the main business of meetings

'So the key thing we need to decide now is do you agree?'

'Can I summarize by saying that the best way forward is is everyone happy with that?'

'From all that has been said so far the main obstacle is?'

'Did anyone who hasn't spoken yet want to add anything?'

'In my view we should go this way, but it is for the whole club to decide'

'All comments should be made through the Chair'

'The sooner there is quiet the sooner we will be able to get the meeting done'

'That sounds like a good idea but do we have the funds to do it?'

'Thank you all for your suggestions'

'Could everyone else please show respect for whoever is speaking?'

Evaluating an activity

This gets done at club meetings – or even on the bus on the way home from the event.

Evaluating involves looking back over something to see what went well, what could be improved on and how the members or the community benefited.

It can be done by all the members together or in small groups. Here are some questions you can use:

- What went well about our... trip to / our Christmas crafts sale,/ our citizenship activity?
- What did not go well?
- How could we improve the bits that did not go well?
- If we were doing it again what would we do differently?
- How did the community benefit from what we did?
- What did you learn or enjoy most?

The secretary should record the answers in the minutes so the club has them for future planning.

Hints for chairing good meetings

Be on time

Be Prepared – know what is on the agenda and be able to introduce each item

Start on time and end on time - long meetings are off putting for most members

Speak clearly and loud enough for everyone to hear

Hold your head up

Look people in the eye

Smile

Encourage everyone to participate

Don't have favourites – you are the chairperson for everyone

Support your committee officers – you are a team

Have good communication with the leaders



The 9 point plan – a tool for planning activities

This can be used by the committee, a sub-committee or at the club meeting.

1. What is the activity?

2. Why are we doing it? Who benefits and how?

3. Where will we do it?

4. Who will be involved?

5. When will we do it?

6. What equipment do we need?

7. What money do we need?

8. Who can help us?

9. After the activity is done- evaluate to see what the members learned and how other people benefited.

Tasks	People responsible	By When



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