

MINUTE TAKING

What are Minutes and why have them?

Minutes are an official record of what took place at a meeting. For meetings such as Annual General Meetings (AGM) or Management Committee meetings, they are a legal record.

Minutes are taken at a meeting in order to give those who were present, and those who didn't attend, a *clear, brief* and *accurate* record of what took place and the decisions which were reached.

Who should take Minutes?

The person taking minutes should:

- know the group's purpose
- know the participants
- know the agenda (discuss with the Chair beforehand)
- listen and make notes
- be prepared to ask for clarification

What should be in the Minutes?

The key things to record are:

- the name of the meeting, date/time, location, and a list of those present
- what was discussed and reported
- what was decided and why
- what action is to be taken, when, and by whom

The amount of detail to include will depend on the type of meeting it is and what the participants will need to know. Sometimes a very simple record will be sufficient; other times it will be necessary to include more detail of discussions and points raised. It is important to make sure that each committee member is happy with the way minutes are presented.

There are no hard and fast rules for what to include, but here are some tips:

- Ask yourself "*If I wasn't present, what would I want or need to know?*"
- Remember that people will rely on the minutes to remind them what decisions were reached and what they were expected to do following the meeting

- Be *clear, brief, accurate* and *neutral*
- Be *consistent* with detail

After the meeting

- Write up the minutes from your notes as soon as possible afterwards
- Make sure you clear the minutes with the Chair before circulating them
- Attach any reports or papers as appropriate
- Use the minutes as the basis for the next agenda

How to set out minutes

Although the details of minutes can vary, the actual format is quite standard. The attached template (below) can be adapted for most meetings.

NAME OF ORGANISATION

NAME OF COMMITTEE / MEETING

LOCATION, DATE & TIME

Present

A list of those present, indicating in brackets who was chair and who was taking minutes

Apologies for Absence

A list of people who had said that they could not attend

1. Minutes of the last meeting

First agree that the minutes of the last meeting are a true record – the Chair should then sign them

2. Matters arising

Any points raised from the previous minutes which are not covered elsewhere on the agenda

3.

- **Make a separate, numbered heading for each item covered.**
- **Remember the advice above about what to include**
- *Different sections within each item should be numbered accordingly - 3.1, 3.2, etc.*
- *Use **Action Points** to highlight who is responsible for carrying out decisions taken – these can then be followed up at the next meeting*

n. Any other business

n. Date of the next meeting

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