



Get going on...

Motions and Voting

A **motion** is a formal suggestion or proposal made during a meeting about something the club should do or decide. It's how members or committee members ask the club to act, approve something, or make a change.

Think of a motion as a way to say, "I think we should do this, let's talk about it, and vote."

If the motion is supported and passed, it becomes an official **decision** of the club.

Moving Motions:

Motions are how decisions get made in meetings. When you've put a motion on the agenda, you'll be asked to **move** it during the meeting. This simply means officially introducing your idea and providing a brief explanation of why you believe it's important.

After that, someone else needs to **second** the motion. This shows that at least one other person thinks it's worth discussing. If no one seconds it, the motion doesn't go ahead, which helps avoid wasting time on things that don't have enough support.

Once the motion is moved and seconded, the meeting opens it up for discussion. People can share their views, ask questions, or even suggest changes to the wording. These are called **amendments** and can be debated and voted on as well.

After everyone has had their say and the wording is final, it's time to vote. If the majority supports the motion, it becomes a formal decision, and the club can move forward with action.

Tip: A good motion is clear, short, and starts with the word "That..." (e.g., *That the club purchase new equipment up to the value of \$500.*)

Voting:

Note: This guide provides information that is relevant to most clubs. As every organisation is different, always check your constitution to confirm the rules that are specific to you.



Voting – How Clubs Make Decisions

Voting is the final step in the meeting process and one of the most important. It's how your club turns ideas into real decisions that everyone agrees to follow.

Once a **motion** has been moved, seconded, and discussed, it's time for the group to decide. This is where voting comes in.

Who gets to vote?

Only eligible members (as outlined in your club's constitution) can vote. Each eligible member gets **one vote per motion** (check your club constitution).

How does voting work?

Most votes in club meetings are decided by a **simple majority**. That means if more people vote **Yes** than **No**, the motion is **carried** — the club agrees to the proposal and it becomes an official decision, called a **resolution**.

If more people vote **No** than **Yes**, the motion is **lost**, and the club does not go ahead with the idea.

What happens if it's a tie?

Sometimes votes end up with the same number of Yes and No votes. Some club constitutions say that in this case, the **chairperson** can use a **casting vote** to break the tie. Not all clubs allow this, so check your constitution.

Ways to vote:

- **Show of hands** – quick and common for small groups
- **Verbal vote** – saying “yes” or “no” when asked
- **Secret ballot** – written votes, often used for elections or sensitive topics
- **Online voting** – helpful for remote or hybrid meetings (check if allowed by your rules)

Tips for a good voting process:

- Make sure the motion is clear before you vote.
- Only vote if you've listened to the discussion and understand the issue.
- Respect the outcome, even if it wasn't your preferred result.

- Keep a clear record of who moved, seconded, and what the vote result was.

Voting helps your club stay fair and democratic. Everyone gets a say, and the group moves forward with decisions made together.

Abstaining- Choosing not to vote:

Sometimes during a vote, a member may choose not to vote **Yes** or **No**, this is called **abstaining**.

Why do people abstain?

There are lots of reasons someone might abstain:

- They feel unsure or need more information.
- They don't want to be seen favouring one option or person over another.
- They may have a personal or ethical reason for staying out of the decision.
- They might not care about the outcome.

Abstaining is allowed, but it's important to understand how it can affect the outcome of a vote.

How does it affect the result?

When someone abstains, they aren't counted in the **Yes** or **No** total. This can change the number of 'Yes' votes needed to pass a motion.

For example:

- If 20 people are voting, a simple majority means 11 Yes votes are needed.
- But if 4 people abstain, only 16 people are voting.
- So now, only 9 Yes votes are needed to reach a majority.

The same applies to **special resolutions**, which usually require **75%** of votes in favour. Fewer people voting means fewer Yes votes needed to reach that percentage.

Important:

Always check your **constitution** to see how abstentions are treated. Some clubs may count abstentions in total attendance, while others only count people who vote.



Good practice tip:

If you choose to abstain, say so clearly when votes are being counted. The secretary should record it in the minutes, just like Yes or No votes.

Abstaining is a valid choice, but it still has an impact. Understanding how it works helps everyone make informed decisions and ensures your club remains fair and transparent.

Conflict in Meetings – keep it respectful

Disagreements in meetings are not only normal, but they're also a **good** thing when handled well. They show people care and want the best for the club. But there's a big difference between **healthy debate** and **destructive arguments**.

Constructive conflict is when people share different ideas respectfully. It leads to better decisions.

Destructive conflict is when things get personal, off-topic or aggressive, and that slows everything down.

Tips for the Chairperson

- Set clear expectations: stay respectful, open-minded, and on topic.
- Let everyone have a say, and keep things balanced.
- Step in if things get heated and bring focus back to the agenda.
- Once enough has been said, summarise the discussion and move to a vote.
- Use formal rules if needed to keep order.

Remember: The committee works as a team for the good of all members. Keep debate focused on ideas, not people.

Look out for...

Want to build on your meeting knowledge? Take a look at:

Get Going On... *Making Meetings Matter*

Get Going On... *Having a Meeting*

Get Going On... *Agendas and Minutes*

