

A successful chair requires tact, tolerance, enthusiasm and resourcefulness. Their main duty is to provide the branch with leadership and guidance. The chair leads meetings of both the branch and the committee.

Chairs must be knowledgeable of the work of Epilepsy Action. They must also be prepared to learn and develop as the branch progresses.

Effective branches and successful chairs learn from each other.

The key to success is through chairs' communication skills. They must be good listeners, good communicators, and good organizers.

The chair helps the secretary prepare the agenda and becomes familiar with the items to be discussed, ensuring that all relevant information will be available to the meeting.

The chair signs the minutes of the previous meeting and makes certain that whoever is taking the minutes of the current meeting knows what to record, what decisions are reached and who is responsible for carrying them out.

The chair makes sure that the meeting goes smoothly and that each item on the agenda has enough time for discussion. They should also make sure that no one item dominates time, preventing other items being discussed.

The chair makes certain that all relevant facts are known to the meeting about the item being discussed.

The chair makes sure that anyone wanting to speak on a subject has the chance to do so, without dominating the available time. The chair should also make sure that all remarks are made through the chair and that no personal matters are introduced.

If two or more people want to speak at the same time, the chair decides who speaks first. If the chair cannot control the meeting he/she can close it.

The chair should encourage all members of the branch to take part in discussions, allowing each item to be fully discussed without becoming too time-consuming.

At the end of an item the chair should draw the discussion together, summarising the important points.

The chair has the right to vote as an ordinary member of the branch and, in the case of a tied vote, the chair has a casting vote.

It is advisable for the chair to always explain their actions to the meeting. If they stop a discussion they should explain why (eg becoming too personal, straying from the point etc).

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