Meeting priorities

What is the purpose of the meeting? Always try to have a clear purpose. Decide the issues for inclusion in the meeting and their relative priority: importance and urgency - they are quite different and need treating in different ways. Important matters do not necessarily need to be resolved quickly. Urgent matters generally do not warrant a lot of discussion. Matters that are both urgent and important are clearly serious priorities that need careful planning and management.

You can avoid the pressure for 'Any Other Business' at the end of the meeting if you circulate a draft agenda in advance of the meeting, and ask for any other items for consideration. ('Any Other Business' often creates a free-for-all session that wastes time, and gives rise to new tricky expectations, which if not managed properly then closes the meeting on a negative note.)

Meeting outcomes

Decide the type of outcome (i.e., what is the purpose) for each issue, and put this on the agenda alongside the item heading. This lets people know what is expected of them, and each item will be more productive with a clear aim at the outset. Typical types of outcomes are:

- Decision
- Discussion
- Information
- Planning (eg workshop session)
- Generating ideas
- Getting feedback
- Finding solutions
- Agreeing (targets, budgets, aims, etc)
- Policy statement
- Team-building/motivation
- Guest speaker - information, initiatives, etc.

Example

(Meeting Title) Parent Council Meeting
(Venue, Time, Date) Staff room, Anywhere High School – 7pm Monday 09/05/08
Agenda

19:00	Warm up and introductions	Welcome new starters Sue Smith and Ken Brown. Guest is Jane Green, School Business Manager	15
19:15	Child Protection Act (Information update)	Procedures for Disclosure regarding Parent Council members (see paper from last meeting)	15