

Title: How to run your AGM



Reference: GOV005

Introduction

Every Area and Group is required to hold an Annual General Meeting to give account to its members. Group AGMs must be held between 1 October and 31 December (corresponding to a three month period after the end of the Ramblers financial year). Area AGMs should be held after the Group AGMs have taken place, and before General Council – usually between 1 January and the end of March.

Every member of the Area or Group must be informed of the date and venue of the AGM at least 14 days beforehand. Groups should also ensure that the Area is informed.

Many Areas and Groups publicise the AGM by including a notice in a walks programme or newsletter. Some Areas and Groups may communicate widely by email, which is much more cost effective.

If the committee are proposing a change to the constitution, advance warning of this must be included in the AGM notice.

The AGM is also where motions can be discussed. Every member should have the right to propose a motion for discussion. Motions should be presented to the committee in advance of the meeting and should have the support of a seconder.

Generic text for the AGM invite could be:

“ Members are invited to attend this year’s AGM which will take place at *<time>* on *<date>* at *<venue>*. The out-going committee will present a report of last year’s activities, including the annual accounts, for approval of the membership and a new committee will be elected. Members who wish to submit motions for discussion at the AGM should submit them in advance to our Area/Group Secretary by *<date>*”

The specific duties which must take place at the AGM are stipulated in the model constitution. This, the business element of the AGM, covers the following:

- Consider the annual report
- Consider the income and expenditure and the balance sheet
- Appoint office holders and the committee
- Appoint representatives to the governing body of the Area (Groups only)
- Appoint an independent examiner for the accounts
- Discuss and consider motions
- Vote on proposals to changes to the constitution



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NB It is important to note that if certain office holders or an independent examiner can not be found, the AGM can authorise the committee to fill these vacancies at their discretion at a later date. In effect, for instance, this can mean that a committee can find an independent examiner towards the end of the financial year when the accounts need to be inspected.

Keeping records of AGMs:

As a matter of good practice, Areas and Groups should ensure that a record is kept of each AGM. The record of the previous year's AGM is presented at the next AGM for the approval of the membership. Each Area and Group should keep an archive of these records of each AGM.

The record need not be long. It can simply state the main decisions taken, record the approval of the report and accounts and note the names of the newly elected committee.

Two alternative approaches to AGMs:

1. Making an event of it:

Many Groups choose to run an AGM as an event. A venue is hired, refreshments are laid on, and quite often, a short walk is programmed for before or after the event. The annual report can take the form of short presentations from office holders outlining some of the issues facing footpaths, the countryside etc.

Combining the business of the AGM with a wider opportunity to socialise and promote Area or Group activities in this way can be a great way to encourage members to attend the AGM and to promote the greater participation and cohesion of the Area or Group.

Running an AGM this way does, of course, require an investment of time and effort.

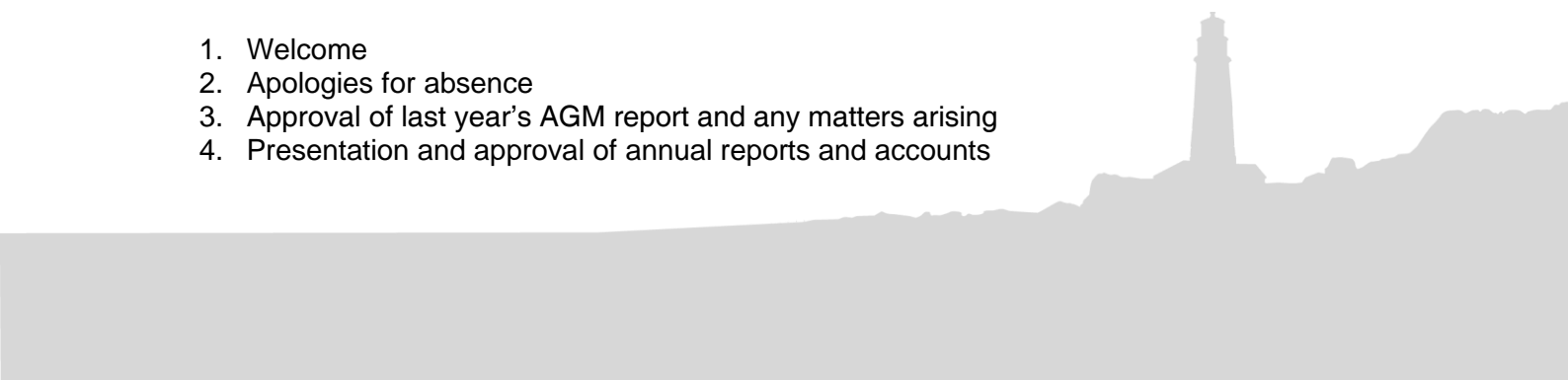
2. Bare Bones:

It is not compulsory to organise the AGM as a large event and it is possible to run it in a matter of minutes. An AGM can be run as a separate addendum to another event (for instance a committee meeting or a walk). The annual report and accounts need not have any greater elaboration, and the elections of the committee can take place very speedily. What is important is that the time and date are fixed and publicised to the membership.

For small and new Groups, in particular, running an AGM in this way may be an excellent way to get through the business efficiently.

An example of the items on an AGM agenda:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Approval of last year's AGM report and any matters arising
4. Presentation and approval of annual reports and accounts



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5. Election of committee members and independent examiner
6. Discussion of motions
7. Close

