

Holding an Effective Meeting

Most committees would agree that their meeting has been successful if:

- All of the committee felt heard, respected and valued
- The meeting ran on time – started when it should have and ended at the expected time
- The meeting met agreed objectives, minutes are recorded and distributed in a timely manner with a clear action plan to get things done before the next meeting

To do this, meetings will require some planning and organisation. Here are some tips to get the most out of your meetings:

Create a season/yearly calendar

Set the dates for committee members for the entire season and make sure any new Committee member is given a copy of this when they join.

Within the calendar, highlight when annual events need to be discussed or confirmed. Eg presentation day might need to be discussed at the July meeting and Spring Comp plans in May

Be clear on when reports and papers need to be received by the Secretary, and when they will be sent to all Committee members. Allow enough reading time in between sending papers and the meeting date.

Identify Agreed Ways of Working

At the beginning of the season, identify how as a committee you will work together. Agree on things like:

- When you can expect to have someone reply to an email or message?
- How you will use message groups and for what purpose?
- How you will tackle discussions that include debate ensuring everyone has a voice and can be heard?
- Conduct such as punctuality and confidentiality?
- If there is conflict, how will you work this through and what are the steps you will follow?
- What are the decision making processes you will adhere to

Set Clear Objectives:

Clearly define the purpose of the meeting and establish specific objectives. This will help guide the discussion and keep everyone focused on the agenda.

Create an Agenda

Develop a well-organised agenda outlining the topics to be discussed and the time allocated for each. Share the agenda with participants in advance so they can come prepared.

Start each meeting with a reminder of the purpose and values of your Club/Association

When making decisions, it is always important to be reminded of why you are there. What are you trying to achieve and what values does your Club or Association live by? Do these decisions support this? Or could they distract or take you away from your purpose?

Preparation

Encourage committee members to come prepared. Agree that any papers should be reviewed ahead of time and if there are any questions, committee members can bring or send them in advance. This ensures a more informed and productive discussion and will help you keep to the allocated time.

Time Management

Allocate specific time slots for each agenda item and stick to the schedule. This helps prevent the meeting from running over time and ensures that all topics are covered.

Encourage Participation and involve everyone

Foster an environment where all committee members feel valued and heard and are comfortable sharing their opinions and ideas. Encourage active participation and ensure that quieter members have the opportunity to speak. Sometimes the quietest members of the committee can make the biggest contribution, but they may take some encouragement to share their thoughts and ideas. Notice who hasn't contributed to conversations and ask them if they would like to.

Follow Up on Action Items

It should be someone's role to collate and identify action items and responsibilities that are agreed upon during the meeting. Don't start the meeting until this role has been identified. During the meeting, assign tasks to individuals and set agreed deadlines for these tasks to be completed. At the end of the meeting, go back over the action items and confirm. Each meeting should begin with following up the progress of action items agreed to at the last meeting.