

A Simple Guide to  
**COMMITTEE  
PROCEDURE**

and the Work of the Officers  
of a Society or Club

BY

**ELEANOR O. LAMBOURN**

*Organising Secretary of The Yorkshire Ladies' Council of  
Education (Inc.) and Principal of its Secretarial  
Training School, Leeds.*

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ONLY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY  
LADY DOROTHY WOOD

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TO

MRS. E. KITSON CLARK,

whose ever-ready help in all my work I gratefully  
acknowledge.



**T**HIS little volume is not only a full, clear and concise manual of instruction for all those qualifying as officers for Committee work, but will also be helpful in the highest degree to every woman who is doing public work at the present time.

It will be a valuable guide to the beginner in the Committee field, who finds herself hampered by the lack of familiarity with routine procedure. As is the case with all things we imperfectly understand, she may be apt to exaggerate the mystery, and the writer of this volume offers her a compendious guide through the many pitfalls. It will fill a real need that has long been felt by many persons, and will be warmly welcomed by the novice, and also by the more experienced, who will find it a most valuable book of reference.

DOROTHY WOOD.



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# Committee Procedure

## CHAPTER I.

### FORMATION OF A SOCIETY.

**M**OST objects are better secured by united action. However earnest and enterprising the individuals may be, an amorphous group of people will effect very little without a leader and a certain amount of organisation.

A group of people desiring the same object will, therefore, elect a leader, and in order not to leave too much responsibility or power in the hands of one person, they will also appoint certain of their number to act as advisers and helpers. Both leader and advisers will have definite duties and powers and a limited tenure of office, and will be made responsible for their actions to the group as a whole.

This method of working is essentially English in its origin. The same idea is at the root of the government of our country by Parliament, the government of a city by its City Council and the organisation of hundreds of groups of English people in the form of Societies, Clubs, Associations, Limited Companies, etc.

A "Society" is a body of people united and organised to further some definite object. The individuals making up the Society are known as its Members, and its Policy and aims and actions



will be determined by its Members, all decisions being arrived at by voting.

The Society will elect two or three Leaders, or Officers as they are called, and also certain of their number to act as a Governing Body (generally the Executive Committee, see page 15, item 6.).

**In all Committee work it is most important to remember that the power and authority of any Officer and of the Executive Committee is given by the Members, and given for a limited time only, and that it can be taken away by the Members.**

The duty of the Officers is to make the desires of the Society effective. They can act only in accordance with the general Policy decided upon by the Society and under the direction of the Executive Committee.

The duty of the Executive Committee is to carry out the wishes of the Society as expressed in its Rules and Constitution and as expressed by the Members voting in General Meeting.

The Executive Committee may appoint Sub-Committees to carry out any particular piece of work for which the Executive is responsible, but the responsibility of the work remains with the Executive Committee, and the latter will, therefore, clearly define the duties which it gives to the Sub-Committee. It will require the Sub-Committee to report to it on the completion of the work, or at the end of the year if it has not ceased to exist before then.

It is important to remember that if an Executive Committee is elected for one year, as is usually

the case, any Sub-Committees it may appoint also cease to exist on the expiration of the year, and that even if the retiring members of the Executive Committee should be re-elected with little or no change, they are technically a new Executive Committee and must re-appoint all their Sub-Committees.

A Sub-Committee appointed for a limited time to carry out a piece of work, such as organising a Meeting, is sometimes called an *Ad Hoc* Committee.

A Sub-Committee appointed to attend to a particular section of the Society's work, which continues year after year, e.g., a Finance Committee to deal with Finance, is called a Standing Committee. But although the necessity for such Committee is continuous, the Standing Committee is doing work for which the Executive is in the end responsible and it must be re-appointed by each new Executive Committee, and submit a report of its work to the Executive Committee, as is the case with any other Sub-Committee.

The usual procedure in forming a new Society is as follows :—

1. An individual or a group of people wish to further some definite object or start some particular piece of work.
2. They approach others likely to be interested.
3. They draw up a skeleton Constitution in the simplest form and call a Meeting, either of the general public, or of a number of people connected with the matter in hand.



The Meeting should be well advertised to give an opportunity for people of all opinions to attend. At this first Meeting it is important to see that some person of weight and experience is present who can take the Chair. The Chairman must be elected by the Meeting. One or more Speakers with a good knowledge of the matter in hand, and who are likely to inspire confidence, should be asked to explain clearly to the Meeting the need for the suggested Society.

After due discussion some such Resolutions as the following would be proposed and seconded :—

“ That a Society be formed with the following objects . . . . . ”

“ That the Society be called . . . . . ”

If carried, the draft Constitution should be read and any suggestions received, and a Resolution would follow appointing a Provisional Committee to draw up full Rules and Constitution to submit to the next Meeting to be called as decided by the Committee.

Lastly it would be necessary to pass a Resolution appointing a temporary Secretary to call the Committee together. It would be advisable for the Secretary to take as many names and addresses as possible of people willing to become members, and if a subscription should have been fixed, to take the subscription also.

At the second General Meeting the Rules and Constitution should be submitted and passed one by one, as submitted or with any alteration agreed upon.

It is difficult and often impossible to decide at the moment on the best wording for anything so important as the Rules and Constitution, so if an alteration is voted upon it is best to leave the exact wording to the Committee, instructing them to submit the final form to the next General Meeting.

At this second Meeting it will be necessary to elect the Officers and Executive Committee, according to the Constitution.



## CHAPTER II.

THE CONSTITUTION OF A  
SOCIETY.

**T**HIS is a statement of its Objects and the Rules by which it is governed. When these have been passed at a General Meeting of the Society, they cannot be altered except at another General Meeting called for the purpose, and the Officers and Executive Committee must follow and act according to the Constitution. It is, therefore, essential that the Constitution should be clearly expressed and should not admit of two interpretations, and that the Objects should be as wide as possible and the Rules as few as are consistent with proper government. *No one who is not thoroughly conversant with Committee work should draw up the Constitution.*

The Constitution will state :—

1. The exact name of the Society (and if possible its address).
2. The Objects of the Society.
3. Who are eligible for membership ; how members shall be elected and the amount of subscription (if any).
4. How often General Meetings shall be held, how such Meetings shall be called and conducted (length of notice required to be

given, proportion of votes necessary to pass resolutions, etc.) and the number that shall form a Quorum.

5. What Officers the Society shall appoint, how and when elected, length of office, and whether eligible for re-election.

Whether they are " ex-officio " members of every sub-committee.

6. What shall be the governing body of the Society.

This is generally the *Executive Committee* which is the " working committee " and therefore should not be too large.

It is sometimes advisable to have as the governing body a larger body whose function shall be to direct the general lines of the work and to discuss the relations of the Society with other bodies. This is called a "*General Committee or Council.*" (e.g. : The Council of The National Council of Women.) The Executive Committee is then responsible to this Council.

7. The size of the Executive Committee, how and when elected, length of office of members, whether retiring members are eligible for re-election and whether it has power to co-opt and to appoint sub-committees.
8. When the Executive Committee shall meet (length of notice, etc.), its powers and duties, the number that shall form a Quorum.



9. What arrangements are to be made for the audit of accounts.
10. How the Constitution can be altered.
11. Whether the Society can be affiliated to any other Society.

A copy of the Rules and Constitution should be sent to each new member of the Society.

## CHAPTER III.

## OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES.

**H**ONORARY or unpaid Officers are generally elected by the Society in General Meeting. The post of President is always an Honorary one.

Paid Officers are generally appointed by the Executive Committee. It is their duty to relieve the Honorary Officers of as much work as possible. They have no vote.

The Officers of a Society are :—

President	} with definite duties.
Treasurer	
Secretary	

Vice-Presidents : with no definite duty, except to take the place of an absent President at a Meeting. They often subscribe largely to the Society.

To the public a Society is represented by its Officers who, therefore, cannot speak or act or write publicly against the declared policy of the Society, as an ordinary member might do. If an Officer disagrees with the *general* policy of her Society she must either be silent or resign.

The Constitution generally states that the Officers are Ex-Officio (by reason of their office)



members of every Committee. The Officers of a Society are its leaders and, at the same time, its servants.

**PRESIDENT.**

The President is the chief Officer and her duties require great skill and tact. Her principal duty is to guide the Society and she requires wide general knowledge of people and affairs, and other similar Organisations.

She must be prepared to take the Chair at every Meeting, to do which, tact, good temper and courtesy are needed as well as rapid and correct judgment, for part of her duty is to enforce rules on a Committee or on Speakers at public meetings. At a Public Meeting the Chairman generally makes a short speech before introducing the Speakers; she must deal with any interruption, and when speeches are limited as to time she must see that the limit is not exceeded.

Any Resolution or Amendment must be put clearly to the Meeting by the Chairman, who asks those in favour to hold up their hands. She then counts the votes and asks those who are against the Resolution to vote. After counting these votes the Chairman announces the result. If there is any uncertainty the vote must be taken again, and if the Meeting is a large one the Chairman should appoint Tellers to count the votes. Personal opinion must not be shown, but absolute impartiality. The Chairman should never propose a contentious Resolution.

The President should sign any public document issued in the name of the Society, and in her capacity as Chairman she signs the Minutes.

**TREASURER.**

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial transactions of the Society. Her duties are:—

1. To check expenditure and see that it does not exceed the income.

An inexperienced Treasurer does not always realise her responsibility in this respect. It is her duty to keep her Committee informed regularly of the state of the finances, and to warn them if the expenditure is becoming more than funds will allow.

2. To collect subscriptions.

A very strict record should be kept of subscriptions due and paid, as Members should be reminded when their subscriptions are due, but they are rightly annoyed at being asked for a subscription that has been paid. Although this seems a simple matter it is a mistake often made by an inexperienced Treasurer.

The most satisfactory record can be kept in the form of a card index (see page 22), and if subscriptions are due in different months, the cards should be filed alphabetically, under their months.

3. To pay accounts. (These must first be passed by the Finance Committee.)



4. To keep proper accounts.

At the end of the financial year the Treasurer must draw up a Financial Statement to present first to her Committee and then to the Society. The Statement of Receipts and Payments, which is so often all that is presented, is insufficient and may be very misleading, unless the accounts for all expenses incurred up to date have been paid. A Treasurer should naturally have some knowledge of book-keeping, such as can be obtained from a simple text-book on the subject.

5. To raise funds for special objects.
6. To see to any investments of the Society as instructed by the Committee.

*Points to remember in dealing with money.*

1. Always bank *all* money received and draw out of the Bank what is wanted for various purposes, large accounts being paid by cheques, smaller payments being made out of Petty Cash which is drawn from the Bank. This rule should *never* be neglected.
2. A receipt (see page 22) must be given for every amount received, stating date, name, amount and *exactly for what purpose the money is received*. The same particulars must be entered on the counterfoil, which will be submitted to the Auditors.
3. A receipt should be obtained for every payment above two shillings, and submitted to the Auditors.

4. A clear account must be kept of all sums received at the office and of all money paid out of the office, and the Petty Cash book must show details of every penny spent. In the case of a large Society the accounts should be audited at the end of the financial year by a Chartered Accountant and a Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account drawn up, which, after being passed by the Finance Committee and by the Executive Committee, must be submitted to the Society at their Annual General Meeting.

5. It is sometimes necessary to keep the accounts of different Committees separate, which can easily be done by analysis columns.

When special funds are collected for a special purpose they should always be entered in a separate account, or column.

6. Before giving to another person accounts of which you have been in charge satisfy yourself that they are quite correct. When taking over the responsibility of accounts from someone else, satisfy yourself that they are quite correct and get any explanation required before taking over the responsibility and before making any fresh entries.
7. Regular and frequent checking of accounts saves time in the end. If any alteration has to be made in any account book, paying-in book, receipt or cheque books, it must be



initialled by the person responsible, namely :—

A cheque or receipt by the person signing the cheque or receipt.

A paying-in book by the person signing and paying in the money.

An account book by the person responsible for it.

*Sample Card from Subscribers' Card Index.*

FRONT.	BACK (entering Subs. when paid).
<p style="text-align: right;">July.</p> <p>Todd, Mrs. B., The Grange, Chapeltown Road, Leeds.</p>	<p>£1 1 0 24 July, 1920 £1 1 0 26 July, 1921 £1 1 0 18 July, 1922 £1 1 0 19 July, 1923 £1 1 0 1 Aug., 1924</p>

RECEIPT.

<p>No. 30. 24 July, 1923. Received from Mrs. B. Todd, Sub. for year beginning Oct. 1st, 1922. £1 1 0</p>	<p>No. 30.                    24th July, 1923. Received from Mrs. B. Todd, the Sum of One Pound, One Shilling and.....Pence, Subscription for year beginning Oct. 1st, 1922, to the .....Society. £1 1 0                    R. M. CORY, Hon. Treasurer.....Society.</p>
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SECRETARY.

The Secretary though not the most prominent Officer, is the most necessary. The whole of the Society's business and correspondence passes through her hands. Her duties are :—

1. To know the Members and to keep them interested in the Society's work.
2. To keep a complete up-to-date list of Members and their addresses, and report any resignations and applications for Membership to the Executive Committee.
3. To keep up-to-date lists of all Committees and see that resignations are reported and vacancies filled.
4. To keep an up-to-date list of representatives on other Societies and see that they are re-elected from time to time, as necessary, and that they send the necessary reports to the Executive Committee.
5. To answer and deal with all the correspondence.

In dealing with any business or correspondence between Meetings, the Secretary must act according to the instructions of her Committee and the general policy of the Society. If in doubt she should consult her fellow Officers and, if all agree, act and report at the next Meeting. If the Officers disagree or feel that they cannot take responsibility, a Special or Emergency Meeting of the Executive Committee should be called. Sometime the custom is adopted of circularising Members of the Executive and asking their



opinion, but this is not a very good plan, as they so often fail to reply.

All correspondence received by the Secretary, as Secretary, belongs to the Committee and should be open to inspection. Technically it should all be presented to the Committee, but in practice there is not time for this, so that only important letters are actually read, but if a wish to see any letter be expressed, the Secretary should produce it at once.

6. To call Meetings and make all necessary arrangements for them.
7. To draw up the Agenda (in consultation with the President or the Chairman of the Committee concerned).
8. To prepare the business of the Meeting and to be able to give any information to the Chairman or the Committee upon any point.
9. To take notes of the proceedings at a Meeting and write the Minutes. (Some Societies have a Minute Secretary as well as a General Secretary.)
10. After the Meeting, to carry out the Committee's instructions and write the letters made necessary by these instructions.
11. To write an Annual Report of the work of the Society to be presented to the Executive Committee. After adoption by the Executive Committee, this is presented as the Report of the Executive Committee to the Annual General Meeting and if approved by the Annual Meeting, is

published as the Report of the Society's work for the year.

12. To draw up lists at the end of the year of people willing to stand as Officers and Committee for the ensuing year.
13. To notify :—
  - (a) The bank of any change of Treasurer or Trustee of any Fund, or of any change in the regulations for the signing of cheques, etc.
  - (b) The Solicitors of any change of Officers or of the Trustee of any Fund.
  - (c) The Secretary of any Sub-Committee of any instructions for that Sub-Committee.
  - (d) A new Member of a Society, or of a Committee, of her election.

A NEWLY APPOINTED SECRETARY must first thoroughly master the Rules and Constitution of the Society, and should read through the last few Annual Reports and the Minutes of, at any rate, the more recent Meetings.

If the Minute Book has not been indexed, it is a good plan to do this at once and in the process a thorough acquaintance will be gained of the history of the Society. The Secretary should then see that the list of Members and of Committees is up-to-date and if she is also responsible for finance she should get a thorough grasp of the system of book-keeping in use. If she is empowered to sign cheques, or any other documents, she should see that a Resolution is passed to this effect and that the bank is notified.



## CHAPTER IV.

## MEETINGS.

**A** GENERAL Meeting is a Meeting of the whole Society.

The Rules and Constitution should state the minimum number of General Meetings, and of Executive Meetings, to be held in the year, and sometimes states when such Meetings are to be held. Meetings held according to these instructions are termed Annual Meetings, Quarterly Meetings, Monthly Meetings, etc. Any Meetings held in addition to these would be called Special, Extraordinary or Emergency Meetings.

At a General Meeting the Officers sit on a platform, or at any rate facing the audience, which consists of ordinary members. At all Committee Meetings the Members sit round a table, with the Chairman at the head and the Secretary on her right.

At all Meetings, all remarks must be addressed to the Chair, and there should be no unnecessary talking or conversation between Members. The Chairman must discourage the introduction of irrelevant matters, and her decision is final on all questions of order.

## QUORUM.

A Quorum is the smallest number necessary for a Meeting to be valid; it should be fixed

for the General Meetings and for the Executive Committee by the Constitution. The Quorum for Sub-Committees is fixed by the main body appointing them, but if this is not done, it is usual to take it as three. The Meeting cannot begin until there is a Quorum, and if a sufficient number does not arrive within half an hour, the Meeting is adjourned and the Secretary should send some such notice as the following:—

“As there was no quorum at the Meeting of the . . . . Committee called for to-day (or yesterday) the Meeting was postponed until . . . .”

This Rule ensures that business shall be transacted only in the presence of several responsible Members, so that controversial matters shall not be settled by a minority.

The Meeting should begin punctually at the time stated, although if the Chairman is expected and does not arrive, it is sometimes customary to wait a quarter of an hour before electing a substitute.

## PREPARATION FOR MEETINGS.

The importance of careful preparations for a Meeting cannot be emphasized too strongly; upon this the success of the Meeting may be said to depend.

It is the Secretary's business to see that nothing that should be brought up at a Committee Meeting is forgotten. She should, therefore, have a box or a folder for each Committee, into which she can put any letters, or notes of matters



to bring up at the next Meeting of the Committee, after which they can be filed away.

If any Sub-Committee ought to report to the Executive Committee the Secretary should see that whoever is responsible is asked to have the report ready, and similarly in the case of a Member who has attended another Committee to represent the Society.

#### *Notice of Meetings.*

It is essential that every Member of the Committee should be informed of the business to be discussed at a Meeting, so that those attending the Meeting may be prepared, and also so that no decision shall be made on an important matter without all Members knowing and having had the chance of attending. When sending a notice of the Meeting, therefore, a list of the items of business (the Agenda) should be sent, and no other important matter may be discussed at that Meeting.

Lists of Committees should be kept together in a card index. If the Officers are Ex-Officio Members of every Committee, notice of all Meetings should be sent to them also.

If there are more than 20 notices they can be sent at circular rates of postage.

The Constitution of the Society states how many days before the Meeting the notice should be sent (generally seven, or for small Sub-Committees or Emergency Meetings sometimes less).

The notice of the Meeting should be drawn up by the Secretary in conjunction with the

Chairman and should state place, date, and time of the Meeting, and the Agenda, and should be signed by the Secretary.

In drawing up the Agenda look up the Minutes of the last Meeting and the contents of the box or folder referred to above.

Any Member wishing to bring forward business of any kind at a Meeting must inform the Secretary in time for it to be put on the Agenda. Sometimes preliminary notice of a Meeting is sent giving date of the Meeting and asking for notice of any matters for discussion by a certain date.

Sometimes at the foot of an Agenda paper the following words are added:—"Proceedings at Committee Meetings are absolutely confidential." In any case this is taken for granted, and is a rule that must be very strictly kept.

#### *Immediate Preparations.*

A business-like Committee gets through a good deal of work in a short time. Very much depends on the preparations that have been made beforehand.

The Secretary should have all the letters and papers in the right order and clearly marked for reference, e.g., all apologies for absence pinned together with a list of names on top, all resignations treated in the same way, etc.

She should have handy any other papers, books, or information that may possibly be needed. Even then she may be asked for some other paper or letter, but if all her papers are properly filed she should be able to find any without delay.



*Preparation of Room.*

At a General Meeting the Officers sit on a platform or facing the audience. At a Committee Meeting they all sit round a table.

Tables, chairs, paper, blotting-paper, pen and ink, should be provided. There should be copies of the Agenda for all, and a specially drawn-up Agenda for the Chairman and Secretary brought up to date and with details of all matters to be discussed.

An attendance book headed with the date and name of the Meeting should be passed round for members present to sign.

A calendar is often needed in fixing dates of future Meetings, etc.

*Special Preparations for General Meetings.*

It may be necessary to hold General Meetings in a larger hall, which involves more preparation, e.g., hiring of a hall, securing stewards, etc. The proceedings will be rather more formal than in the case of a Committee Meeting, and it is generally advisable to secure beforehand a Mover and Seconder for all the formal Resolutions on the Agenda (including the vote of thanks).

*Special Preparations for Annual Meetings.*

See Annual Business, page 43.

*Special Preparations for Public Meetings.*

A successful Public Meeting involves a good deal of preparation. The suggestion of a Public Meeting for some special purpose may be made

by any Members of the Society or by the Officers, or often a request is sent by an outside body or individual. The decision to hold such a Meeting will rest with the Executive Committee, but before they meet to consider the matter the Secretary can often obtain a good deal of useful information bearing on the question.

The Executive Committee having decided to call such a Meeting will settle :—

1. The nature of the Meeting, e.g., whether a Conference with short speeches from the audience, or whether there should be one or more pre-arranged speakers.
2. Whether the Meeting shall be open to the public and widely advertised, or by invitation and confined to individuals specially interested in the matter.
3. Time, place and date. (This will often have to be provisional and a choice of dates given to the Speakers.)
4. Speakers. (It is advisable to have alternative suggestions.)

Sometimes a small Committee is appointed to be responsible for the organisation of the Meeting, otherwise it is the Secretary's responsibility to see that all preparations are made, such as :—

1. Arrangements for Speakers.
2. Securing a Chairman and, if necessary, stewards.
3. Hiring a hall with sufficient accommodation.
4. Advertising, printing, etc.



5. Sending out invitations.
6. Sending invitations to the Press.  
Provision should be made for chairs and tables for reporters to whom a short notice should be given at the Meeting stating the objects of the Meeting, by whom it is called, Speakers' names, etc. If reporters are not present some one should be responsible for taking notes and drawing up a report for the Press.
7. Asking some one to propose and some one to second the Votes of Thanks, particularly the Vote of Thanks to the Chairman, as this cannot be proposed from the Chair. A proposer and seconder should therefore be instructed beforehand when to do this and a note made on the Agenda that . . . . will speak.

## CHAPTER V.

## PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS.

**A**N individual who is not a Member of the Committee is sometimes invited by the Secretary to attend a Meeting to give special information. The Secretary or Chairman should ask the Committee's permission for such visitor to be admitted during the discussion of the particular item in which she is interested. This visitor has, of course, no voting powers.

The Secretary should be in the room a little while beforehand, and ready to answer any questions or see any Members who arrive early. She should see that the attendance book is signed by all present.

All remarks must be addressed to the Chair, and there must be no unnecessary talking and conversation between Members. The Chairman must discourage the introduction of irrelevant matters.

The Chairman is usually addressed as Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairman as the case may be.

The President takes the Chair as a matter of course, or in her absence a Vice-President. In some cases when the President is seldom able to attend Committee Meetings a permanent Chairman of Executive Committee or of a Sub-Committee is appointed. In the absence of the Chairman the Secretary should see that a



Chairman is proposed, seconded, and elected to take the Chair temporarily; she will offer to vacate it on the arrival of the Chairman.

It is the Chairman's business to make herself acquainted with details of each item on the Agenda paper and to see that each item is properly explained either by the person responsible or by herself. She must not allow discussion on any matter not on the Agenda. The heading "Other Business" is only intended to cover unimportant items, and nothing controversial may be discussed under it. The Chairman must refuse to allow any important matter not mentioned on the agenda to be introduced under this heading.

The various items should be taken in the order in which they appear on the Agenda but it is allowable for the convenience of certain Members, to change the order, if the Members present unanimously agree.

#### *Confirmation of Minutes.*

The Chairman opens the Meeting by asking the Secretary to read the Minutes of the last Meeting (or at the first Meeting of a Sub-Committee, the Minute recording their appointment). Minutes of an Annual Meeting should be read and confirmed at the next Annual Meeting. If copies of the Minutes have been circulated beforehand to all Members it is not necessary to read them at the Meeting, they may be "taken as read." No one should interrupt during the reading of the Minutes.

The Chairman then says to the Meeting: "Is it your pleasure that I sign these Minutes as correct?" or "Are these Minutes in the opinion of the Committee correct?" If any point is questioned and an alteration voted for, it must be made at once and initialled by the Chairman. The Chairman then signs with the date. After the Minutes have been signed they must not be altered for any reason.

Minutes are read for the purpose of ensuring their accuracy as a record; this alone may be questioned. On no account should any decision reported in them be questioned or discussed at this point. Fresh discussion on a matter that has been settled can only be raised if notice has been given on the Agenda, and even this is not allowed by some Societies until a certain time has elapsed, and should never be allowed without good reason.

At a Special Meeting it is usual to omit the Minutes of the previous Meeting, these being read with those of the Special Meeting at the next regular meeting.

#### *Business Arising.*

Immediately following the reading of the Minutes comes a report by the Secretary of the business arising from the decisions of the previous Meeting, or of business done as a result of instructions given at the previous Meeting. The heading "Business Arising" need not be put on the Agenda, it is always taken as a matter of course, immediately after the reading of the Minutes.



*Correspondence.*

All correspondence received by the Secretary, as Secretary, belongs to the Committee and should be open to inspection by the Committee. Technically it should all be presented at the next Meeting of the Committee, but in practice there is not time for this so that only important letters are actually read, but if a wish to see any letter is expressed the Secretary should produce it at once.

Apologies for absence come first and any important general correspondence that ought to be reported or about which instructions are needed will follow in order of importance. All letters should be carefully sorted out beforehand, and if it is not intended to read the letter, brief notes made of its contents. Do not include correspondence on matter that is coming up for discussion later.

Each item on the Agenda paper is next brought forward in turn and reported upon or discussed.

*Resolutions and Amendments.*

All decisions made by the Meeting must take the form of Resolutions.

A Motion is a definite proposal put before the Meeting on a certain point; when passed it is called a Resolution (but the word Resolution is often used in both cases). It must be a clear, definite and affirmative statement with only one meaning, and must, therefore, be very carefully worded. The Chairman should always repeat it to ensure accuracy.

The wording of a Resolution is of the utmost importance, and the Chairman or Secretary or, in fact, anyone present with a knowledge of the matter in hand should be very critical and alert so as to ensure that the Resolution is perfectly clear and that it really expresses what is wanted in the best possible way, and will not lead to any difficulties when acted upon.

After a Resolution has been moved it must be seconded before being put to the Meeting and unless an Amendment is proposed it is voted upon after the necessary discussion. A Resolution proposed from the Chair need not be seconded, but no controversial motion should be put in this way. Votes of thanks or of condolence are often proposed from the Chair.

While a Resolution is before a Meeting it is in order for anyone to move an Amendment to it. The Mover of a Resolution may not propose an Amendment, and only one Amendment may be moved by any one person.

An Amendment may omit a word or words of the Resolution, or add one or more words, or both. It may substitute a word for another, or it may alter the wording of the whole Resolution. But it must "amend" the motion and not contradict it. It must be proposed and seconded and must be voted upon before the original Resolution. If carried, the amended form of the Resolution is put, if the Amendment is lost the original Resolution is voted upon. If any person thinks better of an Amendment he has proposed, he may ask the Chairman's leave to withdraw it, which the Chairman may give



provided the Committee agree, but a Resolution to which an Amendment has been proposed may not be withdrawn until the Amendment has been voted upon.

One reason for avoiding a carelessly worded Resolution is that it gives rise to Amendments to correct it.

If at a Meeting a Resolution is proposed contradicting one that has been previously passed it is necessary to rescind the original Resolution before passing the new one, and the Motion that the original Resolution is to be rescinded must be put on the Agenda and proposed, seconded and voted upon in the usual way. The Secretary must be alert and must know the previous work of her Committee in order that she can see that this rule is kept.

A Resolution is said to be "passed unanimously" if every member present votes in favour of it.

It is said to be "passed *nem. con.*" if no member votes against it, but one or more refrain from voting.

The above Rules for procedure hold good both for Committee Meetings and Public Meetings, but at a Public Meeting the proceedings are more formal. At a Public Meeting, a good Speaker will have been asked to move a Resolution. When called on by the Chairman she will first read the Resolution clearly to the Meeting and then speak on it. Next, the person who has been asked beforehand to second it, will be called upon and will rise and state that he is seconding the Motion and speak on it, but

it is quite in order to second and even to propose a Resolution without further remarks, although it is usual for the proposer to speak in favour of it. Each subsequent Speaker should first state whether he is supporting the Motion. At a Public Meeting, Amendments should be handed to the Chairman in writing.

#### *Formal Resolutions and their Use and Meaning.\**

With the object of stopping a discussion and getting rid of a Motion without having it put to the vote, the following Resolutions are sometimes moved :—

- (1) "That the Meeting proceed to the next question."
- (2) "That the question be not now put."  
(This is the only negative Resolution allowed.)
- (3) Briefly: "I beg to move the previous question."

(1) may be moved while an Amendment is before a Meeting and if carried the discussion then reverts to the main Motion, or if the Amendment is an Amendment to an Amendment, discussion returns to that Amendment, whereas, if the Resolution is carried during the debate on the main Motion the Meeting proceeds to the next business on the Agenda.

\* The Author acknowledges indebtedness in this section to *The Chairman's Manual*, by Gurdon Palin and Ernest Martin. Pitman.



(2) and (3) cannot be moved upon an Amendment, but only upon a substantive motion.

"The previous question," does not mean the previous business before the Meeting. A certain subject is before a Meeting and before putting a Motion on the subject, the logically prior question is "Whether such vote shall be put?" If the "previous question" Motion is carried the Meeting proceeds to the next item on the Agenda, but even if negatived there may be no more discussion and the Motion must be put at once to the Meeting. Debate is allowed on the "previous question," and during such debate the original Motion before the Meeting may be discussed.

With the object of stopping a discussion and having a vote on it taken at once, the following Resolution may be moved:—

"That the question be now put."

This may be moved on a Motion or an Amendment and needs to be seconded, but no debate is allowed.

These "formal Resolutions" are not used in ordinary Committee Meetings, where it rests with the Chairman to stop any unprofitable discussion.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE WRITING OF MINUTES.

1.—Make a rule to write the Minutes immediately after the Meeting. They should never be left more than twenty-four hours.

2.—Take notes during the Meeting in a book kept for this purpose. Unless the Secretary is experienced it is advisable to take fairly full notes.

3.—Minutes are a record of Resolutions passed by the Committee at Meetings. They should be clear to anyone reading them, and all decisions should be recorded, omitting all irrelevant matters.

Every Resolution must be recorded verbatim, and it is best to put the names of the Proposer and Secunder. When the voting is unanimous this should be stated. Sometimes a member will ask the Secretary to record the fact that she voted against a certain Resolution. As it is essential to record the exact wording of a Resolution the Secretary should take care to make an exact note of it at the Meeting. If necessary, she should ask the Chairman to repeat it.

A discussion which leads to no decision can often be omitted, though if it is important, or if the matter is postponed for future discussion, it should be reported.



In writing the Minutes follow the order of business on the Agenda paper even if this was not actually adhered to at the Meeting.

4.—The Minute Book should be of a size that will last for a number of years, and the pages should be numbered. The book should be indexed as it is used, and must be kept in a safe place as its contents are strictly private.

5.—While writing the Minutes, make a note of any letter to be written or any business to be attended to as you come to it.

The writing of Minutes needs care and practice, and it is a good plan for a new or an inexperienced Secretary to send a draft of the Minutes to the Chairman for correction or approval before copying them into the Minute Book.

## CHAPTER VII.

## ANNUAL BUSINESS.

THE Annual Meeting, like an annual spring-cleaning, gives an opportunity for "tidying-up" and starting fresh. Lists must be revised, accounts balanced up and proved, and a review made of the year's work.

If the actual date of the Annual Meeting is not fixed in the Constitution, it is often stated that it shall be held within a limited time of the end of the Society's financial year. The date, etc., must be decided by the Executive Committee, and should be on the Agenda of the last Executive Committee Meeting in the year or else a special meeting should be called for the purpose.

The Financial Year of a Society may end on any Quarter Day. In the case of a Church, the Financial Year extends from Easter to Easter, regardless of exact dates, so as to avoid the inclusion in one year of two Easter offerings.

All Account Books must be audited as soon as possible after the last day of the Financial Year, and in a Society of any size and importance, this should be done by a Chartered Accountant, with whom a date for auditing should be booked in advance.

## PREPARATIONS FOR AUDITORS.

See that all subscriptions for the year have been collected.



See that all accounts owing are paid.

Have the Pass Book made up and check the Bank Account with it; if these do not agree owing to an interval elapsing between the drawing of a cheque and its presentation at the Bank, show the balance according to the Society's books, and make a Reconciliation Statement accounting for the difference in the Pass Book.

See that all Account Books are entered up to date, draw up the Trial Balance and Balance Sheet. (This is sometimes left to the auditors.)

Give auditors :—

All Account Books.

All Receipt Books used during the year.

All Receipts for payments made during the year.

All Finance Schedules, i.e., lists of cheques paid, etc.

All Bank Pass Books.

All Cheque Books used during the year.

All Paying-in Books used during the year.

All unpaid Bills (if there are any).

#### PREPARATIONS FOR ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

As soon as the Auditor's Report is received, call a Meeting of the Finance Committee to pass this, and send it on to the Executive Committee at their Annual Meeting.

Write to Secretaries of all Sub-Committees, asking them to ascertain if their members will serve for another year if elected, and asking for

Report of Year's Work. These reports should be passed by the various Sub-Committees.

Draft a Report of the Year's Work done by the Executive and its Sub-Committees.

Call Annual Meeting of the Executive Committee to do the following business :—

1. Accept any resignations that have been tendered throughout the year from the Society.
2. Recommend new members for election at the Annual General Meeting.
3. Recommend to Annual General Meeting :—
  - (a) Names of Officers for election or re-election.
  - (b) Names of Executive Committee Members for election or re-election.
4. Receive Annual Reports of Sub-Committees' work.
5. Receive and adopt the Report of the Year's Work, which thus becomes the Annual Report of the Executive Committee and is presented to the Society at the Annual General Meeting.
6. Make arrangements for the Annual General Meeting.

A note should be added to the Agenda Paper, asking retiring members of the Executive Committee to notify the Secretary whether they are willing to stand for re-election (i.e. if this is allowed by the Constitution).

If there is any doubt as to there being a Quorum at this Meeting it is as well to make sure beforehand by getting promises of attendance.



## PREPARATIONS FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting must, of course, be sent to all Members, and is often accompanied by a printed copy of the Annual Report of the Executive Committee and of the Balance Sheet.

As the business at the Annual General Meeting is almost entirely of a formal nature, it is a good plan to secure beforehand a Proposer and Secunder of the Resolutions. This saves a great deal of time at the Meeting. A copy of the Resolution should be handed before the Meeting to the Proposer and Secunder, and written also on the Chairman's Agenda with the names of Proposer and Secunder.

☞ The Annual General Meeting is often made the occasion of a Public Meeting, following the Business Meeting. (See page 30-32.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

## AFFILIATION, FEDERATION, Etc.

**T**HE terms "Society," "Association," "Club" are generally used to indicate a group of Members. "Union" is sometimes used in the same sense.

The term "Federation" indicates a group of Societies, but the terms "Union" and "Association" are sometimes used in the same sense.

Federations are composed of kindred bodies, who desire to strengthen their cause by combination, e.g., The National Council for Maternity and Child Welfare.

A Federation is a separate entity, having its own Rules and Constitution, Officers, and Executive Committee, and its own Finance.

The term "Affiliation" signifies the linking of small, or new, or local Societies with a larger, or older, or central Society, the object being to give a better standing to the Affiliated Society, and to put the knowledge and experience of the Central Society at the disposal of the Societies affiliated to it.

The smaller Society is said to be affiliated to the larger. There is a gain to both sides, as the affiliated Society with its local knowledge can often be a help to the Central one, but the gain to the smaller body is generally the greater. The procedure is for the Executive Committee or



the General Meeting of the lesser Society to decide to apply for affiliation to the Central Society, and there is often, but not always, an Affiliation Fee.

Affiliation is generally granted for one year, and the payment of the subscription each year signifies renewal. If the subscription were discontinued, affiliation would, of course, lapse. If there is no subscription, affiliation generally lasts until notice is given by either side to the contrary.

The body to which a smaller Society becomes affiliated will, of course, be one whose objects are similar in character to its own. If either body changes its general policy after affiliation in any important respect, the other should know of this change, and its Officers or Executive Committee should consider whether it is advisable to dis-affiliate. The decision would rest with the Executive Committee or, if the matter were important, it might be referred to a General Meeting.

The rights of Affiliated Societies are expressed in the Rules and Constitution. It is usual for the Affiliated Society to send one or more representatives to the Council or Executive Committee of the larger body, the object being to keep both Societies in touch with each other. The terms of affiliation will state the number of representatives allowed. These representatives are elected by the Affiliated Society and the names sent to the Secretary of the larger body. This election may be for one year, or until the representative resigns. In addition to the

permanent representative, the Affiliated Society generally sends one or more delegates to the Annual Meeting of the larger body.

Delegates or Representatives should be chosen who are in general agreement with the policy of the Society they represent, they must be absolutely loyal and must subordinate their personal opinions to those of their Society. It is convenient, though not essential, for them to be Members of the Executive Committee of their Society.

When representing their Society at a Meeting, they should take notes of all points of interest to their Society or of general interest, and *remember to report these fully at an early date*. They have the same status as any other Member and can vote and speak and propose and second Resolutions, etc.

The Society ought to offer to pay expenses of delegates if it sends them to a Meeting.

If, owing to distance, etc., a Society cannot send a Representative to a Meeting a "Proxy Delegate" who lives near is sometimes appointed. The Proxy has the rights of the Representative and will generally be given very exact instructions how to act.



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**PAMPHLET**