

How to be a good Secretary

What a Secretary does

The job of the Secretary is to write down what happens at meetings and keep records.

The Secretary also deals with letters that come in and go out.

A Secretary does not keep financial records – that is the job of the Treasurer.

Here are some jobs that the Secretary might do.

1. Keeping membership records - writing down names of members (including Committee members) to show who can vote
2. Telling members about meetings that are coming up
3. Making sure any papers that the Committee needs are put together and sent out before the meeting
4. Writing down what happens in the meetings (writing minutes)
5. Making sure that letters are written and replied to
6. Keeping letters in and out in a file that others can look at if they need to
7. Writing the agenda (with the Chairperson)
8. Making sure that good records are kept for a new Secretary (so they know what has been happening)



ConnectGroups
helping support groups & individuals



What are 'Minutes'?

The minutes are a written history of what happened in meetings.

When a meeting is held, the Secretary writes down what decisions were made and who agreed to do what.

The minutes can be used to plan, make decisions, fix problems and train people.

They make it easy to keep track of what was decided.

They are a record of the meeting and the decisions that were made.

These are some of the things that are included in minutes –

1. Who was at the meeting
2. Where and when the meeting was held
3. What people talked about
4. What people decided to do
5. Who agreed to do what

There is an example of a minutes sheet at the back of this information sheet.



ConnectGroups
helping support groups & individuals



At the meeting

If you can't write down what is happening quickly enough, ask the Chairperson to wait so that you can write down the information.

Read back what you have written and make sure it is right.

It is important to do this right away, because people might have a different idea about what was said.

Helpful hint – If you have trouble remembering, you can record the minutes and write them down later.

You will need to ask the people at the meeting if they give permission to be recorded.

After the meeting

You should write up the minutes as soon as you can so that you remember what happened.

You should also send the minutes to the members quickly so that people can remember what they had to do and take action.



ConnectGroups
helping support groups & individuals



Important information about minutes

Minutes are important because they are a legal document.

If there is ever a problem, you can use them in court to tell the court what actually happened.

They are a type of contract between the people at the meeting.

That means that enough people at the meeting must see the minutes and agree that they are true.

Two people who were at the meeting need to agree that the last minutes were written down properly.

Helpful tip – If you don't know the name of everyone at the meeting, you can pass around a sheet of paper ('Attendance Sheet').

People can write their names on it before the meeting starts.

What should be in the minutes?

Your minutes should have the same information as in the agenda (with the same numbering)

Your minutes should tell you what type of meeting it is (a meeting to talk about fundraising, a general meeting, an annual general meeting)



ConnectGroups
helping support groups & individuals



Your minutes should tell you the date, place and time your meeting started and finished

It should also tell you who was at the meeting.

If people could not attend the meeting and told you that they could not get there, you can write down their names under 'Apologies'.

You should write down details about the last minutes, whether they were right and anything that came up as a result of the minutes.

You can't change minutes, but if there are any changes that need to be made then they can be written in the new minutes.

If someone reads out or gives the people at the meeting a report, you should write it in the minutes.

Helpful Tip:

You don't need to write down word for word what people said.

Minutes usually give an overview of what happened at the meeting.

How to store the minutes

The minutes must be kept somewhere that makes sure that they cannot get lost, be taken away or replaced

They can only be stored with minutes of the same type of meetings.

For example, if they are the minutes of your Annual General Meeting, you should store them in a file marked 'AGM'.

You should make sure that you file the minutes so you can easily find the minutes of any meeting.

You should also make sure that you can easily find minutes about a particular issue or change.

Connect Groups: Telephone: (08) 9364 6909 Rural Freecall: 1800 195 575
Email: info@connectgroups.org.au
Web Site: www.connectgroups.org.au
Postal Address: PO Box 1209 Booragoon WA 6154
Street Address: 10 Almondbury Road Booragoon WA 6154

New and Existing Support Group Development, Telephone Information Line,
Information Forums, Facilities and Equipment Hire

On-line Directory of Support Groups and Community Organisations, E-News

People With disabilities WA:

1/37 Hampden Road, Nedlands WA 6009

Telephone (08) 9485 8900 Rural Freecall 1800 193 331

Email: info@pwdwa.org Web: www.pwdwa.org