



**Handbook for Members of Tennis Ireland and
Provincial Branch Committees**

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Foreword

I would like to thank you for volunteering to sit on a Tennis Ireland / Branch Committee.

Board and Branch meetings usually have busy agendas and Committees play a key role in supporting the operation of the organisation.

When Board / Branch discussions take up too much meeting time, it is generally best to move items to a committee for further research, problem-solving and discussion. Committees can tackle one issue at a time and give an agenda item the time that it demands.

Well-run committee meetings require a skilled chairperson who can clearly outline and communicate to the other committee members what they need to accomplish. A key role of Committee members is to work together to produce a comprehensive report and final recommendations for presentation to the Board or the Branch.

This handbook provides members of the Board and Branch Council Chair's with the necessary information to understand their role and responsibilities regarding the overall governance and management of a committee whether at national or branch level.

I hope you find it useful and that it improves your experience on whatever committee you are a member of.

Regards

Richard Fahey
Chief Executive

1. Committee Member Responsibilities

In addition to specific roles required by membership on individual committees, members of Tennis Ireland and Branch committees are expected to actively participate in the work of the committee, provide thoughtful input to committee deliberations, and focus on the best interests of the organisation and the sport and committee goals rather than on personal interests.

Members should

- Review all relevant material before committee meetings
- Attend committee meetings and voice objective opinions on issues
- Pay attention to organisational activities that affect or are affected by the committee's work
- Support the efforts of the committee chair and carry out individual assignments made by the chair
- Work as part of the committee and staff team to ensure that the committee's work and recommendations are in keeping with the organisations mission and goals

2. Committee Chair Responsibilities

In addition to specific roles required by the activities of individual committees, chairs of Tennis Ireland or Branch committees are expected to guide their committees and work with staff to develop necessary work plans and meeting agendas.

Chairs should

- Establish a calendar of meetings
- Approve reports of committee meetings before their distribution
- Report to the committee on decisions of the Board / Branch or of executive staff that affect the committee's work
- Where appropriate, guide the committee in proposing new activities and service that will further the mission and goals of the organisation
- Where appropriate, make policy recommendations to the Chief Executive for transmission to the Branch or Board of Tennis Ireland

3. Structuring the Meeting

With the help of the staff liaison, Committee Chairs should:

- Develop and provide an agenda sheet with the beginning and ending times for the meeting, meeting location, a list of committee members, and the agenda of topics.
- Sequence agenda items thoughtfully. Start the meeting with topics that will unify the committee, and with topics that will require mental energy, creativity, and clear thinking. Do not put difficult topics back-to-back. Make the first few topics

after lunch quick-action items. Build in breaks at logical places (at least every two hours). End with topics that should unify the committee.

- Provide at least minimal written background information for each agenda item.
- Indicate whether the item is for discussion only or if action is expected.
- Identify the person who is presenting each item.

4. Facilitating the Meeting

The committee belongs to the organisation, not to the chair: the chair's primary role is as facilitator.

Committee Chairs should guide:

- Guide mediate, probe, and stimulate discussion.
- Monitor talkative members and draw out silent ones.
- Encourage a clash of ideas, but not of personalities. If emotions run high over a difficult issue, return the floor to a neutral person, seek a purely factual answer, or take a break.
- Keep discussions on track, periodically re-state the issue and the goal of the discussion.
- In moving toward a decision, call on the least senior or vocal members first to express their views. Discussions tend to close after senior members express strong views.
- Seek consensus; unanimity is not required.
- Announce the results of actions taken and explain the follow-up to be taken and by whom.
- Close the meeting by noting achievements
- Following adjournment, meet briefly with the staff liaison to agree on follow-up actions and locus of responsibility.

5. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Chairs can refer to the Tennis Ireland Committee Meeting Minutes Template.

Minutes should:

- Include the date, time, and place of the meeting. Note the name of the chair, members present and absent, and other key people in attendance.
- Note all decisions reached, including resolutions passed and follow-up actions to be taken, with deadlines for implementation
- Include summary of discussions. Do not attribute comments to members except possibly where formal motions are introduced.
- Provide information on the time and place of the next meeting
- Meeting reports should be prepared as soon as possible (and within 30 days) after the meeting. They may be shared with the committee with a request that members contact the chair or staff liaison if errors are noted.

6. Staff Support

Where possible or appropriate, each committee should have one staff member who serve as liaisons and perform a variety of tasks, including:

- Contacting individuals to offer them committee appointments
- Providing orientation for each new committee member and chair about their responsibilities and work schedule. This may include a committee manual (in print or electronic form), and will include a committee roster, minutes of previous committee meetings, background on recent committee activities, information about key people with whom the committee or chair is likely to interact
- Developing and maintaining committee descriptions, procedural information, and minutes and activity reports for committees on the appropriate platform, as well as updating committee information in the Tennis Ireland committee management database
- Working with the chairs of the committees to ensure that committee responsibilities are fulfilled, and meeting agendas are set
- Providing administrative assistance to the chair in setting up and conducting meetings
- Facilitating communications between committees and Tennis Ireland / Branch management