



MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Suggestions on how to write them

(reviewed June 2011)

In the majority of larger clubs, the secretary will undertake the preparation of all minutes based on a long standing layout and style. He will arrange for them to be typed up by the office secretary, so that they are neat and easy to read. However, the job of drafting can in some cases fall to a committee member. Anyway, there is no reason why a chairman should not decide that he wants to alter the layout of the minutes to improve their efficiency.

Briefly, let us define the purposes of minutes, which are:

1. In general, to record the activities of the meeting
2. To fulfil any legal requirements or requirements of the club Rules
3. To record decisions on matters relevant to that meeting
4. To identify individual responsibilities for implementing such decisions
5. To set out the timetables for decisions to be carried out
6. To record the voting on any item that requires a vote
7. To provide a document against which progress can be monitored.

General hints regarding actual composition of the minutes are as follows:

- 1) They should be concise as follows, recording:
 - ✂ the brief facts on a particular point
 - ✂ the decision that has been taken
 - ✂ how that decision is to be implemented
- 2) Sentences should be kept short and simple
- 3) Plain English should be used. Avoid padding and waffle!
- 4) Comments and opinions should be avoided.
- 5) Use the past tense.
- 6) Only use names where this is absolutely necessary.
- 7) Items should be clearly numbered and headed.

If necessary, the chairman should summarise a particular point at the end of the discussion, so that the minute taker can record an agreed precis.

Lastly, minutes should be prepared ideally the day after the meeting whilst memories are fresh. Copies should certainly be circulated within a few days of the meeting so that people can read and check them whilst they can still recall what was agreed.

Remember that minutes are confidential at that stage and should not be left lying around or discussed with people other than meeting members.

Keeping Meeting Records - Check List

- ✎ Are meeting minutes circulated promptly?
- ✎ Do they clearly identify the person responsible for implementing each decision?
- ✎ Are they laid out in such a way that it is easy to refer back to the previous minutes ie clearly numbered and headed?
- ✎ Are they concise and written in short sentences?