

VICTORIA CANINE ASSOCIATION INC

CLUB MANAGEMENT

A Guide

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Clubs and their Purposes

Management Committee has become aware of increasing numbers of disputes within clubs. In the main these disputes involve breed clubs, and in all cases the disputes detract from the club's ability to fulfil the purposes for which it was formed, and the purpose for which it was affiliated with the VCA. In all cases the disputes are generated by or exacerbated by petty personality clashes that often border on misconduct under VCA Rules and Regulations.

Another factor that contributes significantly to the disputes is club mismanagement. This mismanagement can arise from lack of knowledge; inability or unwillingness to learn; power plays; adherence to ingrained incorrect methods, ideas and procedures; on committee for the wrong reasons, e.g. kudos instead of commitment to the club; and inability to cope with the rigours of the task.

Club Management

Some of the most common mistakes made by clubs (not in priority order) are:

1. Not lodging annual Section 30 (3) statements with the Department of Justice as required by the Associations Incorporation Act.
2. Not advising the Department of Justice of any change in Public Officer as required by the Act.
3. Not lodging an endorsed copy of the annual Section 30 (3) statement with the VCA as required by VCA Regulations 3.4.3.2 and 3.4.3.3.
4. Changing Rules without following the requirements of the Act and the club Rules, thereby voiding such changes.
5. Not notifying the Department of Justice of changes to Rules as required by the Act and therefore voiding the changes.
6. Not notifying the VCA of changes to club Rules as required by VCA Regulation 3.4.3.5.
7. Committee members not possessing a copy of the club Rules and/or not abiding by them.
8. Not supplying members with a copy of the Rules.
9. Not keeping the members informed e.g. not publishing Committee and General Meeting minutes in the club newsletter.
10. Not recording minutes correctly – following old incorrect ways.
11. General meeting agenda:
 - § Not notifying members of the business to be conducted;
 - § Not complying with the Rules, e.g. dealing with correspondence and business from the floor both of which are contrary to the Rules;
 - § Not educating on the correct way to submit items of business.

12. Allowing meetings to become unruly and ineffective. This deters members, particularly new members, from attending meetings and renewing membership.
13. Office bearers not following VCA Club Management Guidelines, contrary to VCA Regulation 3.4.1.6.
14. Not complying with the club's Statement of Purposes.
15. Incorrect ideas on what is legal and what is not legal in the management of a club, often based on invention or unqualified advice.
16. Using mischievous threats of legal action to create fear and uncertainty – usually these threats are unfounded, unqualified and demonstrate a lack of understanding of the law, especially as it relates to defamation.
17. Members using their position on committee to 'power play' against members they dislike.
18. Unwillingness to seek, or listen to, qualified advice.

Many of the clubs that get into difficulties contact the VCA seeking advice and respond positively to that advice. Sometimes difficulties re occur and it takes time before the club eventually regains stable management.

Unfortunately some clubs do not achieve stable management and the disputes and difficulties continue. Often a limited number of people exacerbate the problems, ignore advice and create the impression that they believe they have the right to continue the disruption. In these cases Management Committee must give serious consideration to the question of continued affiliation and / or disciplinary action against the club or specific members. These clubs should not be permitted to cast the organisation in a bad public light.

CLUB MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Before dealing specifically with any position of management, we should understand the hierarchy of a club. A club is formed by the coming together of people with common interests and goals. Such people establish the aims of the club, that is its Statement of Purpose, and for managerial efficiency elect a committee to manage the club on their behalf.

The members are the ultimate authority and the elected committee is always subordinate to the members. The members, in general meeting, may cancel, reverse or alter any decision made by the committee or make the committee accountable for it, but the committee cannot overrule decisions properly made by the members. Where the members act not in accordance with the rules, it behoves the committee to make the members aware of the fact and recommend reconsideration. The committee cannot declare the act invalid.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

It is important for intending committee members to understand the hierarchy of the club because some people volunteer to become President, Secretary etc. in the belief that the position is one of power, prestige or personal advantage. If that is what motivates a person then all that they will achieve is to generate disruption and disharmony within the club.

Nominees for committee, and elected committee members should never forget that they are servants of the club and are answerable at all times to the members.

A member should never accept nomination for a committee position unless they have:

- adequate time to do justice to the position;
- a genuine interest in voluntary committee work and the objectives of the club;
- background knowledge (or the willingness to acquire it) of the dog world; and
- a good standing in the club.

RULES

The club rules are of paramount importance in the management of a club. All too frequently clubs become embroiled in dissension and unpleasantness because the management committee lacks the thorough knowledge of the rules which would enable them to deal with problems at an early stage.

A thorough knowledge of the rules is the responsibility of all members of the management committee.

CORRESPONDENCE

INTRODUCTION

Much of the administrative work of a club revolves around dealing with correspondence. Efficient processing of correspondence makes for an easier workload for the Secretary, and inspires confidence in the committee. At a meeting, members lose confidence in a Secretary when they see that Secretary searching through a pile of loose correspondence trying to find a particular letter, yet so many Secretaries tend to adopt this 'loose leaf' style of handling the correspondence.

Correspondence has to be received, filed, considered and responded to in an efficient manner. The first step in this process is to adopt a filing system. There are many systems that can be used and the following example is a basic system which would be suitable for most clubs.

FILING

A simple and effective filing system is to use a ringed binder for all correspondence. A large "Lever Arch" binder is very suitable. All incoming correspondence and copies of outgoing correspondence should be placed in the binder as soon as they come to hand. It is not desirable to separate the inwards and outwards correspondence into two separate binders, for reasons which will become obvious in the section dealing with the Register.

A chronological sequence should be used - that is the order used is the date of receipt for incoming, and the date of despatch for outgoing.

Each piece of correspondence placed in the binder (**file**) is known as a **folio** and is given a number which is placed in the top right-hand corner of the first page, starting obviously with the number 1. Each subsequent piece of correspondence placed on the file chronologically is numbered consecutively. This numbering provides an easy and effective method of reference.

REGISTER

The correspondence file should include a register of correspondence. This register functions as an index and permits quick reference to any particular folio or subject. The register should be divided between "Inwards" and "Outwards", as per the following example:

INWARDS

Folio	Date Received	Subject	Refers To
1	2 Feb 94	VCA requesting copy of our Rules	3
2	10 Feb 94	Doggie Spoons Co re range of products	N/A
4	23 Feb 94	Corgi Club offering to share their 1996 CS judge	
7	12 Mar 94	Mr J Smith quote for painting clubhouse	5

OUTWARDS

Folio	Date Sent	Subject	Refers To
3	12 Feb 94	VCA with copy of our Rules	1
5	24 Feb 94	Mr J Smith re quote to paint clubhouse	7
6	1 Mar 94	VCA surcharge cheque and marked catalogue	

As can be seen the register offers an easy method of finding correspondence at short notice. Quickly looking down the register columns will locate the required subject, and the folio number enables the searcher to locate the correspondence in the binder.

One further refinement which also assists in referencing is a follow on to the cross-referencing in the "Refers To" columns. For example, folio 1 deals with a request for a copy of the club rules; the letter in the file would have the number 1 written on the top right hand corner. By drawing a horizontal line under the 1 and writing the number 3 under the line indicates that the folio 1 was dealt with (or refers to) folio 3. With this refinement it is easy to see, when checking through the file, whether correspondence has been dealt with.

The register and referencing outlined above also helps the Secretary at meetings. For example, when the Secretary compiles the Agenda for a committee meeting at which the quote from Mr Smith for painting would be considered, the quote would appear under CORRESPONDENCE as:

a. Quote for painting from Mr Smith (folio 7)

This enables the letter to be located quickly when that agenda item is reached. Many Secretaries isolate the correspondence which is to be dealt with at a meeting by having it loose in a separate folder because of the difficulty in locating it when required. Referencing made possible by the register overcomes that difficulty and the danger of 'loose' correspondence.

Remember: Loose correspondence = lost correspondence !

PRESIDENT AND CHAIRPERSON – Duties and Responsibilities

President

The primary duty of the President of an organisation is to ensure the successful functioning of the organisation and the attainment of its objectives.

The following is a summary of the more important powers and duties of the President:

1. To uphold the Rules of the organisation. This involves knowing the Rules thoroughly.
2. To act as Chairperson at all meetings of the organisation and its Committee.
3. To strive to continually improve the organisation's policy, activities and administration. This requires full co-operation with all members of the Committee.
4. To ensure the correct functioning of all sub committees.
5. To represent the organisation to the outside world.
6. To act, subject to any expressed or implied instructions, on behalf of the organisation and its committee in the interval between meetings.
7. To perform the customary courtesies. This includes thanking office bearers and other helpers and making new members welcome.

Note: A President should not become involved in activities which could undermine the impartiality of the office. A President should be available for consultation by the Secretary and other office bearers as required, but should not normally undertake the specific executive functions more appropriate to their particular positions.

Note: A member should not accept nomination for election to the position of President unless that member has:

1. Adequate time to do justice to the position.
2. A genuine interest in voluntary committee work in general and the objectives of the organisation in particular.
3. Background knowledge appropriate to the organisation.
4. Good standing in the community.

Powers and Duties of the Chairperson of a Meeting

Every meeting must have a Chairperson to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a proper and orderly manner and that the sense of the meeting may be ascertained. Normally the organisation's President will chair the meetings although the Rules can make other provisions. The Chairperson must be familiar with the organisation's Rules and Standing Orders. The Chairperson's more important functions include the following:

1. Before the meeting:
 - (a) to supervise the preparation of the Agenda;
 - (b) to check that all entitled to receive a notice of the meeting do so and that the notice conforms to the Rules;
 - (c) be satisfied with the accuracy of any Minutes to be presented to the meeting for confirmation;
 - (d) familiarise themselves with any correspondence or other material to be brought forward.
2. To open the meeting, after ascertaining that a quorum is present, and to welcome Guest Speakers, other visitors, and new members.

3. To preside over the meeting, to conduct it according to the Rules, to ensure the smooth passage of the business before the meeting (in the order provided for by the Agenda or by the Standing Orders or a previous resolution) and to call on the successive items of business.
4. To ascertain that a quorum is present at all times.
5. To sign Minutes of meetings as correct when they have been confirmed.
6. To present any reports required to be presented by the Chairperson.
7. To introduce Guest Speakers and to arrange for votes of thanks to them.
8. In the case of elections, to ensure the appointment of Scrutineers and or a Returning Officer, and at the appropriate time ensure that the result is declared.
9. To sign for identification purposes any document requiring this.
10. To protect free speech and to ensure that debates are conducted in the correct manner, and, in particular,
 - (a) to see that motions and amendments are respectfully worded, consistent with the Constitution, Rules and Standing Orders, unambiguous and otherwise in order;
 - (b) to see that amendments are relevant to the motion and are not direct negatives of it;
 - (c) to call speakers in appropriate sequence;
 - (d) to ensure that no person (other than the mover in reply) speaks more than once to any question;
 - (e) to allow no member other than the mover to speak on a motion or amendment which has not been seconded;
 - (f) to prevent irrelevant remarks, tedious repetition and objectionable language;
 - (g) to read the motion, amendment, and/or foreshadowed amendments before the Chair when reasonably requested to do so and before taking a vote, and at such other times as would, in the opinion of the Chair, be helpful to the meeting.
 - (h) to insist that motions and amendments are in writing in appropriate circumstances;
 - (i) to ensure that no person is unreasonably denied an opportunity to be heard;
 - (j) to call on the mover of a motion to reply when no other speaker rises, when the Chairperson feels there has been adequate discussion, when the time available is about to expire, when the closure has been carried, or when the previous question has been defeated;
 - (k) to conduct a vote when the mover of a motion has replied or when otherwise necessary, ensuring that only the votes from persons entitled to exercise them are accepted and casting their own deliberate vote before the result is known;
 - (l) to give a casting vote, when necessary, so as to preserve the status quo;
 - (m) to announce the results of all votes clearly.
11. To give rulings on Points of Order and other questions of procedure, and to do so with patience and courtesy, giving explanations where appropriate.
12. To prevent excessive heckling, but to be tolerant to reasonable interjections.
13. To preserve order, and, if necessary to name offending members.
14. To prevent discussions getting nowhere and to insist that at all times a motion is put before the Chair and that all remarks are addressed to the Chair.
15. To use in the best interests of the meeting the Chair's discretionary powers to accept or refuse to accept the various procedural motions.

16. To ensure that only persons entitled to be present are admitted to the meeting.
17. To adjourn the meeting when a motion to that effect is carried, when all business has been concluded, when the time for adjournment laid down by the Rules or by resolution is reached, or if the meeting is excessively disorderly or the quorum lapses.

Other Aspects of Chairpersonship

Four of the most important attributes of a good Chairperson are impartiality, firmness, tact and common sense. Other useful qualities are courtesy, patience and tolerance. The Chairperson should make rulings firmly and not waver or keep changing rulings.

A Chairperson's reputation for impartiality can be speedily undermined if he / she does from the Chair any of those things that should be done from the floor, such as speaking to motions in general meeting, or nominating members to some office. If the Chairperson feels sufficiently strongly about a matter, he / she should vacate the Chair temporarily. It is not, however, ethical to leave the Chair to participate in a debate which has been progressing for some time; the moment to leave the Chair is before the debate starts or immediately after the mover has spoken. This privilege should not often be availed of, as a Chairperson's too frequent participation in detailed debate endangers the reputation for impartiality – justice must not only be done, it must also seem to be done.

Reference: Guide for Meetings and Organisations – N E Renton

**SAMPLE NOTICE FOR AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
AN INCORPORATED CLUB**

THE 3RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SHOWGROUND CLUB OF VICTORIA INC
WILL BE HELD AT THE VCA DOG CENTRE, ROYAL SHOWGROUNDS, EPSOM ROAD, ASCOT
VALE ON THURSDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2001 AT 8PM

AGENDA

1. Opening
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the 2nd Annual General Meeting
4. Minutes of the 10th Special General Meeting
5. Committee Reports
6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee (see Note 1)
7. Statement of Income and Expenditure
8. Appointment of Auditor
9. Special Business (notice required - see Note 2)
10. Close

- Note: 1. Nominations for Office Bearers and Committee must be on the form attached and are to reach the Secretary by close of business on ...(date)....., Clause of the Rules refers.
2. Notices of Special Business must be in writing and must reach the Secretary by close of business on ..(date)..... to allow for publication of the detailed agenda before the meeting date.
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NB: The timings for the initial notice of the meeting, the dates by which nominations and notices of business are to reach the Secretary, and the publication of the full agenda (which will include the nominations received and notices of business) will be determined by the constraints of the Rules of the Club. Check these carefully as non compliance will not only cause ill feeling in the club, but it may also invalidate the meeting.

3RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SHOWGROUND CLUB OF VICTORIA INC HELD AT THE VCA
DOG CENTRE, ROYAL SHOWGROUNDS, EPSOM ROAD, ASCOT VALE ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2001

AGENDA

1. **Opening**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Minutes of the 2nd Annual General Meeting**

Motion that they be confirmed.
4. **Minutes of the 10th Special General Meeting**

Motion that they be confirmed.
5. **Committee Reports**
 - .1 President's Report - Motion that it be received.
 - .2 Secretary's Report - Motion that it be received.
 - .3 Treasurer's Report - Motion that it be received.
 - .4 etc
6. **Election of Office Bearers and Committee**
 - .1 Appointment of Scrutineers.
 - .2 Election of President
 - .3 etc
7. **Statement of Income and Expenditure**

Receive and consider statement in accordance with section 30 (3) of the Act.
8. **Appointment of Auditor**

For the following year.
9. **Special Business**

The Annual General Meeting may transact Special Business notice of which has been given in accordance with the Rules.
10. **Close**

SAMPLE NOTICE FOR A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF AN INCORPORATED CLUB

THE 10TH SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SHOWGROUND CLUB OF VICTORIA INC
WILL BE HELD AT THE VCA DOG CENTRE, ROYAL SHOWGROUNDS, EPSOM ROAD, ASCOT
VALE ON THURSDAY 10TH AUGUST 2001 STARTING AT 8 PM

AGENDA

- 1. Opening**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Special Business** (Notices of which have been received)
 - .1 Motion that the financial year be changed to 1 January to 31 December - moved Mr I Cee seconded Mrs U May.
 - .2 Motion that the Committee's decision to increase Membership Fees be overturned - moved Mr A Scrooge seconded Mr M Too.
 - .3 Discussion on the proposed extension to the breed standard - submitted by Mr I M Lost.
- 4. General Discussion.**
- 5. Close**

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

10TH SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SHOWGROUND CLUB OF VICTORIA INC HELD
AT THE VCA DOG CENTRE, ROYAL SHOWGROUNDS, EPSOM ROAD, ASCOT VALE ON 10TH
AUGUST 2001

AGENDA

1. **Opening**

2. **Apologies**

Motion that they be accepted.

3. **Special Business**

Note: Under the Rules of most Incorporated Clubs, only Special Business notice of which has been given may be dealt with at a Special General Meeting.

List the items (motions) of Special Business, including the mover and seconder of the motions.

4. **General Discussion**

This is an optional agenda item. Inclusion allows the members to discuss matters, question the committee, and often allows members to indicate to the committee what direction to take on matters.

Note: Motions cannot be passed during General Discussion - resolutions can only be passed on matters which have been listed as Special Business.

5. **Close**

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A COMMITTEE MEETING

22ND COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE SHOWGROUND CLUB OF VICTORIA INC
HELD AT THE VCA DOG CENTRE, ROYAL SHOWGROUNDS, EPSOM ROAD,
ASCOT VALE ON 14TH JULY 2001

AGENDA:

1. **Opening**

2. **Apologies**

Motion that they be accepted.

3. **Leave of Absence**

Motion that it be granted.

4. **Minutes of the 21st Committee Meeting**

Motion that they be confirmed.

5. **Business Arising from the Minutes**

- .1 Show Entry fees.
- .2 Working Party for Show.

6. **Correspondence**

Inwards: Motion that it be received.
Outwards: Motion that it be endorsed.

7. **Business Arising from the Correspondence**

- .1 Letter from VCA re Show Schedule.
- .2 Enquiry from Mrs I Cee.
- .3 Letter from Elkhound Club re match day.

8. **Financial Report**

Detail of report - Motion that it be received.

9. **Accounts**

List accounts to be paid - Motion that they be passed for payment.

10. **New Members**

List applicants - Motion that they be elected.

11. **Reports**

Fundraising; Social; Obedience etc. - Motion that they be received.

12. **Motions on Notice**

(list if any)

13. **General Business**

14. **Date of next meeting**

15. **Close of meeting**