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**Governance Code for Sport**

**Running an Effective Meeting**

Checklist and Guidance Note

Disclaimer

Sport Ireland is making available a range of resources including guidance notes, policy documents and templates for selected areas aligned to the Governance Code for Sport which will support sport organisations, boards, management and staff in the development of relevant governance processes and procedures particular to their own organisation.

For the avoidance of doubt, the final decision on the nature, type, extent and format of approved governance policies, procedures and processes for each organisation is a matter for the board / highest governing structure of the organisation and the resources and material provided may assist the approval process.

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Running an Effective Meeting Guidance Note– Version Control

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|  | Running an Effective Meeting Guidance Note | |
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| 1.0 | 04/04/2022 | **Draft for Comment** |
| 1.1 | 26/05/2022 | Final Version for publication |

**Background & Context**

This document has been developed following the input and discussion at a Secretaries Network event in March 2022. The focus of the event was the role of a secretary in running an effective meeting. A checklist is presented below that will help Secretaries in ensuring meetings run consistently, smoothly, and efficiently. Further discussion on some points is provided below along with some resources as an Appendix. Where templates or guidance are provided it is only as a prompt and in all cases will need to be adapted to reflect the operating context of your organisation.

**Checklist**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Meeting Checklist** | | |
| **Before Meeting** | | |
| **1** | Agree internal timeline for provision of Board papers/material |  |
|  | Meeting logistics (venue, IT support, catering etc.) |  |
| **2** | Monitoring Board member availability |  |
| **3** | Plan and Develop draft Agenda for agreement with Chair |  |
| **4** | Receive and review Board papers from Executive team |  |
| **5** | Seek updates on Action Items from previous meetings |  |
| **6** | Circulate papers to Board (Are there any relevant papers where members may have a conflict of interest) |  |
| **7** | If members of your team/external are joining for specific times, communicate an indicative timing |  |
| **During Meeting** | | |
| **8** | Monitor meeting attendance |  |
| **9** | Take detailed notes to assist with the preparation of minutes |  |
| **10** | Ensure Conflicts of Interest are identified and managed in line with your policy |  |
| **11** | Capture and record Action Items |  |
| **12** | Communicate with Chair where needed on agenda, timing, next items etc. |  |
| **13** | Ensure decisions are made where decisions are sought |  |
| **After Meeting** | | |
| **14** | Circulate Action Items to relevant parties as soon as possible after the meeting |  |
| **15** | Draft Minutes once finalised and agreed circulate |  |
| **16** | Reflection on meeting – (What went well/ What could be improved) |  |
| **17** | Reaffirm date of next meeting |  |

**Discussion**

**Meeting Dates**

An agreed calendar of meeting dates ensures that people plan and align their schedules appropriately. Generally, secretaries should spend some time in Q4 of each year planning dates for the year ahead. Once the cycle of meetings is agreed this timeline can be replicated for future years. This shouldn’t preclude the possibility of additional meetings should the need arise but will provide some certainty to members and the Executive.

**Agendas**

The Secretary should ensure that the Chair and CEO have agreed the agenda. The Secretary should also invest some time in planning and crafting the agenda in advance of the meeting to ensure a logical flow to the meeting. Board work programmes[[1]](#footnote-1) and plans can assist and help with planning an agenda. A sample Board work programme is provided as an Appendix.

Allocating indicative times to agenda items can assist in ensuring the meeting agenda is a) realistic and b) remains on track. A sample agenda template is provided as an appendix. Ideally it should be clear on the relevant paper and or the agenda what action is sought from the Board (**i.e.** noting, discussion or decision)

Distribution of Board Papers

Board packs should be circulated in a timely manner. The Board Standing Orders[[2]](#footnote-2) will stipulate when this must take place but 5-7 days is generally best practice. The Secretary should ensure that papers are circulated in a timely manner but also that papers are clear, consistent and align with agreed standards. Standardised templates or formatting/writing style guidance can assist in the presentation of Board papers.

Conflicts of Interest[[3]](#footnote-3)

Secretaries should be aware of areas where members may have a conflict of interest or loyalty. This can be done through a completion of a statement of interest. The secretary should be proactive around Conflicts of Interest as if not probably managed they can create significant risks for the organisation.

Funding decisions, tendering and procurement are areas where a heightened level of control and vigilance would be expected.

**Conflicts of Interest are inevitable and will arise, the key is to make sure they are identified, managed, and recorded.**

Action Items

Relevant action items need to be recorded, circulated, and reported back on. A sample Action Item tracker is provided as an appendix. This template allows for actions that may not be complete after one meeting to continue to be monitored and updated on at future meetings.

Minutes

Minutes must be clear, objective and accurately reflect the meeting.

There are numerous styles of meeting minutes each with their own individual merits. One popular style is that the minutes mainly capture outcomes and decisions in the meeting. It can also be useful at times to provide a general overview of some key points from a lengthy discussion.

As Secretaries it can be useful to clarify with the Chair their expectations with regards to minutes. The table below may be instructive as a general guide to a possible approach.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do record** | **Don’t record** |
| Decisions and outcomes  New information  Expected Actions  Next Steps | Old material (in detail)  Redundant information  Personal Comments (unless specifically requested)  He said/She said information |

Draft Minutes can be issued shortly after the meeting. There should always be ample time to review minutes prior to approval.

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# Appendix 1: Sample Agenda Template

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meeting:** | Board Meeting |
| **Date:** | 10am, 25 February 2022 |
| **Location:** | Sport HQ |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda:** | | |  |  |
| **Item** | **Advance Material** | **Action** | **Indicative Time** |  |
| 1. Apologies | - | Noting | - |  |
| 1. Declaration on Conflicts of Interest | - | Noting | - |  |
| 1. Minutes of previous meeting, 26 November 2021 | Yes | Approval | 5 minutes |  |
| 1. Matters arising | - | Noting | - |  |
| 1. Review of Action Items from previous meeting | Yes | Noting | 5 minutes |  |
| 1. Risk Register | Yes | Decision | 20 minutes |  |
| 1. Financial Statement 2021 | Yes | Decison | 10 minutes |  |
| 1. CEO Update | Yes | Noting | 20 minutes |  |
| 1. Strategy Development | Yes | Discussion | 20 minutes |  |
| 1. A.O.B | - | Noting | - |  |
| 1. Date of next meeting | - | TBC | - |  |

# Appendix 2: Board Work Programme

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Agenda Item** | **Jan** | **Feb** | **March** | **April** | **May** | **June** | **Sept** | **Oct** | **Nov** | **Dec** |
| Declaration on Conflicts of Interest | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Finance Update | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| CEO Update | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Governance Code for Sport |  |  | X |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |
| High Performance Update |  | X |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |
| Update from Audit & Risk Committee |  |  | X |  |  | X |  | X |  | X |
| Risk Management | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Update on Club Network |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 3: Action Item Tracker**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ref** | **Action** | **Responsible** | **Date Action Raised** | **Status** | **Comment** |
| 1.1 | Press Release to issue on the successful hosting on European Championships | Communications Manager | Board Meeting January 2021 | Complete | *Press Release issued on 21st January.* |
| 1.2 | Prepare submission to international event for hosting of another major international events | CEO | Board Meeting January 2021 | On Track | *Possible events identified following consultation with International Federation. To be discussed further at April meeting of Board.* |
| 2.1 | Chair to write to Jane Doe to thank her for her contribution as a Board member | Chair | Board Meeting February 2022 | Complete | *Letter issued on 24th February.* |
| 2.2 | Provide update to Board on Women in Sport initiatives | CEO | Board Meeting February 2022 | Complete | *Update to be provided under Agenda Item 5.* |
| 2.3 | Arrange a Board “away day” for Q3 | Board Secretary | Board Meeting February 2022 | On Track | *Suitable date has now been identified and a venue is currently being sourced.* |

1. <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2021-04/work-programme-board-committees.docx> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2021-11/standing-orders.docx> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2021-11/register-of-interest-guidance-note.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)