



Guide to Serving on the UK Magnetics Society Committee

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Introduction to the Guide

This guide is intended to give potential or new committee members an overview of how the UK Magnetics Society works, and what their commitments, liabilities and opportunities are likely to be. It is advisory only; any comments herein can be superseded by the Constitution of the Society, decisions made by the committee, or events on the ground.

Introduction to the Society

The UK Magnetics Society is a leading professional society run on a not-for-profit basis for the benefit of its members. It is, in general, controlled by an elected committee and administered by an appointed Secretariat, but minor day to day decisions are taken by the Chair, Vice-Chair and Head of the Secretariat.

Although we are called the UK society, there is no geographical restriction on membership, and about 30% of our members are based in Europe or further afield.

Your Role as a Committee Member

In conjunction with the other committee members, you control what the Society does and when it does it, and you oversee how the Society works and how it spends its member's money.

You decide what events we put on, when and where they should be held, and what their agenda will be. Whether we award bursaries, buy equipment, collaborate with other organisations, develop new benefits for the membership and the community, and the many other things we do.

We ask you to use your knowledge and experiences for the benefit of the Society – your knowledge of your field of magnetics to help organise events and find speakers, your networks to market the events, your skills in the running of the Society.

In return, we offer you the opportunity to organise events in your area of magnetics, and in topics you're interested in, even 'niche' areas for the Society. In addition, many members of the UK magnetics community have served on the committee over the years, so you will gain kudos (and sympathy) for giving your time and effort to the Society. And when your time is done, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you've helped support a popular Society that has been running for many years, and hopefully many more to come.

1. Liabilities and Risks

- 1.1. Working for the Society as a committee member does carry some financial and physical risks.
- 1.2. Physical risks are no greater – in fact probably less than – than your normal working conditions, in that you will be travelling and working in offices or conference rooms, with all the physical risks those activities incur.
- 1.3. Financially, as the Society is an unincorporated association, the serving committee is liable for any debts the Society incurs, split evenly between them. This is a standard situation for an unincorporated association (which is a very common type of structure in the UK), and a conscious decision taken by the committee in 2021.
- 1.4. The turnover of the Society is in the region of £80,000 pa; with an average committee of 16 people, a reasonable maximum debt for each committee member could be £5,000.
- 1.5. The financial risk is mitigated first of all by the committee monitoring the secretariat's activities, in particular the finances, and ensuring the Society does not bankrupt itself, for example by agreeing to contracts beyond its financial means.

- 1.6. Both financial and physical risks arising from your role as a committee member are protected by insurances the Society renews each year. The insurance will provide cover providing claims are not caused by illegal activity on the part of some or all of the committee – e.g. if the Society becomes bankrupt because its funds have been stolen by committee members with access to the bank account, and the committee allowed this to happen by not having adequate oversight of the account's workings, then the insurance may not pay out.

2. Roles

- 2.1. Committee Member – everyone serving on the committee is a committee member, and all have the same rights and responsibilities, but the Vice-Chair and Chair have extra duties or rights.
- 2.2. Chair – if required, the Chair has the casting vote in any decision which the committee decides requires a vote. The Chair puts together the agenda for, and chairs the meetings of the Society's committee – called Quarterly Management Meetings (QMMs) – or designates a stand-in for the QMM. The Chair serves for 2 years, in addition to any time they have already served as a committee member and Vice-Chair. The Chair is a co-signatory on the Society's bank account.
- 2.3. Vice-Chair – if required, the Vice-Chair stands in for the Chair and takes over if the Chair has to stand down. The Vice-Chair automatically becomes the Chair once the Chair's two year term is complete. The Vice-Chair serves for 2 years, in addition to any time they have already served as a committee member. The Vice-Chair is a co-signatory on the Society's bank account.
- 2.4. Secretary – the Chair serves as the Society's Secretary as and when required and monitors the general operations of the Society.
- 2.5. Treasurer – the Vice-Chair serves as the Society's Treasurer as and when required and reviews the Society's finances.
- 2.6. Secretariat – the Secretariat is not a member of the committee, but is an organisation contractually appointed to administer the Society's operations (invoicing, finance, membership, production of MagNews, administration, running the website, etc) and the committee's decisions (mainly organising and administering events and seminars). The Head of the Secretariat attends the QMMs, and is a co-signatory on the Society's bank account. The Head of the Secretariat is currently Alastair Stewart of Macresco Ltd, with Henry Beaudette and James Sweeney providing financial and events services respectively.

3. Transition

- 3.1. Duration – Committee members serve for 3 years after the AGM in which they are elected. The exception are Student Committee members, who serve for 1 year.
- 3.2. Coming onto the Committee – any Society member can be invited to stand for the committee by any member of the Society; any proposed committee members have to be elected at an AGM. New committee members are proposed in an attempt to balance the committee between the interests of the Society – academia, industry and subject areas. (This includes committee members who come on to the committee part way through a year, say to replace a committee member who has to stand down.)
- 3.3. Retiring / Leaving the Committee – Committee members must retire after 3 years, unless they are elected to Vice-Chair. A committee member can be asked to stand down by the Chair if they are not performing their duties to the benefit of the Society, or can ask to resign if they feel they cannot perform their duties.
- 3.4. Election to Vice-Chair / Chair – any committee member can be approached by the current Vice-Chair (future Chair) and asked if they would serve as the new Vice-Chair; they can either accept or refuse, but if they accept they must be willing to fulfil the extra duties of the Vice-Chair and Chair in turn, and understand the 4 year commitment implied by the two positions, on top of any time they may already have served on the committee. The invited Vice-Chair must be proposed and elected to the position at the relevant AGM.

4. Opportunities

- 4.1. Serving on the Committee can benefit you in several ways:
- 4.2. A position of responsibility – especially if you go on to be the Vice-Chair or Chair. Your work on the committee overseeing the Society's planning and financial matters can provide valuable experience.

- 4.3. Recognition within the European magnetics community; particularly in the UK where many people have already served on the committee;
- 4.4. The opportunity to organise events which may benefit your area of magnetics, improve your network or establish or develop future opportunities for you. You can propose seminars or events in your particular area of magnetics interest, no matter how niche compared to the rest of the Society, and with any specific aim; providing the rest of the committee agrees, the Society will support you in organising the event, help you market it to attract the delegates you want to attend, and pay the bills incurred in running it.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. Decisions / Guidance of the Society – most decisions regarding the operation of the Society are taken by consensus of the committee, but occasionally issues require a vote, which are usually decided by a simple majority. Discussions on Society matters will mainly take place in the QMMs, but also in between as required.
- 5.2. Actions / Sub-committees – committee members may be asked to deliver particular actions on behalf of the Society, or serve on specialist sub-committees to deliver particular projects for the Society; these will be either due to their specialist knowledge or particular interest in the deliverables. Committee members may decline the responsibility of delivering an action.
- 5.3. Monitor the Society's finances – the committee monitors the Society's finances, mainly via a statement given at each QMM, but can be by request to the Secretariat at any time, within reason. The aim is to generate sufficient funds from advertising, seminars and memberships to cover the Society's costs (which are mainly the Secretariat's contract and costs) and prevent the Society sustaining a loss in any financial year.
- 5.4. Events – a key job of the committee is choosing which events the Society will run – topic areas, dates and masterminds (the people who chair each event). The Society runs about 9 or 10 events a year, mostly in the UK, but we are trying to increase the number of events we organise in Europe.

6. Duties

- 6.1. Attendance at QMMs – committee members should attend all QMMs, as these are where most decisions regarding the Society are taken. There are four QMMs each year, held, by invitation, in different venues around the UK. Each lasts about 5 hours, and reviews recent activity and finances, plans future activity and decides any matters which require resolution.
- 6.2. Event organisation - each event is overseen, or masterminded, by at least one committee member and usually two. To spread the workload, each committee member has to mastermind or assist at least two events each year. Masterminding an event includes working out the details of the subject, finding a venue, finding speakers, chairing the day, and writing a report for publication in MagNews. The subject areas for the events are up to the committee members to propose, or volunteer to take on regular subject area in which they have an interest.
- 6.3. Promotion of the Society – each committee member must promote the Society and its events as well as possible; for example, handing out Society or event flyers at exhibitions they may attend, emailing their networks about relevant events, mentioning the Society where relevant in discussions or presentations, helping to establish contacts with other Societies or potential new members. Material can be provided by the Secretariat on request.
- 6.4. Technical Enquiries – the Society receives several enquiries about magnetic issues every month, and these are forwarded to the committee in confidence for answering. Committee members should treat these fairly and suggest the best contenders for answering the enquiry, which may include competitors as well as their own organisations.

Figure 1: Expected Workload; NB: These figures give an idea of the *minimum* time a committee member can expect to spend on Society activities.

Type of Work	Frequency
Attendance at QMM	4 / year, 1 day each
Delivering Society business	Variable, dependent on what the member agrees to take on
Masterminding an Event	1/ year minimum, minimum 1 day each to run, several days to organise
Assistant Masterminding an Event	1/ year minimum, minimum 1 day each to run, several days to organise

Society / Event Promotion	As required / possible, minimal
Technical Enquiries	As required, minimal