Running a virtual AGM

Running a virtual meeting is a practical option to consider when it comes to your upcoming branch AGM. Please use our guidance to help to organise and successfully run your first virtual AGM.

Invitations

Once you have identified people you should invite to your AGM, send an invitation via email as early as possible. You might start with a communication informing of the date and time and follow this with an email to your members, asking them to RSVP so that you know who to expect. The members are those who are eligible to vote at your AGM, for more information about Branch members visit here.

Remember to email a reminder to members a few days prior to the AGM.

Planning

AGM's usually involve the circulation of key documents such as agendas, reports and previous minutes to those in attendance at the meeting. If you are running a virtual AGM sharing these key documents and reports via email can be a helpful way to ensure attendees have the information they need ahead of the meeting. By sending out these documents in a timely manner you will help members to get themselves set up in advance and feel prepared.

It is important to email information on the video calling platform being used and details of how to access the meeting in enough time so people can practice getting set up if they need to. You may want to ask for confirmation from attendees that they have received the notification and that they are able to log in.

Meeting platforms

If you have a Zoom account with a pro subscription this will allow you to hold a call with up to 100 attendees for over 40 minutes. Alternatively, your ASC may be able to schedule the meeting for you using Microsoft Teams. There are a vast variety of video calling platforms that you may have access to, and you may find these suitable for your event. For more information on using Video Calling Platforms visit here.

You can contact volunteering@mndassociation.org if you'd like to discuss the most suitable option.

If you are using a virtual meeting platform for the first time, it may be beneficial to try a practice run with a few committee members to ensure everything runs smoothly. This can allow people to get used to the system and identify potential technical issues. It may be helpful to identify a protocol for how you deal with these, for example if someone loses connection or is struggling to access the platform.

You will have to ensure that attendees are able to access the online meeting platform you have chosen. A lot of platforms do have introductory videos which can be useful, or you may be able to ask a family member or friend to show them in person prior to the meeting. You may want to allocate someone the role of supporting people with technical issues on the night.

Other video tutorials and training can be found here:

- For Zoom - https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us
- For Microsoft teams - https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/microsoft-teams-video-training-4f108e54-240b-4351-8084-b1089f0d21d7

Tasks allocation

Running a virtual AGM is likely to need a team of people to support different aspects of the event. It may help to identify responsibilities for key tasks such as:

- Setting up the meeting and circulating the information
- Administering the online meeting system
- Supporting people to get online
- Chairing the meeting
- Taking minutes/notes
- Presenting information
- Guest speaking

Sharing information

In order to ensure your virtual event runs as smoothly as possible you can encourage attendees to send questions, comments or concerns to the secretary in advance. This will allow time to prepare suitable answers to any questions and prevent confusion throughout the AGM.

Virtual meeting platforms can give you the option to share documents or PowerPoint presentations. It may be a good idea to use this function as it will help attendees to engage with the virtual event.

Let members know that they can use the chat function throughout the meeting to ask questions at relevant times or if they feel uncomfortable speaking.

Managing attendees

It may be helpful to do some basic "housekeeping" at the start of your meeting and explain how to interact during the meeting as well as any rules of behaviour. Some meeting platforms have a 'hand up' function and attendees should be encouraged to use it.

Unexpected background noises or several attendees talking at the same time can lead to a lack of clarity during virtual meetings. Encourage people to use the mute button unless they wish to speak. Some platforms will allow the host to mute all attendees at particular times and this can be useful during longer presentations.

Voting

The easiest option is to ask members to vote virtually. The committee will have to discuss and decide on a method for gathering votes and a person or people who will count the votes should be identified.

Some platforms have functionality built in for polls and most platforms have simple functions such as raising hands. You can also use voting system like survey monkey, google forms or Mentimeter. For more information about voting rights please visit here.

Recording meetings

You may want to record your meeting, using the record function on your meeting platform, to make it easier for the secretary take notes and check these after the meeting. You can also then share this with attendees who weren't able to attend on the day. At the start of your meeting, inform your attendees that you will be recording the meeting and let them know when the recording has begun.