



HOW TO FORM A NEW CAMERA CLUB?

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The term “Camera Club” is used in this guide without any implied requirement or preference that a club for those interested in photography must be called a “Camera Club”. Many use other styles such as “Photographic Club” or “Group”.

The use of the word “Society” in a club’s name is generally restricted to clubs that are Incorporated Societies under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908.

DISCLAIMER

This guide is based on the experience of members of PSNZ, and has been prepared on a “best endeavors” basis. The guide is not intended as a definitive documentation of the legal and accounting matters that may be involved in the establishment of a new Camera Club, and users should seek professional legal and accounting advice on particular matters as necessary.

Neither PSNZ, nor the author of this guide, accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions in the guide, or for any adverse consequences, including costs and/or losses arising from the use of the guide.

BACKGROUND

The circumstances surrounding the formation of a new Camera Club can vary widely and it is not possible to cover each one in this guide. Some typical circumstances are: -

- A “green-fields” independent new club, in an area where a Camera Club has not previously existed
- The re-establishment of a club in a region where a Camera Club previously existed but is now defunct.
- A new club in a part of a region currently served by an existing Camera Club. This may include: -
 - A new club sponsored by the exiting club
 - A friendly breakaway of some members of the existing club to create a smaller more intimate club, or to create a club in their suburb to minimize travel etc...
 - An unfriendly break-away ...
 - A new club to focus on limited specific photographic objectives such as nature photography, digital photography etc..

While the circumstances for a particular new club may vary widely, there are a number of common steps that should be taken, and these are set out in the remainder of this guide.

FIND EXPERIENCE -Don't "Reinvent the Wheel"

Where possible, it is **highly desirable** to have a person with significant camera club experience involved in the establishment of a new club, and with its leadership in its first year or two of operation. Such a person should bring a new club a wealth of experience, ideas and contacts that will help avoid "*re-inventing the wheel*" and allow the new club to build on the experience of others. This should significantly improve the new club's chances of being successful.

Experience can be sourced in a number of ways including: -

- One or more of those wishing to establish the new club may have such experience and will naturally, or can be prevailed upon, to play a major role in the creation of the new club
- An existing nearby club may be happy to sponsor the new club and to second one or more experienced members to assist the new club in its first year or two
- A member of another club may be prepared to personally act as a sponsor or mentor for the new club in its first year or two
- PSNZ is able to provide suitable mentors to assist a new club get established and up and running

TYPICAL STEPS INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING A NEW CAMERA CLUB

Step 1:

Form an Establishment Group

Find a small number of like minded individuals prepared to drive the establishment of the new club – this is the "Establishment Group"

Step 2:

Sort out what is proposed

The Establishment Group should meet and sort out their common goals including:-

- a) Why do they want to form the proposed new Camera Club?
- b) Is there a need for the proposed new club?
- c) What are to be the general objectives of the new club?
 - i. General amateur photography?
 - ii. Specific aspects of photography – nature, digital etc..?
 - iii. Provide facilities? (darkroom or projectors and AV equipment etc)
 - iv. or just bring interested people together?
- d) What is to be the style or character of the club?
 - i. All members to be hands-on photographers or just anyone interested in photography?
 - ii. A hard-driving competitive club or a more laid back, "follow your interests" style
 - iii. "Photography on the cheap" or "go first class"?

- e) What region is the new club going to operate in /draw members from?
- f) What are the size/growth expectations for the new club?
- g) A general idea for a name for the proposed club
- h) A general schedule for the establishment of the proposed club
- i) Definite dates for the establishment meetings
- j) Select a Chairperson to lead the Establishment Group
- k) Prepare a written outline of their general ideas and objectives for the proposed club to assist other understand what is proposed

Step 3:

Advertise a Meeting for Interested People

With the common goals sorted out, the Establishment Group should then advertise and promote their intentions to form the proposed club, and advise of a first meeting of interested people, by advertisements, flyers, word of mouth etc., including: -

- i. Flyers in local camera shops, photolabs, pharmacies etc
- ii. Flyers on local public notice boards in council offices, libraries, public places
- iii. Advertisements in local newspapers, local radio stations' community notices e
- iv. Involvement in local radio station "what's happening"/talk-back programmes
- v. Providing a written outline on what is proposed for the club, to interested parties
- vi. Get alongside the local professionals who may well offer tuition and help

Step 4:

Prepare for the Meeting of Interested People

The Establishment Group should carefully prepare for the first meeting of interested people so that this first meeting is a real success, projecting the prospect of a dynamic and well-organised club that the interested people will want to join.

This will typically include preparation of written material for distribution at the meeting, outlining the following: -

- a) Introduction of the members of the Establishment Group
- b) Club objectives
- c) Club style/character
- d) Club region
- e) What are members going to get from their membership
- f) Club growth objectives
- g) Proposed frequency of meetings
- h) Proposed meeting venue
- i) Likely subscription rates
- j) A proposed programme for the first few months of operation
- k) Proposed Rules for the club

Step 5:

Hold the first meeting of interested people.

We recommend that: -

- a) All members of the Establishment Group attend
- b) Start on-time
- c) Collect names, contact details, photographic interests and abilities of all those attending
- d) Conduct the meeting in a positive, organized and interactive way.
- e) Work through the proposals for the club, getting input from those attending through strong chairmanship – watch that a few individuals do not monopolise/derail the discussions.
- f) Record the mood of the meeting on the various proposals put to it, so that the Establishment Group can incorporate these into the establishment of the club
- g) Get: -
 - i. endorsement of the concept to establish the club
 - ii. endorsement of the main issues such as objectives, style, frequency of meetings etc
 - iii. confirmation of continuing interest from those attending
 - iv. agreement on the date for the formal Establishment Meeting for the club
- h) It is important that good minutes be kept of the decisions taken at this meeting.

Step 6:

Prepare for the Establishment Meeting

Following the first meeting of interested parties, the Establishment Group should then work through the conclusions coming from the first meeting, modifying the written material and incorporating the relevant material into the proposed Rules for the club. PSNZ can provide advice or comment to assist in this phase.

Step 7:

Advertise the Establishment Meeting

The Establishment Group should then advise all interested people who attended the first meeting, in writing, of the date and place of the formal Establishment Meeting, circulating the amended papers, particularly the Rules.

The Establishment Meeting should be advertised and publicised as was done for the first meeting – see step 3 above.

Step 8:

The Establishment Meeting

The Establishment Meeting should then be held in a similar way to the first meeting as discussed in Step 5.

The main objectives for this meeting are as follows: -

- a) Agree to form the Club
- b) Agree Rules for the Club
- c) Sign up members for the Club
- d) Elect the Officers and Committee for the Club from the members in accordance with the Rules
- e) Delegate authorities to the Officers in accordance with the Rules
- f) Authorise the opening of a Bank Account(s) for the Club
- g) Set the Subscription levels for the first year
- h) Appoint an Auditor if the Rules provide for one
- i) Agree the Club's normal meeting schedule and place

It is essential that good minutes be kept of this meeting for legal, banking and historical reasons, recording: -

- The names of all in attendance,
- The name of the Chairman and Secretary at the commencement of the meeting
- The decisions taken on the matters listed in a) thru i) above

Step 9:

First Committee Meeting

The Officers and Committee of the Club should meet as soon as possible after the Establishment Meeting to keep up the momentum and enthusiasm arising from the formation of the Club, and to get the regular club meetings and activities started.

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The following are some specific issues to be considered in establishing a new Camera Club: -

Incorporation

It is not essential that a new club incorporate itself under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. Many clubs never incorporate.

Incorporation of a club provides protection to its members against the liabilities that a club may incur, and a certain "standing" in the commercial world. Against this, Incorporation imposes additional burdens and cost on a club's administration, such as the requirements to have the clubs financial statements audited and filed with the Companies Office annually.

It is recommended that legal advice be sought on this matter.

As noted in the introduction to this guide, whether a club is incorporated or not may have an influence on the style of the name of the club.

Rules

The Rules of a club are its most important document, as they govern the structure, organization and operation of the club. They are the ultimate control available to members on the conduct of the club.

The Rules of a club can typically only be changed at the Annual General Meetings of a club, with advanced notice to all members of the changes proposed.

PSNZ can provide clubs intending to affiliate with the Society, with a typical set of Rules, from which a club can develop its own Rules during the establishment process. It is recommended that legal advice be sought even in developing Rules from the typical Rules provided by PSNZ.

Alternatively, a lawyer can be retained to draw up a specific set of Rules for a new club.

Formality

While informality is a characteristic of the 21st century, a certain level of formality is necessary in the structuring and running of a club for efficiency and effectiveness. PSNZ recommends that clubs use accepted officer structures and rules of conduct for meetings to assist in being successful.

Officers & Committee

PSNZ recommends that all clubs have the following Officers as a minimum: -

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary} The Secretary and Treasurer roles are often carried out by one person in small clubs
- Treasurer}

The Committee structure of clubs varies widely. Probably the most important role to have in a club's committee is that of Programme Coordinator, as the success of a club is very dependant on the quality and interest of its' programmes, to members.

The need for other positions such as Bulletin/Newsletter Editor, Competition Secretary, Membership Secretary etc depend on the size of the club and the scope of it's activities.

Meetings

For new clubs it is recommended that the number of meetings be limited to one a month, as providing good programmes is a treadmill. From experience it is better to have a few good meetings than to have many mediocre ones.

Once well established, the club can determine if there is a demand and support to move to two meetings a month. Few clubs have more than two formal meetings a month, but special interest groups and/or workshops may be in addition.

Getting a good venue for meetings is important, so that going to meetings is both easy and enjoyable for members. Big empty halls and out of the way homes can quickly lead to members not bothering to attend.

Subscription Levels

PSNZ can provide advice as to the typical subscription levels currently being charged by affiliated clubs member. This may or may not include the cost of supper depending on the club.

Typically, the only additional charge to members is for special field trips or special programmes, with the normal club programmes and competitions, a monthly newsletter, PSNZ affiliation etc, included in the annual subscription.

Most clubs offer Double or Family membership at a discount. A number of clubs offer stepped subscription rates for joining partway through the financial year, but this is a refinement that can be introduced once a club is well established.

PSNZ Affiliation

PSNZ is the national amateur or recreational photographic organization in New Zealand, representing over 60 affiliated clubs and some 900 individuals or couples who belong to PSNZ in their own right. In total, PSNZ represents over 2500 serious recreational photographers in New Zealand. PSNZ is an umbrella organization, which helps clubs deliver services to their members locally, and also organizes or sponsors Regional and National conventions, competitions and exhibitions.

PSNZ is particularly valuable to small or remote clubs, as it offers a library of *Recorded Lectures* for use as club programmes. These may be hired at a nominal charge and provide a slide based AV programme with instructional topics as well as featuring competitions and lectures. *Help Sheets* on over 30 topics are also available FREE to affiliated clubs and Individual members.

PSNZ publishes “*Cameratalk*” a bimonthly newsletter and “*New Zealand Camera*” an annual “coffee table” quality book of members work. PSNZ also publishes a Members Directory that is available to affiliated clubs and all PSNZ members, which provides contact details for all affiliated clubs and individual members, as well as the indexes for the *Recorded Lectures* and *Help Sheets*

The range of services offered to affiliated clubs is outlined in the “*Why Affiliate with PSNZ*” available from the PSNZ Secretary.

The affiliation fee to clubs is modest capitation fee for every club member who is not a member of PSNZ in their own right. There is no charge for club members who are PSNZ members.

PSNZ is committed to assisting those establishing new Camera Clubs, and we urge you to utilize our services and the pool of experience that is available through our members.

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