

THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

The secretary's role in any group is to be guardian of the process of meetings. They are usually the person who makes the arrangements for the meetings, including AGMs, and keeps formal records of the group's process and decisions: the minutes of the meeting. This may include keeping records of correspondence.

PREPARATION

There are a number of things that the secretary needs to know before a meeting, most of which can easily be found out by asking the person due to chair the meeting. The most important are:

- › Who is expected to make the arrangements for the meeting?
- › Who is responsible for preparing the agenda?
- › Who will distribute the agenda and any reports or supplemental materials?
- › What type of notes or minutes are required?
- › How quickly do notes or minutes need to be produced and circulated after the meeting?
- › Do minutes need to be approved? By whom?

TAKING THE MINUTES OF A MEETING

- › Have a full list of those present, and all who sent apologies. Use a sign-in sheet if needed.
- › Document all motions (exact wording), who made them, whether they were seconded, a brief summary of discussion, and whether or not they passed or failed.
- › "Moved to approve the minutes from last meeting. (Tara, seconded) PASSED."

How you take notes in the meeting depends on how formal the minutes need to be. If you are only reporting a brief summary of the discussion, plus any action points, then you can afford to listen to the discussion and summarize it in note form. If, however, you are expected to write down the main points made by individual speakers, then you will need to make a fuller set of notes, including the speakers' names or initials.