

Role of the Secretary

What is the role of the Secretary?

Although the role of the Secretary can be very different from group to group the secretary's duties generally cover three main areas:

- Keeping people informed about your group and its activities (e.g. letting people know about the date and time of group meetings)
- Keeping group records (e.g. membership details, meeting notes)
- Being a point of contact for people wanting to get in touch with your group (i.e. the person people write to when they want to contact your group)

The tasks your group Secretary might be expected to perform can be divided into Meeting Tasks, Membership Tasks and Communication Tasks.

1) Meetings Tasks

Before a meeting

- Book the room for the meeting and arrange any refreshments etc.
- Work with the Chair to put together a meeting agenda.
- Let everyone invited to attend the meeting (including group members and guests) know when and where the meeting is to take place and what is to be discussed.
- Make sure any documents (such as copies of the meeting agenda, minutes of previous meeting and any documents that are to be discussed) are distributed well in advance of that meeting.

During the meeting

- Make a record of who has attended the meeting.
- Take notes (or minutes) of the meeting. These notes should not try to record everything that has been said at the meeting, but should rather concentrate on recording any decisions made and who is going to do what.

After the meeting

- Write or type up the notes of the meeting.
(It is a good idea to do this as soon as possible after a meeting, while what was said is still fresh in your mind.)
- Make sure copies of the notes are available for the next meeting.
- File the meeting notes for future reference.

2) Membership Tasks

Deal with membership applications.

Keep group membership records. This can be as simple as a list of the names and addresses of all group members.

3) Communication Tasks

- Keep the group informed about what letters and emails the group has received.
- Write letters on behalf of the group and keep group members informed about what letters have been sent out on the group's behalf.

Some groups choose to split the Secretary's role amongst a number of different people. For example a group may have a Minutes Secretary to deal with meeting tasks, a Membership Secretary to keep membership records and deal with other membership tasks and Correspondence Secretary to deal with group communications such as letters and emails. This is often a good idea as it stops one person being overloaded with work and involves more people in the running of your group.