

## The Annual General Meeting

If you're worried about organising an Annual General Meeting (AGM), here are a few tips to guide you.

### Legal stuff

The first step is to consult your **governing document** (Constitution, Trust Deed or Memorandum & Articles). This will help you sort out the timing, framework and business of your Annual General Meeting.

It should refer to:-

What has to be voted on and who is entitled to vote (usually members only)  
Quorum, Membership and notice periods

### Timing

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)

### Business (the agenda)

The usual business of an Annual General Meeting will include:

- Welcome and apologies for absence
- Approval of the previous years 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)

### Quorum

This is the number of voting members of any group 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 constitution. 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.

## FACTSHEET 4

### Checklist

#### Before

Notice of AGM to members (usually 21 days minimum – **your governing document should provide exact details**) giving date, time and venue.

Non members do not legally have to be informed but it is good practice to do so by personal invitation and notices in the press (local newspapers and voluntary sector newsletters)

#### **Create a list of other people you may want to invite:-**

Staff, Trustees and Volunteers

– Many of whom may be there with identified tasks to ensure the smooth running of the operation

The mayor /councillors/ local members of parliament

Funders / voluntary sector and business supporters

Media patrons

**Some of the above will need a lot of advance warning**

#### **Also Send out – with the notice of AGM**

The Agenda – this is frequently not done

Any resolutions

Appoint a minute taker

#### **Things to take to the meeting**

- Sufficient copies of Annual reports and Accounts and the Minutes of the previous years AGM
- Spare copies of Agenda and any resolutions
- Attendance Sheet (Members should sign in)
- Membership list to check off and give voting slips to. You may have a pre prepared attendance sheet listing those coming and indicating who are members
- Have independent Tellers available to count any votes (election of trustees & resolutions).

#### **During**

- Appointed person to record the minutes which should include:-
  - Full details of any motions and amendments
  - Proposers and seconders of motions
  - Results of votes announced by the person chairing the meeting.

#### **After**

- Consider your legal requirements. If you are a registered charity you must send an annual return to the Charity Commission. If your income is over £10,000 you must send your audited accounts to the Charity Commission within 10 months of the end of the financial year - but its usually best to do it once they've been passed at the Annual General Meeting, so you know it's out of the way.
- If you are a company limited by guarantee, you must send your accounts to Companies House. If you are not sure what you are, then you really must have a look at your governing document which will be a Memorandum & Articles for a company!