



T3SC Factsheet

Holding an AGM

Annual General Meetings (AGMs) are usually held once a year. In order to get the best out of an AGM a certain amount of planning needs to take place. The best place to begin is in your constitution. The constitution should give you the following information:-

- When your AGM should take place.
- How much notice you must give to your members.
- How many members need be present so that the group can make decisions (the quorum);
- Who should chair the meeting.
- Who should take the minutes.
- What items need to be discussed at an AGM.

Not all constitutions are the same and yours may also tell you how you must carry out the elections and whether or not the officers (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) should be chosen at the AGM.

What is the purpose of an AGM?

It is important to realise that AGMs have a specific purpose. The aim is for management committee members, officers or trustees to have the opportunity to explain how they have managed the organisation over the past 12 months. It also gives members a chance to ask questions before voting on the business items of the agenda. To make an AGM more exciting, some groups make them into social occasions, or invite a speaker to talk on a subject that the members will find interesting.

Annual Report and Accounts

The AGM is the place where your annual report and accounts will be presented. You will need to make sure that you have enough time to prepare your annual report and accounts because you may have to have your accounts independently examined. This depends on how much income your group has received over the past 12 months. The annual report should explain what the organisation is trying to achieve, whether or not they have done what they said they would (the objectives) and what the plans are for the next 12 months. The accounts will show how the finances met the objectives. It is useful for those attending your AGM to have the annual report and accounts before the meeting takes place. The annual report could enhance your group's standing in the community by explaining what it does and what changes your activities have made to the lives of your members (what the outcomes were).

Venue

As an organisation you need to think about where your Annual General Meeting will take place. Obviously your venue is dependent on the amount of money you have and how many people will be attending. Some of the things you will need to think about are: access issues, refreshments and the time of meeting.

Who can attend the Annual General Meeting?

The constitution will usually state who can attend your meeting and who has voting rights. It is important for the organisation to keep an up to date record of its members so they can be involved in the AGM. Some organisations invite groups, volunteers and interested bodies and people with professional skills such as an accountant or solicitor. Unless these people are members of the organisation they will not be able to vote.

Secretary

Usually the secretary informs all the members about the forthcoming meeting and calls for any resolutions. (A resolution should be a burning issue, either about the organisation or about local or national issues. It could also be a proposal to amend the constitution.) At the same time the secretary asks for advance nominations for those that would like to become committee members. The secretary will also prepare the agenda, with the chair, and should make sure there are enough copies for everybody attending the meeting. They will also provide the minutes from the previous AGM. **No business can take place until the previous minutes have been agreed and accepted.**

The Chairperson

During the meeting the chairperson will give an overview of the activities and will formally present the annual report. Any member can ask questions about the report. This annual report should then be formally adopted by the organisation (this happens when somebody proposes that the annual report be adopted, somebody will then second the proposal and the rest of the members will vote on the proposal).

The Treasurer

The treasurer arranges for the accounts to be approved by the committee before the AGM. Copies of the accounts should be made available to all the members. During the meeting the Treasurer will discuss the accounts highlighting the main points about the income and expenditure. Although the accounts do not have to be formally accepted the chair will usually ask the meeting to receive the accounts formally.

Elections

The AGM appoints two or more people to act as tellers to count the votes (they should be people who are not allowed to vote). The constitution should tell you when you can receive nominations. If it doesn't, you can ask for nominations either before or during the meeting. If there are more people than places then a ballot should be held. The votes can then be counted by the tellers and announced by the chair.

Election of Auditor

Depending on how much income your organisation receives will depend on whether or not you need to elect an auditor or independent examiner. The committee or treasurer will usually recommend an auditor or independent examiner. The name of the person or persons (who is not a member of the organisation) will be proposed and seconded and then voted on by the members.

Resolutions

The secretary will ask all its members whether or not they would like to make a resolution to the AGM. A resolution should be a burning issue, either about the organisation or about local or national issues. It could also be a proposal to amend the constitution. Each resolution must be proposed and seconded before it is open to discussion from the floor of the meeting.

Any other business

Any other business **cannot** be allowed at an AGM because all business to be discussed should have been received by the secretary **before** the meeting takes place. However the chair could close the AGM then encourage a discussion to take place.

Close of business

This could be coupled by a vote of thanks for the work of the committee over the previous 12 months. The meeting can then be formally closed.

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