Frequently asked questions about Branch AGMs

How much notice should be given of the AGM?
30 days notice, in writing, should be given to all branch members.

Who are branch members?
Branch members are defined as ‘full, honorary or associate members of the MND Association who live in the area of the branch or who otherwise wish to be linked to the branch’ (Branch Charter, clause 9).

The monthly branch listing which is available from the Information Exchange provides a list of all members linked with your branch, however as there may be some members not entitled to vote (i.e. a family membership entitles one vote per family), a specific list of branch members entitled to vote, will be made available to you closer to the time of your AGM. Should you wish to have an up-to-date list produced nearer to the date of your AGM, contact the Membership Team on 01604 611855 or email membership@mndassociation.org

Invitations to your AGM, however, can be sent to a much wider audience including supporters, friends, health and social care professionals and local dignitaries.

What has to be included in the notice of the AGM?
The notice of the meeting should specify the time and place of the meeting. It should include a nomination form for the members of the branch management committee and a request for resolutions to be put to the AGM. We suggest that it is also accompanied by a letter explaining the role of the branch management committee and encouraging people to put their names forward.

Is there a time limit by which nominations for branch management committee positions must be received?
Nominations must be returned to the secretary at least two weeks before the time set for the meeting.

What happens if a late nomination is made – for example, at the AGM?
The chair can accept late nominations at the meeting at his or her discretion.

What is the quorum for the AGM?
The minimum legal attendance for the AGM, known as the ‘quorum’, is five full branch members. If the meeting is not ‘quorate’ the AGM part of it must be postponed.

Who should chair the AGM?
The branch chair should. If they are more than 20 minutes late, the Vice Chair can take over, or in their absence, the members present should choose one of their number to chair the meeting.

Should the branch chair preside over the whole meeting if they are standing down from office?
Yes, their term of office finishes at the end of the AGM.

Who should preside over the election of branch management committee members?
The branch chair.

How many members can be elected to the branch management committee?
It is recommended to that the branch management committee should consist of no more than ten members including the honorary officers (chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary).

What should happen if there are more than ten candidates for the branch committee?
Prior to the AGM, the members of your branch management committee should decide upon the size of the committee. The Charter recommends ten people, but this is not mandatory. If the branch management committee has decided upon ten and there are, for example, 15 candidates, then a secret ballot should be held.

The secretary will know whether committee positions are contested and so can prepare voting slips in advance, printed with candidates’ names. These should be distributed before the meeting beings to full members. They should be asked to mark their preferred candidates on the slip with an ‘x’ and the votes should be collected and counted by tellers appointed by the chair. Each person eligible to vote has one vote for each vacancy. The tellers should agree on the outcome and hand the result to the chair, who should then announce it to the meeting. The number of votes cast for each candidate should be recorded in the minutes.

Who is eligible to vote in branch management committee elections?
Only full members can vote for the branch committee.

What happens if candidates get the same number of votes?
The usual way to break a deadlock of this kind is to draw lots.

What happens if a branch management committee vacancy is not filled at the AGM?
Co-option can be considered by the branch management committee at your next meeting. Branch committees can co-opt up to one third of their number. A 'co-opted' committee member is one who is invited by the branch management committee to join them. Co-options are often made when an elected member leaves during their term of office or as a way of bringing someone with specialist skills onto the committee. A co-option should be recorded in the minutes.

**Is it necessary to take minutes at the AGM?**

Yes, it is essential that minutes are taken and decisions are recorded. Resolutions put to the meeting should be proposed and seconded. The names of the proposer and seconder should be recorded. They may be unanimous or, if put to a vote, the outcome of the vote should be noted.

**Is it necessary to read the minutes of the previous AGM to the meeting?**

No, it’s not a requirement and it could be rather tedious for the people present. The best option is to have copies of the minutes available for those attending the meeting. The minutes of the previous AGM must be signed by the chair.

**Should the chair provide a written report of the branch’s activity during the year?**

This is not strictly necessary although it might be a good idea to provide members with a short list of the highlights of the year. The chair can then choose to expand upon them in their presentation.

**What is the procedure for discussing a resolution that has been put to the meeting?**

The person proposing the resolution should be given an opportunity to make their case. A member of the branch management committee should then respond to the resolution. The chair should then invite members from the floor to speak in favour, or against, the resolution.

The meeting should then vote on the resolution. Only full members can vote. The vote should be taken as a show of hands unless two or more members ask for a secret ballot. In the event of a tie, the chair has a casting vote.

A member should declare an interest in, and should not vote on, any matter in which he or she has a personal financial or material interest.

**What is the difference between an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)?**

Both are ‘general meetings’ of which the whole branch membership are notified. Both require 30 days notice.

AGMs are held each year and their purpose is for the branch management committee to account to the membership for their activities during the year and to elect a branch management committee for the coming year.
EGMs can be called by five members of the branch, with the approval of the board of trustees, usually following discussion with the Head of Volunteering. An EGM is a rare occurrence and would only be called to deal with a serious matter which required consultation with the whole membership – for example, a proposal to close the branch.

**When are the honorary branch officers (chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer) elected?**
This should happen at the first branch management committee following the AGM.

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**For more information contact the Volunteering Team:**
Phone: 0345 6044 150
Email: volunteering@mndassociation.org
Website: [www.mndassociation.org/volunteerzone](http://www.mndassociation.org/volunteerzone)

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