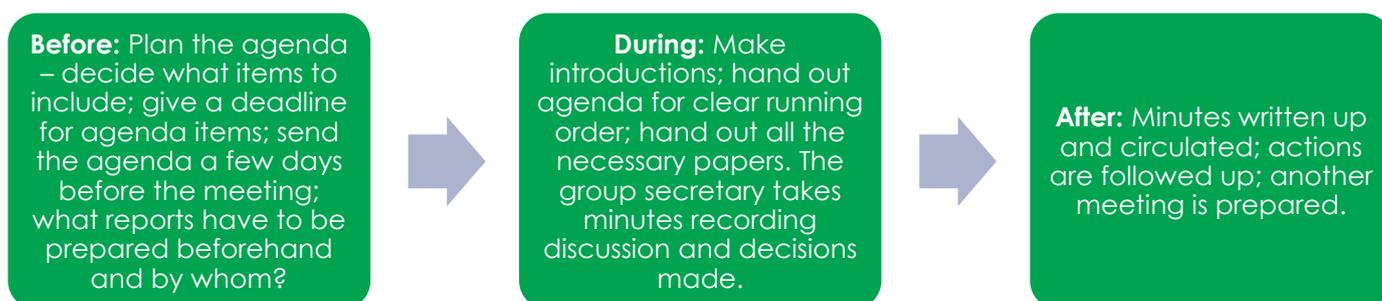


Meetings and Minutes

Meetings of your group or committee can be very laid back occasions, usually involving cake. Remember though, however relaxed your meetings are, you're discussing things and making decisions that affect your whole membership. This means that you have a responsibility to conduct your meetings in a certain way.



Chairing a Meeting

For each meeting a Chair should be appointed from the committee. The Chair's first role is to start the meeting and to proceed through the agenda. The Chair, more than anyone else, needs to be conscious of the amount of time available for the meeting. It also helps to know who's going to start speaking on each item.

If it's a report, it's a good idea if, following the presentation, the Chair first allows questions, then a discussion, before moving to a decision. The Chair's other role is to keep order so that the meeting proceeds in a productive and fair manner, giving everyone the opportunity to contribute.

It's important that everyone feels that they have the opportunity to participate fully. If the discussion is being dominated by a few people, the Chair should stop and, looking around at the 'quieter' people, ask if anyone who hasn't spoken yet would like to contribute. If no one indicates, hold everything for a few moments... before resuming the discussion. Being aware of people's body-language is important here, and responding accordingly.

Agenda

Each meeting agenda will be set by your secretary, who will open the opportunity up to committee to submit items for discussion. It can be beneficial to also offer this opportunity to all members for certain meetings. If you meet once a week then this isn't always necessary, but is something to think about.



Minutes

Whenever you have a meeting of your group or your committee, your secretary should be taking minutes. The main focus of minutes is usually –

Recap of previous meeting minutes

Summary of discussion as set by agenda

Any actions to be carried out and who by.

Minutes serve multiple purposes, primarily so you and your committee/members remember what you have discussed and decided! Noting down actions and who will complete them also means that everyone knows exactly what duties they have.

Examples of committee meeting minutes include –

- TUBBS. (<https://www.tubbs.org.uk/about/committee/minutes/2015-03-19>)
- PantoSoc. (<https://www.pantosoc.co.uk> > committee > minutes)

Common meeting problems to be aware of

Too much wrangling:

The Chair should prevent this happening, but it also needs awareness from the Committee that they are there to get the things done and decisions made!

Lack of clarity:

The Chair should clarify or sum up all issues, for the purpose of the attendees and the minute taker

Decisions are put off:

Putting off a decision won't make it go away. Only do this if you genuinely need more information or wider consultation

Too little involvement:

It is up to the Chair to 'monitor' the performance of the meeting, including who is participating most or least. For an important item, ask individuals their views

Meetings go on too long:

Agree a rough target to aim to finish by. Agree this at the beginning of the meeting. Encourage succinct contributions, don't let people ramble

Too many meetings:

Don't overload people with too many meetings, and ensure everyone has time to carry out their actions

Lack of understanding:

Make sure people are properly briefed from the outset, give out background papers and make sure that someone is available to answer questions

No real follow up:

Meetings happen, decisions are made, and nothing gets done. This is a waste of your time. Ensure decisions are recorded and the people to carry them out are clearly identified