

Deputy Chairman

Membership & Finance

This document is to be used in conjunction with regularly supplied advice and templates through the CCHQ Compliance and Organisation Departments. It should also be seen in the context of our document “Defining an Association” that reminds us of the aims and objectives of a successful Association.

Introduction

The Deputy Chairman Membership and Finance has particular responsibility for membership, fundraising and dealing with all the financial matters of the Association.

If the Executive Council determines that the role is not to be combined then an Association may elect a separate Treasurer. This decision must be made by the Executive Council before an Annual General Meeting of members. Membership and fundraising are closely linked with political campaigning. They equal money and helpers - where Associations are strong at raising funds and recruiting and retaining a good number of members they are usually strong campaigners.

Although the overall aim must be to raise the income in any legal way to enable the Association to fulfil its aims, it is recommended to aim for an even split in fundraising:

- 33% Membership Subscriptions
- 33% Branch Fundraising
- 33% Central Association Fundraising

It is therefore important for a Deputy Chairman Membership and Finance to recognize as part of their remit, the need for both robust membership numbers and also, with fellow Officers, seeking to have members organized in to as many active Branches as possible. If an Association cannot grow and maintain a branch infrastructure it will put extra pressure on the need for greater central Association fundraising.

The combined responsibilities of the Deputy Chairman Membership and Finance are:

FINANCE

- ✔ To prepare and manage a balanced annual Association budget that can achieve the realistic political objectives of the Association.
- ✔ To maintain up to date accounts which shall be provided regularly for each of the Association's Management team and Executive Council meetings.
- ✔ To control the Association's expenditure and ensure that all invoices are paid on time.
- ✔ To present annual verified and certified accounts for the Association at its AGM.
- ✔ To be aware of and comply with PPERA compliance regulations.
- ✔ To establish an annual programme of central Association fundraising.
- ✔ To organize Fighting Fund Appeals for every election.

Preparing a Balanced Annual Association Budget

It is essential that a realistic and achievable balanced budget is set each year so that the Association can put its plans into action. This would be prepared each autumn and signed off by the final Management Team and Executive Council meetings of the year. The annual budget should be on a month by month basis so that income and expenditure can be monitored throughout the year and problems addressed immediately. Use past accounts to help plan the likely levels of income and expenditure through the year. Remember that election years will require greater funding but also provide more opportunity for financial appeals.

It is important that the budget is built on the basis of what is needed to run an effective Association rather than entirely on what might be a rather pessimistic or conservative estimate of what can be raised. Balancing the books is no achievement in itself if it is merely a report of inadequate income matching insufficient expenditure to meet the needs of the Association.

It is also sensible to establish a three year financial plan as part of the Association's Strategy Plan which aims to plan for replacement of major items such as IT and printing equipment, office furniture, redecoration etc. Plan ahead to ensure that sufficient income is raised to fight elections and a surplus to help through times of reduced income such as the period after a General Election. If the Association owns or leases a building it is advisable to include payments to a building fund to ensure that repairs and renewals are carried out on a regular basis. However, it is essential that ownership of a building does not become a drain on an Association. Members do not join the Party to pay for the maintenance of dilapidated buildings and if the building cannot be proved to be a cost-effective means of providing an office and maybe income for the Association then serious consideration needs to be given as to whether it is an asset worth retaining.

Provision of Regularly Updated Accounts, Control of Expenditure and Payment of Invoices on time

The accounts must be kept up to date and current reports provided at all Management Team and Executive Council meetings. A clear understanding of the Association's financial position will enable control of expenditure. If a monthly budget forecast has been completed it should be easier to maintain control of the cash

flow. If income is consistently below the budgeted level it may be necessary to reduce expenditure BUT only as a last resort and after all attempts at increased income generation have been exhausted. Simply reducing expenditure is an easy way out. Refusing to pay invoices is not an option. All should be paid promptly.

To Present Annual Verified and Certified Accounts at the Association AGM

It is essential that accurate end of year accounts detailing the financial position and performance of the Association are put to the Annual General Meeting each year. On that basis, the turn of the year is when all financial records from the Branches and the Association need to be collected and collated using the templates as supplied by the CCHQ Compliance Department. The accounts

should then be passed to the independent verifier as agreed by the previous year's AGM and returned for the Management Team and Executive Council meetings, held in the early part of the New Year, to scrutinize and adopt for tabling at the Annual General Meeting so that the members may analyse, question and vote on adoption.

To be aware of and comply with PPERA (Compliance) Regulations

The Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act places an obligation on Associations regarding the reporting of donations of goods and services, cash and in kind, also publishing

of accounts. The Compliance Department at CCHQ regularly issues information and advice on all these matters and these can be found on the Blueprint website.

Set an annual programme of central Association fundraising

The Association should seek to raise at least a third of its annual income from a programme of central Association fundraising which might include Christmas and Summer Draws, a Patrons Club, Luncheon Club, Annual Dinner.

These should not encroach on Branch fundraising and should seek to attract 'new money' to the Association i.e. being run as much to involve non-members as members. If real money is to be raised then events of a major nature should be geared towards such thus attract donations and ticket sales from the business and professional

community. It is important that a central diary of fundraising events is held by the Association and communicated regularly to members and Branches so as to get in to people's diaries early and to avoid event clashes.

Your Field Director and the Voluntary Party Manager team will be happy to offer advice on ways to increase your fundraising capabilities and there is guidance on a number of fundraising ideas on the Blueprint website.

To organise fighting fund appeals for every election

If the organization of the substantial type of election campaign that will maximize an election result is to be achieved then a Fighting Fund must be organized in good time, with thought

and planning. The objective being to raise the sort of income required to meet the election budget. Campaigns should not be under-gunned due to lack of monies.

MEMBERSHIP

✔ Ensure efficient membership renewals and administration (NB until switch over to central administration of membership)

✔ Send regular newsletters, bulletins, invitations etc to members and work with your fellow Officers to ensure that the Association's website is regularly updated and always current

✔ Get to know the interests and skills of the members and ensure that they are asked for help and to get involved

✔ Ensure that all members' email addresses and mobile numbers are captured and loaded on to Votesource, keeping records up to date.

✔ Carry out constant membership recruitment activities

Ensure Efficient Membership Renewals and Administration

Until the switchover to central administration of membership renewals, the administration of renewals in advance of their due date, leaving sufficient time to keep them current, must be

robust and constant, including amending the Votesource database records and sending out new membership cards.

Send Regular Newsletters, Bulletins, Invitations etc to Members, Updating of Website

Just as with any membership based organization, members have a right to expect and should be sent regular newsletters, bulletins and invitations to events/activities. Use of new media is important with this and as part of this,

ensuring that the Association's website is regularly updated and always current. This acts also as a public face of the Association thus to inform and hopefully attract new support and involvement.

Get to Know the Interests and Skills of the Members, Ensuring That They are Asked for Help and Involvement

All types of produced communications to members should incorporate the opportunity for them to specify their interests and skills, mark on Votesource, then as such are required, make sure they are asked to help with whatever projects or activities are being run as are applicable.

Equally, don't dismiss activities because the current Officers haven't the time or skills, call up those who have and can make something happen.