

British Orienteering

Meeting Guidelines

June 2008

These Guidelines are now operational however they are not 'tried and tested'. Please, as you use these Guidelines, can you feedback to the Chief Executive any issues you identify and any improvements you consider appropriate. The Guidelines are intended to apply across all 'Work Units' as defined below; if there are specific issues that relate to your 'work unit' but not to others please let the Chief Executive know.

Terminology and Applicability

The term "Work Unit" is used to denote Board, Committee, Group or Working Party as appropriate.

The term "member" is used to denote someone who has been elected or appointed to a Work Unit. The Secretary of a Work Unit is not counted as a member of the Work Unit unless a member in his/her own right.

These guidelines apply to all meetings of Work Units, whether held with everyone physically present, or with one or more members participating using phone or computer where such members can hear what everyone else says and can be heard by everyone when they speak. "Participating" shall mean either of the foregoing methods.

Notice of meetings

Normally, at least 14 days' notice of a meeting (ie date, time and exact location) must be given for the meeting to be valid and to have the authority to take decisions. Less notice than 14 days is permissible however, provided the Chairman of the meeting explains the reason in the calling notice. Meetings at less than 7 days' notice shall only be called for extremely urgent matters that could not reasonably have been anticipated, or where all non-correspondent members of the Work Unit agree to the meeting in advance.

Agenda and supporting papers

The agenda for a meeting should be distributed as soon as is practicable, and normally with any final confirmation of a meeting which has been scheduled for some time. Supporting papers should be distributed with the agenda where possible, but as soon as possible thereafter if not with the agenda. Matters which by their length or complexity require time to study or which require consultation with people who are not members of the meeting should not normally be distributed at the meeting or immediately before it.

Items not on the agenda

Items introduced at the meeting under "Any Other Business" or which arise from discussion of other matters should be treated very carefully, taking into account that some Work Unit members or correspondent members might have had strong opinions on them had they been on the published agenda, and that members present may not have had sufficient time to consider the implications of any proposal made. Decisions on such matters can be taken, but should be done where the next meeting of the Work Unit would be too late to do so; where a decision by polling members by e-mail after the meeting will not be practicable; or when all members are present and give their assent to the decision being taken.

Quorum

A quorum at all Work Unit meetings is the participation of half or more of the number of members of the Work Unit. The quorum is established at the start of the meeting. A quorum must be present then or within 30 minutes of the scheduled start time of the meeting for the meeting to take authorised decisions after a quorum is established. A meeting remains quorate if members cease their participation at that meeting, unless the number of members drops below one third of the number of members.

In calculating the quorum, correspondent members do not count in the number of members. However, if a correspondent member is participating in the meeting, the Work Unit membership is increased by one for

each correspondent member participating, and the quorum is calculated using the number of members participating, whether correspondent members or not.

Chairman

The Chairman of the Work Unit will normally act as meeting Chairman. Where the Work Unit has appointed a Vice Chairman, the Vice Chairman will act as Chairman when the Chairman is absent or has a conflict of interest. Where the Chairman (and Vice Chairman if one has been appointed) is/are not present or have a conflict of interest, the members participating in the meeting shall appoint a Chairman.

Voting

Where a vote is taken, all members participating in the meeting may choose to vote for or against a proposal, or to abstain from voting. A majority of votes cast must be in favour of a proposal for it to pass. For avoidance of doubt, a member who abstains from voting does not count as a vote cast. Where there is equality of votes for and against a proposal, the Chairman of the meeting at the time of taking the vote shall have a casting vote.

Correspondent members may vote if participating in the meeting.

No member may cast his vote using a proxy whether another Work Unit member or not.

E-mail discussions and decisions

Initial discussion of matters using e-mail is generally to be encouraged as it often saves members travel time and expense, and enables them to review and respond to the discussion at their own convenience. However, e-mail is not generally a secure form of communication, so care should be taken about what is included in the e-mails unless there is a secure method of exchanging views. Frequently e-mails can help discussion to a point where the Work Unit is ready at a formal meeting to review the various points that have been made and to take a decision. However, it is not always the case that exchanges by e-mail (or on a private bulletin board where one is available) properly allow full discussion and the development of alternative approaches or decisions.

Decisions taken by e-mail should be done by first circulating members about the issue, perhaps including options or recommendations if thinking is already at that stage. Only once members have had a reasonable opportunity to respond and propose solutions or make other points (and occasionally for members to respond to those other points), is it appropriate to take a decision using e-mail.

Finally, the Chairman (or Secretary of the Work Unit at the Chairman's request) should send an e-mail to all members including correspondent members and invite them to vote for or against a proposal or to choose from a set of options. A clear end date and time must be set for replies to be received, and replies received should immediately be acknowledged.

A quorum of the Work Unit (including all members invited to vote) must cast a vote for the decision to be valid, and if there was other than a straight choice (eg For or Against, or Option 1 or Option 2), a majority of votes cast must be in favour of the option selected. If not, the two highest scoring options must be put to the members again for a final decision. As with all votes, the Chairman (or the acting Chairman) of the Work Unit has a casting vote if necessary.

Finally, any decisions taken by e-mail should be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Work Unit.