

## INTRODUCTION

A Board, committee or subcommittee all exist to serve the association and to ensure the best possible service is given to the members. Thus it is important that each of these must keep reminding itself why it is there.

Often an association's success will be down to the work of the Board, its employees, and its subcommittees. Establishing all of these with clearly identified roles helps to clarify who does what in the association and spread the workload to ensure the association is not dependant on only 1 or 2 people.

One step to becoming successful is for the Board / committees to meet regularly to sort out any issues within the association or to develop particular areas of the association's game and administration. These meetings could be quarterly or monthly as required.

While meeting regularly is a positive step in the right direction, it does not ensure that your meeting will have good outcomes or run effectively. A good meeting will ensure that everybody involved has the information they need, understands the outcomes and knows what they need to contribute to achieve these outcomes.

This resource has been designed to give you an understanding of what will make a meeting "good" and also provide you with ideas and templates that you can implement into your meeting structure to assist with the efficiency and effectiveness of them.

**Tips for Running Effective Meetings**

- Email an agenda 24 hours in advance.
- Arrive 5 minutes early.
- Start and end on time.
- Come prepared.
- No smartphones.
- Bring paper and a pen.
- Share all relevant data.
- Stay on topic.
- Be brief and concise.
- No interrupting.
- Silence = agreement.
- No side conversations or comments.
- Disagree without being disagreeable.
- Challenge ideas rather than people.
- Everyone participates.
- Follow-up by email within 24 hours.

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## What are formal meetings?

Within an association there are several different types of meeting that may be required; some are informal, others are more formal.

Formal meetings, such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM) are held annually, and will be a requirement of an association's constitution. They are open to all club members and are held to make decisions that affect what your association does and how it is run.

AGMs are also a reporting meeting for the association, this means that your association's aims, activities and finances are reported on.

An association's constitution will dictate when the AGM is to be held, who needs to be appointed at an AGM (key roles such as chairman etc) and what constitutes a quorum present for the meeting to go ahead.

As a general rule you should:

- Follow the constitution to the letter - don't leave room for protests that the procedures weren't followed correctly
- Involve others in the planning process for the meeting - share the workload and the responsibility
- Not use an AGM to 'surprise' people with important issues that were not raised beforehand!
- Make the business part as brief as possible and then follow it with some form of social gathering.
- Take advantage of the fact that it is a great opportunity to make your members feel part of a successful club and to get them involved with helping out.



**SAXTON SOFTBALL ASSN  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Another type of formal meeting is a Special General Meeting (SGM). Like an AGM, at a SGM there will be procedures to follow and generally these too are outlined in an Association's constitution.

For both an AGM and a SGM the club's Secretary and Treasurer usually prepare the agenda in accordance with the timelines set out in the constitution and send it out to everyone who will attend the meeting.

In regards to AGMs, there are many types of agenda – but by keeping it simple you'll be able to run a straight-forward and effective meeting. Your association's chairperson will run the meeting and make sure that the agenda is used.

An example of a straightforward agenda for an AGM can be found on page 10.

## What are informal meetings?

Informal meetings are the regular meetings that can be held by a Board, Committee or Sub committee. These tackle the projects you have been assigned to help progress the association forward. At best informal meetings will be stimulating, build involvement and commitment. At worst, they can slide into a lack of activity and chaos.

Examples of why you might hold an informal meeting are:

- To discuss and undertake future planning
- To discuss new ideas and to create proposals
- To solve problems
- To discuss how a current project is going.
- To create and set policies
- To organise how you will achieve each project outlined to your group, with what and by when



While there is still some structure to the way these meetings are held, they aren't bound by any stipulations from the constitution (with the possible exception of the frequency that an Associations Board is to meet and what makes the quorum for Board meetings).

There is no one way to run an informal meeting, but commonly they include checking on the notes / minutes of the previous meetings minutes, hearing reports on projects, checking progress on upcoming projects and other matters important to your group.

Informal meetings are generally more relaxed and social needs are met and acknowledged. A group may have fun informal conversations around projects and everyone has the opportunity to be heard. However it is important that clear decisions are made with majority support shown from the group and that this is recorded. Even if the group isn't used to raising, moving, seconding and voting on motions, it is a good practise to get a formal resolution for decisions that carry a lot of importance.

Even though there is a more relaxed approach to these meetings, it is still good to set an agenda, and try to limit discussion on each topic. If this isn't practised time is wasted, things do not get accomplished, people get bored or lose interest and the groups overall productivity will decline.

There is an "Active meeting template" on page 10 which can help your group stay on track at meetings and determine project details, timelines and outcomes.

## Good vs Bad meetings

Any meeting will need someone to be in charge or 'chair' the meeting and someone to write down the minutes. The minutes often give an overview of the structure of the meeting, starting with a list of those present, a list of the various issues discussed, and any responses/decisions that are made. However this alone will not make ensure an effective meeting.

Basically there are good meetings and bad meetings and I am sure most of you would have experience both. **Bad meetings** can drone on forever and you never seem to get to the point or make a decision and you are left feeling that your time has been wasted. **Good and effective meetings** will give you a feeling that you have accomplished something.

Good Meetings
1. Have a clear and informative agenda circulated with a good amount of time so everyone is well informed prior to the meeting
2. Have a good chairperson - keeps everyone to the point and ensures minimal distractions (asks people to turn off phones, not over talk each other etc)
3. Achieves its objectives and clearly states who is responsible for tasks and by when
4. Takes up a minimal amount of time
5. Has everyone on the committee / board involved
6. Have the right people attend (those able to make - and implement - decisions)
7. Has the chairperson summarise each topic discussed as the agenda progresses
8. Gets decisions made, even if everyone did not agree with the outcome, they were accepted and respected
9. Leaves members feeling that a sensible process has been taken

Bad meetings
1. Meeting was called at short notice
2. There were several late comers which meant going over the same information several times for their benefit
3. The purpose of meeting was not clear - people were unsure whether they were there just to be told what was happening or to decide about what should happen
4. The people who were best informed about the topic weren't there
5. Information was handed out at the beginning of the meeting - but those attending had no chance to read and understand the content
6. The minutes did not reflect what we actually talked about - the chair and secretary cobbled them together after the meeting
7. Alternative view points were not valued as the chairperson seemed already to have made the decision
8. One or two people dominated the discussion....again...or were disruptive
9. The meeting ambled on and at the end it wasn't clear whether a decision had been made or not

## What will be discussed at meetings?

The topics of discussion at meetings will be influenced by your associations long term planning and the issues it considers to be important. Discussion items may vary from meeting to meeting and range from which policies need reviewing (Board) to representative coach/manager appointments (Sub committee), to what coaching and development will be formally organised for players, coaches and volunteers (Sub committee).

An agenda helps share the purpose of a meeting by outlining what items will be discussed. Items may need to be discussed at consecutive meetings and be ongoing points for discussion. Others may be dealt with on a one off basis.

When scheduling a meeting, make sure that there is a point it before you go ahead with it. People are far more likely to attend if something will be achieved and progress made.



## The agenda:

Agendas ensure meetings are better planned, help with recording the minutes and keep groups on task which in itself means better time management of meetings. We have made this easy for you and have included an area for your agenda in the “active meeting” template on pg 10.

Circulating an agenda prior to a meeting is a great idea. This gives people have time to think about responses or do any research if required, or provide feedback on items listed on the agenda.

Also send out any other relevant material that the members should read prior to the meeting, at the same time as the agenda.

## How do you create a good agenda?

1. Refer to what key tasks the group has been given (possibly off the Strategic Plan or Business Plan, or in the groups role description) to see if any items are coming up for discussion
2. To get all of the group involved in the agenda items, it may be a good idea to get group members to email the chair person or secretary one week after the last meeting with any items they would like raise at the next meeting. Following this the agenda for the next upcoming meeting can then be circulated one week prior so everyone is aware of what topics the meeting will discuss.
3. Avoid ‘agenda stacking’ (the manipulation of the agenda order to put more controversial issues at the end to reduce time for discussion on them). Usually the most important items should be addressed earlier in the meeting.



## Use time wisely during meetings

Time is a precious resource, and no one wants their time wasted. With the amount of time we all spend in meetings, the group owes it to its members to streamline the meeting as much as possible. It's important to remember that time wasted in a meeting is time wasted for everybody.....so ensure your meeting stays on topic

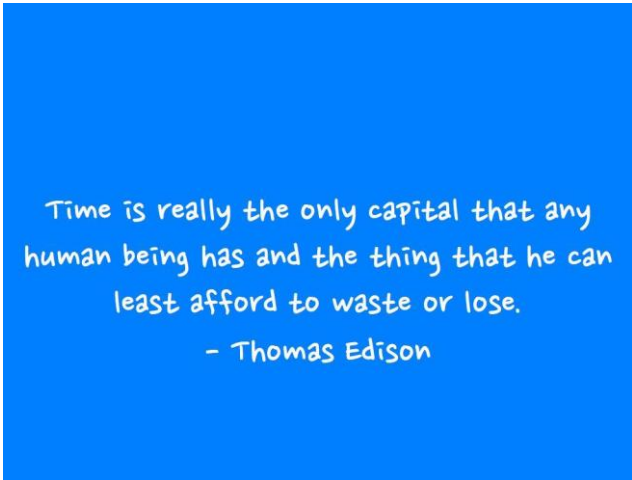
Start meetings on time, and do not spend time recapping for latecomers, and when you can, finish on time. What ever can be done out of the meeting should be. This includes circulating reports for people to read beforehand and assigning smaller group meetings to discuss issues relevant to only certain people.

## Tips on getting all members involved at meetings

- If it's a meeting to solve a problem, the chairman should ask the participants to come prepared with a viable solution.
- If you are discussing an ongoing project, have each participant summarize his or her progress to date and circulate reports amongst members. (Try and have these reports circulated prior to the meeting so you don't have to allow for "reading time")
- Encourage everyone to be objective and keep discussion focused on the topic.
- Having the chairman assign a particular topic of discussion to various people is another great way to increase involvement and interest. On the agenda indicate who will lead the discussion or presentation of each item.
- If certain people are dominating conversation, the chairman needs to make a point of asking others for their ideas and ensure only one person speaks at a time.
- Watch body language and make adjustments as necessary. Maybe people need a break, or you need to stop someone from speaking so much.

## Things to keep in mind

During your meeting and at the end of each agenda item, quickly summarize what was said and ask people to confirm if that is a fair summary. Also keep a note of items that either don't require follow up or items that require further discussion at a later date.



Time is really the only capital that any human being has and the thing that he can least afford to waste or lose.  
- Thomas Edison



## Post meeting

Great, you have made it through your meeting, hopefully things went smoothly and all members are happy. The final step is to prepare the summary of the meeting and send it out to all the participants. This often gets overlooked but is very crucial part of your group meetings.

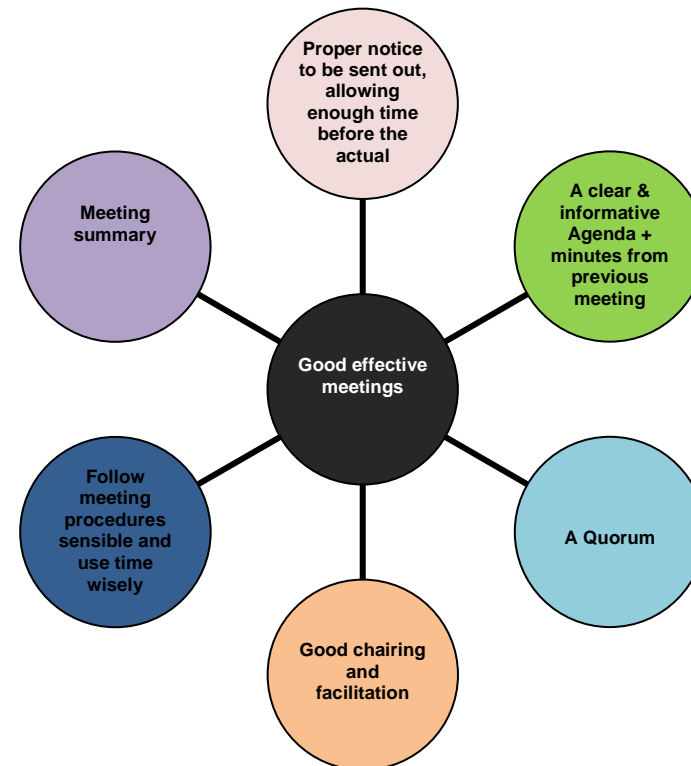
This summary is a record of your meeting, what was accomplished and who is responsible for what as the team moves forwards.....so basically by sending out the “active meeting” notes you are sending out the minutes of the meeting and the summary of the meeting in one go. Simple!

When you send out your summary, allow the opportunity for members to provide any additional comments or amendments to be made. Put a time frame on this (i.e.: a week) so a revised version can be sent out immediately.

## In Summary

Whether it's a formal or an informal meeting, running an effective meeting is more than sending out a notice that you want to meet at a particular time and place. Effective meetings need structure and order. Without these elements they can go on forever and not accomplish a thing.

With a solid objective in mind, a tight agenda, and a commitment to involving all of the members in the planning, preparation, and execution of the meeting, you are well on your way to being involved in great meetings.



**TEMPLATE: ACTIVE MEETING NOTES (and minutes)**

<b>Date:</b>		<b>Time</b>		<b>Location</b>	
<b>Present</b>					
<b>Apologies</b>					

**Agenda Items:**

1. Meeting minutes
2. Matters arising from previous meeting
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
6. Any other business (not identified on the agenda but required urgent attention)

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Progress</b>
1. Meeting minutes	The minutes and active meeting notes from the previous meeting are adopted as true and correct. Accepted by _____ and seconded by _____	N/a	N/a	N/a	Completed
2. Matters arising from previous meeting	<i>Work through the actions from previous meetings</i>	<i>Identify any further action or identify its "progress"</i>	<i>Identify who needs to do the tasks highlighted</i>	<i>Identify when the action needs to have been achieved by</i>	<i>State the progress of the action</i>
3. New agenda item	<i>Summarise discussions</i>	<i>As above</i>	<i>As above</i>	<i>As above</i>	<i>As above</i>
4.					
5.					
6. Any other business					

**Meeting ended:**

**Date time and place of next meeting:**

### EXAMPLE: A straightforward AGM agenda

What it to be included in the agenda	Further explanation
Welcome by the chairperson	This starts the meeting off
Apologies	From people who can't get to the meeting.
Confirmation of minutes of the previous AGM	A summary of what was discussed
Correspondence	Important letters, email and faxes to and from your association
Chairperson's report	Usually an overview of the activities and aims of the association
Treasurer's report	Usually an overview of the financial activities and the associations current finances
Notice of any new management committee members	
General business	Anything that hasn't been covered by the chairperson or treasurer.
Guest speaker	This is optional but sometimes a guest speaker can provide new ideas or inspiration for your association.
Confirming the date of the next meeting.	
Close of meeting	Serving refreshments at this stage can be great way to thank everyone for their efforts and keeping the meeting fun.

**TEMPLATE: Subcommittee self assessment checks**

It is recommended that this assessment is to be completed quarterly by each Sub committee member and handed to the chairperson. This check will take no more than 5 minutes and will help the Sub committee monitor if they are working cohesively together, if you are running effectively and efficiently and if you are achieving the purpose of your committee.

<b>At this month's meeting (insert date)</b>	<b>( circle one )</b>			
we prioritised our objectives	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We outlined the details of how we are going to achieve each objectives (how, who, when and where)	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We have met deadlines of our objectives	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
Prior to meetings, we receive the agenda and all relevant info necessary in a timely fashion	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
All members have the opportunity to contribute to the meeting agenda	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
At meetings a diversity of viewpoints was encouraged	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
At meetings we spent about the right amount of time discussing agenda items	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
we have met openly and honestly with a high degree of mutual trust among the members	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
we made collective (rather than individual) decisions .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
The knowledge, skills and experience of individual members are well utilised by the committee	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
we are proactive rather than reactive .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
all members contributed to the meeting discussion	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
Conflicts are resolved on the committee and dissenting views are not overly criticised	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
we observed a clear separation between governance and the Sub committee (our role)	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
we received about the right amount of monitoring information on projects .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We work well together as a team	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
I am leaving with a sense of achievement	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree

**TEMPLATE: Board Self Assessment Checks**

It is recommended that this assessment is to be completed quarterly by each Board member and handed to the chairperson. This check will take no more than 5 minutes and will help the Board monitor if they are working cohesively together, if you are running effectively and efficiently and if you are achieving the purpose of your Board / executive committee.

At this month's meeting <b>(insert date)</b>	<i>( circle one )</i>			
We governed with an emphasis on the future (rather than the present or the past) .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We governed with an emphasis on strategic leadership (rather than administrative detail) .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
A diversity of viewpoints was encouraged .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We governed openly and honestly with a high degree of mutual trust among the members .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We made collective (rather than individual) decisions .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We governed proactively rather than reactively .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
All members contributed to the discussion .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We observed a clear separation between governance (our role) and management/paid roles .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We received about the right amount of monitoring information .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We received high-quality monitoring information .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We received information in a timely manner .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
We spent about the right amount of time discussing agenda items .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
I am leaving with a sense of achievement .....	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
The knowledge, skills and experience of individual members are well utilised by the board	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
Conflicts are resolved on the Board and dissenting views are not overly criticised	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree

I have the following suggestions to make about the way we conduct our meetings: