

## Role: Secretary

The Secretary often acts as an information and reference point for the Chair/President and other committee members.

The role of the Secretary is to support the Chair/President in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Committee by:

- Keeping up-to-date contact details
- Compiling lists of names and addresses that are useful to the committee
- Keeping a record of the committee's activities and reporting the activities of the committee and future programs to members
- Ensuring elections and the committee's activities are in line with the declaration or covenant.
- Ensuring charity and company law requirements are met (where relevant)
- Sitting on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels, as required.
- Responding to all committee correspondence and filing all correspondence received and copies of replies sent
- Keeping a record of any of the committee's publications
- Preparing a report of the committee's activities for the year, for the Annual General Meeting.

A good Committee Secretary will:

- Be methodical, with a good eye for detail;
- Be well organized, with an orderly mind;
- Bring objectivity to the proceedings;
- Deal promptly with correspondence;
- Be able to take accurate notes of meetings;
- Make sure members receive all the necessary material;
- Bring the necessary material to the meeting;
- Work well with the Chairperson;
- Ensure quorum is met for meetings;
- Have knowledge or experience of committee procedures.

The Secretary is crucial to the smooth running of a Committee meeting. The role involves activities before, during and after Committee meetings. In order to be effective, the Secretary should ensure that they carry out the following activities:

#### Before the Meeting:

- Consult with the Chairperson(s) on the order of items for the agenda for the meeting. Decide what requires discussion and what requires a decision by the Committee;
- Ensure that the notice of the meeting is given, that suitable accommodation is arranged and confirmed, and that copies of the agenda are prepared;
- Circulate in good time to all members any papers to be discussed at the upcoming meeting and a copy of the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting;
- Make sure that any reports or information requested at the last meeting are available or that there is a good reason why not.

#### At the Meeting:

- Arrive in good time before the meeting with the minutes and with all the relevant correspondence for that meeting;
- Record the names of attendees and record apologies received from those who are absent;
- Checking quorum is present at meetings
- Read the minutes of the previous meeting, and if they are approved, obtain the Chairperson's signature on them;
- Report on action or matters arising from the previous minutes
- Take notes of the meeting, recording the key points and making sure that all decisions and proposals are recorded, as well as the name of the person or group responsible for carrying them out.
- Remind the Chairperson if an item has been overlooked.

#### After the Meeting:

- Prepare a draft of the minutes and consult the Chairperson for approval
- Filing minutes and reports

- Send a reminder notice of each decision requiring action to the relevant person;
- Promptly send all correspondence to members.

## Minutes

All committees must keep an accurate record of business discussed at meetings. Taking the minutes is one of the most critical aspects of the secretary's job. Actions and decisions made are the key things to record. Minutes should not be a record of everything said at the meeting or the Secretary's personal feelings.

- State the name of your Committee and date, time and place of the meeting
- Include a list of who was present at the meeting
- Follow the agenda
- Be clear, short, easy to read and understand
- Include all decisions made, and the key arguments leading to them
- Have an "Action" column stating who's responsible for carrying out decisions made
- State the date, time and place of the next meeting
- Be written up and sent out soon after the meeting
- The Secretary should keep a copy of all minutes for future reference