

HOW TO RUN EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

About this tool

A great meeting is well planned, effectively chaired and focused on decision making. There are a huge amount of simple and easy to adopt techniques you can use to constantly improve your meetings to ensure that they are well organised, well managed and that all members participate fully.

Why is it important?

Committee meetings can be a major barrier to fresh talent including younger and more diverse volunteers taking on leadership roles. Ensuring that meetings are efficient, friendly and flexible can ensure that you don't put off potential new volunteers. Meetings are also as easy to get right as they are to get wrong. But if do you get it wrong, the meeting could be declared unconstitutional and you may have to start all over again.

Step 1 – Planning Effective Meetings

- Committee meetings are much more productive if the proper time is invested in preparation.
- Responsibility for planning lies with the Chair who will work with the Secretary. All committee members should be given enough time to read the documents (also called the meeting pack) beforehand. Committee members who do not attend or consistently attend without preparing or contributing should be encouraged to step down. Refer to your constitution for guidance on this.
- Once a year the committee should set the meeting calendar for the next 12 months. This allows you to ensure that meetings are regular enough for decisions to be made (usually every 6-8 weeks), members have enough notice to be available and there is time to prepare. Virtual meetings should also be considered in line with your constitution which will be useful with regular meetings.
- Using a digital shared calendar such as Google, or Teamup, can help you to be more efficient and paperless. Here is a list of [some examples](#). Setting a meeting cycle should involve the governance lead, who can ensure that meetings fall at key times in the governance calendar e.g. AGM, financial reporting, start of the new season.
- The Secretary should gather, prepare and share the meeting pack including the agenda and previous minutes and information relevant to all the agenda items before the meeting in plenty of time. Volunteers are busy people, 2-4 weeks in advance is ideal to ensure that all papers are read.
- Do encourage Committee members to read all the information not just the area they are interested in to ensure that you are working as a team.
- Make it clear that members should read the information ahead of the meeting so as to not waste time on the day going through this.

Step 2 – Running an Effective Meeting

- On the day good preparation and skilful chairing make a great meeting.

- A good Chair will actually say very little if the meeting is effective. They will be facilitating, summarising and probing the Committee supporting them to make decisions.
- It's important to ensure that every Committee member contributes equally, too often some people can dominate and others can contribute nothing, both of which are very frustrating for other members and difficult for the Chair.
- We would recommend a technique called the Running Effective Meetings Style which involves:
 1. Asking everyone to come prepared and focused.
 2. Replacing agenda items with focused questions helps the Committee search for solutions rather than describe problems. For e.g, replacing agenda item "Superleague" with "How can our organisation build a great relationship with our local Superleague club?" instantly asks people to focus on the real agenda whilst setting a positive and aspirational tone.
 3. Using a rigid "rounds" system which requires strong chairing but utterly transforms meetings. A round is simply asking everyone to answer the question posed concisely, one at a time around the table. Everyone has the same amount of time to answer. If anyone has more comments outside of the round they would need to put their hand up and no members should interrupt. The meeting should open with a round that acts as an ice breaker and end with a round that asks members to honestly evaluate the meeting.
 4. The Chair is required to focus tightly on the timings of each agenda item. If more debate is needed than has been allocated, the item is unresolved and discussed either in a separate session or at the next meeting.
 5. Having someone capturing the key points being discussed, any decisions that are made and actions that individuals have agreed to carry out after the meeting. All of this information forms the minutes of a meeting. There is a minutes template available in the toolkit for your organisation to adapt and use.

"Ensure that the venue is conveniently located for all who travel. Our Region is over 200 miles long so we always meet in Somerset to make it easier. Having hot food really helps to make the meeting run well as well as plenty of tea and coffee."
South West Regional Chair

Step 3 – After the Meeting

Hopefully if you have prepared well and used the effective meeting style techniques outlined above everyone should leave the meeting feeling energised and that you've achieved a lot together. But the work doesn't stop there.

- The Chair or other suitable Committee member should review and sign the minutes, to show that they are a fair representation of the discussions. Ideally, these should be circulated to the wider members to keep them involved the club's organisation's affairs and promote

transparency around decisions. Doing so promptly helps to keep the activities moving in between meetings.

- Try to focus on only the key points and actions, good minutes should be very concise and detail key decisions and next steps, rather than give a written record of a two-hour conversation.
- Minute taking well, like chairing a meeting well is a highly skilled ability and worth investing in regular training and learning. Some charities and other organisations in your local area will run free training for voluntary committees. You can find your local provider on the [NAVCA](#) website.

For further information on how to run an effective meeting visit the [Club Matters](#) website.

Top Tips for AGMs and EGMs:

- Follow the constitution to the letter - don't leave room for protests that the procedures weren't followed correctly
- Involve others in the planning process for the meeting - share the workload and the responsibility
- Don't use the AGM to 'surprise' people with important issues that were not raised beforehand!
- Make the business part as brief as possible and then follow it with some form of social gathering.
- Take advantage of the fact that it is a great opportunity to make your members feel part of a successful organisation and to get them involved with helping out.

How does this link to the Governance Code?

Running effective meetings is the key element of Mandatory Requirement 2 of Tier 1 of the [Code for Sports Governance](#).

"The governing committee meets regularly, and decision making is recorded."

This is because ensuring that meetings are regular, well organised, recorded and publicised is an important part of being a healthy and effective committee. Once this is in place you will be able to tick the corresponding boxes on your Annual Governance Health Check.

Anywhere Organisation Meeting

Date:

Time:

Venue:

Apologies:

Time	TOPIC	LEAD	Preparation/questions	Desired outcomes
18:45 – 19:00	Arrival and coffees	N/A	Please arrive on time and have some refreshments	<i>We feel ready and energised for the meeting ahead.</i>
19:00 – 19:10	Welcome. What's the best thing that has happened to you since the last meeting?	Chair	Think about this question as an ice breaker to warm us up for the meeting and get to know one another.	<i>We get to know one another more and feel ready to approach the meeting as a team. Anyone new can be introduced to everyone else in a relaxed way.</i>
19:10 – 19:20	Share a positive netball story since our last meeting?	Vice Chair	Think of something good in netball that has happened recently you could briefly share.	<i>We get to practice the round technique and start the meeting positively.</i>
19:20 – 19:30	Who has a conflict on any item?	Chair	All members to ensure they have prepared for the topics ahead and considered if they may have any conflicts.	<i>We are prepared and aware of any committee members who have a conflict and need to abstain from a decision.</i>
19:30 – 19:40	Do we agree minutes from last time?	Chair	All members to have read the last minutes ahead of the meeting and brought comments, queries or amendments.	<i>We do not waste time reading the minutes of the last meeting as they are fresh in our minds already and we are able to move on quickly to today's business.</i>
19:40 – 20:00	Having read the TSG reports, what do we need to decide/approve?	Chair	All committee members to have read the reports from TSG leads and come to the meeting with feedback.	<i>We do not waste time reading or hearing updates and come to the meeting ready to make the decisions TSGs require.</i>
20:00 – 20:20	Do we understand and approve our new governance policy?	Governance Lead	All committee members have read and understood the Governance Lead's update on new governance policy.	<i>We have the chance to ask any questions and approve the new policy as a committee.</i>
20:20 – 20:30	How do we invest surplus funds built up in 2017-18?	Treasurer	We have read the Treasurers' report and options for use surplus funds in 2020-2021.	<i>We have the chance to ask any questions and agree together how to invest our resources to achieve our three-year plan's goals.</i>
20:30 – 20:40	How can we build a strong partnership with a new organisation?	Guest	We have read and researched the potential new partner/sponsor and brought our questions and ideas.	<i>We agree how we would like to work with the new organisation and what we can each do to benefit the other.</i>
20:40 – 20:50	Where and when is our next meeting? What should be on the agenda?	Chair	We have thought about the logistics of the next meeting and agree what should be discussed.	<i>We are focused on the next meeting and our own development as a team.</i>
20:50 – 21:00	What could be improved about today's meeting? (Closing Round)	Chair	We give constructive feedback on our own performance as a committee.	<i>We know next time how to make this time together effective.</i>