

Annual General Meetings

It is a legal requirement to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) if your organisation has company limited status or if it is written in your constitution that you have one, however it is good practice to hold the AGM.

An AGM is a meeting that is open to anyone to attend and it is about being open and accountable to the public about your organisation's finances and activities and how you are fulfilling your aims and objectives.

There is certain business that has to be carried out at the AGM and this will be set out in your constitution. In most cases it will be:

- Approving the minutes of last year's AGM
- Receiving the last year's accounts
- Receiving any reports on activities from the committee
- Appointing auditors (if needed)
- Electing committee members and officers
- Approving changes to the constitution (if any)
- Considering resolutions (if any)

If you are a new organisation you might want to hold your first AGM in the first few months of the organisation's life. This could have the advantages of:

- publicising the new organisation
- serving as a launch meeting
- providing an opportunity to hold democratic elections of a committee.



When you wish to hold an AGM you will need to refer to your constitution to see how much notice needs to be given. Often it is 14 days. You need to send out an agenda and some nomination papers to all members of your organisation.

The Secretary of your organisation should have an up-to-date list of your current members. Your members will be people who support your organisation and who have a right to vote at AGMs and Special (or Extraordinary) Meetings. Members have a legal right to be invited to the AGM and Special Meetings – this is also why it is important to keep an up-to-date record of their contact details.

Your constitution usually requires you to elect committee members/officers at your AGM. If it is not written into your constitution, it is essential good practice to elect new officers to your committee. This allows the organisation to be seen to be accountable to all its members, and to the public.

Subject to the provisions in your constitution, you may elect your members with a show of hands or by a ballot. Usually a simple majority is sufficient.

Checklist for an Annual General Meeting

Before the meeting

- Check the time period within which the AGM must be held, this should be stated in your constitution
- Where relevant, ensure the accounts are submitted to the auditor in time for the audit to be completed and for approved accounts to be sent to members
- Check the constitution for any agenda requirements
- Check the rules on elections
- Ensure that the correct notice is given of the AGM and that notices are sent in accordance with the constitution



- Ensure that the auditor is informed of the meeting

At the meeting

- Ensure that resolutions are passed receiving, and if required under the constitution approving, the accounts and the committee's report
- Ensure elections are held
- Ensure minutes are kept

After the meeting

- Ensure that a copy of the audited accounts, annual report, annual return and balance sheets are available for inspection by all members in line with your constitution.
- Ensure that the minutes are written up
- Carry out any induction procedures for new committee members (existing committee members may also find this useful)

Checklist for Elections

Some constitutions detail the election procedures. If there are no requirements, the committee should agree the format for the election, including procedures for taking nominations, methods of making sure that only those entitled to vote do so, and whether it should take place by secret ballot or open show of hands.

Before the meeting

Check

- Categories of elected members
- Who can vote for which categories
- Nomination procedures, including timescales



Circulate (as appropriate)

- Requests for nominations with instructions
- Information about nominees, if this is being sent out before the meeting
- Proxy or ballot papers, if allowed under the constitution

Prepare (as appropriate)

- Ballot papers
- A list of those entitled to vote for each category member
- The agenda, produced in such a way that vote counting can take place without interrupting the flow of the meeting

At the Meeting

Ensure (as appropriate)

- Ballot papers are given to those entitled to vote, with an explanation of the voting procedure (including who can vote for particular categories of members)
- People not running for election are available to count votes (where applicable)
- Results are announced, and recorded in the minutes

