

How to run a meeting

Along with deciding on your club's structure and putting together your management team (Committee), you'll need to create a plan for the type of meetings your club needs and decide on who will run these.

Within a club there are several different types of meeting that may be required. Some are informal, others are more formal such as an annual general meeting (AGM). The AGM is held annually, usually when financial reporting and annual report is made.

A good meeting will ensure everyone has the information they require, understands the outcomes, and knows what they need to contribute to achieve these.

Any meeting will need someone to be in charge or 'chair' it and another person to write down the minutes (the written record of a meeting). The minutes often give an overview of the structure of the meeting, starting with a list of those present, a list of the various issues discussed, and any responses/decisions that are made.

Informal meetings should still be managed, but they also encourage members to relax and join in. You might hold an informal meeting to:

- discuss new ideas
- solve problems
- gather opinions
- ensure everyone is still feeling enthusiastic about the club
- brainstorm ideas for fundraising or sponsorship.

Tips to running a good meeting

- Establish the purpose and desired outcomes of the meeting.
- Check that everyone understands the topics to be discussed. Distribute an agenda (list of points to discuss usually distributed before the actual meeting) prior to the meeting if necessary.
- Ensure everyone listens to each other carefully.
- Ensure only one person speaks at a time.
- Encourage everyone to be objective and keep discussion focused on the topic.
- Examine each option individually and objectively and reaching a conclusion for that option.

Formal meetings such as the AGM are usually a reporting meeting for the club. This means that your club's aims, activities and finances are reported on at the meeting. They are usually held annually and they are open to anyone directly involved with the club. It is also when key roles like the chairperson are decided upon.

These meetings are based around an agenda which is similar to a programme or list of points to discuss. The club's secretary and treasurer usually prepare the agenda and send it out to everyone who will attend the meeting. There are many types of agenda – but by keeping it simple you'll be able to run a straightforward and effective meeting. Your club's chairperson will run the meeting and make sure that the agenda is used.

Here's an example of a straightforward agenda for an AGM:

1. Welcome by the chairperson – this starts the meeting off.
2. Apologies – from people who can't get to the meeting.
3. Confirmation of minutes of the previous AGM – a summary of what was discussed.
4. Correspondence – important letters, email and faxes to and from your club.
5. Chairperson's report – usually an overview of the activities and aims of the club.
6. Treasurer's report – usually an overview of the financial activities and the club's current finances.
7. Notice of any new management committee members.
8. General business – anything that hasn't been covered by the chairperson or treasurer.
9. Guest speaker – this is optional but sometimes a guest speaker can provide new ideas or inspiration for your club.
10. Confirming the date of the next meeting.

11. Close of meeting – serving refreshments at this stage can be a great way to thank everyone for their efforts and will keep the meeting fun.