

The Rough Guide to Motions and Musings

For all your Althing agenda needs...



0 This Guide in a Nutshell

- There are two main types of agenda items discussed at Althing, Motions and Musings.
- These are different in:
 - The kinds of issues they can deal with
 - The way we need to prepare them
 - The way we discuss them
 - What we do after Althing is over
- Use this Guide to:
 - Learn more about Motions and Musings work in practice.
 - Work out how best to turn your idea into an Althing agenda item.

1 Motions

1.1 About Motions

Motions are a kind of formal way of bringing a proposal to the Movement. If we pass a Motion, it will lead to DFs **taking a specific action**, or changing the way we do things, which often involves updating our written documents, either policy or the Constitution. Motions can be used both to fix an issue that has arisen (eg. by reforming the way we run events or committee) and to direct the Movement towards something new (eg. creating a new role, starting a new project etc.). In either case, a Motion is a way for any member of the Movement to improve

1.2 Writing Motions

Motions are written in two sections: **Content** and **Rationale**

The **Content** sets out what you propose for the Movement to change. Sometimes if you want to change a written policy (and definitely if you want to change the Constitution) it is helpful to include the new text you suggest changing to. Even if this is just a first draft, it gives Althing something to work on and know exactly what it's working with.

The **Rationale** explains the content of the motion that you are putting forward - the issue you are trying to solve, and the reasons that you think your proposal will work for the Movement.

1.2 Discussing Motions

Motion discussion is slightly more formal than discussion of Musings, but it is still guided by **cooperative discussion** principles. This means we are always working together to find a solution that works best for the Movement, and hopefully we can find **consensus in the room**. This is **not always possible**, so it is important to have the ability to be decisive and so we **vote to approve motions**.

A Motion comes to Althing as a specific proposal, but we often discover during the course of discussion that we can improve the proposal. We incorporate these improvements into the motion through **Amendments**, which are changes to the text of the motion submitted by the original proposer. We vote to adopt each Amendment separately and in the final vote to pass the motion, we are voting on the text that has been edited by the successful Amendments.

1.3 When a Motion is Best

- You want to deal with pre-existing issue in DFs that needs fixing
- You have an idea for a solution but you can't act alone and you are open to try and come up with an optimised version cooperatively.
- You want to update the Constitution or one of the DF policies
- You want to consult the whole movement on a new initiative or action you are considering within your role on Committee.
- You want the Movement to make a united statement on an issue and adjust the way it operates accordingly.

2 Musings

2.1 About Musings

Musings are more open-ended topics of discussion. They aim to **get the Movement talking** about an issue, work through the topic collaboratively and generate some pointers for future action. The points raised in a musing usually go on to be tackled by the incoming DF Committee elected at that Althing, or by a dedicated Moot¹. The outcome of a Musing might even be the writing of a Motion.

¹ A Moot is a small committee for a specific purpose, which may be open to all members of the Movement, there's a whole Rough Guide about them!

2.2 Writing Musings

In order to submit a Musing for the agenda you **only need a discussion title**. It can also be helpful to give a short intro text to set the scene on what you want Althing to discuss and perhaps provide some starting suggestions or even better questions to guide the start of discussion.

2.3 Discussing Musings

Unlike Motions, which aim to consult as much of the Movement as possible to put us on a set course of action, Musings focus on **constructive discussion in the room on the day**. To achieve this, discussion of Musings prioritises co-operative practices like **consensus** and often occurs in small groups.

To achieve this, we often split into smaller groups to discuss, according to the principles of Open Space discussion (See Appendix A of the [DF Democratic Procedures](#)). Open Space means that a Musing may have a lot of participants, or fewer.

2.4 When a Musing is Best

- When you're not sure where to start with a motion, a Musing is a perfect way to still contribute to the agenda and create change. **Go for it!**
- When you have identified an issue but you haven't settled on a proposed solution.
- When the discussion you want to have is important, but not everyone at Althing would want to/be able to engage with it.
- When the issue looks like it's going to be difficult to tackle and a dedicated working group and determined consensus building would be helpful.
- When you know that there are some people at Althing that have specific knowledge or roles in the Movement that are relevant to this issue.

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