

## Everything you need to know about AGMs

Our good practice guidance for AGMs is based on the PTA UK model constitution. If you haven't adopted our model constitution, we recommend you check the details of your constitution as some aspects, such as the number of days' notice required for a general meeting, may be different.

[See details of the PTA UK model constitution for England and Wales and the PTA NI model constitution for Northern Ireland.](#)

### 1. What is an AGM?

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is a yearly meeting for all members of the association, where elections take place and the year's events are reported on. It's an opportunity for the committee to show that it's accountable for the decisions taken and that the committee members have acted in the best interests of the association.

The AGM should be held every year and no more than 15 months should pass between successive AGMs.

### 2. How do I call an AGM?

All members need to be given advance notice of the date, time and venue for your AGM. Your constitution will usually specify:

- How much notice you need to give.
- How that notice is given.
- Who the members of your association are.

Our good practice guidance (as specified in the PTA UK model constitution) is that all members should be given 21 days written notice. This could be:

- Letter sent home with children or posted to parents.
- Email to parents.
- School or PTA newsletter.

You could also display a notice on school and PTA noticeboards, or on your website or Facebook page if you have one.

### 3. What needs to be on the agenda?

When you give notice of your AGM, you should also ask members to suggest items for the agenda and put forward nominations for new committee members.

#### **Do we have to include all agenda items suggested by our members?**

No, the AGM is all about the association and how it's run, so you should only include relevant items on the agenda. If a member suggests an item that is not appropriate for the AGM, make sure you let them know why it's not being included, and find another time to discuss it.

Relevant items:

- Changes to the constitution
- Change from a PTA to Friends
- Adopt a new constitution

Non-relevant items:

- Suggestions for events
- Ideas how funds could be spent
- Unhappy about how events are run

### **What does a typical agenda include?**

As best practice, we recommend you include:

#### **-Apologies**

Names of any committee members that can't attend and have sent apologies.

#### **-Minutes of the last AGM**

Minutes of the last AGM should be circulated and approved. These should be brief, recording only the main items of business and any decisions taken, for example the elected committee members, any changes to the association or constitution.

#### **-Matters arising**

This allows for any further information arising from the last AGM to be reported back.

#### **-Chair's report**

An informal report on the years' activities. Please see 'What should we include in our reports' below.

#### **-Treasurer's report**

A formal presentation of the examined accounts for the past year. Please see 'What should we include in our reports'.

#### **-Appointment of the independent examiner**

The committee should decide before the meeting who will examine the association's accounts for the next year. The committee should appoint someone with sufficient knowledge and experience to be able to carry out a basic examination of the accounts, a full audit is not needed. You can't appoint a committee member or relative of a committee member, but you could appoint the school bursar, school business manager, or a parent with accountancy or book keeping experience.

#### **-Election of committee members**

Committee members are elected at the AGM to serve for the term stated in your constitution (the PTA UK constitution states until the next AGM). If there are more nominees than places available, they will be elected by a majority vote of those members attending the meeting. If you are short of nominations, you can ask for volunteers to be elected at the AGM.

#### **-Special business**

Items such as proposed changes to the constitution should be included on the agenda. Members must be given details of the proposed changes before the meeting.

#### **-Any other business**

This gives members who are present an opportunity to raise matters that haven't been covered by the agenda. If the matter raised is not appropriate for an AGM (see examples here), you can record the question and add it to the agenda of a future committee meeting.

#### **-Close of business**

**For Northern Ireland members** in particular – if you do not currently have a Constitution, then prior to the AGM it is important that you have shared the PTA UK model (Northern Ireland version) with the committee and you can propose to adopt it as your governing document. Same applies if you do have a document that the current committee agree is not 'fit for purpose' and you wish to adopt the PTA UK model (Northern Ireland version).

Northern Ireland members who are preparing for charity registration should, after the closing of

the AGM, get new trustees to sign the trustee declaration and complete the registration form that requires personal details from each individual. If the PTA is already a registered charity, new trustees will be required to complete the registration form so that their details are available to upload onto the Charity Commission Northern Ireland website.

## 4. What should we include in our reports?

A Treasurer's (or financial) report must be presented at the AGM so that your committee is financially transparent. However, the Chair's report isn't a constitutional requirement, so it can be much more informal – an opportunity to celebrate the success of your PTA and suggest your plans for the coming year.

Your reports also don't need to be lengthy; focus on getting through business quickly and efficiently. Members are more likely to come along each year if they know the AGM will only last around 15 minutes and are given the opportunity to ask questions at the end of these reports.

- The role of the PTA, it's objectives and a brief overview of:
  - a) It's charitable structure and how it is governed (make sure members are aware of the constitution).
  - b)The process of deciding how funds will be spent.
- Highlights of the past PTA year.
- How the PTA has benefited pupils at the school in the past year.
- Thanks to those who have supported the committee.
- Plans for the coming year and how members can get involved – any specific skills the committee need support with.

### **What to include in the Treasurer's report:**

- The opening balance of the PTA's bank account at the beginning of the previous year.
- How much money was raised overall and a breakdown of the funds achieved by each activity or event.
- Costs incurred throughout the year, with a breakdown of spending.
- How funds raised were spent, showing the amount spent on each purchase (this does not include the items purchased for running events, which should be included in your costs).
- How the items purchased achieved your charitable objectives as set out in your constitution.
- How your accounts have been independently examined.
- The current bank balance (last year's opening balance, plus monies raised, less costs and funds spent).

### **Reports are a bit dull. Can we liven them up with a presentation?**

Yes, you can present your report however you like. A PowerPoint presentation or film showing photos from events, and quotes from staff and pupils about how they're using the equipment the PTA has funded, can really bring an AGM to life.

## 5. What happens at an AGM? (quorums, voting and minutes)

Your AGM is when new committee members are elected and current committee members are re-appointed, if they wish to stand again. The committee should use the AGM to celebrate the successes of the association and to thank its supporters for the time and assistance they have given throughout the year.

## **How many people need to attend our AGM?**

The minimum number of members you'll need at your AGM so that any decisions made at the meeting are valid, is called a quorum. Your constitution will usually state the quorum required for each type of meeting. If you don't have a constitution, or it doesn't include information about quorums, your association should set the number and record it in any rules or procedures followed by your committee. When setting a quorum, consider:

- The number of ordinary members in your association.
- Set the quorum too high and you may struggle to attract enough members to hold valid meetings.
- Set the quorum too low and a small minority may be able to impose their views unreasonably.

The PTA UK model constitution states "there is a quorum at a general meeting when the number of members present is at least twice the number of committee members/trustees in office at the start of the meeting."

## **What happens if not enough people come?**

If a meeting is not quorate you can't make any decisions; this includes electing committee members. Your constitution may state whether the meeting only needs to be quorate at the start or throughout the whole meeting. If it doesn't, this will need to be established as a rule by the committee.

As best practice, we recommend a quorum for the whole meeting to ensure all items of business are considered by a representative group of your members.

## **Who can vote at an AGM?**

Every member attending the general meeting has one vote on every issue. Where a vote is equally divided, the Chair will have a second casting vote.

## **Can a vote be taken by show of hands?**

Yes, a simple show of hands is usually all that's needed. Where a vote is very close, a count of hands should be taken and recorded in the minutes. If the item of business could be considered contentious, you could hold a ballot, or nominees for committee positions could be asked to leave the room while voting takes place and you may choose a non-committee member/teacher to assist with the count.

## **What if we're closing down the PTA at our AGM?**

If your general meeting has been called to close the PTA and you don't achieve a quorum, then two-thirds of those in attendance would need to vote to dissolve the association.

## **Does someone need to take minutes?**

Yes, minutes should be taken by the committee Secretary and should correspond with the agenda items. Minutes should be kept brief, recording for each item any decisions made and actions agreed.

More tips on minute taking can be found in our Committee Meetings information [here](#)

## **6. How do we get people to attend?**

If you find it difficult getting people to attend your AGM, don't worry, you're not alone. Achieving a quorum (the number of people that must be present to validate decisions) is a stipulation of your constitution, so that's the minimum number you need to aim for.

These are our top tips:

1. Keep it short, and tell people you'll be keeping it short. An AGM can usually be wrapped up

in 15 minutes.

2. Provide a crèche so parents don't need to organise childcare.
3. Pick a time and venue that will suit most of your members (not just the committee).
4. Bring a buddy. The PTA UK constitution states a quorum for an AGM is twice the number of elected committee members. So if each committee member brings one member, your meeting will be valid.
5. Piggyback another event. Hold your AGM at a quiz night, parent consultation evening, or after a film night.
6. Generate interest. Remind parents and staff they are all members of the association, this is their chance to decide who will represent them, and learn more about what they do.
7. Shout it from the rooftops. As well as sending out written notice, use every opportunity to let parents know about your AGM. Facebook page, website, text, noticeboards etc.

### **What's the best time of day to hold our AGM?**

You need to make your AGM accessible to as many parents as possible. Holding your meeting mid-morning will rule out most working parents and teachers, so evenings tend to be more inclusive. Of course the biggest obstacle for attending an evening meeting is childcare, so for Facebook member Chrissie the solution was holding the AGM after a disco, with a crèche for the kids ...

"we arranged a crèche for the kids and the adults just went into the adjoining classroom. We had a fair turn out because we had a captive audience"

### **Do we have to hold it at the school?**

No, if there's another venue you think parents would prefer and it will help with attendance you can hold the meeting elsewhere. Just make sure it's accessible for everyone and consider confidentiality. Facebook member Naomi told us ...

"We hold ours in a local pub function room and have a free team quiz after the meeting. We get about 30-40 attendees"

## **7. What happens after the AGM?**

Once you've held your AGM and the new committee have been elected, there are a few things you need to do to wrap things up and get the new year off to a good start:

1. Finalise the minutes
2. The Secretary should write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.
3. Minutes should be saved for approval at the next AGM.
4. Update your committee members
5. Let your members know who is on the new committee. Use noticeboards, website, newsletter, Facebook – include pictures if the committee are willing!
6. Give each committee member a copy of the constitution and be prepared to answer any questions they may have at the first committee meeting.
7. Update bank account signatories as appropriate.
8. Update the Charity Commission. If your PTA is a registered charity, you'll need to update details of your trustees on their website. It's important to make sure the details for the nominated contact are always up to date

England and Wales - [www.gov.uk/change-your-charitys-details](http://www.gov.uk/change-your-charitys-details)

Northern Ireland - [www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/manage-your-charity/update-your-charitys-details/](http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/manage-your-charity/update-your-charitys-details/)

9. Add new contacts and create logins for the PTA UK website here.

10. Plan your committee meetings

Get dates in the diary for your committee meetings, ideally for the year.

11. Keep the school informed

A good relationship with the school is essential for a PTA to run smoothly. The main contact will usually be the Chair or Secretary, but if you have a larger committee or a member that already has good links with the school, it doesn't need to be.

Give a list of committee members and contact details to the school office.

12. Charity Commission

Most AGMs take place at the end of the financial year. If you are a registered charity, you have 10 months to file your annual return with the Charity Commission. In **Northern Ireland** all charities registered with Charity Commission Northern Ireland must report to them on an annual basis. If your charity was registered with the Commission prior to 1st January 2016 and you are reporting on a financial year that commenced before the same date, then you may apply the [interim reporting arrangements](#) to that year. However, the [full accounting and reporting](#) requirements will apply to all financial years beginning on or after 1 January 2016. It is advisable for all charities to commence reporting using the full regulations to help you in preparing for subsequent reporting years [Click here](#) to find out what information you need to supply if you are in England or Wales

[Click here](#) for annual reporting requirements in Northern Ireland

13. Finalise the handover

The outgoing Chair, Secretary and Treasurer should make sure they handover to the new committee. [Click here](#) to read our Handover Guide.

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