**Hints and Tips for Minute Taking**

**Remember**

**When you go to a meeting to take minutes you are listening:**

**For Meaning**

**For KEY points**

**For Answers, Decisions and Actions**

**Before your first meeting:**

**Read previous minutes**

* Take a critical view of these if you are new
* Make yourself familiar with the “vocabulary” of the meeting
* Generate a list of abbreviations and their meaning
* Develop your own shorthand
* Page number your note pad
* Take a second pen with you....

**When you start to take notes in the meeting:**

* Use the agenda to structure your note taking and final record
* Page number your notes
* List action points

**When you get to draft the minutes:**

* Get started as soon as possible
* Find tactful ways of describing a disagreement
* Remember to save as you go
* Use the past tense
* Use subheadings to clarify within agenda items, if necessary

**After the meeting:**

* Agree the minutes with the chair, if appropriate
* Distribute minutes to members after you have agreement from the chair
* Act on tasks assigned to you

**Ethical Issues – consider:**

* Confidentiality of items discussed
* Freedom of Information – personal information
* Potential for conflicts of interest

**Format**

In general your meetings will have an agenda and the order of the agenda items will determine the shape of the minutes. This is a common structure for a set of minutes:

* Title, date and venue of the meeting
* Names of those present, apologies
* Agreement of minutes
* Matters arising from the last set of minutes
* Correspondence that has been addressed to the Committee
* Agenda Items\*
* Any other business
* Date of next meeting

\*When you are drafting a record of the agenda items you should include the main discussion, perhaps the arguments for and against within the discussion, a description of any documents or reports that have been presented, any decisions that have been taken, resolution and votes, suggestions for future agenda items.

In an informal meeting you may decide to only record the decisions or actions but it will still be useful to have a note of the date, who was present and who is going to take the actions and by when.

When critiquing minutes, your own or someone else’s the following criteria are a useful starting point.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Are the Minutes** | **Yes, No, Don’t Know** | **Comments** |
| -Meaningful? |  |  |
| -Concise? |  |  |
| -Accurate? |  |  |
| -Impartial? |  |  |
| -Unambiguous? |  |  |
| -Complete? |  |  |
| -Authentic? |  |  |
| -Objective? |  |  |