

Effective and Productive Committee Meetings

Any meeting worth holding is worth planning. By using simple steps, your next committee meeting can be transformed with everyone being enthusiastic and active participants.

Firstly, do not hold meetings for the sake of it - this is frustrating and a waste of everyone's time and can lead to a high drop off rate of meeting attendance. *Value your member's time.* Just because your club has monthly meetings, does not mean you need to hold a monthly meeting if there are not enough items to justify calling for a meeting. If a decision needs to be made and it is appropriate to use *flying minutes* rather than calling a meeting, then do so. Information on *flying minutes* is below.

Notice of Meetings

The Constitution will state how much notice should be given for meetings. Often it will say 'reasonable notice' or specific a specific period (14 days). Ideally, you should set regular meeting dates and times at the beginning of each year/season and adjust as needed (First Wednesday of the month at 7 pm) and confirm at the end of each monthly meeting. Advantages:

- with Constitution
- Members have adequate time to consider issues prior to meeting
- Quorum numbers
- Reduce disputes – decisions made without members being able to attend

Distribute Agenda and Previous Minutes

Committee members will not be able to contribute effectively if they are given Board papers as the last minute. Most meetings will have a standard agenda covering Welcome, Previous Minutes, Treasurer's Report, Secretary's Report, General Business, Next Meeting and Close.

A well prepared agenda distributed in advance, will contribute towards Committee Members being actively involved in the meeting.

Accurate and Detailed Minutes

Minutes are often referred back to for checking discussions/decisions, therefore, keeping accurate and detailed minutes including points raised, decisions, motions and actions agreed help to avoid disputes and refer back to decisions.

Chair of the Meeting

Usually the President/Chairperson will chair the meeting. If not present, the Constitution will state who will be the chair of the meeting (vice chair) or how to appoint the chair of the meeting.

Chairperson

Whenever members are considering a Chairperson, they need to ensure that the person has strong qualities as this person will be responsible for ensuring meetings are run in an orderly and inclusive manner. A good chair encourages input from all attendees and steps in if discussions are getting heated and matters cannot be debated fairly or sensibly. If the meeting is not controlled in an orderly manner, decisions will not be made equitably and there will be feelings of mistrust and anger towards dominant persons within the meeting.

A good Chairperson, will be a good listener. If the Chairperson, shows self-control and calmness and does not get heated or involved in a heated discussion, usually all the members will listen when the Chairperson speaks.

Giving respect to all present and speaking at the meeting will in-turn gain respect when you as the Chairperson need to take control of the meeting and bring it back to the topic or propose a motion.

The Chairperson has a voting right at all the meetings (they are a member of the committee) The Chairperson should be the last person to vote on any motions as they also hold the deciding vote on any motions. For example (based on a committee of 5 members) if the motion is 2 for and 2 against, the Chairperson then makes the deciding vote.

Quorum

Do not start a meeting unless there is a quorum as per your Constitution. Should at any stage during the meeting, the quorum falls below the minimum number required, the meeting should be adjourned until a quorum is in place. Remember, being in the electronic age, it is viable to send out decisions and ask committee members to vote on a decision, but you must provide enough information to ensure an informed decision is being made.

Voting

The Constitution will detail who can vote at the Club's meetings including the AGM. Usually it will state that all *financial members* are eligible to vote. Please note: Chairperson does vote and maybe the deciding vote on decisions which are split 50/50. Further *Lifetime* members can vote unless stated otherwise in the Constitution.

Keep to the Agenda

Setting timeframes for each agenda point helps to keep the meeting on track but still allowing for item to be debated. It is important to follow the agenda - usually you set the most important items first particularly if it require more time for discussion. General Business should be used for new items from members, however, if they require extensive discussion it is recommended they are held over to the next meeting. Keeping your meetings on time will keep your members happy to continue to attend meetings. When meeting drag out, people usually will drop off the committee or stop attending meetings.

General Business

What constitutes *General Business*? General Business should not take more than 15 minutes and is usually an opportunity for all the meeting members to **quickly** update other members or to ask a question of other members.

It certainly is not the time to present a new item that should have been on the Agenda and requires members to vote on. Such an item should be held over until the next meeting.

It is important the Chairperson, informs the members the purpose of General Business and the time allocation.

Assign Roles

Sharing responsibility and creating a sense of community can be achieved by assigning and sharing roles. Rotating roles for ach meeting is another possibility. The common responsibilities include:

- Meeting Chairperson
- Scribe – records notes on chart paper or whiteboard (used during major planning meetings)
- Note-taker – takes the minutes of the meeting (then handed to secretary to type up)

There are times when it is important the Secretary can fully participate in the meeting and a note-taker helps this to be achieved.

Flying Minutes

When a committee is required to make a decision on an issue before the committee is next scheduled to meet, flying minutes are prepared to facilitate the decision-making and approval process.

Three documents should be prepared:

- (i) A covering memorandum
- (ii) A response page
- (iii) A flying minute

The memorandum, response page and any relevant attachments are emailed to committee members. Members are asked to indicate their decision on the response page, sign it, and return it to the Secretary electronically.

It is preferable to receive a response from all committee members, however if this is not possible within the time-frame specified, the number of responses required to constitute the quorum for the committee should be obtained before the flying minute is finalised.

The flying minute is then prepared, sent to the Chair for approval, and distributed in the usual manner to the committee. Examples are attached.

ATTACHMENT 1

MEMORANDUM TO: Members of XYZ Committee

FROM: Ross Brown, Chair

DATE: 11 November 2012

RE: **Flying Minute – Letter to city council regarding changes to infrastructure use**

Please find attached a copy of our club letter to the city council request changes to the current use of our clubhouse.

As discussed and agreed at our October meeting, we wish to request a change of usage of our clubhouse to include operating the kitchen facility weekdays to provide meals to the local members of our community. Not only will this increase patronage and revenue, we may also find in the longer term will provide us with a broader base of memberships and volunteer pool.

I have also taken this opportunity to develop a standard template for the terms of reference for the use of our kitchen facility and position descriptions for a chef and kitchen hands.

Could you please indicate your support, or otherwise, for the letter to council and position descriptions by returning the attached Flying Minute to the Secretary, Mr John Bloggs, by email no later than **10.00am Friday 16 November 2012**.

Thank you for your assistance.

Name:
Chair, XYZ Committee

Copy: Secretary, XYZ Committee
File

ATTACHMENT 2

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
Flying Minute of the XYZ Committee
11 November 2012**

**Please Email this Response page only to:
Mr John Bloggs
Jbloggs@xyzcommittee.com.au**

Letter to City Council

Letter to city council - change of infrastructure use

It is resolved to recommend –

The letter to City Council be approved, signed and posted to Council.

(Refer to attached letter from the Chairperson of XYZ Committee.)

Approve

Abstain

Dissent

.....
Signature

.....
Signature

.....
Signature

Name:.....

Date:

ATTACHMENT 3

FLYING MINUTES 20 November 2012

On the 11 November 2012 flying minutes were sent to all committee members requesting approval to send a letter to the City Council regarding the change of infrastructure usage. As discussed in the October 2012 meeting, the club is ready to increase its usage of the kitchen facility and employ a chef and kitchen staff to operate the facility during the week, particularly in the evenings. As a committee we discussed this strategy would increase our revenue, patronage, membership and potential to recruit new volunteers for our club.

The positive responses received from the flying minutes has been exceptional with all 9 committee members in full support of signing off and sending the letter to the local City Council.

Thank you to everyone for their very promote responses and be advised the letter was posted to Council on Monday 19th November 2012. We await their response.

Signed:
Chairperson
20 November 2012