

Annual General Meeting (AGM) Guide

The aim of the AGM is to provide the charity trustees and/or officers the opportunity to explain their management of the charity to the members. It also provides the members of the charity with an opportunity to ask questions before voting on business items on the agenda. Not all charities are required to hold an AGM.

Governing Document

The first step is to consult your Governing Document (Constitution, Trust Deed or Memorandum & Articles). This will tell you if you need to hold an AGM, and will help you sort out the notice period, quorum and agenda of your Annual General Meeting.

Notice Period

Your constitution probably says something like:

“The organisation will hold the first AGM within 18 months of setting up and then once in each calendar year, with no more than 15 months between AGMs.”

The constitution should also tell you the notice period for the Annual General Meeting that must be given to members, e.g. 21 days notice. If you are presenting resolution(s) it may be longer (e.g. 28 days).

Quorum

Your Governing Document should tell you what has to be voted on and who is entitled to vote (usually members only). Quorum refers to the number or proportion of voting members that have to be present at a meeting of the group for decisions to be taken, e.g. the minimum number of Management Committee members needed to take decisions at a Management Committee meeting. Again this should be defined in your Governing Document. Remember that it was defined for a reason so to ignore it (i.e. make a decision without a quorum) is breaking your own rules. If any problem was to occur as a result of, or related to, that decision the fact that it was made outside of the constitutional rules will be important and could have negative effects

on the members that made the decision. If a meeting is inquorate then there should be a clause in your constitution telling you what should happen – usually a postponement of the meeting. If this is the case, particularly with a general or public meeting, then you should be asking yourselves what went wrong with the publicity for the meeting and how you can improve on turnout next time.

Agenda

The usual business of an Annual General Meeting will include:

- Welcome and apologies for absence
- Approval of the previous AGM's minutes
- A financial report for the year (or receiving of the audited accounts, if this is appropriate)
- A report of the activities in the year (Annual Report)
- The election of trustees/directors (management committee) and perhaps officers (chair, secretary and treasurer)
- Any Resolutions that have been proposed (usually relating to the Governing Document)
- Appointment of auditors / independent examiners for the next year.
- Any Other Business (frequently none at an AGM)

Checklist

Before the AGM

Give notice of the AGM to members, including the date, time and venue

Decide who else should be invited. Non members do not legally have to be informed but you may want to invite staff, volunteers, the mayor, councillors, local members of parliament, funders, patrons and other supporters

- Publicise the AGM. It is good practice to do so by personal invitation and notices in the press (local newspapers and voluntary sector newsletters)
- Send out the agenda and any proposed resolutions to all people who are invited
- Appoint someone to take the minutes (typically a member of staff or volunteer). The minutes should include full details of any motions and amendments, proposers and seconders of motions, and the results of votes announced by the person chairing the meeting

What to take to the AGM

- Sufficient copies of the Annual Report
- Sufficient copies of the Accounts
- Sufficient copies of last AGM's minutes
- Sufficient copies of any proposed resolutions
- Attendance sheet (for members to sign in)
- Membership list (to check off and give voting slips to)