



# **The Club Secretary**

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# ***1. Why do you Need a Secretary***

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The secretary is the key administration officer of the club. This person provides the link between members, the club executive committee and outside agencies (such as other clubs and organisations).

The position of secretary is critical to the successful management of any club or organisation.

The secretary is often the first point of contact for people interested in the club who need information or details about activities. An effective secretary also helps in co-ordinating club events such as meeting schedules, working bees and fundraising activities.

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The secretary's role is a challenging one. Often not seen as high profile, in actual fact the secretary is a key pivot point for all the club's activities. This person is a valuable member of the club and contributes continuously to its success. Every effort should be made to support and value this person, whose duties may sometimes be repetitive and time-consuming.

In many clubs, the hard work of the secretary is often recognised by an honorarium (a small payment made for the service given).

## ***2. Professional Skill and Qualities***

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### ***What is a Secretary?***

*The international definition states:*

#### **A SECRETARY...**

*shall be defined as an executive assistant who possesses a mastery of office skills, demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision, exercises initiative and judgement and makes decisions within the scope of assigned authority.*



*Administration Skills*

*Personal Qualities*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well organised</li> <li>• task and time efficient</li> <li>• good communicator</li> <li>• competent word processing skills</li> <li>• telephone skills</li> <li>• understanding of office systems and procedures</li> <li>• dedication and loyalty</li> <li>• goal oriented and self motivated</li> <li>• decision making and delegation</li> <li>• management and supervision of other staff/volunteers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lots of energy and enthusiasm</li> <li>• an interest in people</li> <li>• initiative</li> <li>• tact and discretion</li> <li>• commitment</li> <li>• good listening skills</li> <li>• good understanding and knowledge of the organisation and its activities</li> <li>• reliable and trustworthy</li> <li>• problem solver and positive thinker</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

The above is a very comprehensive list. However, if someone has the enthusiasm for the position, some of the necessary skills, and receives plenty of encouragement and committed support, they will grow to become a valuable club asset.

### ***3. Where to Find the Secretary?***

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A good secretary is often found from within your organisation. There are many myths about the workload and the little thanks the secretary receives.

Through good communication and a clear description of the tasks involved, the position can be interesting and provide involvement. Your secretary is often someone who has a keen interest in the organisation

and wants to see the organisation progress. They may or may not be actively involved in the organisation's activities. They may be from a member's family, former participants or keen spectators of club events. With good support, previously well-maintained records, and clear instructions on what has to be done, many enthusiastic volunteers have become effective secretaries for their club.

Another source of secretarial help may come from secretaries currently training at a local polytechnic or college. (Refer also to *Running Sport* 1: Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers.)

## **4. Role and Responsibilities**

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These will vary from organisation to organisation. As a guide we have divided the role into core responsibilities and additional responsibilities.

### *Core Responsibilities*

- a Mail/correspondence - inward/outward
- b Meeting procedures (including minutes)
- c Communication and public relations - inward/outward
- d Record maintenance and filing systems
- e Word processing
- f Administration supplies/equipment/keys

### *Additional Responsibilities*

There are additional responsibilities:

- Managing/supervising other staff/volunteers
- Arranging functions
- Supporting club events/activities
- Other activities as appropriate to skill and interest.



## CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

### a. Mail/Correspondence

#### *Inward*

- Regularly clear the mailbox.
- Enter all inward mail received in mailbook (See Appendix 1).
  - a) You can purchase a printed mailbook from a stationer.
  - b) Make up your own blank sets in a binder.
  - c) It's a good idea to date stamp all incoming mail.
- Recording mail and copy distribution supports you in case members claim they did not received the information
- Acknowledge all letters promptly (see Appendix 2). Use the model text as a guide, amended for your use.
- Ensure you clear the mailbox within 24 hours of a committee meeting, keeping correspondence matters up to date.
- Prepare a list of correspondence for yourself prior to meeting, listing key points for each item.
- Staple slip of paper to each item of correspondence (this can be entered as Inward Mail Record).

Meeting/Discussion Date _____
Points for reply _____
_____
_____
Deadline Date _____

## *Outward*

- Reply promptly to correspondence.
- File copies of all correspondence and replies in club records.
- A trend in recent years is to discontinue the correspondence record and table all correspondence by listing these items on the agenda. They can then be taken as 'read'. Members can request information if needed (Appendix 3).

## **b. Meeting Procedures**

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### *Meeting Preparation*

- Contact chairperson and confirm agenda items.
- Send out notice and agenda for meeting to all people concerned at pre-determined time set by committee (for example three weeks prior to meeting). Members should be aware of meeting date as this was the final item on minutes of previous meeting.

Enclose minutes of previous meeting if not already circulated (Appendices 4 and 5).

- Confirm arrangements at meeting location for resources/catering/ photocopying etc.
  - Be there to open the building/room (at least 30 minutes prior to meeting).
  - Arrange chairs for members (possibly in a circle).
  - Arrange table for chairperson/secretary/treasurer (Appendix 6).
  - Check catering arrangements.
  - Supplies of milk/tea/coffee/fruit juice/water/biscuits and hot water
- Check your resources.
  - Diary
  - Correspondence files
  - Minute book



- Notebook

### *During the Meeting*

- Have a prepared list of expected participants.
  - Note those present
  - Note apologies
  - Note absentees
- Following each agenda item, you will need to record:
  - Main points
  - Key issues
  - Decisions made
  - Reports presented
  - Accounts approved (See Appendix 7)
- Motions MUST be accurately recorded and Proposer/Seconder recorded. A printed form may help this.
- Be alert for additional notes.
- Working with the chairperson, ask questions if you are not clear.

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*In some organisations the secretary does not take an active role in discussions.*

### *After the Meeting*

- Write up the minutes as soon as possible while the meeting is fresh in your mind (or record them on a small tape recorder).
- Check the minutes with the chairperson prior to circulation.
- Circulate to all committee members and other approved persons/ organisations as quickly as possible (within one week if possible, to ensure actions required are completed).
- Follow up on action points with persons concerned.

- Enter in club diary items needing long-term attention.
- Confirm in writing all important arrangements.
- Reply to correspondence where appropriate.
- \* See also Meeting Procedures in *Running Sport 3*.

### *Annual General Meeting*

In addition to the above you will need to:

- Send notice to all financial members in line with club rules.
- Collect reports from club officers.
- Receive nominations for club positions.
- Arrange for printing of reports.
- Make arrangements for guest speakers.

### **c. Communication and Public Relations**

The primary function of the secretary is to be the communications centre of the organisation. This means:

- Communicating decisions made to all concerned.
- Informing club members of events and activities (e.g. telephone/written correspondence/noticeboards/newsletters).
- Being the liaison point for external contacts (e.g. other clubs/membership enquiries/guest speakers etc).

#### *Inward*

- You are usually the first point of contact for the organisation.
- Make up a contact list.
- Check you are listed appropriately in:
  - Community Directories



- Networking lists

- Newsletters

(NB: This needs to be updated if the secretary changes.)

### *Outward*

- Keep the membership list up to date.
- Possibly prepare a separate list for committee members, including:

<b>Residential address</b>	<b>Telephone (home/work), Fax</b>
<b>Postal address</b>	<b>E-mail</b>

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- Check the preferred time for contacting members by telephone.
- Respond to all calls as soon as possible. Always acknowledge even if you cannot provide immediate information.
- System of ‘ringers’ for meetings is useful (team of people each ringing say four to six other people). This shares the telephone load.

### *General*

- A telephone note book can be useful to record incoming/outgoing calls (or make this a section of your personal/business diary).

### *Meeting Liaison / Action*

The secretary plays a key role in following up progress on actions planned at meetings. It is important to check that all designated tasks have been completed. Read more about this in *Running Sport 3 Managing Meetings*.

### *Membership*

- The secretary has the responsibility of ensuring all new members have a copy of the rules, procedures and information about the organisation.
- Membership application forms need to have the required information checked annually.

- Prepare a membership kit and have these available to send out.

### *Guest Speakers / Visitors*

- The secretary is often responsible for telephone contact and written confirmation for guests. They may also have responsibility for greeting and hosting visitors at special events.
- At the first contact find out exactly what the guest/visitor expects to happen and what they may need in the way of resources. Draw up your own checklist if this is a regular aspect of your role.

## **d. Record Maintenance and Filing Systems**

Maintenance and security of club records and filing is the responsibility of the secretary. They are necessary for club returns regionally and nationally.

A list should be held by the secretary of all records which are held by the club and who holds these records. (Financial records usually remain with the treasurer. Chairperson may hold separate records.)

*Records may take the form of:*

- a) Manual files
- b) Computer files

### *Manual Files*

Can be effective and portable, particularly between personnel. Good resources are available in the form of minute books, ring binders, storage binders/boxes, portable A-Z filing boxes.

### *Computer Files*

More people have access to computers these days. The club may consider this a valuable resource to purchase at some point. Computers have the advantage of storing all information at the one source:



- Membership lists and database.
- Duty rosters.
- Applications for Grants/Sponsorship.
- Competition lists and results.
- Correspondence.
- Financial records.

Today's software has flexibility and speed for updating information. Information on computer training is listed in Reference and Further Reading at the end of this resource.



### *Historical Records*

Past members, club history and interesting information will be useful for reunions, fundraising and recruitment.

### **e. Word Processing**

This function of the secretary's role may be delegated. Most clubs have personnel who have access to word processing facilities. Small clubs may still have printed correspondence prepared on a typewriter and photocopied.

It is important to keep file copies of all processed items.

### *Meetings*

The standardised form for recording minutes helps in pre-meeting preparation and allows for longhand writing.

### *Events / Speakers*

Ensure all important arrangements are confirmed in writing with copies to all concerned and copies on file.

## **f. Administration**

The secretary has responsibility for maintaining resources, equipment and security.

### *Equipment*

- Telephone access - evening (day if possible).
- Word processing facility - computer or typewriter.
- Fax access if possible.

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### *Resources*

- Diary for managing schedules of events, activities, meetings, fundraising sponsorship, and valuable information on the club (such as membership details/phone numbers).
- Notebook/binder for recording meetings.
- Minute book for storing signed minutes.
- Stationery - club letterhead, envelopes, stamps.
- Club seal and address stamp.
- Files for records.

### *Security*

- List of keys and who holds them.
- List of building procedures
  - opening/closing
  - evacuation
  - safety procedures (in relation to Health and Safety Act).
- Duplicate keys.



## Appendix 2

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### Sample Letter

*Return address  
(only required if NOT on club letterhead)*

16 February 1999

James Smith  
19 The Avenue  
NORTHTOWN

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Dear Mr Smith

#### RESURFACING CONCRETE AREAS

Thank you for your letter drawing our attention to the condition of some of the concrete pads.

Your letter will be presented at our next committee meeting to be held on 30 March 1999. After the meeting I will contact you to give you the results of our discussions.

Yours sincerely  
Northtown Tennis Club  
(only required if NOT on letterhead)

Joe Bloggs  
Secretary



## Appendix 3

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### Correspondence List

Date Received	Sender	Key Points	Reply Points	Date Sent





## Appendix 5

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### Sample Agenda

Title: Meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ Club Committee at *place*, on *date*, at *time*.

1. Present
2. Apologies
3. Absentees
4. Previous Minutes (or Minutes of the last meeting)
5. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes (not on the Agenda)
6. Inward and Outward Correspondence
7. Reports:     Chairperson's/President's  
                  Treasurer's/Financial  
                  (income received/accounts paid)
8. Accounts to be passed for payment
9. Committee Reports in priority order
- 10 General Business
11. Next Meeting

# Appendix 6

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## Meeting Checklist

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Organisation

---

Location

---

Date

---

From

to

---

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Participants

(X)

Room reserved

---

Meeting notice/agenda

---

Prepared

---

Sent

---

Meeting Materials

- Note pads

- Pencils

- Name Place Cards/Badges

- Handouts

Equipment

White board

---

Flip chart papers

---

Marking pens

---

Room Layout (draw your organisation's preferred layout)





## Appendix 7

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*This form can be amended to suit your organisation.  
You may need more space or fewer items on each page.*

### Standardised Form for Recording Minutes

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Club Title:

---

Date:

Time:

Location:

---

Present:

---

---

---

Purpose:

---

Minutes and/or Progress to Date:

---

---

### Correspondence

---

Reports:

---

---

---

Accounts for payment:

---

---

---

Committee Reports:

---

---

---

Projects: \_\_\_\_\_

General Business:

---

---

Action Items:

Item No.	Action	Individual Responsible	Due Date
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Next Meeting:

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## References and further Reading

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The information in this text was researched and compiled by Valerie Jackson, Jackson Training, Wellington.

### *Club Procedures*

*Club Administrator's Manual*, Wellington

Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport, 1990

Volunteer Improvement Programme Club Administration Manual,

*Australian Sports Commission*, 1994

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### *Secretarial Role*

*The Drake New Zealand Secretary's Handbook*

(Available from NZ Society of Executive Secretaries Inc, PO Box 1418 Auckland)

McLaren, M., *Check it Out - A Guide to Effective Writing*

Longman Paul, 1993

Hawthorne, J., *How to Take Minutes of Meetings*

*Kogan Page*, 1993

### *Training Programmes*

- Polytechnics and private organisations provide word processing courses.
- NZ Institute of Management provides short programmes for secretaries.
- A number of community organisations provide business courses - check your Citizens Advice Bureau or Library noticeboards.

## National Qualifications Framework

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Following completion of this course, some participants may wish to seek credit for relevant unit standards registered on the National Qualifications Framework.

This Role of the Secretary *Running Sport 2* contains, wholly or in part, similar content to the competencies specified in the following unit standards:

Unit Number	Unit Title
3494	Write records (minutes) of formal meetings
4880	Explain the roles and structure of recreation or sports clubs and societies

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Those wishing to pursue this option should firstly seek up to date information, as new unit standards continue to be added to the Framework and registered unit standards are subject to regular revision.

*Further information can be obtained from:*

- the **Sport, Fitness & Recreation Industry Training Organisation (SFRITO)**  
P O Box 2183  
WELLINGTON  
Telephone 04-3859047
- your local **Regional Sports Trust**
- your local **training providers**  
(eg, polytechnic, schools or private training establishments)

These organisations can advise on next steps and, if appropriate, put the participant in touch with a registered assessor in their area.



## ***The Club Secretary***

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Sport is an integral part of the Kiwi lifestyle. It enriches our lives, enhances our health and brings people and communities together. Sport fosters the development of excellence, team spirit, competition and pride. It unites people of all ages and walks of life.

Sport and leisure is a huge growth industry in New Zealand. Spin-offs include substantial benefits to the economy - millions of dollars in the case of big events. As a nation, we're mad about sport and justifiably proud of our successes.

Sport is now big business and clubs are needing to keep ahead of the latest principles and practices in marketing and development in order to survive and prosper. To do this, many clubs today are adopting a strategic approach to club administration and are becoming more business-like in the way they manage their programmes and events. As a result sports bodies and other non-profit organisations throughout New Zealand are achieving some spectacular results.

By becoming more entrepreneurial, clubs and non-profit organisations are gaining an enhanced public profile, growing their membership and attracting strong commercial partnerships, such as through sponsorships.

Sport in New Zealand is still dependent, to a large degree, on the huge number of dedicated volunteers who give so freely of their time and energies. Therefore, the Hillary Commission has developed a series of information packages with volunteers like you in mind.

*The topics in this series include:*

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

The Club Secretary

Managing Meetings

Marketing and Public Relations

Funding and Sponsorship

Club Planning

Managing Money

Event Management

The Sports Team Manager

*Some of these resources may be new to you, while others may simply summarise areas you already know a lot about. It's up to you to choose the topics that are of greatest interest and relevance to the volunteer work you do in sport.*



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