

Informed decision making guide



The management committee is the guardian of the club, and makes decisions to protect the club from going off course. The main purpose of management committee meetings is to make decisions, not just to have discussions. Making good decisions efficiently allows you to move quickly from 'decision' to 'action', leading to great outcomes for your members.

What decisions may be required?

Club decisions should be made by the management committee, with the majority of committee members agreeing to the decision. These decisions could include:

- The type of events or activities the club will organise
- What needs to be purchased and how much money will be spent
- Changes to your website after a review
- Selecting a preferred quote for significant maintenance expenditure
- Agreement on terms of supplier or lease agreements
- Changes to a policy document after an annual review

When determining the best way to make a decision, consider the nature, importance and urgency of the required decision. The following steps are a recommended approach for making decisions by a management committee.

What is a 'quorum'?

Quorum is the minimum number of management committee members who must be present in a management committee meeting for a decision to be made.

Take a look at your constitution or rules, which will confirm your quorum.

Step 1: Prioritise your decision making

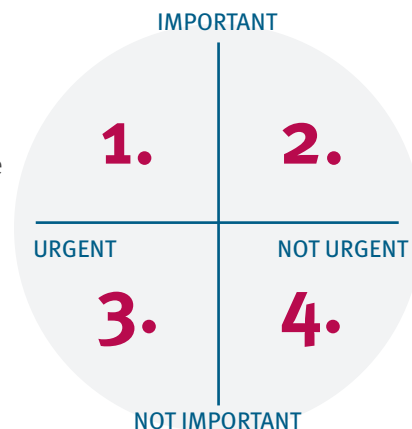
If the decision will have a significant impact or benefit to the club, a thorough process of information gathering is needed before the management committee makes the decision. Giving management committee members time to reflect and prepare is critical to making good decisions.

Urgent decision? Consider a 'flying minute'

If a task is urgent and important it can be critical to act quickly. Rather than waiting for a scheduled meeting you can share information and make decisions by email. The decision could be made by requesting committee members to reply 'agree' or 'disagree' to an email to collate votes. Remember, to help achieve a quick decision, ensure everyone on the management committee is aware of the urgency. But reserve flying minutes only for urgent matters, as they don't benefit from the power of debate. It is important that you keep a written record of any decisions made by flying minute. This might include saving a PDF copy of each committee member's response, or the complete email trail, wherever you save your meeting minutes.

What's important?

Clubs can effectively prioritise items of importance by categorising tasks into four groups: important and urgent, important but not urgent, unimportant but urgent, and unimportant and not urgent. It's crucial to focus on important tasks, regardless of urgency, to proactively manage club activities. Important tasks could include strategic planning, committee meetings, or regulatory compliance, which contribute significantly to the club's operation and longevity. By addressing these tasks before they become urgent, clubs can avoid crisis management or 'fire-fighting,' which occurs when you're forced to make critical decisions under pressure. Remember, an unaddressed important task can quickly become a crisis if it's not dealt with in a timely manner. On the other hand, some tasks may seem urgent but are not vital to your club's overall success. These could include minor administrative tasks or responding to non-critical emails. Such tasks, while requiring attention, should not detract from addressing what is truly important. This approach to prioritising helps clubs to use their resources wisely, reducing stress and enhancing productivity.



Step 2: Set parameters

If the decision is important, follow the process of informed decision making by setting parameters for a good decision, including:

- Why is this decision important?
- What information is required?
- Who will conduct the research?
- When do you need to make the decision?
- Are there any conflicts of interest relating to this decision that need to be declared?

It's all about the club

Remember to focus on club interests and not the interests of individuals. Your decisions should link to the club's objects in your constitution. When a club decision could directly impact a member of the management committee or someone close to them, this is referred to as a conflict of interest. Your constitution should include guidance for how conflicts of interest need to be disclosed and managed.

Step 3 - Gather information

Proposed decisions to be made at a management committee meeting should be included on the agenda for that meeting. The wording of the decision that the management committee intends to make should be clear and unambiguous on the agenda, allowing committee members to prepare for the decision. Before the meeting, gather all the relevant information.

Information gathering can consist of:

- Seeking out members' views (e.g. through surveys, interviews or polls)
- Conducting online research
- Gathering expert and/or external opinions
- Reviewing documents (such as policies that need to be changed and the suggested changes)
- Obtaining quotes
- Setting a budget

Make sure all management committee members have been given sufficient information and time to review it (e.g. more than 48 hours prior to a management committee meeting) so that everyone can be prepared to make an informed decision.

Step 4 - Consider the consequences

Every decision has consequences, some good and some bad. Before making an important decision, consider the consequences either way. The sorts of consequences you consider should include:

- What impact will the decision have on the club's operations (such as scheduling/rosters, coaches, canteen)?
- Will it affect the club's reputation?
- Will it influence fields, facilities, buildings and the external environment?
- Will it lead to a change in the club's financial position?
- Are there fundraising or marketing implications?
- What will our members think? What about the community?
- Will it change our relationships with suppliers, partners or other stakeholders?
- How will it affect our volunteers, paid employees and the management committee?

The danger of delay

Not making a decision is a decision in itself. Deciding to delay an important decision can have unintended consequences, like delaying the benefits that the club could enjoy by making the right decision in a timely manner.



The Best and Worst Matrix is a helpful tool when considering the consequences of your decisions.

	DO	DON'T	
BEST	What's the best that could happen if we DO ?	What's the best that could happen if we DON'T ?	
	What's the WORST that could happen if we DO ?	What's the WORST that could happen if we DON'T ?	WORST

Step 5 - Make the decision

During the meeting at which you'll make the decision, consider the information gathered, participate in constructive debate if necessary and confidently reach the conclusion. Once a decision has been made, create an action list for the next steps and get to work!

A conflict of interest can be declared at a committee meeting or in writing between meetings. If a conflict of interest is declared at a committee meeting, as well as being noted in the minutes, it should be entered into a register of declared interests, which must be shared with members at the next general meeting.

Revisit the process from Step 2 if more information is required before an informed decision can be made.

A fair decision

Support input from all management committee members and follow proper meeting procedures when debating, to ensure a fair decision. Make sure all committee members are given the opportunity to raise concerns. Constructive discussion managed effectively, while avoiding conflict, is all part of good decision making.

Step 6 - Assign

When an action list for the next steps has been made you can assign tasks.

- 1. Define and match:** Clearly outline the tasks, making sure they are actionable and specific. Identify the skills required for each task and assign them to individuals who possess these skills and have an interest in the area.
- 2. Set expectations and deadlines:** Communicate the expected outcomes and deadlines for each task. Ensure the assignees understand what is expected of them and when the task should be completed.
- 3. Equip and communicate:** Provide the necessary authority and tools for individuals to carry out their tasks efficiently. Maintain open communication for updates, changes and feedback, recognising achievements to foster motivation.

Step 7 - Review

Once you've implemented your decision, monitor the impact of the outcomes on your club.

- Do you need to inform the members or community of the decision or the outcome?
- Did the decision lead to the benefits you expected?
- Was everyone on board when you implemented the decision?
- Do you need to review the decision-making process to be more inclusive?
- Did you predict the consequences accurately?

A chance to learn

Making a decision that later turns out to be wrong can be better than not making the decision at all. This is a chance to learn what not to do next time and it can inform your future decision making.