



Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc.

Committee Member Handbook

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VHDPA Inc
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www.hall.com.au

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to be a Committee member for the Village of Hall and District Progress Association. We welcome your enthusiasm and hope you will find the work of the Committee to be fun and rewarding. This short orientation handbook explains the community's expectations of the VHDPA Committee and aims to provide some guidance for its efficient and smooth functioning. This handbook is kept on the VHDPA website and may be updated by the Committee of the day at any time as it sees fit. Committee members are volunteers and we are grateful you have committed to make time for this job. As a community organisation that operates entirely off the good will of relatively few people, members of the Committee are particularly appreciated for their warmth, cooperative spirit and initiative-taking.

1. About the Progress Association

The 'Progress Association' is an incorporated, not-for-profit community association which promotes the interests of Hall and district community members. While the Association is incorporated in the ACT, the Hall district extends across the border towards Murrumbateman and Gundaroo, and down to the Murrumbidgee River. Hall village has been designated a heritage precinct in the Territory Plan, due primarily to past efforts of the Association.

The Progress Association has been part of this community for more than a hundred years, and is believed to be the oldest community association in the ACT. It has a long and proud history of representing the needs and interests of the community and is recognized by government for its capacity to represent the village and district.

2. Functions of the Progress Association

The objects of the Association are:

- (a) *to further the interests and welfare of the community of the Village of Hall and District; and,*
- (b) *to protect and progress the amenity and character of the Village of Hall.*

The Association, working in partnership with government agencies, statutory bodies and other stakeholders when needed, performs a number of functions including:

- **Advocacy and representation** of the Hall and district community in relation to significant planning, development, heritage and environmental issues and the provision of government services.
- Custodianship and management of the **Hall Showground Pavilion** and **School Site**.
- Informing the community about local issues, events, and personalities – through the **Rural Fringe** newsletter, and the Association's **website**.
- Organising or helping to organise a range of **community social and fund-raising activities**.
- Facilitating or undertaking minor **repairs and maintenance** in and around the village, such as at the showground and barbeque sheds.
- Acting as an **umbrella group** for a number of special interest groups and affiliated community associations.
- Convening **public meetings** or facilitating other types of consultation on issues of widespread community interest or concern.

3. Values and Behaviours of the Committee

The community of Hall and the district entrusts the Committee to manage the affairs and funds of the Association and expects Committee members to uphold and observe the following values and associated behaviours:

Integrity, honesty and transparency

- Place the interests of the community, members and the Association above personal and professional interests
- Provide timely and equal access to information to fellow Committee members
- Share information about the work and decisions of the Association with members and the community

Respect

- Treat members of the Association and fellow Committee members with courtesy and respect
- Listen to and respect different points of view, welcome and consider differing ideas and opinions in decision-making processes
- Oppose prejudice and promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the Association's governance

Responsibility and commitment

- Pursue the objects of the Association
- Keep the community informed and engage with and consult with members and the community.
- Participate in Committee meetings and keep informed about developments and issues relevant to the Association's operations.
- Understand the heritage and environmental values of the village precinct and surrounds and act to promote and protect them
- Promote and support local amenity and enterprise
- Carry out assigned duties and discharge those duties with the degree of care and diligence that a reasonable person would exercise
- Within the bounds of authority and ability, make sure that the Association observes sound financial practices, manages risks effectively and complies with relevant laws and regulations
- Abide by the constitution and agreed processes of the Association
- Represent the Association officially or communicate officially on behalf of the Association only when designated by the Committee.
- Do not cause detriment or disrepute to the Association or the Committee

Cooperation and community

- Work collaboratively and cooperatively and promote a sense of community through the Association's work;
- Seek out ways that make members, residents and fellow Committee members feel included and recognised;
- Encourage fun and enjoyment in the work of the Association

4. Community consultation

The Association gains its legitimacy to represent the community through its membership numbers and through its ability to reflect community views, which it can only know through consultation. Consultation also allows the experience and expertise of community members to contribute to the work of the Association. It can be difficult to find the balance between ensuring there is adequate and good quality consultation that seeks out all the relevant information, views and concerns on which informed decisions can be made and not letting the consultation bog down a project or the voice of a few override the views of many. It should also be acknowledged that not everyone in the community has access to the website or email. For any new project, the Committee should agree on the level of consultation needed and the methods to be used. The following table suggests some of the available methods.

Level	When used	Methods	Examples
Information	To let the community know about a decision or a proposal. Also used for ongoing information about a continuing project	Rural Fringe; website; letterbox drop; community noticeboard; email to member list	President's Page in the Rural Fringe letting community know of Association priorities for the year
Consultation	To gauge community interest or views about a project; seek comment on a proposal, action or issue or build consensus for a course of action. Used when information is needed or a proposal is likely to have widespread interest and impact. Views are taken into account in decision making and decisions are explained	As above plus suggestion box; community survey; discussions with affected residents; focus group discussions; site visits; public meetings; general meetings	Finding out how many people would use a bus service to Hall; Choosing between options for reducing speed on Victoria Street
Involvement	Involve the community in discussion or debate throughout the course of project development and implementation	As above plus task force; community workshops; public meetings with expert panels	Developing the Master Plan for Hall; Project for improving drainage in Hall

Terms of Reference for the Committee

The Committee controls and manages the affairs of the Association.

Committee meetings

The Committee consists of the office-bearers of the Association and up to 7 ordinary Committee members. Most of the work of the Committee is progressed through Committee meetings. For matters of broader interest, a General meeting may be called at any time (see constitution). The Committee generally meets on the third Wednesday of each month, except January, at 7pm at the Cottage.

All Committee members are expected to attend and fully participate in meetings. They should be familiar with the Association's constitution, with Access Canberra's Guide to Incorporated Associations in the ACT (July 2017), the Hall Village Heritage Precinct Code, the VHPDA website and with the contents of this handbook.

Office bearers

Office-bearers of the Association (president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary) are expected to have appropriate skills to fulfil specific roles:

(a) The president

- provides leadership for the Association, including leading on setting priorities, plans and meeting agendas for the work of the Association and upholding the constitution and values
- works closely with the vice-president, treasurer and secretary to enable the smooth operations of the Committee
- chairs meetings and facilitates decision-making
- is the primary official representative of the Association

(b) The vice-president

- substitutes for the President in their absence, including as alternative chair of meetings
- supports the work of the treasurer, secretary and president
- helps progress priority work of the Committee

(c) The treasurer

- collects and receives all amounts owing to the Association and makes all payments authorised by the Committee;
- keeps correct accounts and books showing the financial affairs of the Association with full details of all receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the Association;
- liaises with the treasurers of all special interest groups to ensure they keep records and manage affairs in a way that allows the treasurer to fulfil their duties;
- liaises with the Association's auditor to help ensure the Association is meeting all legal requirements;
- provides a financial report to each regular Committee meeting;
- prepares and arranges for the audit of the annual statement of accounts, to be available at least 14 days before the association's AGM to allow members to access the information in the statements.

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(d) The secretary

- keeps minutes of
 - all elections and appointments of office-bearers and ordinary Committee members;
 - the names of members of the Committee present at a Committee meeting or a general meeting; and
 - the proceedings and resolutions of Committee meetings and general meetings.
- circulates draft minutes to Committee members shortly after a meeting. Minutes are agreed out of session and published on the website.
- circulates a draft agenda to Committee members two weeks in advance of a Committee meeting. The draft agenda should also be published on the website.
- keeps all correspondence, records and documents relating to the Association. This includes the current list of members.

Public officer

The public officer is appointed by the Committee and remains until they retire or a different public officer is appointed. They are the official contact for receiving, dealing with and lodging statutory documents and facilitating elections.

Legal obligations

Committee members should appreciate their legal obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 as they may be prosecuted if they do not take all reasonable steps to ensure the association complies with the Act. The following is a selection of legal obligations taken from Access Canberra's Guide to Incorporated Associations in the ACT (July 2017).

- An association must maintain a register of members and make it available for inspection for members at reasonable times or as stated in the rules of the association.
- All associations must keep and maintain financial records that explain the association's transactions and its financial position.
- An incorporated association must lodge an annual return with Access Canberra within six months of the end of the financial year for that association.

Conflict of interest

At the commencement of an agenda item at a Committee meeting, any Committee member who has a potential conflict of interest with respect to the agenda item must declare that potential conflict. The remaining Committee members will decide if the potential conflict (even if it is only perceived) means the Committee member is excused from the discussion or voting on that item. This procedure is to protect both the Committee member and the reputation of the Association and to ensure the Committee is seen to be placing the interests of the community, members and the Association above personal and professional interests.

Projects and Tasks

Projects may be initiated by a request from a member of the community or a member of the Committee. When an idea comes before the Committee it needs to consider whether it is consistent with the objects and values of the Association and sufficiently important to be pursued. This initial stage may involve community consultation or other investigations and a Committee member may be designated by the Committee to formulate the idea into a viable project or a 'watching brief' for a particular issue. This becomes a formal project when the

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Committee deems it so, determines the level and means of community consultation, time frame, budget limit if applicable and formally assigns a project manager with a specific mandate.

Action Item Register

A project, along with regular work of the Committee (for example the maintenance and upkeep of the school site and pavilion) becomes an item on the Action item register and progress is reported at subsequent meetings. A project is complete when the Committee agrees it is complete. It is then removed from the Action item register. The Action item register is updated as part of the agenda and after each Committee meeting as part of the minutes.

Expenditure

If a Committee member needs to expend Association funds, they must receive the authorisation of the Committee for the expenditure (except for Special Interest Groups, see below). This may be done between Committee meetings through exchange of emails and minuted at the subsequent Committee meeting. Invoices should be made out to the Village of Hall and District Progress Association and provided to the treasurer for payment. Receipts must be issued for cash or cheque payments.

Special Interest Groups

The current special interest groups of the Association are the Hall School Museum and Heritage Centre, the Hall Men's Shed and the Hall Collector's Club. They each have their own management Committees and bank accounts but fall under the umbrella of the Association for insurance and legal purposes. The Rural Fringe also manages its own bank account. Special Interest Groups formally report once per year to the Association, in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting. The Committee may ask them to report more regularly to the Committee. Special interest groups formally exist as sub-committees of the Association and the appointment of a chair for each group and the Rural Fringe Editor is endorsed by the Committee.

Support for ad hoc proposals

The VHDPA's primary financial responsibility is the maintenance and upkeep of the school site and pavilion as these are, in turn, the source of funds for the association. The VHDPA is not primarily a fund raising entity. Nevertheless, surplus funds may be distributed in response to requests. The Committee assesses such requests using a number of criteria, found on the VHDPA request for grant form at <https://www.hall.act.au/documents.html>.

Out of session decisions

Where appropriate the Committee can conduct business through email exchange between Committee members. The protocol for the sender of a request is to respect the time constraints of Committee members, provide full information and a clear request for a decision and respond as quickly as possible to requests for more information. The protocol for recipients is to consider the correspondence, ask questions if necessary, and respond as quickly as possible. A decision is taken when a majority of members supports or declines to support a decision. Decisions taken by email should be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the Committee.