

MEDIA RELEASE

GUIDE TO CHARITIES ON THE CONDUCT OF GENERAL MEETINGS

2 May 2020, Singapore – The Commissioner of Charities (COC) and its shared services partner, the Chartered Secretaries Institute of Singapore (CSIS), have developed a Guide (refer to **Annex 1**) and webinar for charities on the conduct of meetings amid COVID-19.

2 In April 2020, the Minister for Law issued various Orders (refer to **Annex 2**) to enable charities to conduct general meetings through alternative arrangements, while complying with prevailing safe distancing measures. These arrangements apply to the period between 27 March 2020 and 30 September 2020.

Guide on Conduct of Meetings amid COVID-19

3 Charities can now refer to a new Guide, titled “Conduct of Meetings by Charities amid COVID-19”, on the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg). The Guide provides more information about how the Orders apply to charities, shares best practices on conducting virtual meetings, and the relevant resources that can support charities on this front. This includes:

- (a) good practices and procedures to take note of when organising virtual meetings;
- (b) considerations for selecting an appropriate platform for such meetings;
- (c) information to be provided to members at general meetings;
- (d) grants that charities can tap on;
- (e) templates that charities may adapt for their use.

Webinar on “How to Conduct Virtual Annual General Meetings (AGM)”

4 In addition, the COC and its partners will conduct a series of webinars, one of which is to share key points in the Guide and discuss how to apply them. The free webinar pertaining to the Guide will be held on 15 May 2020, 10.30am. The webinar is co-organised by COC and the CSIS. To join the webinar, charities can register at <https://www.123formbuilder.com/form-5397178/>. Should charities wish to find out more about the Guide, charities may also contact the CSIS at charities@csis.org.sg to arrange for a free consultation session.

5 Commissioner of Charities, Dr Ang Hak Seng said, “The operations of many charities have been severely affected by COVID-19. In response, we are taking a many helping hands approach involving our shared services and partners, to provide more resources to support our charities and help them tide over this challenging period. We stand with our charities as one, and will emerge stronger together.”

Other Measures to Support Charities

6 Earlier, the COC announced an extension of the deadline for charities to file their annual submissions. In light of the evolving COVID-19 situation, the COC has granted a further extension for all charities whose annual submissions are originally due between 31 March 2020 and 30 September 2020. For these charities, the annual submissions must now be filed via the Charity Portal by 31 October 2020.

7 Charities may tap on the existing VWOs-Charities Capability Fund (VCF) grant for Info-Communications Technology to support the implementation of the alternative arrangements. The VCF’s scope has been expanded to include funding for online training courses, audio and video-conferencing tools. The COC has also developed infographics on a range of topics for the sector, including funding assistance and tips on working remotely. More information on these support measures can be found on the Charity Portal (www.charities.gov.sg).

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Annex 1: Guide on Conduct of Meetings by Charities amid COVID-19

[Refer to the Attached PDF]

Annex 2:

Charities may refer to the appended list, for the appropriate Order depending on their legal structure.

S/N	Legal Structure of Charity	Name of Order
1	Registered charities established as Companies Limited by Guarantee	(Issued on 13 April 2020) COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Companies, Variable Capital Companies, Business Trusts, Unit Trusts and Debenture Holders) Order 2020
2	Registered charities established as Societies	(Issued on 27 April 2020) COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Registered Societies) Order 2020
3	(a) Registered charities that are set up by way of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charitable trusts • Unincorporated associations (such as charitable funds of co-operatives) • Private Acts (b) All exempt charities except those which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory boards covered under the Public Sector (Governance) Act 2018 • Government-aided and independent schools 	(Issued on 27 April 2020) COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Charities, Co-operative Societies and Mutual Benefit Organisations) Order 2020
4	Exempt charities which are government-aided or independent schools	(Issued on 27 April 2020) COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Alternative Arrangements for Meetings for Schools) Order 2020