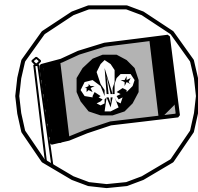


2.8 The Scout Fellowship - Annual General Meetings



Every Scout Fellowship should hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM). This is an opportunity for the entire membership to get together to;

- Review the previous twelve months,
- Elect a new Chairman and Executive Committee,
- Share plans for the next twelve months,
- Meet with invited guests (including guest speakers),
- Socialise amongst themselves.

When should an AGM be held?

Obviously, an Annual General Meeting should be held every year, and usually at the same time of year so that everyone knows when it will be. It is often useful to choose the same day each year, for example, the first meeting every May, or the last Sunday in April.

When setting a date, try and avoid busy periods such as Bank Holidays (remembering that the date for Easter varies each year) and avoid events in the Scouting calendar, such as annual Group camps, or District sports day.

The AGM should be held at a suitable time of year, usually between March and May in order to fit in with the sequence of Group, District and Area/County AGMs. For a Group or District Scout Fellowship it is useful to hold the AGM before the main Group or District AGM. This means that the Fellowships Annual Report and Accounts can be approved by the membership before they are given in to the Group, District or Area/County.

What should be included in an AGM?

There are certain items that must be included in an AGM, whilst others are included by tradition.

As a minimum, the Treasurer should present the audited accounts for approval by the membership. These should be prepared well in advance so that the independent auditor has sufficient time to study the accounts and clear up any queries that may exist.

The accounts should then be approved by the membership prior to submission to the Group, District or Area/County Treasurer.

It is also traditional to review the previous twelve months and often an Annual Report will be prepared. Although this doesn't have to be lengthy document it is often worth putting some time and effort into preparing this, since a good quality Annual Report can be a useful promotional aid. It is also a useful archive document and should certainly cover the highlights of the year.

As well as a written report, many Scout Fellowships take the opportunity for the Chairman to review the previous year by presenting the report verbally. Think about how you can make this interesting for people to see, perhaps by using photographs, slides, video or other visual aids. This would also mean that the presentation of the report could be used on other occasions to promote the Scout Fellowship.

This may also be an opportunity to review the remit of the Scout Fellowship (or even update it - see factsheet "Agreeing the Remit for a Scout Fellowship")

The AGM is often used as an opportunity to elect a new Chairman and Executive Committee.

These should have been nominated beforehand and the nominees should have previously agreed to stand for the various posts. The nominees may wish to take the opportunity to speak on their own behalf (or not, as the case may be). The actual ballot can be conducted by show of hands or by 'secret ballot' and members who can't attend should be given the chance to vote by proxy or by postal ballot.

Many Scout Fellowships also use the AGM as a chance to socialise and may invite a guest speaker to address the membership or may combine the AGM with a social function such as a cheese and wine evening, quiz night etc. This is quite popular and has the advantage that it makes the evening more fun and certainly increases the attendance on the night.

It is also traditional to invite guests to the AGM, such as the GSL or appropriate Commissioner, Section Leaders, other ADCs etc. If you wish invited guests to say a few words, it is courtesy to ask them beforehand so that they aren't put 'on-the-spot' with nothing to say.

How should the AGM be conducted?

Some Scout Fellowships enjoy the formality of the AGM and take it as their one chance every year to wear full uniform and decorations, hold flag break and say prayers etc. Others treat the AGM as informally as possible and race through the business in order to carry on with the socialising!

Either is acceptable, or anything in between, so long as the membership is comfortable with the proceedings and invited guests are briefed on what to expect when they are invited.

So long as the necessary business (such as presenting the accounts and elections) is actually conducted and recorded there is no formal set pattern for the proceedings and it's much more fun for Scout Fellowships to develop a tradition of their own.

See factsheet "Running a Scout Fellowship Business Meeting" for guidance on actually conducting the formal business of the meeting.

Preparing for the AGM

As with most things, proper preparation goes a long way and it is usually the job of the Executive Committee to prepare for the AGM. The following table provides guidelines of what needs to be done, by whom and when:

Action	Responsible	Time to AGM
Send out Executive Committee nomination forms to the membership, along with details of the AGM (date, time, place, dress code). Allow four weeks for the return of the nominations.	Secretary	10 weeks
Informally invite guests to check who can and can not come, and who is willing to be a guest speaker.	Chairman	8 weeks
Check with nominees who actually wants to stand, and start drawing up a list of candidates.	Secretary	6 weeks
Complete annual accounts and submit to auditor	Treasurer	6 weeks
Start writing the Annual Report / Review of the year	Chairman	6 weeks
Send out formal invitations to guests (including details of dress code)	Secretary	4 weeks
Finalise list of nominees and circulate names with postal ballot forms.	Secretary	4 weeks

Action	Responsible	Time to AGM
Prepare final accounts for printing / presentation (after review with auditor)	Treasurer	2 weeks
Complete Annual Report for printing / presentation	Chairman	2 weeks
Prepare Agenda for printing	Secretary	2 weeks
Print annual accounts, annual report and agenda	Secretary	1 week
Arrange refreshments, equipment etc	Executive	1 week
Chair meeting (open meeting, welcome guests, introduce speakers, close meeting)	Chairman	On the day
Present Annual Report	Chairman	On the day
Present Annual Accounts and answer any questions	Treasurer	On the day
Record formal business as official minutes	Secretary	On the day
Type up and send minutes and action points	Secretary	After the meeting