

Annual General Meeting (AGM) Guide

A practical guide for community and voluntary groups

AGM Guide

1. What is an AGM?

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is a formal meeting held once a year where a group reports to its members, reviews the year, and makes key decisions.

It is where the committee or board reports to the members, and members have the opportunity to ask questions and take part in decisions.

It is an important part of good governance, supporting transparency, accountability, and member participation.

2. Level of formality

An AGM is more formal than a regular meeting, but it should still be clear and accessible.

This means following a structured agenda, recording decisions clearly, allowing members to ask questions, and formally approving key items such as minutes, reports, and finances.

It does not need to feel legal or complicated — just organised and fair.

3. What must be included

Most AGMs will include:

- approval of the previous AGM minutes
- a report on the year
- a financial report
- elections where required
- and any proposed changes such as updates to the constitution.

Any proposed changes should be shared in advance where possible so members can consider them.

The AGM should be run in line with the group's constitution or governing rules.

4. Who does what

The committee or board is responsible for running the organisation during the year, and the AGM is where they report back to members.

1. The Chair or facilitator leads the meeting, keeps it on track, and ensures all agenda items are covered fairly.
2. The Secretary or minute taker records the minutes, including decisions and election results.
3. The Treasurer, where applicable, presents the financial report and responds to questions.

Members attend, ask questions, and take part in decisions, including voting where required. Voting is usually by a show of hands unless a secret ballot is required or requested.

5. Key procedures (simple and practical)

Members should be given advance notice of the AGM, including the date, time, location, and agenda. Notice of the AGM should be given in line with the group's constitution, including the agenda and any relevant documents.

The meeting should have enough members present to proceed, in line with the group's constitution. If this is not met, decisions may need to be deferred.

Items such as minutes and reports are usually approved by members through a simple process of proposing, seconding, and agreeing, often by a show of hands.

Where elections are taking place, nominations should be confirmed, and a vote held if there is more than one candidate. The outcome should be clearly recorded.

Elections ensure the committee or board remains accountable to members and can be refreshed where needed. Nominations for roles should be sought in advance where possible or taken at the meeting in line with the group's rules.

Members should also be given an opportunity to ask questions or raise issues.

6. Good practice

Keep the meeting structured but welcoming. Use plain language and explain anything that may be unfamiliar.

Allow enough time for key items, particularly reports and elections. Ensure all decisions are clearly recorded.

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The financial report should give members a clear understanding of how funds have been managed and used.

A clear record of the AGM, including decisions and election results, should be kept and shared with members.

7. Final note

An AGM is not just a requirement — it is an opportunity to show the work of the group, involve members, and set direction for the year ahead.

Running the Meeting (On the Day Guide)

1. Before the meeting starts

Arrive early and make sure everything is ready, including sign-in, seating, and any documents. Confirm who will take minutes and who will support with elections if needed.

Have a copy of the agenda and any reports to hand.

2. Opening the meeting

The Chair welcomes everyone, introduces the meeting, and briefly explains the purpose of the AGM.

They should confirm that quorum has been reached before moving forward.

3. Setting the tone

Keep the meeting clear, respectful, and inclusive. Speak in plain language and explain anything that may not be familiar.

Let members know there will be time for questions.

4. Moving through the agenda

Follow the agenda in order, keeping the meeting focused and on time.

For each item:

- introduce the item clearly
- allow brief discussion where appropriate
- confirm the outcome before moving on

If a decision is made, state it clearly so it can be recorded.

5. Approving items

When approving minutes or reports:

- ask for a proposer
- ask for a seconder
- confirm agreement (usually by show of hands)

State clearly when an item is approved.

6. Managing elections

Clearly explain the roles and the process before starting.

If there is one nominee, this can be approved by agreement. If there are multiple nominees, a vote should take place.

Ensure results are clearly announced and recorded.

7. Handling questions

Allow members to ask questions, particularly after reports.

Keep responses clear and focused. If something cannot be answered on the spot, note it for follow-up.

8. Keeping control of the meeting

Keep discussions focused and avoid going off track. If needed, suggest that detailed discussions be taken outside the meeting or at a future meeting.

9. Closing the meeting

Once all items are complete, thank attendees for their time and contribution.

Formally close the meeting.

10. After the meeting

Ensure minutes are written up promptly, including all decisions and election outcomes.

Share minutes with members and store them appropriately.