

## Effective meetings

### Effective meetings

There are various types of meetings which are held for very different purposes and are therefore organised and managed in a variety of ways. The three most frequent meeting styles you are likely to be involved with are:

- Official or formal meetings, e.g. a management committee;
- An Annual General Meeting;
- A public meeting.

#### 1 | The official or formal meeting

##### Paperwork

- **The agenda** is the document which lists all the issues and items which need to be discussed at the meeting and the order in which they will be covered. It will clearly show the title of the meeting, where it is to be held and at what time. For good practice this Agenda should be circulated to attendees before the meeting takes place with spare copies available at the meeting too. The first item on the Agenda is usually introductions and apologies.
- **Attendees list** so that there is a record of who attended. A sheet of paper can be circulated at the meeting for everyone to print their names & sign. Sometimes to gather information phone numbers and e-mail addresses can also be requested. If the meeting is a regular one and members known then a list of who is present can simply be reproduced by the secretary for the minutes
- **The minutes** are a clear record of the meeting. The person taking minutes needs to be clear about the level of detail to be recorded. Some meetings need a summary of each item discussed, others want a fuller overview of the range of issues including comments being attributed to named people. It is

vital that the minutes are an impartial and factual record. All minutes should have the outcome of the discussion, a clear record of the decisions taken and who has been given the responsibility to action them.

- **At the following meeting** these minutes, as part of the agenda, should be checked and agreed as a true record with any mistakes noted in the new minutes. All minutes should be kept as a log of the meetings, used as a basis for the following agenda and circulated to people before the next meeting.

These procedures should be followed for all types of meetings simply making the process more or less formal depending on the nature of the gathering.

##### Officer Roles

- 1 The **chair** keeps control of the meeting allowing equal participation of all. They make sure that the agenda is followed and that at the end of each item everyone is clear on the decision taken and the appropriate notes recorded.
- 2 The **secretary** keeps a record of the minutes as noted above and if not clear what decision has been taken should ask the chair for clarification.
- 3 The **treasurer** is normally responsible for reporting on the overall financial position of the organisation.

#### 2 | An Annual General Meeting (AGM)

This is a very specific, formal and legal meeting. You must check your constitution for the rules, procedures and processes which have to be followed to legally comply with the holding of your AGM. The constitution will tell you the:

- Timescales for when you hold your AGM usually:
  - » First within 18 months of registration or incorporation;
  - » Not more than 15 months apart;
  - » One in each calendar year;

- Notice period that must be given to members of the AGM e.g. 21 days;
- Period of notice for any changes to the constitution or resolutions being proposed at the AGM;
- Voting procedure, what constitutes a voting member and a majority vote;
- How you work out if your meeting is legal by being quorate.

### Quorum

This is the number of voting members that have to be present to make a decision. If you are inquorate (not enough present) the constitution should also tell you what should happen, e.g. postponement of the AGM

### Agenda items

Not necessarily in this order these usually include minutes for previous AGM plus:

- 1 Financial report for the year or acceptance of audited accounts;
- 2 Election of management committee and officers;
- 3 Appointment of auditors for next year;
- 4 Check on legal requirements to be carried out (e.g. audited accounts to Charity Commission or Companies House);
- 5 Any resolutions or amendments and relevant voting procedure.

## 3 | Public Meeting

Public meetings are usually held to either inform and/or consult perhaps about new plans for the area or a building or the need for a new community group. Procedures may be similar to the formal meeting setup because you will need a chair to make sure everyone can express their view, someone to explain why the meeting has been called and someone to take notes about what happened at the meeting. Things needing to be considered are:

- **The venue** which people know well, are comfortable visiting and is within easy reach for the majority of people who you feel need to be there.
- **The timing** will affect who is available to attend so should it be in the daytime or evening, at a weekend or weekday. Perhaps it means two meetings so as to capture all those it will affect or you want involved.
- **The publicity** is important so everyone knows it is taking place, where and at what time. Use local shops, libraries, free newspapers, and all those community and project centres that people visit regularly.

### Further help

#### Ask BVSC Helpline

0121 678 8888

[askbvsc@bvsc.org](mailto:askbvsc@bvsc.org)

#### Development Agencies website

Links and information for developing voluntary and community organisations.

[www.birmingham-da.org](http://www.birmingham-da.org)

#### For tips on running meetings and checklists

[www.businessballs.com/meetings](http://www.businessballs.com/meetings)

#### Organising event with young people

[www.capitalcf.org.uk](http://www.capitalcf.org.uk)

#### Organising meetings

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)