

Information for committee members

Our volunteers are at the heart of our community and the Networks Team are here to provide expert guidance and support our volunteers and member networks' committees.

Member Networks are part of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) and as such, it's important that committee members are aware of the various rules and guidelines that are in place to ensure they are meeting legal requirements, best practice in charity governance, and to help to protect the reputation and interests of the RSC as well as individual members and Trustees involved.

The RSC Board of Trustees alongside the Chair of the respective committees are the Trustees of each network and as such have overall responsibility. RSC Board of Trustees delegate the governance of Member Networks to the Member Communities Board, who set and review the associated rules within which the member network committees must operate.

We appreciate that our volunteers give their time freely, so we try to ensure that all of the information you need for your role is easily accessible. Currently we store all of our resources for our member networks on our [useful forms and documents web page](#) but we have summarised the most important information in this document.

Purpose of our member networks

All of our member networks are run by committees of members in voluntary roles to support the RSC in its charitable aims. The purpose of our member networks is formally set out in their Trust Deed. This is the document that permits the committee to utilise Royal Society of Chemistry funds for the purpose set out in Clause 4 of the Deed.

For Interest Groups:

The fund and all associated income shall be held by the Trustees upon trust **for the general advancement of chemical science in <the scope of the group> by the dissemination of knowledge.**

For Local Sections:

The fund and all associated income shall be held by the Trustees upon trust **for the purpose of carrying out, in the local area, activities that support the purpose the Society for the convenience of local members.**

For Subject Community Regions:

Neither the Analytical nor Education Community Regions have Trust Deeds as they are sub-committees of their respective Subject Community Councils, and their purpose aligns to that of the subject community.

Support and guidance

In any instance where you or your committee are unsure about anything relating to your role as an RSC volunteer, please contact the Networks Team (networks@rsc.org). We are here to support our volunteers and we are always happy to speak with our volunteers.

Rules for our member networks

To support our volunteers, the rules which are put in place by the Member Communities Board ensure that our committees have an easy guide to their legal, financial and governance responsibilities. The full set of [rules and guidance notes](#) are available online.

It is important that committee members familiarise themselves with the content covered in the full set of Rules and refer to them when needed. Additional support is available via the Networks Team.

Here we highlight some of the most important rules:

3	Management of the member networks
3.1	All committees must act in accordance with the Royal Charter and By-laws of the Royal Society of Chemistry, the code of conduct and these rules.
5	Committee terms of office
5.1	The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the committee must be elected by the committee from amongst members of the committee who are also members of the RSC. In the case of Interest Groups joint with other organisations members of those organisations may be elected.
5.2	The maximum term of such appointments should be for three or four years, at the committee's discretion, and under normal circumstances but via subsequent elections may be extended for a term.
5.4	Committee members should serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms of three or four years, at the committee's discretion, as ordinary members. In addition to these terms, in line with 5.1, committee members may be elected as Chair, Secretary or Treasurer.
5.5	A period of two years should elapse before members are eligible for re- election to the committee.
7	Finance and legal
7.1	The committee may set up a bank account in the name of the Trust Fund as defined in clause 1 of the relevant Deed (where applicable), and may draw cheques on and make payments from such accounts. All UK and Ireland bank accounts must be set up with NatWest bank under the RSC's established banking relationship (managed by the RSC Finance Team). All payments from the accounts must be authorised by two signatories the Treasurer and one of the Chair or Secretary of the committee. All newly-appointed account signatories must be ID verified.
7.4	All contracts and/or documents which will commit the RSC to any liability must be submitted for legal review by the RSC's Legal Services Team prior to signature. Contracts should be submitted to networks@rsc.org with a completed contract approval form . Following the legal review process, all contracts must be signed by an appropriate RSC staff member with authority to bind the RSC.
7.5	Any activity with an overall budget greater than £15,000 requires the pre-approval of the Member Communities Board. All member networks need to fill in a pro-forma and submit it to staff (networks@rsc.org) at least three months before the event. Any contract for goods and/or services valued at greater than £10,000 must be approved 'in principle' by the Member Communities Board, subject to the contract approval process and submission of a copy of the (unsigned) contract to the board by the committee. This includes any bids or verbal commitments including peripatetic conferences.
8	Member networks activities
8.2	Any events or activities organised by or associated with the committee must comply with the health and safety policies and procedures of the RSC.

8.3	Any events or activities organised by or associated with the committee targeted at engaging children and vulnerable adults must comply with the safeguarding policies and procedures of the RSC.
8.4	All member and public events must be uploaded on the events database to ensure that all relevant members have access to the information.
8.5	In planning activities, the committee should consider whether there are other networks with which collaborations could be established in order to widen participation.
9	Public communication
9.1	Unless the subject relates solely to the day-to-day activities of the member network, neither the members of the network nor the committee shall authorise or countenance, or cause to be published or communicated any statement or other communication, either in the name of the RSC or the member network, without the prior knowledge and express permission of the RSC Media Team (pressoffice@rsc.org).

Volunteer Principles, Code of Conduct and Problem Solving Policy

Volunteering is deeply embedded in the culture of the RSC and is vital to delivering our chartered objectives. Our [Volunteer Principles](#) recognise the importance of volunteers to the Royal Society of Chemistry. They set the standards for the volunteer experience, and the responsibilities of both the RSC and volunteers to each other and we expect our volunteers to act in accordance with these principles.

Committee members are expected to adhere to the [Royal Charter and Bylaws of the Royal Society of Chemistry](#), the [code of conduct](#) and the [rules for member networks](#). Additional information about the purpose of our member networks and support and guidance available to committees can be found in the [member networks handbook](#).

We know that sometimes there can be issues that arise for or with our volunteers and so this policy is available on our website. We hope that you don't experience any issues as an RSC volunteer or with any of our other volunteers but we want you to know that you can come to us at any time for guidance as referenced in the [volunteer problem solving policy](#).

Role of committee Secretaries

For the purpose of RSC governance, we consider the positions of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer as the officer positions in our committees, and these roles come with specific responsibilities. Many of our committees create additional roles to share responsibility for different aspects of their activities.

Role	Secretary
Purpose	The Secretary is responsible for the organisation and recording of committee meetings. The Secretary is also the conduit through which staff communicate with the committee.
Key responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main contact point for RSC staff – this includes passing on relevant information as requested. • Either taking the committee minutes - or delegating this duty. • Organising the committee meetings and associated papers – or delegating this duty. • Preparing the annual report and ensuring that any changes to committee membership are communicated to the Networks Team. • Ensuring that the committee complies with our data protection guidelines. • Ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are completed for all events and activities. • Signatory on bank account.

<p>Person specification</p>	<p>Attributes</p> <p>Responsible - taking responsibility for ensuring that the committee meetings are accurately recorded.</p> <p>Supportive - accepting support from all of the committee members and staff and being supportive of committee members in fulfilling their responsibilities.</p> <p>Organised - can ensure the committee has a suitable agenda and associated papers in advance of each meeting.</p> <p>Focused - ensures that minutes which accurately represent the meeting are disseminated as soon as possible after each meeting.</p> <p>Detailed - can ensure that all decisions are noted and that all actions agreed are assigned.</p> <p>Decisive - can ensure that the committee makes all necessary decisions in the meetings and that any necessary follow up discussions are agreed.</p> <p>Efficient - can ensure that the annual activity reports is submitted before the deadline.</p> <p>Attitudes</p> <p>Integrity - to be the trusted leader and colleague of all committee members and to address any issues or concerns in an honest and open manner.</p> <p>Neutral - to be able to lead meetings in a neutral fashion regardless of professional or personal conflicts.</p> <p>Inclusive - to encourage an inclusive culture ensuring that all committee members are given equal opportunities to take part in meetings and running the programme.</p> <p>Open - to be open to new ideas, proposed changes to current processes or programmes and to actively seek input from new areas.</p>
<p>Training and support</p>	<p>Support for Secretaries is available from our networks team by emailing networks@rsc.org.</p> <p>Our rules and handbook give volunteers guidance on complying with our rules and advice on best practice in running their committee. Both are available online.</p> <p>We have online training new officers of our committees and any members considering taking on an officer role or any committee member wishing to understand more about the way our committees are run.</p>
<p>Benefits of the role</p>	<p>Demonstrates the following skills to employers and potential employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record keeping • Organisational • Project management • Strategic thinking/planning <p>This role also shows a desire to support the wider chemical science community and to take on a principal role in the community.</p>