

Rules of Wolverhampton Speakers Club

Note: These rules are non-gender specific so we have used the terms 'they' and 'their' to refer to any gender.

1. ORGANISATION

Wolverhampton Speakers Club (WSC) is a mixed-gender self-governing independent public speaking club.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Membership

2.1a. Eligibility

Membership of the Club shall be open to anyone of appropriate age who has completed the application as required by the Club's Executive Committee and has paid the required membership fee.

2.1b. Classifications

Membership of the Club shall be divided into classifications as follows:

Full Member

A Full Member is an active member who is aged sixteen or over and pays the club subscription as determined from time-to-time by the Club Executive Committee and approved at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting.

Inactive Member

An Inactive Member is a member who has opted, for whatever reason, to put their membership in abeyance for a period of not more than one calendar year with the intention of becoming active after the period of inactivity. A member wishing to become inactive should notify their intention to the Club Secretary stating the date from which they wish to become inactive.

Honorary Life Member

A member may become an Honorary Life Member on the recommendation of the Club Executive Committee and a majority vote by all active members of the Club.

2.2 Membership limits

The club's viability shall be reviewed by the Club Executive Committee if the membership falls below six members.

3. CLUB OFFICERS

3.1 Composition of the Club Executive Committee

The Officers of the Club shall be:

- a. The President
- b. The Vice President
- c. The Secretary
- d. The Treasurer
- e. The Education Director

f. The Membership Officer

All Officers, together with the Past President, constitute the Executive Committee of the Club. Officers shall be elected as provided for in these Club Rules.

The Club Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt club members following the approval of a duly seconded motion at a Committee Meeting by a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote. Co-opted members shall have the right to vote at Club Executive Committee meetings.

3.2 Terms of Office

All Officers shall serve a term of one year commencing on the first day of September.

The President and Vice-President, on completion of their first term in office, are eligible for re-election for a further term not exceeding one year. The Vice President shall normally be nominated for election as President for the following year unless the incumbent declines to be nominated.

Other Officers are eligible for re-election annually with the proviso that none shall serve in any one office for more than five consecutive years.

In exceptional circumstances this rule may be waived by the Executive Committee on motion requiring a simple majority of those present and voting.

3.3 Casual Vacancies

The Club Executive Committee has the power to appoint a member during the year to fill a casual vacancy in any office. Such appointments are valid only until the subsequent election of Officers and their assumption of office on 1 September. A member who is appointed to fill a casual vacancy is not regarded as completing a term of office i.e. they are eligible for election/appointment under the terms of Rule 3.2.

3.4 Removal from Office

Any Officer may be removed from office for cause shown by the Club Executive Committee, subject to approval by the members. A Motion shall be intimated in the Notice convening the Meeting, Annual or Special, at which removal is to be proposed. Removal requires a two-thirds majority in favour.

3.5 Elections

The Election of Officers shall take place at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

3.6 Nominations

Nominations for office in the following year shall be made by the existing Club Executive Committee after ensuring that each nominee has given approval for nomination. The President shall notify the Club of the nominations at the Meeting immediately preceding the AGM. Alternative nominations, with the permission of the nominee, may be notified by any two members at the Meeting preceding the AGM.

3.7 Voting

The election of Officers is by a simple majority of the members, present and voting, at the AGM. Elections shall be by a show of hands unless a secret ballot is requested by no fewer than three members.

4 DUTIES OF CLUB OFFICERS

4.1 The President

The President shall:

- a. Preside at all Meetings of the Club and of the Club Executive Committee.
- b. Have general supervision of the Club and, ex officio, shall be a member of any Sub-Committee.
- c. Ensure that the administration and practices of the Club are properly carried out by the respective Officers.

4.2 The Vice President

The Vice President shall:

- a. Deputise as President whenever the President is absent and shall chair any sub-committee to which is devolved responsibility for Recruitment and Retention.

4.3 Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- a. Be the custodian of the Club Constitution and Rules and be familiar with their provisions, advising the Club and the Executive Committee appropriately.
- b. Call meetings of the Executive Committee and Special and Annual General meetings of the Club as directed by The President or the Executive Committee and produce and circulate the agendas for these meetings.
- c. Record the Minutes of Club business meetings and Club Executive Committee meetings and distribute these as appropriate. The Secretary shall be the custodian of the Minutes.
- d. Act as the Club correspondent.
- e. In liaison with the Treasurer and Membership Officer maintain an up-to-date list of active and lapsed members and regularly produce contact details of members and officers, ensuring that the Education Director is fully up-to-date with membership.

4.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- a. Receive and disburse the Club funds.
- b. Keep accurate records and give interim reports to the Club Executive Committee and to the Club when requested.
- c. Make regular payments to the proprietors of the Club venue to cover room hire and any other facilities used.
- d. Unless otherwise directed by the Executive Committee, the Treasurer will negotiate room hire fees with the proprietors of the Club venue annually for the coming season and make bookings.
- e. Produce an annual financial statement, subject to audit, and present it for approval at the AGM. An auditor, who need not be a member, shall be appointed annually at the AGM unless this requirement is waived by the Executive Committee.

4.5 Education Director

The Education Director shall:

- a. Normally possess the WSC Certificate of Competence or at least the Basic Certificate of Competence.
- b. Have a comprehensive understanding of the contents of the club 'Guide to Public Speaking' and their application.
- c. Seek to maintain the speaking standards of the Club.

- d. Produce programmes for each meeting of the club and an overall programme for each speaking season. In this respect the Education Director shall present a schedule of dates for the coming year, in advance, to the Club Executive Committee for ratification at the AGM.
- e. Hand over each meeting programme to the Chair for that meeting in sufficient time for the arrangements to be made and the speakers notified. As a general rule the Chair takes over responsibility for the meeting at that point unless assistance is requested from the Education Director.
- f. Arrange training assignments for members and maintain a record thereof.
- g. Arrange the Club Speaking Contests.
- h. Arrange short educational sessions for members so as to address their needs at any time in their speaking career.
- i. Advise members about all aspects of public speaking.
- j. Introduce variety into the programme to increase the enjoyment of members and to encourage guests to become members.

4.7 The Membership Officer

The Membership Officer and Team will greet and brief guests and will support new members. They will work to retain existing members and attempt to re-connect with lapsed members.

4.8 The Past President

The Past President shall:

- a. Maintain the traditions, standards and practices of the Club, advising the Executive Committee as appropriate.
- b. Stand-in for the President and/or the Vice President as appropriate.
- c. Carry out additional duties as requested by the Executive Committee.

4.9 Other Officers

The Club may elect/appoint other Officers from time to time and their duties shall be as determined by the Club Executive Committee or the Club Members.

4.10 Reports

Each Officer shall produce a written report to be presented at the Annual General Meeting. The report should be circulated to members in advance of the AGM but may be read aloud in exceptional circumstances. A written copy shall be deposited with the Secretary.

5. MEETINGS

5.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Club shall be held fortnightly or at such other intervals as the Club may agree from time to time.

5.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM may be held on the date of a regular meeting or on a different date proposed by the Club Executive Committee. In both cases all members are to be notified no less than 28 days before the date of the meeting. The Agenda shall include reports by the Club Officers, the election/appointment of Officers for the following year, approval of the audited accounts and the appointment of an auditor for the next speaking year.

5.3 Other Meetings

Special Meetings of the Club may be called by the President or by a majority of the Club

Executive Committee for the sole purpose of transacting special or urgent business.

Notice of a Special Meeting shall be sent to all Club members no less than 7 clear days prior to the proposed date. The Agenda, setting forth the business to be discussed, shall be included in the Notice.

5.4 Voting Rights

All Full and Honorary Life members are entitled to vote.

5.5 Quorum

One third of Club members, attending in person, shall constitute a quorum for a Special or Annual General Meeting. The quorum for an Executive Committee meeting shall be one half of the membership of that Committee, attending in person.

If a Meeting is not quorate any proposal approved may be ratified at the subsequent Meeting, provided that the requirements for a quorum are met.

5.6 Voting

At all meetings of the Club, Regular, Annual or Special, and the Club Executive Committee, resolutions shall be carried if a majority of those present, entitled to vote and voting, is in favour. Abstentions shall be disregarded for the purpose of determining a majority. The number of abstentions need not be recorded but a member may request that their abstention be recorded by name. Proxy votes and postal votes shall not be permitted. Resolutions shall be carried by a simple majority except where an Article or Rule requires a two-thirds majority.

6. CLUB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

6.1 How Constituted

The Club Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Club as per Rule 3.1 above. The President is Chair of the Club Executive Committee but in their absence a Committee Meeting is chaired by the Vice-President, the Past President, or another member of the Club Executive Committee by agreement.

6.2 Duties

The Club Executive Committee is responsible to the Club. It controls all the business affairs of the Club and all matters concerning the wellbeing of the Club. It may present recommendations to the members for a decision and propose Motions to the AGM or Special General Meeting. There shall be no fewer than three meetings of the Club Executive Committee annually, the first meeting being immediately before the start of the annual speaking season.

6.3 Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Club Executive Committee include:

- a. Promoting the welfare and better operation of the club.
- b. Promoting activities to widen understanding of the club.
- c. Approving the allocation of the Club budget.

7. SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-Committees may be appointed from time to time for specific purposes by the Executive Committee or at a Special or Annual General Meeting of the Club.

8. FINANCE

8.1 Club Subscription

At the AGM the members shall agree the annual subscription for the following Club year. Membership subscription is per calendar year and falls due for renewal after twelve calendar months. A member who has not paid the annual subscription in due time shall have their membership suspended automatically for the remainder of the season.

Cases of financial hardship should be notified to any member of the Club Executive Committee who will refer to the Treasurer who will bring the case up at the next meeting of the Club Executive Committee or, in urgent situations, will refer to the President who is authorized to make a decision.

Changes to the club subscription shall be set before an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting called for the purpose. Notice of the proposed change, including the sum proposed, shall be given at least 14 days before the meeting.

8.2 Honorary Life Members

Honorary Life Members shall be exempt from the Club subscription but may make a voluntary contribution if they so desire.

9. STANDING ORDERS

The general procedure at Special and Annual General Meetings shall be in accordance with the Standing Orders of Wolverhampton Speakers Club.

10. EXPULSION OF A MEMBER

Upon good cause being shown, a motion for the expulsion of a Club member may be proposed at any meeting of the Club, provided that notice of fourteen days has been given to all members. The motion shall be carried by a majority of two thirds of those present, entitled to vote and voting. Before any such vote is taken, the member concerned shall have had the opportunity to address the membership and to invite other Club members to speak in their support. Any appeal against such a resolution shall be subject to the procedures for the resolution of disputes and complaints in force for the time being within the Club.

11. AMENDMENTS

These Rules may be amended by the Executive Committee of the Club and approved by the club members at an Ordinary Meeting, Special Meeting or Annual General Meeting of the club provided that such amendments are in accordance with the Constitution of Wolverhampton Speakers Club.

12. DISSOLUTION

Wolverhampton Speakers Club shall only be dissolved by the passing of a motion, requiring a majority of two-thirds of those present and voting, at a meeting called expressly for that purpose, 14 days' notice of the motion for dissolution having been given to all members. The Motion shall include directions for the disposal of the net assets of the Club under the supervision of three members so appointed.