

**Author**  
Derek  
Robertson

# Bannockburn man's agenda – to make meetings interesting

**ALASTAIR MCNEILL**

**Workplace meetings aren't always greeted with enthusiasm by those scheduled to take part.**

But a Bannockburn man hopes to change all that with a new book which aims to show how meetings can be made effective and fulfilling experiences.

Human resources consultant Derek Robertson has written 'The Great Cape Escapade' in fable form to get his point across.

Derek (58) said: "I wanted to do something to start a conversation in organisations across the world to cure bad meetings

disease.

"I've done meetings training over three decades, and I would always hear people complaining about their experience of meetings being poor and unfulfilling.

"They feel hamstrung to do anything about it, especially when the boss is the chair.

"And the explosion of virtual meetings sadly hasn't made meetings any more effective."

Derek started writing the first draft of the book while on holiday in Tenerife in 2012 before putting it aside.

However, the coronavirus lockdown gave him the opportunity to refine and polish it for publication.

Derek has long been a fan of science fiction and the book has a sci-fi theme. The main character Dakkc, pronounced Dax, is a combination of Derek's childhood friends in

Bannockburn. He was also assisted by Bannockburn friend and English teacher Ian Dudgeon who helped to add a dash of humour.

Derek added: "Meetings aren't treated as a core skill. Chair people and participants learn by observing others. And if what they observe isn't good then the poor practice continues. I've experienced the keynote address meeting, where the chair speaks, answers their own questions and believes they have

involved people.

"I have experienced massive frustration as people do lots of preparation and then discover that it was wasted because the agenda wasn't clear enough. "Then there are the circular

**Inspiring**  
Derek's book

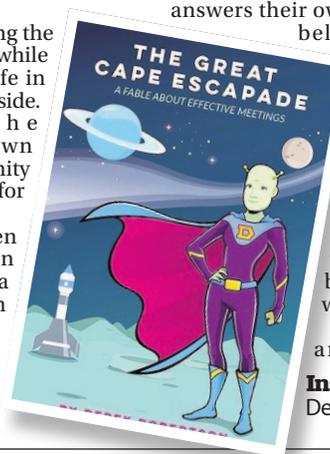
discussions, revisiting topics and rehashing old decisions, as well as a lack of decision making – including the chair not being clear on how they will make one whether consensus, majority and so on."

Derek attended Bannockburn Primary, Bannockburn High School and the High School of Stirling. He is also chairman of Bannockburn Amateurs Football Club.

His first job on leaving school was in the claims department of Scottish Amicable, Craigforth, now Prudential, where he later became HR and training manager. He has run Robertson Training for Business, specialising in training adults, since 2001.

For Derek an effective business meeting is all about planning, starting on time, getting people involved in discussions and making decisions.

He added: "The book aims to start a global conversation about improving business meetings. At a time when organisations need to be super effective to survive the global pandemic, curing ineffective meetings can produce straightforward business benefits."



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