

MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES

Table of Contents

MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES.....	1
Topic 1 Introduction.....	4
Understanding decision-making.....	4
Simple decisions- Simple and easy decisions are normally made for things that are short term. These decisions do not have a great impact on your future and are easy to change.....	4
Difficult personal decisions- Difficult decisions can be personal and involve only yourself although you may ask others to help you make the decision. These decisions are generally long term and difficult to change.....	4
Difficult non-personal decisions- Difficult decisions can also include other people. When other people are involved in decision-making, the final decision must be one that is best for everyone involved.	4
The purpose of decision-making.....	4
Types of decisions.....	5
Informal decision-making.....	5
Formal decision-making.....	5
The purpose of formal decision-making.....	5
Formal decision-making bodies.....	5
Aims of decision-making bodies.....	6
Conflict of interest.....	6
Avoiding conflict of interest.....	6
What is a committee?.....	7
When is a committee needed?.....	8
How long do committees operate?.....	8
Successful committees.....	8
Types of committees.....	9
Steering committees.....	9

Management committees.....	9
The functions of a committee.....	10
The powers of a committee.....	10
Incorporated organisation.....	10
Constitution.....	10
Powers of a steering committee.....	10
Powers of a management committee.....	11
Powers of a subcommittee.....	11
How committee members are chosen.....	11
Reporting proceedings.....	12
What should be reported.....	12
How to present information.....	12
How reports are used.....	13
Summary.....	13
Introduction.....	13
What is a meeting?.....	14
Types of meetings.....	14
Roles and responsibilities at meetings.....	15
The chairperson.....	15
The vice-chairperson.....	16
The secretary.....	17
The treasurer.....	18
Members.....	19
Meeting procedures.....	19
The quorum.....	20
Decision making at meetings.....	20
Motions.....	20
Voting.....	20

Amendments to motions.....	21
Summary.....	21
Introduction.....	21
Meetings in communities and organisations.....	22
What is an agenda?.....	22
The functions and purpose of an agenda.....	22
What information should be on an agenda.....	23
How meetings are called.....	25
Conducting a formal meeting.....	25
Minute taking in meetings.....	26
The purpose of minutes.....	26
Who is responsible for minutes?.....	29
Who should have access to the minutes?.....	29
Using minutes to remember responsibilities	30
Summary: In this module you learned how to organise and conduct a formal meeting. You will now understand the function of an agenda, what is included in an agenda and how it is used to give some order and direction to a meeting. You have learnt how to call a meeting according to your Constitution and how the meeting is conducted once everyone has gathered. You have learnt more about the importance of minutes and what information they should include. The process of taking minutes and the role of the minute taker was discussed so that you would be able to take on this responsibility. Finally you learned how to make sure that duties allocated at meetings are carried out and how to fulfil any of your own responsibilities.	30

Topic 1 Introduction

Welcome to the first topic for the module *Meetings and Committees*. This topic is called Decision-making Processes.

This topic looks at decision-making at both an informal and formal level in everyday life. It explains the importance of decision-making and the reason why the formal decision-making process may be introduced to a group or community. Finally the topic will explain the issues of concern related to decision-making. These include teamwork, conflict of interest, communication and confidentiality.

Understanding decision-making

Decision-making is a very important process done by nearly every person several times a day. There are many different types of decisions that have to be made.

Simple decisions- Simple and easy decisions are normally made for things that are short term. These decisions do not have a great impact on your future and are easy to change.

Complex decisions - Complex decisions require a lot more time and thought. They are often much more important decisions as they may have a great impact on your future, are very difficult to change and may affect your relationships with others.

Difficult personal decisions- Difficult decisions can be personal and involve only yourself although you may ask others to help you make the decision. These decisions are generally long term and difficult to change.

Difficult non-personal decisions- Difficult decisions can also include other people. When other people are involved in decision-making, the final decision must be one that is best for everyone involved.

The purpose of decision-making

Decisions and choices are made to help you to achieve your goals.

Types of decisions

The decision-making process *that* involves other people can be separated into two main types:

Informal decision-making

Decision-making is informal when:

- There are no formal meeting procedures
- There are no formal procedures for making the decision
- The decision is made in an every-day situation
- There may not be an agenda.

The informal decision-making does not mean that the decision is not important

Formal decision-making

Decision-making becomes formal when it involves:

- An *agenda*
- Minutes*
- Elected officers*
- Meeting procedures (e.g.: *motions, amendments, voting* etc.).

The purpose of formal decision-making

Formal “decision – making” has many purposes. Most organisations and meetings use “formal decision-making” at their meetings to help:

- Fulfill the goals of the organisation or community
- Keep a record of decisions
- Make decisions in an orderly way
- Make sure that individual responsibilities are fulfilled
- Make decisions *legal*.

Formal decision-making bodies

Formal decisions can be made at all levels of an organisation and community. Formal decision-making bodies may include:

- Members of a *council*

- Members of a *committee*
- Members of an *executive committee*
- The chairperson of a *company*
- The school committee.

Every person present at a formal meeting will have a role to play.

Aims of decision-making bodies

The major aims of the decision-making bodies are to:

- Make decisions on behalf of and for the benefit of the whole community or organisation
- Work together as a team within the community or organisation
- Agree on the fairest and most accepted method of action
- Deal with all issues of concern to the community or organisation.

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest occurs when a decision that is being made by an organisation will have an affect on the private life of one of the decision makers. The decision-maker may believe that a certain decision would have a positive affect on their life so that the decision-maker would want the organisation to vote in favour of the decision even if such a decision is not really good for the community.

Avoiding conflict of interest

- To recognise that they have a personal or private interest in the decision.
 - Let other members of the organisation or committee know
 - Request to be excluded from the voting or decision-making.
- Confidentiality

Lastly, it is important to understand the meaning of confidentiality.

When involved with meetings or committees you will be exposed to some information that is considered to be confidential. This is private information that has only been given to the people at the meeting. **Failing to keep information confidential can have disastrous effects.** The best way to avoid giving out confidential information is to try not to talk about meetings that discuss confidential issues.

Summary: In this topic you learned about both informal and formal decision-making. The importance of decision-making was explained along with the reasons why formal decision-making processes are sometimes necessary. You were introduced to some decision-making bodies and the aims of these groups. Finally the topic explained some issues of concern related to decision-making. The two most important issues discussed were conflict of interest and confidentiality.

Topic 2 Introduction

Welcome to the second topic of *Meetings and Committees*. This topic is called Types of Committees.

In this topic you will learn about different types of committees in organisations and their purposes. You will learn the functions and powers of a committee and how members of a committee are chosen. You will be introduced to the proceedings of committees and learn how these proceedings are used in an organisation.

What is a committee?

A committee is a name often used for a group of people who have come together to organise something. To be successful, the group must have common goals to fulfill.

A group of people may come together as a committee or they may be appointed to a committee to:

- Organise an event (e.g.: a school sports day)
- Manage something that has to be done (e.g.: vaccination of all community members)
- Celebrate something (e.g.: New Year)
- Make changes or improvements to the organisation or community (e.g.: introduce new subjects at school).

The purpose of a committee

Every committee should have a purpose. The purpose is related to the goals of the committee members.

When is a committee needed?

Committees may be needed for many different reasons. Committees are formed when people have goals but need a group to organise activities so that the goals can be achieved.

How long do committees operate?

Committees can be long term or short term.

- Long-term committees are ones that continue over many years. The members of the committee may change but the committee itself will remain because the purpose remains.
- Short-term committees are normally formed to address one issue for a specific length of time. These committees have a goal to reach. Once the goal is fulfilled, the committee is no longer needed.

Successful committees

Committees will only be successful if:

- The ideas behind them are good and practical
- The committee has support from its members and from the organisation or community
- The ideas behind the committee have future direction and goals that will benefit all members of the community or organisation
- There is money available or a way of raising money to support the idea.

Types of committees

In your community or organisation, you will find different types of committees.

Different types of committees include:

- Steering committees
- Management committees
- Subcommittees.

Steering committees

Is made up of some people who have come together to start forming ideas about some activity.

The aims of a steering committee are to:

- Work on new ideas
- Research all of the information needed to develop new ideas
- Report back to the community or organisation
- If a long-term committee is needed, the steering committee will make decisions about how the long-term committee will be organised
- Write decisions about the long-term committee into a *Constitution*.
- Steering committees are a short-term committee.

Management committees

The main aims of a management committee are to make sure that:

- The ideas and plans developed by the steering committee are carried out
- Decisions are made and acted upon in a proper way
- The people involved are organised and have everything they need in order to get things done
- Things actually get done as planned.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees are normally short-term committees that are formed within a very large organisation or community. They are made up of committee

members who have formed a smaller internal committee to work on one particular task. Subcommittees are often formed to address a difficult or complicated issue.

The functions of a committee

Committee members have many functions that must be fulfilled for the committee to be successful.

Every committee member must be willing to:

- Be properly organised
- Provide feedback to the community or organisation
- Play a full and active part in the work of the committee
- Work towards the committee's goals
- Work as a team.

Every one of these functions is important to the success of the committee.

The powers of a committee

Every committee will have certain powers to be able to make decisions and changes to the community or organisation they represent. Before we can discuss the powers of the committee, it is important for you to know what is meant by an incorporated organisation and a Constitution.

Incorporated organisation

An incorporated organisation is one which has its own separate legal identity. An incorporated organisation is required by law must hold formal meetings to make decisions

Constitution

The Constitution is a set of rules that guide how an organisation works.

Powers of a steering committee

Steering committees generally have the power to present recommendations. They put together information and suggest some *alternative* options to fulfill overall goals.

Powers of a management committee

The management committee must make sure that they make suitable decisions because they are in the end responsible for the success of the organisation. They have the power to delegate work and expect results. The management committee would normally report back to council and would have power of decision over a subcommittee.

Powers of a subcommittee

A subcommittee will only have powers related to a specific issue. Depending on the issue, the management committee may grant decision making powers but is more likely to grant powers of recommendation.

How committee members are chosen

Committee members can be:

- Nominated* for a position and then voted in by the members of the community or organisation
- Volunteer for a position and then be voted in by the members of the community or organisation
- Asked to join, because they have a particular skill
- Interested members of the community or organisation who want to join the committee.

A committee may be made up of some or all of the following types of people.

Founder members

These are the people who started the organisation or who had the original ideas to set up the committee.

Key people

These people are asked to join because they have certain skills, knowledge or status within the organisation or community that will help the committee fulfill its goals.

Representatives

Representatives from other relevant or related organisations that will be able to provide assistance to the committee.

Grass roots community members

These people are members of your community or organisation. They have a good understanding about the needs and problems of the community or organisation, but have limited experience in working on committees.

Reporting proceedings

What should be reported

When a new committee is formed there are many things they must let the community or organisation know.

These include:

- Informing everyone of their existence
- Explaining why the committee was formed
- The purpose of the committee
- The type of committee
- The members of the committee
- The functions of the committee
- The goals and plans of the committee.

Once a committee has been established, it needs to report information and activities back to the members of the community or organisation.

These reports include information on the:

- Activities of the committee members
- Actions of the committee
- Future plans of the committee
- Decisions made by the committee
- Financial situation of the committee
- Findings and recommendations made by the committee.

How to present information

Information can be presented to the organisation or community in a variety of different ways.

These include:

- a) Verbal reports to individuals or groups.

- b) Written reports or newsletters that details all of the information that needs to be circulated.
- c) Videotape of activities.
- d) Using key people to present information.

How reports are used

The organisation or community uses reports in a number of different ways.

Reports will always be used to:

- Circulate information
- Make decisions
- Direct future actions
- Direct future goals
- Help achieve the overall goals of the community or organisation.

Summary

In this topic you learned what a committee is, different types of committees and the purpose of a committee. The functions and powers of a committee have been explained and related to the Constitution. You should now also know how members of a committee are chosen and who are the major types of committee members. The proceedings of committees were introduced and you learned the importance of reporting information and how an organisation or community uses this information.

Topic 3

Introduction

Welcome to Topic 3 in *Meetings and Committees*. This topic is called Types of Meetings.

In this topic you will be introduced to different types of meetings in communities and organisations. The purpose or reason for meetings will be explained. You will learn about the role and responsibilities of executive officers, office holders and members. You will also be introduced to the procedures of a meeting including how to move a motion and take a vote.

What is a meeting?

A meeting occurs when a group of people gets together at a set time to discuss and decide on issues that have been presented by the people attending the meeting. A meeting is used to make decisions. A meeting is a decision making process.

Just like you learned in the first topic, Decision Making Processes, a meeting can have an informal or formal structure.

A meeting is **informal** when:

- There is no formal structure
- There are no formal procedures
- It takes place in an every-day setting
- There is no formal agenda.

A meeting is **formal** when:

- There is a formal agenda
- Office holders are elected or elected office-holders are present
- There are rules for procedure (sometimes outlined in a Constitution).

Types of meetings

Meetings are held for many reasons and by many different organisations

Annual general meeting

An annual general meeting (AGM) is held once a year. All *eligible* members attend to help

- Plan the activities for the following year.
- Elect office bearers (e.g. a chairperson, secretary etc) for the following year.

General meeting

- This type of meeting normally takes care of the regular affairs of the organisation and aims to make decisions about items that have been brought up for discussion.
- All persons concerned should attend the general meeting

Special general meeting

- A special general meeting is called when an issue of major concern arises. This may include problems with funding or the resignation or serious illness of a key member of the committee
- All eligible members should attend to assist in solving the problem

Executive committee meeting

- The Executive Committee meetings are attended by all of the executive committee members. This includes the Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer or the office-bearers listed in the constitution.
- **Committee meeting**
Committee meetings are normally held at a set time each month to address the ongoing work of the committee.

Staff meeting

- Staff are normally specialists that are paid employees. Staff meetings generally address situations directly related to their position and often include their employer or supervising body.

Roles and responsibilities at meetings

When meetings are held, every member that is present will have one or more roles to play.

The positions held at meetings are:

- The chairperson
- The vice-chairperson
- The secretary
- The treasurer
- Participants or members.

The chairperson

The main responsibilities of the chairperson include:

- Attending meetings.
- Chairing the meeting according to the rules of the Constitution.
- Following the agenda.

- Knowing the rules of the Constitution.
- Keeping the meeting moving.
- Treating everyone equally.
- Communicating with outsiders.
- Handling troublemakers.
- The chairperson must:
 - Make sure a quorum is present before they can open a meeting.
 - Declare the meeting open.
 - Welcome guests.
 - Ask the secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting. If everyone is agreed that this is an accurate record of the last meeting then the minutes are accepted and signed.
- Discuss business arising.
- Allow enough time between each speaker and each motion for the secretary to write it down.
- Make it clear whose turn it is to speak.
- Summarise what has been said at different times throughout the meeting.
- Close the meeting.

The vice-chairperson

Responsibilities include:

- Attending meetings.
- Act as chairperson when the chairperson cannot be there.
- To learn, know and understand the role and responsibilities of the chairperson.
- Help the chairperson to keep order, keep the meeting moving and control troublemakers.
- Take responsibility for any duties that are given to them by the committee.

The secretary

The secretary is an important person at meetings and to many other activities of the committee. She or he is elected according to the rules in the Constitution.

Responsibilities before the meeting

The secretary is responsible for all of the administration of the meeting. This means that before the meeting she or he must:

- Send out or post a 'Notice of Meeting' to all members who are eligible to attend. This notice will include information such as the date, time and place of the meeting.
- Draw up an agenda for the meeting with the help of the chairperson. The agenda should include a list of all of the items or issues that will be discussed at the meeting. They will be discussed at the meeting in the order they are presented on the agenda.
- Organise all information they have been given that is related to issues that will be discussed at the meeting.
- Bring to the meeting the minutes from the last meeting.
- Keep a list of all of the people who have contacted them to say they will not be able to attend the meeting. This is called a list of apologies. The names on this list will be recorded. It is important for you to let the secretary know if you cannot make it to a meeting, so that your apology can be recorded in the minutes.
- Read all incoming correspondence and deal with it if possible. This means that the secretary needs to make some decisions on behalf of the committee.
- Let the chairperson know of any important information that they have been given.
- Arrive at the meeting early to set it up and to make sure that all of the papers, information and files they have are organised.

Responsibilities during the meeting:

The secretary has many roles and responsibilities that they must fulfill during the meeting.

The secretary must:

- Read out the minutes of the last meeting so they can be approved by the meeting and signed by the chairperson.

- Help the chairperson with the meeting procedure to make sure the meeting is run by the rules in the Constitution.
- Take the minutes of the meeting.
- Write down the exact words of all motions and amendments that are presented in the meeting.
- Repeat at different times throughout the meeting what they have written down.
- Read out all related correspondence and let the committee know what action they have taken.

Responsibilities after the meeting

The secretary must:

- Make a copy of the minutes from the notes taken during the meeting. The copy of the minutes must be correct and detailed. It is important that this is done as soon as possible so that things are not forgotten.
- Put together a list of all of the decisions (resolutions) that were made and accepted by everyone at the meeting. This list should be given to the chairperson.
- Do any tasks that have been given to them at the meeting as soon as possible.
- Write letters on behalf of the committee, following any instructions given at meetings.
- Organise any outgoing correspondence.

The treasurer

The treasurer has a very important role to play and, as with other executive positions, is elected according to the rules in the Constitution.

The role of the treasurer at meetings includes:

- Reporting a summary of payments and receipts and the amount of the remaining funds to the committee
- Issue receipts for any money they receive
- Look after *invoices* for *bills* and present them at meetings to get approval to pay them.

Members

Members are needed to help give ideas and input into the meeting. They have many roles and responsibilities that they fulfill to make a meeting successful.

These include:

- Attending the meeting
- Following the rules and regulations outlined in the Constitution
- Providing information and putting forward ideas
- Assisting the chairperson in keeping the meeting moving
- Make motions by putting forward ideas that are voted on by the rest of the committee members
- Avoid conflict, but participate in discussion in an orderly way to find real solutions to problems
- Participate as part of a team by listening to other people's opinions and giving support to other members or executive officers.
- In some organisations or communities, it is the responsibility of members to elect a person at each meeting to take minutes.

Staff members

A staff member is a specialist that has been employed by the organisation to do a specific job. Normally a staff member would report to the committee during a general meeting. This helps to keep the committee informed and to make sure that the staff member is doing their job properly.

Meeting procedures

All meetings follow a certain series of steps. There are some steps that are so important, that the meeting cannot take place unless they have been followed.

These include:

- The quorum
- Moving motions
- Decision making by majority vote.

The quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of people that need to be present for the meeting to take place. This will be stated in the Constitution.

If a quorum is not present, the chairperson can:

- Announce that a quorum is not present and the meeting has therefore been cancelled
- Ask a member to quickly gather extra members to attend so that the quorum is reached
- Ask for the meeting to be delayed for an hour so that there is time to find other members to attend.

Once a quorum is reached the meeting can be declared open.

Decision making at meetings

You have already learned that meetings are held for many reasons. One of the reasons meetings are held is to make decisions. Items to be discussed at a meeting are listed on the agenda.

The reason they may be listed on the agenda is to:

- Pass on information
- Make a decision about the item
- Decide on a plan of action to deal with the item.

When a decision is made, it is given in the form of a motion.

Motions

A motion is a decision or a plan for action.

During a meeting, members discuss each item on the agenda. There may be several different opinions relating to the item. The chairperson will allow each person to state their opinion and everyone will be given a fair turn. This will continue until everyone has had his or her say. Normally the chairperson will try to restrict it to one suggestion per person. This helps to stop anyone from taking up too much time and prevents arguments.

Voting

The members at the meeting will vote to either accept or reject the motion. The chairperson asks all those in favour of the motion to raise their hand.

The secretary will then take a count of all hands that are raised. The chairperson will then ask all those against the motion to raise their hand. Once again the secretary will take a count of hands. The numbers for and against are recorded in the minutes. The chairperson will announce if the motion has been accepted or rejected according to the vote.

Amendments to motions

Sometimes a motion is not worded properly or does not properly cover the issue. If this happens, the motion needs to be amended. Amendments are used to improve motions, not to give them a different meaning. Amendments are handled in exactly the same way as motions.

Summary

In this topic you were introduced to different types of meetings in communities and organisations. The purpose or reason for meetings and the role and responsibilities of executive officers, office holders and members was explained. You were also introduced to the procedures of a meeting including how to move a motion and take a vote.

Topic 4

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth and last topic in the module *Meetings and Committees*. This topic is called Agendas and Minutes.

In this topic you will learn how to organise and conduct a formal meeting. You will gain an understanding of the function of an agenda, what is included in an agenda and how it is used to give some order and direction to a meeting. Learning how to call a meeting according to your Constitution and how to conduct the meeting once everyone has gathered is also part of your work for this topic. You will also learn more about the importance of minutes and what should be included. The process of minute taking and the role of the minute taker will also be explained. Finally you will learn how to make sure that duties allocated at meetings are carried out.

Meetings in communities and organisations

To make decisions and share information, communities and organisations need to hold meetings. For a meeting to be successful, it must follow some sort of order. It is the agenda and the minutes that help to give a meeting structure.

What is an agenda?

An agenda is a list of all of the items that will be discussed at a meeting. The chairperson with the help of the secretary normally prepares the agenda.

The items that appear on an agenda are:

- Issues that were raised but not solved in the last meeting
- Issues that community members ask to be put on the agenda
- Important information that the secretary or chairperson needs to share with the community or organisation
- Important information that community members need to share with other community members
- Some regular items such as members present, welcoming guests, apologies and the opening and closing of the meeting.

The agenda will include anything that should be discussed at a meeting. If an issue is raised that is not on the agenda, it may be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, or it could be dealt with under other business, or a special meeting may be held, or a subcommittee formed for an issue that is very important.

The functions and purpose of an agenda

Now that you understand what an agenda is, it is important that you understand what it is used for.

The main functions of the agenda include:

- Information - to let others know what will be discussed
- Raise issues - to allow members to put forward issues that they want to be discussed
- Order - to give a time frame and order to the discussion

- Lists the goals of the meeting.

All of this information is very useful to members who may wish to attend the meeting.

What information should be on an agenda

The agenda will include all issues for discussion. There is also some standard information that must be included on every agenda. The basic items include:

- The name of the organisation, community or committee that is holding the meeting
- The type of meeting that is being held
- The time, day and date of the meeting
- The place that the meeting will be held
- The opening of the meeting and welcome by the chairperson
- Apologies from those who cannot attend
- Minutes from the last meeting
- Business arising from those minutes
- Correspondence that has been received by the organisation, community or committee
- Any reports that need to be read out or discussed
- The treasurer's financial report, funding balance and accounts that need to be paid
- General business, this will include a list of all of the items that members wanted discussed
- Any other business, these are normally quick announcements that people want to make at the end of the meeting
- The date of the next meeting is announced by the chairperson
- The close of the meeting.

Following is an example of an agenda.

Agenda

The Greenhill Village Development Committee Meeting

General meeting

The Development Committee meeting will be held in the

VILLAGE HALL

On

TUESDAY, 12 AUGUST 1997 at 7.00 pm

1. Opening and welcome by chairperson
2. Apologies
3. Minutes from the previous meeting (Tuesday, 15 July 1997)
4. Confirmation of those minutes
5. Correspondence

6. Reports
7. Treasurer's report
8. General business:
 - The new football ground Win Naing
 - Straying cattle Naw Angela
 - Submission for youth centre Saw Peter
9. Any other business
10. Date of the next meeting
11. Close of the meeting

How meetings are called

Every organisation, community or committee will have regular meetings.

These meetings may:

- Occur at a regular time each month
- Be a special meeting that is called to address an important issue
- Be an annual meeting where the goals and aims of the organisation are discussed and people are selected for each of the executive positions for the following year.

Most organisation or community Constitutions will outline who can call a meeting, how it can be called and what length of time needs to be given as notice.

Conducting a formal meeting

Every organisation or community will conduct their formal meetings in a similar way according to their own Constitution. Every meeting will have the same basic items listed on the agenda that must be included. The main differences will come under the heading of General Business.

The following steps are included in a meeting:

1. The chairperson determines if a quorum is present.
2. The meeting is declared open.
3. The chairperson calls for apologies
4. The chairperson asks members to introduce guests
5. The chairperson asks for the minutes of the last meeting to be read
6. The chairperson then calls for a discussion of matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting
7. The chairperson asks for a financial report
8. The chairperson asks for incoming correspondence
9. The chairperson asks for outgoing correspondence
10. The chairperson calls on community members to report
11. The chairperson calls for general business
12. The chairperson calls for any other business
13. The chairperson declares the meeting closed

Minute taking in meetings

Just like the agenda is needed to give direction and order to the meeting, the minutes are needed to give a complete record of what happened at the meeting. Minutes are a brief and accurate record of everything that has happened at the meeting.

The purpose of minutes

Minutes have three main purposes.

- They are an official and legal record of what happened at the meeting.
- They are a written record of what was discussed and what decisions were made.
- Minutes provide members with a plan of action.

What information is included in the minutes?

There are many things that must be included in the minutes to make the minutes legal.

It is important that the following information is recorded.

- The name of the community, organisation or committee holding the meeting.
- The type of meeting that took place such as committee meeting, general meeting or annual general meeting.
- The day, date and place where the meeting took place and the time the meeting was opened.
- The names of all the people who are present and the names of those who put in apologies.
- The name of the chairperson.
- Confirmation of the minutes from the last meeting.
- Any action that was taken as a result of the minutes from the last meeting.
- Any correspondence received and the actions that have resulted from that correspondence.
- The treasurer's report.
- Any other reports that were given and the resulting actions of those reports.
- The general business arising and decisions that were made in relation to that business.
- Any other business and the decisions made on that business.
- All resolutions that were passed and all action that resulted from those resolutions.
- The date of the next meeting.
- The time the meeting was closed.

An example of a set of minutes is shown below.

Greenhill Village Development Committee

Committee meeting

This meeting was held in the Village Hall on

Monday, 3 March 1997 at 7.00 pm.

Chairperson: U Khin Maung Win

Meeting opened at 7.03 pm

Present:

U Khin Maung Win (chairperson), Nai Aung Mon, Khaine Oo Maung, Mi Sandar, U Win Tin, Daw Sein Sein, Seng Naw, Saw Moo Wah (secretary).

Apologies:

Salai Tham Bwe.

Minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 3 February 1997 were read. Their approval was moved by Khaine Oo Maung and seconded by Mi Sandar. The chairperson then signed them.

Matters arising from those minutes:

There was only one matter arising from those minutes.

The secretary reported that the recent application to employ an extra nurse had been accepted

Correspondence:

The secretary listed all of the incoming and outgoing correspondence for the month ending Monday, 3 March 1997.

Business arising from correspondence:

A motion was made by Mi Sandar suggesting that the secretary write a letter to the local council to tell them about the committees concern regarding the lack of medicine for the children in the community. This was seconded by U Win Tin and declared carried by the Chairperson.

Other reports:

Purchasing mosquito nets

The secretary submitted a report on the mosquito nets that people had been using. U Win Tin made a motion to purchase fifty more mosquito nets at an estimated cost of 200 baht each. This motion was seconded by Seng Naw and declared by the Chairperson as carried.

General business:

Youth project

Khaine Oo Maung raised the issue of starting a youth project.

He explained that some of the young people in the community had approached him in the hope that he would organise some youth activities.

After some discussion, Mi Sandar made a motion for Khaine Oo Maung to

prepare a report and present it at the next meeting. This was seconded by Nai Aung Mon and declared by the Chairperson as carried.

Any other business:

U Khin Maung Win announced that he would be absent for the next meeting on Monday, 7 April and that Nai Aung Mon was to chair the meeting.

Date of the next meeting:

Monday, 7 April 1997.

Closure of the meeting:

The meeting was closed by the chairperson at 8.45 pm.

Who is responsible for minutes?

One person needs to be responsible for taking the minutes.

It is important that the person who takes the minutes is independent from the decision making process.

Once the chairperson has given their approval of the minutes, the secretary must distribute a copy to each of the members. Different people then use the minutes in different ways. Minutes will always be an official record of what happened at a meeting.

Who should have access to the minutes?

The minutes should be available at any time during office hours to the following people.

- Those people who attended the meeting.
- Members of the community, organisation, council or committee who held the meeting.
- People selected by the community, organisation, council or committee that were responsible for holding the meeting.
- Any other people granted access to the minutes as listed in the Constitution.

Using minutes to remember responsibilities

During the meeting many decisions will be made and people will agree to take on responsibilities or agree to do certain tasks. Once the meeting is finished, it is easy to forget what tasks you have agreed to do. The minutes can be used to help you remember. It is important that you actually do any tasks that you have said you would do.

Summary: In this module you learned how to organise and conduct a formal meeting. You will now understand the function of an agenda, what is included in an agenda and how it is used to give some order and direction to a meeting. You have learnt how to call a meeting according to your Constitution and how the meeting is conducted once everyone has gathered. You have learnt more about the importance of minutes and what information they should include. The process of taking minutes and the role of the minute taker was discussed so that you would be able to take on this responsibility. Finally you learned how to make sure that duties allocated at meetings are carried out and how to fulfil any of your own responsibilities.