**Guide to Minuting a Society Meeting / Elections**

**What are minutes?**

When we ask for ‘minutes’ of a meeting, we mean a record of what was said and agreed in this meeting. Minutes can vary in length, level of detail, and style, but should always aim to accurately reflect the main points of discussion, as well as any important decisions made. The idea is that if someone was absent or needs to look back on the meeting to verify something, they can easily get any information that came out of that meeting from reading the minutes.

**Why do minutes matter for your society?**

The SU is a democratic organisation. This means we have bylaws and regulations that we must follow – they are all available on the website at <https://www.warwicksu.com/your-union/how-the-su-works/governingdocuments/>. As a society affiliated with the SU, your exec and members agree to abide by the bylaws and regulations which specify how affiliated groups must behave, and the democratic processes they must follow – the ones you need to be most aware of are ‘Bylaw 5 – Student Activities’ and ‘Regulation 9 – Clubs and Societies’.

It is important to keep a record of how you make decisions as an exec – for example, minuting exec meetings means you can prove that any votes were held according to both your constitution and SU regulations. By taking good minutes of exec meetings / Annual General Meetings / Elections, you can easily demonstrate to your members and the SU that you are leading your society constitutionally and democratically.

**How can you take good minutes?**

* Choose someone to take minutes. This could be the job of a particular exec role, or maybe you could elect a different person at each meeting to take notes to share the task. It helps if they’re a fast writer / typer so that they can jot things down as the meeting goes on!
* Minutes don’t need to be verbatim / word for word, but try and capture the main points of a conversation that are being made. It is sometimes useful to pause and listen to what someone says in full and then summarise their point.
* Your first draft of minutes doesn’t need to be perfect – it is easier to write more messily and to cut it down / neaten it up later than it is to remember points that you didn’t write down in the meeting.
* Make sure you record any votes, decisions, and action points to come out of the meeting.

**Some lingo explained:**

Most meetings in professional environments have minutes taken. There are a few things which might not make immediate sense, but which happen in most meetings. It’s up to you how many of these things you include – for the purpose of your society, the SU would only ever need to reference who was attending a meeting, the main points discussed, and the records of exec and member votes.

**Agenda –** An agenda is essentially a running order of what will be discussed in a meeting – typically sent out beforehand for attendees to view and prepare for discussion. Some agendas might include a ‘lead’ for each agenda point, i.e. someone who will feedback to the group/lead the discussion on that point.

**Apologies –** It is expected in professional environments that if you cannot attend a meeting that you have been invited to, you send ‘apologies’ for your absence to the Chair/organiser of the meeting. Apologies can be just an email to the organiser saying ‘Apologies, I will not be able to attend this meeting.’ It is generally polite to include a reason as well if you can!

Apologies for absence are typically included at the beginning of meetings as an agenda point, and included in the minutes to account for who was supposed to be in the meeting.

**AOB –** This stands for ‘any other business’ and is typically one of the last agenda points. This is an opportunity for anyone at the meeting to raise a point for discussion that has not already spoken about / was not on the agenda.

For example, this is what an agenda and minutes might look like for a conversation I’ve just had with my fellow Full Time Officers while I write this…

**Agenda** for Meeting about Minutes, 12-12:10pm, 20/02/23

* Welcome and Apologies
* Last meeting’s minutes
* Varying minuting styles
* Votes, Actions and Decisions
* AOB
* Action Log

**Minutes** of Meeting about Minutes 12-2pm, 20/02/23

In attendance: Anna Taylor (AT), Chih-Hsiang Lo (CHL), Emma Birch (EB), Terry the Sports Bear mascot who is permanently present in our office (TB)

Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence: Disco Dave

**AT** thanked everyone for coming and noted that despite the longstanding invite, Dave had yet to attend a cheeky Friday afternoon office hangout.

**EB** and **CHL** agreed that neither of them wanted to attend this meeting, and given they were working in the shared FTO office they had no way to escape **AT**’s incessant questions about meeting minutes.

Last meeting’s minutes

**AT** asked if everyone had received the minutes from the last meeting, and if there were any edits that needed to be made.

**EB** noted that since this was an imaginary meeting she obviously hadn’t seen the minutes for the previous imaginary meeting but for the sake of maintaining the illusion had no issues.

No edits proposed so previous minutes taken as approved.

**ACTION: EB to suspend her disbelief for the remainder of this meeting**

Varying minuting styles

**AT**: Even though it might look odd and random, it’s probably worth changing styles to show that minutes can look vastly different, and don’t have to be written with a detached, third-person kind of vibe

**CHL**: when I was on exec for Anime and Manga Society the person that took our minutes was insanely detailed and wrote basically word for word, which was a lot of typing but really useful.

**EB**: I’d rather just keep the highlights, so will jot down notes and give a sentence or two summarising each main point at the end.

Voting, Actions and Decisions

**TB** notes that he consistently has nothing to contribute to these meetings but he is on the list of people required to attend, and would like to be removed from the group officially.

**CHL** raises that the membership of the group would then be quite small, but still have enough people to make a quorate vote.

**Vote: to remove TB’s position from the expected membership of the meeting.**

**Votes cast:**

* **AT – For**
* **CHL – Against**
* **EB – For**
* **TB – For**

**Vote outcome:**

* **For 3, Against 1, Abstain 0**
* **passed by majority**

\*for secret ballots you could just take out the ‘votes cast’ section as you won’t know.

AOB

**AT** asked if anyone had any other business.

**CHL** brought up the intense desire for **AT** to leave him alone and let him finish his work before the end of the day. He has decided to forevermore work elsewhere to avoid **AT**.

**ACTION: CHL to book a separate meeting room for every day he has left as VP for Education**

Action Log

**ACTION: EB to suspend her disbelief for the remainder of this meeting**

**ACTION: CHL to book a separate meeting room for every day he has left as VP for Education**