Ninety minutes, real decisions, everyone still speaking at the end.

Running a Committee Meeting

General guidance, not a rulebook - every building's circumstances differ, so take what's useful and leave the rest.

This is about **committee** meetings — the ones you hold through the year. Your AGM is a different animal with its own legal requirements; use the AGM Prep Checklist for that.

Most committee meetings fail the same way. One item eats the clock, three items get deferred without anyone noticing, and nothing is written down clearly enough to act on afterwards. None of that is about the people in the room.

Before

Task	Who's doing this	By when
☐ Set the date far enough ahead that people can plan around it — a standing slot beats a scramble		
☐ Circulate the agenda at least a few days out, with the papers attached, not promised		
☐ Put a time estimate against each item, and stick to it out loud		
☐ Put the hard item second, not last — last means it gets ten minutes at 9pm		
☐ Confirm you'll have a quorum before anyone drives across town		
☐ Check what's outstanding from last meeting and list it at the top		

A working agenda

Item	Time	What it's for
Apologies and quorum	2 min	Note who's absent; confirm you can decide things
Minutes of the last meeting	3 min	Confirm they're accurate. Not a re-debate.
Action register	10 min	Every open item, one line each: what's it waiting on?
Maintenance	20 min	New reports, quotes in, anything overdue
Finance	10 min	Actual vs budget, arrears, anything unusual
The main item	25 min	The one thing this meeting exists to settle
Correspondence	5 min	Anything needing a decision, not a reading

Item	Time	What it's for
General business	10 min	Flagged in advance where possible
Next meeting	2 min	Date, and who's bringing what

During — six rules that do the work

1. **Someone chairs, and it's a job.** The chair's role is to keep time and get decisions, not to have the most opinions. If the chair is also the loudest voice, hand the gavel to someone else for that item.
2. **Someone takes minutes, and it isn't the chair.** You cannot run the room and record it at once.
3. **Every item ends with a decision or an owner.** 'We'll look into it' is not an outcome. 'Sam to get two quotes by the 30th' is.
4. **Record the decision, not the discussion.** Minutes are a record of what was resolved. The argument doesn't need preserving; the resolution and its reasoning do.
5. **Write down why, when it wasn't obvious.** 'Accepted the dearer quote — contractor holds parts locally and can attend Thursday.' That sentence saves the next committee an entire conversation.
6. **If it's going nowhere after ten minutes, park it.** Assign two people to come back with options. Meetings are bad at solving problems and good at choosing between prepared answers.

*The single highest-value change most committees can make: start with the action register and ask, of every open item, not 'what is it?' but **'what is it waiting on?'** Most delay in a building isn't disagreement. It's nobody knowing who currently has the thing.*

Decisions made outside a meeting

Committees can usually decide things between meetings — by email, or by a vote circulated in writing — and the rules for doing it validly differ by state and by module. Two things hold everywhere:

- **Record it the same way you'd record a meeting decision** — the motion, who voted, the date, the outcome
- **Put it in the next meeting's minutes** so it becomes part of the building's record rather than living in one person's sent folder

Check your own module for what's actually required — notice periods, who must be given the chance to vote, and how the result is recorded.

After

Task	Who's doing this	By when
☐ Circulate minutes within a week, while people still remember agreeing to things		
☐ Update the action register the same day — it's the document that runs the building		
☐ Tell residents what was decided, in plain language, not just formal minutes		
☐ Diarise anything with a date attached		

The quiet failure mode of most committee meetings isn't a bad decision. It's a good decision nobody hears about afterwards, so residents assume nothing happened and email to ask. Now you've got a second job: managing the emails about the first one.

General guidance only. Quorum, notice and out-of-meeting voting rules are set by your state's legislation and your scheme's module or rules, and they differ. Current as at August 2026.