The Beginning, Middle and End of Your Meeting

Running an effective meeting as a community group is important because it:

- saves time
- ensures the purpose of the meeting is achieved
- shows respect for the time people are volunteering to attend the meeting
- keeps members engaged and enthusiastic
- contributes to achieving the goals of the community group
- Helps members to feel valued.

Beginning

Before the meeting:

1. Encourage community group members to attend meetings regularly and be on time.
2. Identify a suitable location and time and consider if you might need to vary these so that a range of different members can have the opportunity to attend.
3. Consider whether food, drink or break time should be incorporated into the meeting.
4. Develop a meeting Agenda that outlines what needs to be discussed and achieved by the end of the meeting and send it to attendees before the meeting- consider inviting members to contribute items to the Agenda where appropriate.
5. Assign someone to lead (chair) the meeting and someone to take notes (minutes) about the meeting discussions.
6. Be prepared for the meeting by arranging any necessary paperwork or resources that will be required as part of the discussions.

Middle

During the meeting:

1. The person leading the meeting should ideally be a confident speaker who is comfortable with re-directing conversations and managing disagreements.
2. Welcome and thank participants for attending the meeting and draw their attention to the Agenda, highlighting the importance of sticking to it.
3. Carefully manage the time by being aware of everything that needs to be discussed and when necessary, redirect discussions which don't relate to the Agenda or are unhelpful or disruptive.
4. Review any actions identified at the last meeting and follow-up on their completion.
5. Ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.
6. Focus on facts, not rumours, gossip or personal opinion.
7. Apply a fair, transparent and equitable decision-making process and ensure that any decisions that are made are recorded in the minutes.
8. Inject some fun into the meeting proceedings- you could consider:

- running a "get to know you" or team building activity
- having refreshments
- showing appreciation for members
- sharing a funny video
- celebrating the achievements of the community group
- talking about personal achievements, milestones or upcoming holidays.

End

Concluding the meeting:

1. Ensure any decisions and actions have been recorded and someone has been assigned, and has agreed to, being responsible for the individual actions.
2. Assign a date by which the actions need to be completed.
3. Identify any Agenda items that were not discussed and make sure they're included on the Agenda for the next meeting.
4. Ensure the meeting minutes are clear and accurately record the meeting discussions-distribute them to those who attended the meeting once they are finalised.
5. Discuss a date, time and place for the next meeting.
6. Announce that the meeting has officially closed and thank everyone for their attendance and contributions.

Additional support

The Wanneroo Community Toolkit (www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/communitytoolkit) contains a range of templates, information and resources to help your community group to hold effective meetings, such as:

- Meeting Agenda template
- Meeting Minutes template
- Videos with tips for running effective meetings
- Information about hosting online meetings.