

A typical meeting agenda may be similar to this example

AGENDA

- 1 Chairperson opens the meeting and welcomes members
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting
- 4 Matters arising from above minutes
- 5 Secretary's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report
- 7 Report on association show
- 8 Organisation of working party
- 9 Any other business
- 10 Chairperson closes meeting



The National Allotment Society

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd

GARDENING ASSOCIATIONS

HOW TO FORM AND RUN THEM

The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd
Registered Office: O'Dell House, Hunters Road,
Corby, Northants. NN17 5JE

Tel: 01536 266576 Fax: 01536 264509

E-Mail: natsoc@nsalg.org.uk

Web: www.nsalg.org.uk

PROTECT PROMOTE PRESERVE

The Benefits of Gardening

The best use of leisure is said to be one of the greatest problems of modern times. If by that is meant the use of leisure hours in the most profitable way, both for oneself and the community, then gardening ranks very high; giving as it does bodily health, mental relaxation and a good return on the money and energy expended, as well as being an abounding source of interest. The cumulative effect of this is to make life more tolerable for a great number of people whose opportunities for health giving activities and pleasures are limited.

The Benefits of forming a Gardening Association

The benefits of starting a gardening association are many, but the most important aspect perhaps being that it is possible thereby to instil the community spirit that enhances the whole neighbourhood. Gardening certainly takes no account of class, creed or race, beyond extending a helping hand to those of its members who may meet with misfortune. Indeed, the pivot upon which the Gardening Movement works is co-operation.

Membership of a gardening association is functional and continuous. It is possible to save a good deal of expense in obtaining seeds and other horticultural products for members at favourable terms. Mutual trading between members is not liable to taxation.

accounts, one to be known as a profit and loss account and the other as a balance sheet.

When presenting the accounts at the Annual General Meeting, the Treasurer should preferably have a sufficient number of copies to provide one for each member attending. He/she then need not read out a mere list of figures, but can comment on particular items, making comparisons with previous years. (With associations registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, a copy of the audited accounts for the year must be sent to each share holding member with the notice calling the Annual General Meeting). A good Treasurer can make his Annual Report a most interesting one and this is a fitting end to his/her years work on behalf of his fellows.

If you have any doubts or queries please contact your Regional Representative or telephone Head Office (details on front page)

Regional Rep _____

Tel Number _____

Other services include:

Discounted seed scheme

Insurance provision

Quarterly Magazine

In house Legal Representative

The Treasurer

Not all associations appoint a separate Treasurer, the office instead being incorporated with that of the Secretary. This practice has the advantage that a problem of liaison between the two is removed. Apart from this practical advantage however, it is generally agreed that it is better to have a dedicated Treasurer.

It is, of course, the Treasurers duty to be responsible for the Associations finances, to ensure that money is only spent as directed by the committee. He/she should be a person used to figures and keeping accounts. Integrity and method are attributes essential in the Treasurer of an allotment or garden association. He/she does not need to be a financial wizard as there is usually little money to invest, but he/she should maintain a keen interest in the financial affairs of the association and if he/she sees that funds are getting low, should suggest ways of increasing income.

Duties

The Treasurer should take charge of all monies paid to the association and pay all bills, preferably by cheque. To do this he/she should open a bank account in the name of the association, if this has not already been done. It is the Treasurers business to see that the Secretary has sufficient petty cash to meet incidental expenses, such as stamps and stationery (or pay his expenses).

Before each Annual General Meeting it is the treasurer's duty to prepare an account of receipts and payments for the year which will have just ended. This account should show comparative figures for the preceding year, so that the members can see how things are going financially with all the Associations activities. If an association has a sizeable turnover and owns a number of assets, it may be desirable to prepare two main

Essentials for forming an Association

Two things are necessary for the formation of a successful gardening association. **Enthusiasm** and **good spade work**.

The enthusiasm usually comes from a person, or several people, who are inspired by the possibilities of the formation of an Association. They gather others around them and together they begin the spade work of interesting others in their idea.

The first question that confronts the person, or people, is how to interest others. Word of mouth, leaflets, advertisements in a local newspaper or by judiciously placed posters. But the obvious solution is to call a meeting to discuss the matter.

The Initial Meeting

A popular person should be approached to act as Chairperson, he or she, should be well informed as to the objects of the meeting and the hoped for outcome.

Agreement being reached at the meeting that an association be formed, then a Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer should be elected. A provisional Committee should also be appointed. By Appointing the Committee as a provisional body it enables people who are willing to work to get the Association going, and afterward retire if they wish to do so. It also allows for other, maybe more able members, to be recruited later. (An item on the Agenda of the first Ordinary General Meeting, after the Formation Meeting, should be the election of a committee to serve for the ensuing twelve months).

Model Rules Guidelines for Associations

Rules should be simple to the point and may be based on the following Model Rules.

- 1 **NAME:** The name of the association shall be
.....

- 2 **OBJECTS:** The objects of the association shall be:
 - (i) To promote the interests of all members in their gardening activities, and to take joint action for the benefit of members.
 - (ii) To conduct negotiations with the Local Authority or or Private Landlords for the use of gardening land.
 - (iii) To take action to protect members against damage, trespass and theft.
 - (iv) To obtain a supply of seeds, fertilisers, tools and other horticultural items on behalf of members.
 - (v) Arrange lectures, film shows, demonstrations, competitions and other social events.
 - (vi) Co-operating with other gardening and environmental organisations in matters of mutual interest.

- 3 **MEMBERSHIP:** The Association shall consist of such persons whose application for membership are approved by the committee.

- 4 **SUBSCRIPTION:** Every member shall pay on entry into the Association an annual subscription of..... renewable on each year (or such a sum as may be determined by an AGM) (See note on pg 5)

- 5 **ARREARS:** Any member who is one month in arrears with his subscriptions shall be held to have ceased to have become a member, unless an explanation is given to the committee, in writing, of extenuating circumstances.

bringing in correspondence that the Secretary has conducted since the previous meeting. This should be summarised if the letters are lengthy. When matters from the minutes have been dealt with the Secretary should report on any further business that has been conducted since the last meeting, including any further correspondence. The Chairperson should clearly state any decisions that are made including any formal motions or votes taken.

At this stage the Treasurer may be asked to give a brief statement as to the finances of the association, including having any bank details available.

Under the heading "Any other business" members may raise any matter that is not on the agenda. This practice should not be encouraged as most items could have been placed on the agenda. Snap decisions on such matters are often bad decisions. Finally the date and time of the next meeting should be decided or announced.

Sometimes meetings are devoted partly to business and partly to a talk given by an invited speaker. Unless the speaker has been asked to speak at a given time it is often desirable to ask the guest to speak first and deal with business afterwards.

A guest speaker should always be introduced by the Chairperson, giving his name and the subject about which he is to speak, and if possible his relevant background. The length of the speech should be agreed beforehand and also whether or not questions will be taken. If questions are allowed the Chairperson should ask for these immediately. It is wise for the Chairperson to have a question ready to avoid embarrassment and to encourage others. Before the guest speaker arrives it should be arranged for two members to propose and second a vote of thanks, alternatively the Chairperson should thank the speaker.

business that is in hand, and which will probably have to be finalised at the next meeting. Much time is saved this way.

A great asset to an Honorary Secretary is to have the habit of neatness and method in keeping records and dealing with correspondence. This can be acquired by a little application, and will serve him/her well during the period of office. It is of course, essential that a Secretary should not be afraid to speak in public and he/she should have the ability to express themselves without diverging from the point, and thereby wasting the time of the meeting. This having been said, it is not necessary for a Secretary to be an accomplished orator, he/she should not attempt to assume the role of leading committee member as well. He/she should be the expert in the affairs of the association, ever ready to give help and advice and to keep the Chairperson and committee members informed and up to date on all matters of concern to the association.

Where the rules provide for a quorum it is the Chairperson's duty to insist that this minimum number is present before he opens the meeting. Having welcomed those attending, the Chairperson's first duty is to ask the Secretary to read out the notice convening the meeting, in practice this is often dispensed with and the Secretary is asked to read out the apologies from those unable to attend. This should be followed by the minutes of the previous meeting. The Chairperson then "puts" the minutes to the meeting with the words "is it your wish that I sign these as a correct record". With the approval of the meeting he/she signs and dates the minutes. Alternatively the meeting can be asked to approve the minutes when a proposer and seconder are found and the meeting votes to accept the minutes as a true record.

The next business should be to deal with matters arising from the minutes. These must be dealt with one by one in the order in which they come up. The procedure often involves

- 6 OFFICERS:** The Officers of the Association shall be a Secretary, a Treasurer and a President or Chairperson. They shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting. Retiring Officers shall be eligible to stand again.
 - 7 COMMITTEE:** The affairs of the Association shall be conducted by a Committee of Management of not less than members. The Committee shall retire at the Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible for re-election. Casual vacancies shall be filled by the Committee and the members so appointed shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting. A quorum shall bemembers (or such number as may be determined by an AGM)
 - 8 GENERAL MEETINGS:** The Annual General Meeting shall be held at such times as the Committee or a General Meeting shall decide. Ten members shall form a quorum. At the meeting the audited accounts and Secretaries Report shall be submitted and the Officers and Committee for the ensuing year elected. Special General Meetings shall be called upon the requisition in writing to the Secretary of at least ten members. No party-political or sectarian discussions shall be raised or resolutions proposed at either Committee or General Meetings.
 - 9 BANK ACCOUNT:** The Committee shall open a bank account in the name of the Association and all monies received from any source shall be paid into that account. Two out of three signatories shall sign cheques.
 - 10 AUDITORS:** Two auditors shall be appointed, who are not members of the Committee, to audit the accounts and to report thereon to the Annual General Meeting.
 - 11 MEMBERSHIP** of The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd shall be applied for and it shall be a condition of membership to agree to pay such annual affiliation contributions as may be prescribed.
- NOTE** - Subscriptions should not be set too high, but the best Associations are those where the fees are sufficient to run a successful organisation.

The Duties of Local Association Officers

The Chairperson

A good Chairperson, this may be the President, is a person who commands respect derived from their ability, personality and character and sometimes from their integrity and attitude to their fellow members. Occasionally a person chosen combines all these qualities.

Usually a Chairperson of an Association is elected annually and their duties will not only include taking the chair at meetings, but also seeing to it that the affairs of the Association are being properly conducted, in the best interests of the members. The best Chairperson therefore is someone who is willing to work hard and conscientiously in the best interest of their fellow members. And can inspire others to do the same. If you add to these attributes, tact, patience, impartiality, resourcefulness, firmness and courtesy, and can find someone who combines them all, you should have a really good Chairperson.

Duties of a Chairperson

A new Chairperson usually takes over at the end of the Annual General Meeting when he is elected, but he/she may be asked to take over when the election of Officers has been completed.

The first test of the new Chairperson will probably be at the first Committee meeting. However before this he/she should have studied the rules of the Association and be familiar with the procedure for the meeting. He/she should also have conferred with the Secretary so that both are aware of the meetings content.

Working with a committee, the Secretary should be a person with the self confidence to carry out the decisions of the committee without fear or favour.

Duties and Responsibilities

The first duty of a Secretary appointed to a newly formed association would probably be to call a meeting of the committee. An up to date list of the names and addresses of all the officers and committee members should, of course, be kept. Notices should be posted calling for the committee meetings.

Before the meeting assembles the Secretary should have prepared an agenda, in consultation with the Chairperson. It is also his/her business to maintain a minute book, in which the Minutes of the meetings are recorded, attendance at the meetings should also be recorded.

At the meeting the Secretary must remain alert and make careful notes of each decision as and when it is taken. If he/she is in any doubt as to what has been decided (this happens) then he/she should ask the Chairperson to clarify the point. A recorder can be used, with the consent of the meeting, to aid with the note taking.

After the meeting, as soon as the decisions taken have been recorded in the minutes book, the Secretary must implement those decisions as soon as is possible, it may be found that replies to letters may not be received before the next meeting.

In reporting to the committee the Secretary should, as far as possible, confine his/her remarks to business that has been accomplished and not dwell too much on business

A point of order may be raised at any time (a) if a speaker is not dealing with the subject under discussion, or (b) if a speaker is not observing Standing Orders. The raiser should state his point briefly and should not be allowed to make a speech. The Chairperson may accept or reject a point of order - it cannot be discussed - and his/her decision is final and binding. Persons who perpetually raise points of order should be firmly but kindly dealt with.

If a member is guilty of improper conduct at a meeting and will not obey the Chairpersons ruling, he/she should be asked to withdraw. Should he/she decline, reasonable force may be used to eject him/her. If he/she becomes violent to those whose duty it is to remove him/her, he/she renders themselves liable to prosecution.

The Secretary

The office of Secretary with any association must always be an important one. Whilst the Chairperson is looked to for leadership, it is the Secretary that is expected to carry out the decisions of the committee, and between General Meetings or Committee Meetings. He/she is responsible only to the Chairperson. While it is inevitable that the Secretary will have a considerable influence on the policy of an association, he/she must act in accordance with the decisions of the committee, or where matters of emergency arise between meetings then with the Chairperson, or Treasurers agreement and other matters should be dealt with promptly.

A good Secretary must be a good administrator and a capable correspondent. He/she should have sufficient time to meet the duties of his office, for it is important that correspondence and other matters should be dealt with promptly.

Whilst Committee Meetings are generally friendly, they should not be so informal that at the end of the evening no one is sure what has been decided. This is very much in the hands of the Chairperson.

For all meetings he/she should ensure that the Secretary has prepared an Agenda. This may be duplicated and sent to members or made available at the meeting. After the discussion on each item the Chairperson should make clear what the decision was and the result of any vote. This allows the Secretary to make authoritative notes.

Apart from taking the chair at meetings the Chairperson must at all times keep in touch with the other Officers and ensure that the Associations rules and objectives are being followed. He/she should always keep in mind the interest of the members and should be prepared to initiate changes in policy to meet changing circumstances. If he/she expects the Committee members and others to work hard in the interest of the Association then he/she should themselves lead by example. A good Chairperson gets things done by the consent and help of members, he/she should not act first and seek approval afterwards, except in emergencies, and then with the approval of another Officer.

Procedure at Meetings

At all meetings the Chairperson is in charge and the members must obey his/her ruling on all matters. He/she should be certain that the meeting had been called in accordance with the rules.

At Annual General Meetings the procedure is very similar to that of ordinary meetings, except that the annual reports of the Treasurer and Secretary should be presented, followed perhaps by the Chairpersons remarks.

Then the election of Officers for the ensuing year must take place.

Unless the Associations rules make a special alternative provision for the election of Officers and Committee, nominations may be handed in on slips or made verbally. When the Officers are about to be elected the Chairperson in Office steps down and a "temporary" Chairperson takes over. Each Officer and Committee Member should be proposed, seconded and voted on separately, unless it is decided to re-elect the whole Committee en-block. This latter procedure sometimes commends its self, but may have the disadvantage that it keeps out new blood and maybe new ideas.

At Special General Meetings, which have been called for a specific purpose, only the business set out on the notice calling the meeting may be discussed.

The Conduct of Meetings

One of the most important rules at meetings is that members must always address the Chairperson and not each other. All members must remain seated, or silent, whilst the Chairperson is speaking, or standing. If he/she rises when a member is speaking that member must resume their seat, or cease speaking. The Chairperson may call to order any member who speaks on irrelevant matters or upon matters previously decided. All members have a right to speak once on any subject that is before the meeting. If they wish to speak again they must not do so unless the Chairperson gives permission. Movers of resolutions have a right to reply to points raised in the discussion. Whenever possible, Special Resolutions should be sent to the Secretary before the meeting. Discussion should not be allowed until a resolution is seconded. Resolutions may only be withdrawn with the

consent of the mover and the seconder. An amendment may modify, add to, or be substituted for a resolution, though strictly speaking, an entirely different set of words is not an amendment: but a Chairperson sometimes treats it as such. Any number of amendments may be proposed and seconded, but the one before the meeting should be disposed of before another is accepted. Should an amendment be carried by the requisite majority, the Chairperson should then put it to the meeting to be voted upon as a substantive motion. If it is carried no further amendment can be moved. Amendments cannot be accepted at Special Meetings called for a specific purpose (such as the revision of rules) when the voting must be for or against the proposals circulated.

When a resolution has been passed, something of a non-controversial character may be added, with the consent of the mover and seconder. This is not an amendment but a "rider". Voting may be by show of hands or by ballot, as the meeting may decide. If the rules do not lay down by what majority a resolution shall be carried, a clear majority decides the matter. A Secretary may vote only if he/she is a member of the Association or Committee. The Chairperson not only possesses a vote but he/she may use their vote and give a casting vote besides. Usually, however, the Chairperson does not vote unless he/she has very strong feelings on the matter, or when he/she has to give a casting vote.

If it is desired to close the discussion on any resolution or matter before the meeting, the closure should be moved and seconded as follows: "I move the closure of this resolution" or "I move that the question be now put". A motion to adjourn the meeting may be proposed and seconded. The Chairperson should not allow any discussion on motions for closure or adjournment. To terminate discussion on certain matters a motion to proceed with the next business is sometimes moved. A Chairperson needs to be discreet when accepting such motions, but if accepted, discussion should not be allowed upon them.