

# ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

The Secretary's main role is to keep people informed and involved in the organisation's activities. They are responsible for taking the minutes of meetings, such as the AGM, letting people know when and where the next meeting is and distributing the agenda. The secretary helps to prepare the agenda for meetings with the chairperson, as well as writing and receiving letters on behalf of the organisation. They keep a record of membership and important phone numbers, keeping members informed of what correspondence has been sent out and received.

## Main Responsibilities

- Organizing and scheduling meetings, including the Annual General Meeting.
- Preparing and distributing agendas in consultation with the chairperson.
- Taking and distributing minutes of meetings.
- Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of all meetings and decisions.
- Handling correspondence and ensuring that communication within the organisation is effective.
- Keeping a register of members and maintaining membership records.
- Ensuring compliance with the organisation's constitution and any relevant legislation.
- Assisting with the preparation of reports and documentation for funding applications or regulatory purposes.
- Maintaining an up-to-date filing system, both physical and electronic.
- Liaising with the chairperson and other committee members to ensure coordinated activities.

## What does the Secretary need to do?

- Be organized and meticulous with documentation.
- Be able to take clear and concise minutes of meetings.
- Be effective in written and verbal communication.
- Be able to manage and maintain accurate records and files.
- Be proactive in ensuring that meetings and communications are well-coordinated.
- Be willing to accept training, if required, for effective record-keeping and administrative tasks.
- Be comfortable using email and other communication tools to keep members informed.

## What are the minute taking requirements?

Accurate minutes are essential for every committee to document decisions and actions. They serve as a valuable reference for members who missed the meeting, those who need to recall specific details, and any invited guests. Minutes are particularly useful for addressing future questions and clarifying past decisions. Additionally, funding parties often review an organisation's minutes to evaluate its operations when making funding recommendations. Inaccurate or incomplete minutes can hinder this assessment.

The group secretary is responsible for taking minutes, focusing on recording the main points rather than everything said. The Chair ensures the meeting is conducted properly, addresses appropriate issues, and provides clear decisions for the minute-taker to record. Effective minutes result from good chairing, a

well-prepared agenda, and competent minute-taking. It's challenging to chair a meeting and take minutes simultaneously; thus, the Chair should not assume the role of minute-taker. The Chair is ultimately responsible for the minutes and should collaborate with the minute-taker to produce the final version. It is good practice for the Chair to sign the approved minutes.

### What should be included in the minutes?

Minutes should document the attendees, the meeting, and its decisions. Detailed discussions on each item are unnecessary; instead, provide an overview of the issues, the decisions or outcomes, and clear actions with responsible individuals and deadlines.

Avoid the temptation to use raw notes instead of properly writing up the minutes, as these are rarely useful. Use clear, everyday language rather than overly formal or official terms. Remember that others may need to refer to your minutes, so keep them factual and unemotional.

Ensure your minutes are typed and follow the meeting agenda's structure. A well-prepared agenda is key to effective minute-taking.

### What Should the Minutes Contain?

- **Heading:** Include the group's name and the meeting date.
- **Attendance:** List full names and positions of attendees. Non-members should be listed separately.
- **Apologies:** Record the full names and roles of those who informed the group they couldn't attend.
- **Previous Minutes:** Allow members to point out inaccuracies. If none, state: "The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record." Correct and document any inaccuracies.
- **Matters Arising:** Update on any ongoing discussions from the last meeting not covered in the current agenda. If none, note: "There were no matters arising."
- **Finance Report:** Include this standing item in every agenda, with a full report at least quarterly.
- **Subcommittee Reports:** Document recommendations and decisions from subcommittees or working groups.
- **Any Other Business (AOB):** Address issues not on the agenda or arising from the last meeting. Check for AOB items at the start to manage the meeting effectively.
- **Action Column:** On the right side of the page, specify who is responsible for each action. For clarity, include specific tasks within the minutes and an action checklist if needed.
- **Next Meeting:** End with the date, place, and time of the next meeting..

### What should Minutes look like?

There are no rules, as long as it is easy to make sense of the minutes. It is usual to give prominent headings to each item so that they stand out and to number each item so that they are easier to refer to in the future. It may also be helpful to use standard wording to record decisions and to highlight the relevant word.

## **BLACK FOXES UK MEETING MINUTES (EXAMPLE)**

**Date:** 5th July 2024

**Location:** Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Present:** Hayley de Ronde, Barny Underwood, L. Sherrington

**Guest Speakers:** None

### **Meeting Minutes:**

Item 1) **Welcome and Apologies**

1.1) *The Chairperson welcomed everyone. Apologies from Member A.*

Item 2) **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

2.1) *Minutes from the previous meeting approved unanimously.*

Item 3) **Treasurer Funding Report**

3.1) *The Treasurer presented the financial report. Balance: £0.00.*

Item 4) **Funding**

4.1) *After discussion, it was agreed that funding is required to further our aims.*

4.2.) *A decision to focus on enlisting a new 'Fundraising Officer' was agreed.*

Item 5) **Membership Recruitment Strategies**

5.1) *After long discussion, it was decided that we need a larger membership base.*

5.2.) *Members will make attempts to increase our membership with suitable persons.*

Item 6) **Any Other Business**

6.1) *None.*

Item 7) **Date of Next Meeting**

7.1) *Agreed for 5th July 2025.*

## Where Should Minutes Go When They Are Complete?

- **Approval and Signing:** The Chair should review, agree to, and sign the minutes.
- **Filing:** Keep a copy securely on file.
- **Distribution:** Distribute copies to relevant individuals. This typically includes everyone who attended the meeting and those who sent apologies.
- **Inclusion with Agenda:** It is common, though not essential, to include the minutes of the last meeting with the agenda for the next one.
- **Timeliness:** Decide how soon after the meeting to distribute the minutes. Writing them up promptly while the meeting is fresh is beneficial. Completed minutes should ideally be received at least two weeks before the next meeting.
- **Additional Recipients:** Consider other stakeholders, such as funders, who may need occasional copies.
- **Confidential Items:** Always check for confidential items before sharing minutes outside the committee. If there are confidential items, record these as separate confidential minutes to be shared only with those who attended the meeting.