

A Guide to Meetings

This guide provides information on some of the implications of conducting or attending meetings and is in response to feedback from committee members and the wider membership.

Meetings should enable discussion, debate and decision making. The objective of this guide is to improve meeting productivity through the full inclusion of all those attending. However, it is not a definitive or exhaustive guide.

1 Responsibilities before the meeting takes place

- Organiser/ Chair
- Format and Objectives
- Consider if the meeting is necessary and what the aims and objectives are, ensuring that objectives are communicated early and clearly.
- Would a tele-/ video conference work better?

2 Travel

- Give particular attention to people's travel, the timing of the meeting and sustainability issues.
- Will anyone need to make 'challenging' travel arrangements?
- Will anyone have a very long day?

Access & Venue

- Ensure the location is suitable for everyone to attend. Think through access/ evacuation procedures. Check parking arrangements and toilet facilities for disabled people
- Make sure the room is large enough for attendees and there is room to move around easily
- If using a new venue, try to visit and check accessibility and arrangements yourself wherever possible

3 Engagement

- Try to give members the opportunity to contribute their ideas preferably via different formats
- If preparing agendas, include extra information that will help people prepare, i.e. what to read beforehand or if decisions are needed

Individuals needs

- If asking for agenda items, make it clear that individual needs will be supported if at all possible and confidentiality will be maintained
- Make sure you have given yourself enough time to prepare accessible formats of all information if needed. Try to send out information at least two weeks before the meeting
- Pay particular attention to any dietary needs or allergies. Arrange alternatives if necessary. If providing biscuits, try to organise healthy options like fruit, where possible. Always try to have water available
- Allow people the flexibility to attend for only the agenda items that are key to them, especially if they have further to travel. Plan agendas for maximum participation and 'key items for key people'
- Ensure people are comfortable in arriving late or leaving early if they have caring or other responsibilities

“Above all make sure everyone is included and has the chance to contribute”

4 Delegate responsibilities (Things to consider)

- Balance both your needs and those of the committee and broader community (Need to understand and rise above the local agenda)
- Ensure the secretary/organiser knows of any individual needs that you have, before you attend

Responsibilities during the meeting

A Organiser/Chair

- Welcome and domestics
It is common to mention ‘domestics’ but if anyone has additional requirements consider a ‘buddy’ system for anyone who may need individual assistance
- Make sure everyone is introduced

B Structure

- If the meeting will take several hours, allow the opportunity for people to move around or stretch, especially as they may not be sitting in their usual chair.
- More breaks may be necessary depending on the audience. Don’t assume people are comfortable sitting for hours on end
- If meetings are lengthy, try to use interactive sessions that engage people (syndicate work, brainstorming etc).
- Productivity drops dramatically as people get hungry. Allow time for people to eat as necessary and remember individual dietary needs. We are Bohras, regular breaks are key.
- Try to have a variety of drinks and foods available. Dehydration reduces performance, water is a simple solution
- Make sure no-one is excluded from full participation because of the pace of the discussion or use of complex language. Explain jargon and avoid acronyms
- Use a variety of communication methods to cater for different ways we all prefer to take in information and make decisions
- Always try to finish on time and make allowances for people’s work life balance commitments

5 Responsibilities after the meeting

A Organiser/Chair

- Post event checks
- Check if members are clear about decisions made and any action points they need to complete. Your deadlines may not match their availability
- Evaluate your meeting with delegates.
- Try to ensure action points are issued promptly (Secretary)
- Brief anyone unable to attend about the key points, decisions and actions. It is the member’s responsibility to find out what happened through the secretary or buddy.