



By Curtis Mitchell

# I work in Pensions

## ...but I still get to play with technology

I do find it incredible that, in this technological age, so many non-pensions people think our industry still involves lots of paper. Why on earth is that?

Pulling together meeting packs is a big part of my day job. It is true that some of the pension trustees for schemes I look after still like a paper pack, but they are a rare breed, and may be moving rapidly towards extinction. GDPR is looming and it makes you question whether we will be allowed to post hard copy packs anymore. The world is moving on very quickly. We are all becoming busier and carrying a variety of devices to help us be efficient while on the move or out of the office (or to pay for the parking and a coffee at the station on the way in). Carrying a paper trustee meeting pack doesn't really sit with today's world. Lugging them to and from meetings (and into and out of shops in between) can't be appealing to anyone! Finding a place to keep them safe or

ensuring they are securely destroyed is yet another drag.

**That's why technology is my friend.**

Perhaps some context would be helpful to explain why this is a subject I feel so strongly about. I have worked in pensions for seven years and one of my first roles was setting up and running an online meeting pack portal for one of our largest clients. Over the next few years the trustee meetings I attended became more focused towards technology. More clients have invested in online meeting pack sites and I now regularly use five different ones.





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Printing, collating and posting is a thing of the past. With an online meeting pack you simply load the papers in and, once you're happy, make the meeting pack live to all attendees. Huge time savings and no clock-watching needed to make sure those hard copy packs are finished before the postman turns up.

Late papers? Modification to papers? These are a pain in the hard copy world but are no problem with an online meeting pack. You simply change what's shown online and it's updated for everyone.

Online meeting packs can often be viewed on a tablet, computer or phone so no matter where you are you can check up on those packs and prepare for a meeting. Most online meeting pack sites have high security levels that would be more than adequate to comply with

GDPR requirements. They are significantly more secure than paper. Where did that missing hard copy pack end up anyway...?

I keep saying 'online meeting pack', but it isn't just about that. The functionality available with this technology takes us far from just a meeting pack. They help make meetings more productive. Trustees have their annotations to hand and, with some solutions, conversations on the system can resolve non-strategic matters outside and ahead of the meeting.

Searching is simple. How many times have you sat in a meeting when someone says, "I'm sure we discussed

that last year." Technology enables you to simply go back through the previous meeting agendas and find the right item. Most solutions come with a document storage facility as

well, so the key documents like the Trust Deed and rules and valuation reports can be saved and easily referenced at meetings. It makes my life as a pension trustee secretary so much easier. It also means trustees

can deal with the business at hand more quickly and effectively.

Redactions or hiding papers from certain or conflicted individuals are all possible, and very quick to do. Some systems come with a voting section so trustee discretions

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can be actioned in complete safety without the risk of confidential and personal data being released onto a public device, or enable me to record, monitor and track minutes and actions all within the same place.

I could go on, but I think you get the idea.

As a scheme secretary, technology really is useful and definitely makes me, and the trustees I work with, more productive. As technology becomes more cost effective, I genuinely believe more and more trustee boards should embrace this approach. I've seen the focus and efficiency at meetings improve significantly. Personally, I think it makes my job more enjoyable too. I know I wouldn't like my work quite as much as I do if, like those non-pension people think, it did revolve around paper.