



Church of Ireland – Parish Handbook

TAKING MINUTES OF SELECT VESTRY MEETINGS

A select vestry must ensure that key information discussed and decisions made at select vestry meetings are accurately recorded. The records of meetings are known as minutes. These minutes should be carefully retained for future reference. The secretary to the select vestry takes responsibility for the minutes.

CHECKLIST FOR TAKING AND RETAINING MINUTES

Minutes should:

- be taken at every select vestry meeting
- be accurate and concise
- record all the decisions made and briefly summarise any essential points leading to the decision
- record any discussion and decision on a conflict of interest
- state what actions are to be taken and who is to take them
- be circulated to members for their reference
- be agreed by the select vestry as an accurate record
- be signed by the chairperson (officiating member of the clergy)
- be kept in a minute book for future reference
- be safely retained in accordance with regulations of the diocesan synod

REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE

It is good practice to keep a register of attendance showing members' attendance and apologies. This is often kept as part of or along with the minute book or equivalent digital files.

TIPS FOR TAKING MINUTES

- Be prepared with a copy of the previous minutes, the agenda, and any supporting materials such as reports, so you know what topics are being discussed.
- Strictly stick to the facts of what happened; do not allow your own viewpoint to influence how you record the meeting.
- Even though the note taker must be able to clearly hear all the discussion, remember that the chairperson is still in charge of running the meeting.
- Minutes should be written in the third person, e.g. use *the finance team* rather than *we*.
- Write up a draft of the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting so that it is still fresh in your mind; details can quickly be forgotten.
- Keep any rough notes until the minutes have been approved in case you need to refer back to your original notes for clarification.
- Circulating draft minutes to the select vestry may be a useful way to remind members about tasks they agreed to undertake prior to the next meeting.
- Keep the minute book up-to-date to make it easier to refer to minutes relating to a specific item.

IMPORTANCE OF MINUTES

Select vestry minute books are important records and need to be maintained and kept for the record and long-term historic value of local parish life and the general evolution of the Church of Ireland.

One master set of printed or written records must be maintained. Whilst copies of minutes may be shared electronically, the secretary to the select vestry should be responsible for printing (or writing) out a master set which should be pasted into a hardcopy volume. It is this hardcopy that should be signed and dated as an agreed version of the minutes, from meeting to meeting.

The RCB Library is the official place of deposit for all non-current Church of Ireland records and welcomes transfers of general and select vestry minutes and related materials. Such records are held permanently in the Library facilities and retained for all time.

In respect of confidentiality, a 40-year closure rule is applied to all select vestry minutes, so it would only be with the permission of the officiating member of the clergy or the vestry secretary that access would be granted to records within that period.

SAMPLE MINUTES

[INSERT PARISH NAME] SELECT VESTRY MEETING MINUTES

1. A meeting of the [insert parish name] select vestry was held on [insert date] at [time] in [place].
2. Present: [Insert members' names]
3. Apologies: [Insert members' names]
4. A quorum was declared.
5. Opening prayer [e.g. The Rector opened with prayer.]
6. Approval of minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting [were read]/[having been circulated were taken as read], and [were proposed, seconded and agreed]/[changes were noted and agreed]. [The agreed minutes were signed by the chairperson].
7. Conflicts of interest check. [None were declared]/ [A potential conflict was declared by [insert name], the nature of which is [insert nature of interest]. [Insert a summary of the discussion, the decision taken by the select vestry and the actions agreed/taken to manage the conflict].
8. Actions relating to previous meetings [summarise actions taken and reported on].
9. Items to be discussed and decided: [Insert item(s), decision(s) and action(s) (who is taking what action and by when)].
10. Updates/Reports were presented: [E.g. Finance update: The Treasurer reported that [insert summary of finance report]. [The report was proposed by.....and seconded by..... that.....].
11. Reports from sub-committees or working groups were presented: [The Rector/convenor of working party introduced the subject of/reported that.....].
12. Routine maintenance and repairs: [Insert any relevant discussion/decision/action].
13. Correspondence: [E.g. the secretary read letters/emails from [insert detail]. [It was proposed by....., seconded by..... and decided that]. [The secretary agreed to respond accordingly/by [insert response/date].
14. Under Any Other Business: [Insert name] raised the matter of [insert details].
15. Confirm the date, time and place of the next meeting (if known).
16. A closing prayer was said.
17. The meeting ended.