

A Guide to running an Annual General Meeting

1. What is an Annual General Meeting (AGM)?

This is a meeting of the membership required by RSB bylaws, regulations and Royal Charter where members conduct business.

All RSB branches are required to hold an AGM each financial year (1st October – 30th September). In practice the AGM can be a very short session held before or after a regular branch event.

2. Importance of an AGM

The AGM is also an opportunity for a review of the year's events, the use of branch funds and to allow discussion on future plans and direction of the branch.

All committee roles, including those of the principal officers are required to be reviewed, either formally or informally, on an annual basis. This is to ensure that branch members:

- remain happy with their roles
- have the opportunity to change roles
- are able to stand down from the committee
- can create new roles
- can propose changes to the committee

3. Organising an AGM

AGM's must be free for members to attend to ensure they are inclusive to all branch members. Try and consider how accessible the location is, taking into account disability requirements, transport links, time of the event, and so on. We recommend running the AGM with a regular branch event such as a talk to increase attendance.

The AGM is chaired by the branch chair, or in their absence the vice-chair, or in the absence of both officers by a member of the branch committee.

A quorum of 10 members is needed to regulate the annual meeting. If you do not have 10 members present then your AGM is non-quorate and must be repeated within the financial year.

All branch members must be invited to the AGM and informed of the meeting at least six weeks in advance. Please fill in the regional events form and send to regions@rsb.org.uk and the team will add it to the website and notify all branch members. If your branch has Facebook and Twitter accounts, notification of the AGM should be posted, and committee members encouraged to share.

Non-members are welcome at branch AGM's but cannot vote. The regions team will send a guest list in advance indicating which attendees are RSB members or non-members.

4. The Agenda

It is important to create an AGM agenda to list things that will happen or will be discussed at the meeting.

This should be drawn up by honorary officers and circulated to branch committee before being sent to regions@rsb.org.uk to be circulated to all branch members. The proposed agenda for the AGM, should be sent out to all branch members six weeks before the AGM takes place to ensure branch members can submit any other business (AOB).

Any branch member can request a specific agenda item to be added but must notify the branch secretary in writing at least two weeks prior to the AGM. You can download a [template agenda document](#). Example agenda items include:

- Introduction and welcome

- Apologies for absence
- Review of committee roles
- Elect new committee members
- Chair's report
- Treasurer's report
- Event reports
- Future events
- AOB

5. Review of committee roles and nominations for new committee members

All committee roles, including those of the principal officers, are required to be reviewed each year. This review should take place in advance of the AGM where any formal changes can be made. The branch secretary must be informed if committee members wish to remain in post, stand down, change roles or nominate themselves for another committee position.

The ideal length of term in office for branch members should be not less than three and not more than five consecutive years, although this will depend on specific local conditions and availability of branch members willing to serve on the committee.

Nominations for new committee members can be made in advance or at the AGM:

- any registered branch member can nominate themselves for election for a vacant position
- if more than one nomination is made for a specific committee role a formal vote must be taken at the meeting
- absent members may vote by email or in writing to the branch secretary or other nominated branch officer before the AGM takes place
- if only one candidate stands for a vacant position then that person will be duly elected and no vote needs to take place, unless any serious objections are raised by other branch members

6. Voting

A vote should be handled in stages:

1. Motion is Proposed or Moved
2. Motion is Seconded
3. Motion is opened to General Debate
4. When debate is done Proposer has Right of Reply
5. Vote is Taken

Absent members may vote by email or in writing to the branch secretary or other nominated branch officer before the AGM takes place.

7. Minutes

Minutes should be recorded by the secretary, or other committee member if the secretary is not available. Minutes should be reviewed by committee and then sent to regions@rsb.org.uk for central record keeping and for uploading on the branch webpage.

8. After your AGM

Any changes to the composition of the committee or of principal officer roles must be notified to the RSB regions team (regions@rsb.org.uk) following the AGM so records online and in *The Biologist* magazine can be updated.

9. Final tips

Try and run your AGM in an inclusive way as people may not be familiar with formal meeting procedures. Examples of ways to do this include:

- Introduce committee
- Ask people to give their name when they speak
- Have copies of your agenda, previous minutes, financial report available
- Approach new people and welcome them
- Combine your AGM with another event, such as a lecture or networking.

10. Final tips

First point of contact for any queries are the events officers, who you can contact at regions@rsb.org.uk

The branches are also supported through the Royal Society of Biology Council, who act as the Trustees of the Society and consist of three Honorary Officers: President, Secretary and Treasurer. Four members are elected from the College of Individual Members and four are elected from the College of Organisational Members. Another four members can be appointed by Council to ensure coverage of the breadth of the life sciences based on skills gap amongst Council.

The chair of the College of Individual Members, Nigel Brown CBiol FRSB, supports the regional branches and chairs the Branches Working Group.