

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

For some organisations AGMs and Annual Reports are a legal obligation, for others it is a way of ensuring that their organisation is accountable.

BEING ACCOUNTABLE

Ensuring that your organisation is accountable is a crucial responsibility of all community groups and voluntary Management Committees. If you are a registered charity there are also legal requirements that you must comply with.

Accountability means:

- * Answerable to your members/public
- * Open about your activities to members/public
- * Open to scrutiny by your members/public
- * The Committee must ensure it carries out its work in an honest and legal manner

One way in which organisations can ensure that they are accountable is through AGM's and Annual Reports.

AGM's and Annual Reports are important so need a bit of planning. This is only a short guide and checklist to help you get organised.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

AGM's are open to the general public to attend and they have two important functions—to consider the previous year's accounts and to elect or re-elect Committee members.

For some organisations this will be a legal requirement, for others it will be a good way of being accountable to the community.

An AGM should include the following:

- * Minutes of the previous AGM;
- * A report from the Committee on the activities of the organisation;
- * The election for Committee Members and Office Bearers;

- * A presentation of the accounts in a form approved by the Committee;
- * If appropriate the auditors' report on the accounts and appoint the auditors' for the next year; and
- * Consider any resolutions put forward.

AGM CHECKLIST

- * Put notice of meeting in local paper twenty one days prior to the AGM, this is a legal requirement for registered charities.
- * Plan the Annual Report and Committee Report well in advance.
- * Book the venue and organise the refreshments.
- * If you want guest speakers arrange them well in advance and decide what topics you would like them to discuss.
- * If required arrange transport and creche facilities.

ANNUAL REPORTS

The production of an Annual Report including a properly presented set of accounts is a key responsibility for all voluntary Management Committees.

If you have charitable status the information included in your report will show that your organisation complies with all its legal requirements. It is also a simple way to sent out information to members of the public on request.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ANNUAL REPORT

Your Annual Report can be used for much more than complying with the law. It is a great opportunity to tell people what you do. You can use it to advertise your services to potential users, referral agencies and volunteers. You can also use it to attract funding and encourage high quality job applicants.

If you want your Annual Report to do this it is important to make it interesting for people to read. It doesn't have to be expensive or time consuming, and a little imagination can impress more than a glossy report.

ANNUAL REPORT HANDY HINTS

Who is the Report for?

Who do you want to appeal to most? Users, funders, etc. This will affect what you write and how many you produce.

Explain yourselves

Give some background as to why you exist. Detail your aims and not just the nuts and bolts of what you did over the last year.

Highlight your achievements

Include statistics or success stories in the report.

Summarise

Don't feel that you need to write too much. If you think that some people might want more information, say that it is available separately.

Break up the text

Photographs, drawings or graphs can make it more appealing for people to read.

Where are you?

Include a section that lets people know how they can contact you.

Acknowledge

Make sure you thank your funders and others who have supported your organisation. A little thanks may go a long way.

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