

## 6.5 Writing Reports and minutes

## Discussion

- 1 Why should companies invest time and money in community projects?

## Brainstorming

- 2 How many different alternatives can you think of for the words in the box?

but and so say tell think

## Skim reading

- 3 Mirratec Industries, a subsidiary of a multinational manufacturer of compressors for refrigerators and air-conditioning units, has a plant in the small Polish town of Bychawa. Read the report which Mirratec sent to Head Office, and the minutes of a management committee meeting at Head Office, and answer the questions.

- 1 What are the arguments for and against involvement in the community centre project?
- 2 What did a) Head Office and b) Mirratec decide?

## Bychawa Community Centre project

**EARLIER** this year Mirratec was asked to invest in a project to build a Community Centre in Bychawa. As a rule, group policy is to give encouragement but only limited financial support to such community projects. However, a meeting was held by managers and staff at the plant and in this case it was thought that the benefits to the company's image justified more active and extensive support, in particular after the recent difficult negotiations with the local authorities over the access road to the new workshop. Moreover, it was felt that employee involvement in the project would bring substantial benefits in terms of motivation and job satisfaction. Consequently, it is recommended that the company should contribute 50% of the funding; in addition, selected employees should be assigned to manage key areas of the project

during work time, such as design, fund-raising and construction.

Naturally, the project will require a high level of commitment from our staff in order to complete all stages on time. The community centre will be officially opened in September, and it is hoped that department managers will be able to reduce staff workloads for the duration of the project.

In conclusion, it is believed that the community and the company will derive numerous benefits from the project and that overall, the company's image within the community will be greatly improved. It is expected that an ongoing close relationship with the community will have a positive effect on two strategic areas of our development, namely expansion of our manufacturing facilities and recruitment of our workforce locally.

*Minutes of the Management Committee meeting, 15 April*

Attendees: Jan Navratil, MD; Ines Caba, Production; Christopher Taberley, Finance

1. Bychawa Community Centre. JN reported that the plan had been favourably received at Head Office. Even so, there were concerns about the size of the investment and the project's impact on productivity. But he stressed that group management were aware of the need for good relations with local communities, and would support Mirratec's decision. Consequently, JN felt that they should go ahead.

IC agreed that it was important to improve public relations, but emphasized the risks involved for production, for example, absenteeism and quality issues. She claimed that the project could become an excuse to take time off work, especially during the construction phase in the summer.

CT reminded the meeting that only a small number of employees would be concerned. Obviously department managers would have to organize cover for any absences. In other words, production should not be affected. Furthermore, managers of other departments were very happy with the project on the whole. In brief, he suggested that the benefits in developing team spirit were clearly far greater than any potential risk to productivity.

Finally, it was agreed that the project should be approved.



**Internet research**

Search for the keywords *email ethics* and make notes about ethical practice in electronic communication. Write a short report on your findings, using some of the linking words you studied in this module.

**Scan reading**

4 Read the report and the minutes again. Underline the linking words and complete the table.

Function	Linking words
Addition	besides, mo_____, in ad_____, fur_____
Conclusion	lastly, in c_____, f_____
Consequence	so, therefore, c_____
Contrast	but, h_____, e_____ s_____
Equivalence	that is to say, n_____, in o_____ w_____
Example	for instance, s_____ as, f_____ e_____
Generalization	in most cases, as a _____, on the w_____
Highlighting	mainly, chiefly, in p_____, es_____
Stating the obvious	of course, n_____, ob_____, cl_____
Summary	to sum up, o_____, in b_____

**Writing**

5 Replace the inappropriate linking words in **bold** with a better choice from 4.

Josiah Wedgwood was a pioneer in social responsibility, building a village for his workforce in 1769. **For instance**, his products combined technology with classical culture. More than a century later, George Cadbury developed social housing for his chocolate factory workers. **As a rule**, Cadbury's became one of Britain's most respected companies. Both men were pioneers of corporate social responsibility. **Overall**, they were also accused of paternalism.

Today, sustainable development policies aim to manage the effects of business on employees, the community, and, **on the whole**, on the environment. Multinationals like Shell are focusing on the idea of being good neighbours, **naturally**, by consulting local stakeholders before beginning new projects which may affect them.

**Reading for detail**

6 Read the quote below and identify five more impersonal structures used in the report in 3 to express the views of Mirratec's management.


'... **it was thought that** the benefits to the company's image justified more active and extensive support ...'

7 Choose an appropriate reporting verb from the box and report Christopher Taberley's statements below, as in the example. The verbs in the box were all in the minutes in 3.

report agree suggest stress claim

- Yes, I have to say that you are quite right that productivity is a concern.  
*Christopher agreed that productivity was a concern.*
- On the other hand, you mustn't forget that only a small number of staff will be directly involved.
- As a matter of fact, most department managers don't expect any problems.
- I've heard there's a similar project in Greece where they've actually improved productivity.
- I'm pretty sure team spirit will be much better when the community centre has been built.

**Listening and writing**

8  2.60 Listen to a discussion of the second point on the agenda of the meeting in 3. Take notes. Then, with a partner, write a short summary of the discussion and decisions.

