



Policy - Meeting Effectiveness

Approval Date: 25 June 2011

Meetings are necessary for:

- Decision making;
- Reporting;
- Review;
- Problem solving; and
- Discussion.

What is a committee?

The club must elect a committee at each annual general meeting.

The committee consists of executive members (a President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer) and any ordinary members.

Management Committee meetings are for:

- Monitoring and reviewing progress towards meeting the aims of the club
- Ensuring all activities are consistent with the club's purpose and mission
- Initiating and reviewing the policies and procedures of the club
- Delegating work
- Discussion and making decisions
- Identifying problems
- Regular updates

Types of Meetings

- Annual General Meeting
 - recap on the years progress
 - confirm minutes of all general meetings
 - Receive the financial report
 - elect new members or office bearers
 - chart a direction for the future
- Extraordinary Meetings
 - for urgent decision making between general meetings
- Committee Meetings
 - held regularly to discuss club management



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1 Planning meetings

Management Committee Meetings can become more effective if

1. they are well planned with a clear purpose,
2. effectively chaired
3. focused on decision-making

Responsibility for planning the meeting lies with the Office bearers, in particular the Secretary and President or Chairperson.

However all Management Committee members will need to ensure they have read any papers prior to the meeting and have added relevant items to the agenda.

Plan your meetings effectively by...

- Setting dates well in advance to maximise the number of members available to attend (and sending a reminder notice);
- Clarifying the purpose or focus of the meeting;
- Ensuring that minutes and agreed actions from the previous meetings are circulated.
- Ensuring that all papers are circulated in advance;
- Setting an agenda and circulating it
- Identifying which agenda items require a decision and which are for information or discussion.

A well planned agenda should clearly communicate the purpose and objectives of the meeting.



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2 Effective chairing and participation

Chairing and agenda are the key factor in the effectiveness of meetings.

The role of the Chair is to direct discussion of the Committee, ensuring that the objectives of the meeting can be met, and that the Committee effectively fulfils its responsibility in consideration of the items on the agenda. This involves ensuring that you are well briefed about each agenda item and that:-

- decisions are taken, recorded and carried out;
- the Club's policies are applied;
- there is full participation;
- the agenda is followed; and
- there are time limits for the meeting as a whole and for agenda items.

Productive meetings require the contribution of all members of the Management Committee, working as a team and taking joint responsibility for ensuring that issues are given due consideration and decisions taken.

All members should:

- Prepare for meetings;
- Forward apologies if you are unable to attend;
- Use your agenda.
- Listen to the speakers;
- Learn from other people;
- Speak up when you have something to say;
- Ask questions if you are unclear or unsure;
- Consider all the options and share your views; and
- Abide by decisions which are taken, whether you agree with them or not.
- Arrive on time

Minutes of proceedings at a meeting must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting or by the chairperson of the next succeeding meeting.



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3 Decision making

Management committees are responsible for taking major strategic decisions and need to take decisions jointly with other members.

In making any big decision, a number of steps are involved, including some or all of the following:-

1. **Information** - ensuring the committee has read or heard all relevant information;
2. **The goal** - what is our aim and is it consistent with the aim and direction of the organisation. Agreement on the goal is a crucial stage in decision making;
3. **Choices** - what choices are available to us and what are the constraints; and
4. **The plan** - how do we achieve our goal - what are the steps and what resources do we need.

Decision making is much more effective if the committee establishes not only what is to be done but also how and when it will be done and by whom.

There are two common methods of making decisions:

1. By consensus; and
2. By taking a vote.

Regardless of how decisions are taken, all committee members should be clear about exactly what has been decided and decisions should be clearly minuted.

Proxy Voting forms for absent committee members must be given to the secretary before voting.



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4 Chairing meetings

One of the most important roles of the Chairperson is steering a Management Committee through its business effectively and efficiently. A good Chair will be mindful of the following basic points!

Before the Meeting

1. Plan the agenda with the Secretary and Office Bearers
2. Read all background papers (EG previous minutes, tabled documents)
3. Check that all relevant practical arrangements have been made, e.g. room hire, comfort, etc.
4. Arrive in good time before the meeting is due to start.

During the Meeting

Communicate

- Start the meeting. Welcome any new members. Make any necessary introductions.
- Set the scene. State the objectives of the meeting and each item. Try to be brief when making a point.

Control

- Maintain control. Set out any time limits.
- Allow flexibility and freedom of expression.
- Keep to the agenda. Ensure time is used effectively.

Coax

- Ensure full participation. Draw out quieter members and discourage those who are monopolising the meeting.
- Be prepared to highlight issues that no-one else will, and to be the one who always has to ask the awkward questions.

Compare

- Weigh up contributions impartially.
- All points in favour of a point should be summarised against all points not in favour.
- Clarify and Summarise.
- Ensure everyone understands what is being discussed.
- Ensure that if jargon and abbreviations are used, all present understand them.
- Ensure that decisions are recorded, together with who is going to implement them.

Decision Making

- Ensure that decisions are taken in the context of the organisations strategy and that they are recorded, together with who is going to implement them.

Guide

- Remember that above all you are there to guide the meeting.
- Steer members to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team.
- Keep an eye on time.

At the End of the Meeting

1. Summarise decisions and action points to be followed up e.g. who's responsible, by when.
2. Agree a date for the next meeting - set dates for the year's meetings well in advance.
3. Agree what special items will be put on the agenda of the next meeting and what work needs to be done, by whom etc.



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5 Secretary's Organisation

The Secretary is crucial to the smooth running of a Management Committee meeting. This involves activities before, during and after Committee meetings.

In order to be effective, the Secretary of the Management Committee should ensure that they carry out the following activities:

Before the Meeting

- Consult with the Chairperson on the agenda. Decide what business requires discussion and what requires a decision by the Management Committee;
- Ensure that the notice of the meeting is given and that copies of the agenda is prepared;
- Circulate to all members (a) any papers to be discussed at the upcoming meeting and (b) a copy of the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting; and
- Make sure that any reports or information requested at the last meeting is available or that there is a good reason why not.

At the Meeting

- Arrive in good time before the meeting with the minutes and with all the relevant correspondence and business matters for that meeting, in good order. Record the names of those who are present, and convey and record apologies received from those who are absent;
- Read the minutes of the previous meeting, and if they are approved, obtain the Chairperson's signature on them;
- Report on action or matters arising from the previous minutes. Read any important correspondence that has been received;
- Unless there is a Minutes Secretary, take notes of the meeting, recording the key points and making sure that all decisions and proposals are recorded, as well as the name of the person or group responsible for carrying them out. Make sure action points are clear; and
- Make sure that the Chairperson is supplied with all the necessary information for items on the agenda, and remind the Chairperson if an item has been overlooked.

After the Meeting

- Prepare a draft of the minutes (unless there is a minutes secretary) and consult the Chairperson and most senior staff member (where relevant) for approval;
- Send a reminder notice of each decision requiring action to the relevant person; this can be done by telephone, or by an 'action list' with the relevant action for each person duly marked; and

Promptly send all correspondence as decided by the Management Committee.