

## **MINUTES OF PARISH MEETINGS AND BEHAVIOUR IN MEETINGS**

Good governance requires that appropriate, accurate and the timely provision of minutes of meetings should be evident on all occasions.

Minutes should include:

- Name of meeting
- Date and time
- Venue
- Those present and apologies.

Meetings should start and finish on time and if different to what was proposed, the times noted. If people arrive late or leave early, this should be noted.

A record of those present (and those absent) constitute the membership of the meeting and resolutions or decisions taken are taken in the name of the whole membership of the meeting.

A formal Quorum should be ensured.

It is NOT necessary to include a verbatim report of the contents of the meeting.

Conflicts of Interest must be noted on each occasion at the start and if they emerge during a meeting and the action taken for the individual/s involved.

Confidentiality is a requirement of members acting responsibly in a meeting and discussions and sharing information outside the meeting and outside of the membership unless approved by Members is not appropriate nor is it acting in accordance with the meeting's rules and good governance.

The Minutes should provide a brief description of the subject matter in hand, the decision that has been taken, any Resolutions formally adopted and any Actions Arising when agreed are set out. The minutes need to be accurate and approved by the Chairperson in the first instance and preferably by the whole group at the following meeting.

It is NOT necessary to name the mover, seconder or numbers voting for or against a resolution, unless a specific request is made for a particular occasion. Once the resolution is put, if it is carried according to the voting rules of the meeting, the minutes should state it was 'carried'.

Once a decision is taken, actions agreed, it is the responsibility of the whole group to support the direction and decision that has been taken by the group. It is not appropriate for individuals to continue to speak inside or outside of the meeting if they disagree or dispute the outcome. This 'spoiling' behaviour can be followed up as a matter of group discipline by the Committee Chairperson. If the decision is one that a number of people do not approve of in the meeting, the Committee led by the Chairperson can agree to re-visit the matter on a formal basis if the group agrees.

It is good practice to have the minutes written up promptly, within a week of the meeting and once the Chairperson has seen them, distribute them to all the members as a Draft for any comments and feedback and corrections so that the 'final' version can be presented at the next meeting for approval for the record.

A copy of the minutes of Parish Council and other critical meetings of the parish are

encouraged to be shared on the church noticeboard, or a summary of the contents of the meeting if confidential matters are discussed. As with the reporting at Synod of the key decisions and resolutions, this is encouraged for Parish Councils.

### **Meeting Behaviour and Recording**

If there are concerns about individual behaviour in a meeting, the Chairperson should follow up with the individual/s concerned if it cannot be handled appropriately in the formal meeting.

The Safe Church Guidelines give guidelines about behaviour and bullying, intimidation and non-attendance and constant gossiping and breaches of confidentiality are not acceptable and will be followed up formally.

The Parish Council is encouraged to have its own 'code of conduct' for its meetings. For example:

- Listening to each other and not speaking over another person
- Letting everyone have a voice in the discussion and not dominating the issues
- Maintaining confidentiality outside the meeting
- Understanding the role of the Chairperson and the Chairperson's voting authority
- Sticking to the agenda and the timeframes given for the meeting
- Understanding the legislation that governs the authority, power, responsibilities and accountabilities of the Parish Council
- Ensuring a quorum is maintained for the meeting and attending responsibly
- Sharing the workload of the Parish Council
- Providing the papers or information for the Council in a timely manner and presenting reports appropriately to keep matters being progressed
- Always speaking respectfully and ensuring an independence of mind