

Council meeting 6 & 7 June 2006

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Standing orders of the Council

Purpose

To adopt the standing orders of the Council

Action required

The Council is asked to adopt the standing orders of the Council as set out in appendix 1 to this paper.

1. Background

The meetings of the Council are regulated in accordance with Section VII of the Byelaws. The Standing Orders are framed under the provision of Section VII, paragraph 8 for the regulation of the procedure of meetings of the Council.

Every year the Council adopts the standing orders for the procedure of its meetings. In 2005 a revised set of standing orders was agreed by the Council which reflected up-to-date best practice.

The Governance Committee reviewed the standing orders in May 2006 as part of the annual review of the Council Governance Handbook and proposed no changes.

Accordingly, Council is asked to adopt the standing orders as set out in Appendix 1.

2. Risk implications

Council requires a set of orders under which to operate. If the standing orders are not adopted then those adopted last year will remain extant and continue to apply.

3. Resource implications

There are no resource implications.

Ann M Lewis
Secretary & Registrar

Appendix 1**Standing Orders of Council****1. The Byelaws**

- 1.1 The meetings of the Council are regulated in accordance with Section VII of the Byelaws. These Standing Orders are framed under the provision of Section VII, paragraph 8 for the regulation of the procedure of meetings of the Council.

2. Frequency of Meetings

- 2.1 The Council shall meet not less than four times in each calendar year.

3. Notice of meetings

- 3.1 The Secretary & Registrar shall notify members of the Council in writing of the time, date and place of a meeting of the Council at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.
- 3.2 The Secretary & Registrar shall publish details of the meetings and the agenda and the papers of the public business part of the meetings on the Society's website 4 working days in advance of each meeting.

4. Business of the Meeting

The business of the meeting shall be divided into public business, which shall be conducted in public, and confidential business, which shall be conducted in private.

5. Quorum

- 5.1 No business shall be transacted at the meeting unless at least sixteen members are present.
- 5.2 If within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting to commence, a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved.
- 5.3 If at any time during the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be suspended for up to half an hour pending the re-establishment of a quorum. If this does not occur, the meeting will be adjourned and outstanding business will be conducted at the next meeting.

6. Declarations of interest

- 6.1 Declarations of interest relevant to items on the agenda shall be made at the start of the discussion of the item to which it relates.
- 6.2 In the event of a member not appreciating at the beginning of a discussion that an interest exists, the member shall declare such an interest as soon as s/he becomes aware of it.
- 6.3 In any case of doubt the member should openly declare the possibility of interest.
- 6.4 The Chairman will rule on whether an interest is such as to prevent the member participating in discussion or determination of the matter.
- 6.5 If a member of Council believes that another member present has a direct or indirect interest in an item for discussion and that interest has not been declared, s/he should inform the Chairman. The Chairman will establish whether or not there is an interest which should have been declared, and will if necessary make a ruling in accordance with 6.4 above.

7. Minutes of Council meetings

- 7.1 The Secretary & Registrar shall be responsible for the production of minutes, which once confirmed, when read in conjunction with the papers presented to the meeting, shall provide a correct and authoritative record of the meeting and shall be sufficiently detailed to provide an audit trail of issues discussed by the Council and the decisions taken.
- 7.2 The minutes of the previous ordinary meeting shall be circulated to members with the agenda. If there has been an additional meeting(s) between ordinary meetings, the minutes of the additional meeting(s) shall be circulated with the agenda for the next ordinary meeting.
- 7.3 No motion or discussion shall be allowed on the minutes except in regard to their accuracy.
- 7.4 Any inaccuracies in the minutes of Council being presented for agreement should be drawn to the attention of the Secretary & Registrar in writing before the meeting at which these are to be agreed. If on occasion time does not permit, then the item should be drawn to the attention of the Secretary & Registrar or the Chairman verbally before the next meeting.
- 7.5 The minutes of the public business of the Council shall be published on the Society's website once agreed by the Council.
- 7.6 If there are matters arising from the minutes presented for agreement these should be brought to the attention of the Secretary & Registrar in writing before the next meeting. Exceptionally, where time does not permit, the Secretary & Registrar or the Chairman should be informed of the matter(s) to be raised verbally before the meeting.
- 7.7 Questions relating to matters arising shall be allowed for the purposes of information only, and no debate on the policy outlined in the minutes shall take place.

8. Conduct of Meetings

- 8.1 The President shall preside as the Chairman of any meeting of the Council.
- 8.2 In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall chair the meeting.
- 8.3 If the President and Vice-President are absent from, or otherwise unable or unwilling to preside at a meeting, the members present shall, as the first business of the meeting, elect one of their number to preside at that meeting.
- 8.4 The Chairman's ruling on any question of order or conduct raised at a meeting will be final. Rulings by the Chairman will be made in accordance with the provision of these standing orders and the Code of Conduct for Council members.
- 8.5 In discussion of agenda items the intention is to reach agreement by consensus. The Chairman will conduct the meeting in such a way as to ensure that all Council members have the opportunity to contribute and that no member or members dominate the discussion. If there are a number of contributions supporting one viewpoint, the Chairman shall make an opportunity for those of differing views to contribute. There is no automatic right for all members wishing to speak to an item to be heard. If a general consensus emerges, then the Chairman may curtail discussion and seek agreement to the proposal. Where a consensus decision is reached the Chairman shall ask the Council to confirm this verbally.

9. Ten minute debate

- 9.1 The purpose of a ten minute debate is to allow Council to address important issues which have arisen too recently to have been included in the agenda for a specific Council meeting. A session will be set aside at the beginning of each Council meeting for such items, the session not to exceed 30 minutes in time.
- 9.2 A Council member who wishes to propose a subject for ten minute debate shall notify the Secretary & Registrar in writing by 1700 on the Tuesday 1 week before the Council meeting at which the item is proposed.
- 9.3 The matter will be included in the ten minute debate session if
- It falls within or is relevant to the Charter or statutory functions of the Council or the Society.
 - It is not a matter which the Council has validly decided within the previous 12 months.
 - It is not covered elsewhere on the agenda for the relevant Council meeting.
 - The proposal is supported by at least two other Council members at the time of submission.
 - The member has not proposed any other subject for ten minute debate at that meeting.
 - It does not propose a motion to be put to the vote.
- 9.4 The Chairman and the Secretary & Registrar together shall decide if a proposed item is acceptable and how many items for ten minute debate will be allowed at any one meeting of the Council.

10. Motions

- 10.1 All notices of motions for submission to the Council shall be given in writing to the Secretary & Registrar and shall be received at least fourteen clear days before an ordinary meeting of the Council. (A "clear day" is a 24 hour period; 14 days does not include the day on which the Council meeting begins so is in effect by close of business 15 days before the first day of the Council meeting.)
- 10.2 All motions shall require a seconder, and this person shall be named at the time of submission of the motion and be present at the meeting at which the motion is put.
- 10.3 The Secretary & Registrar and the Chairman shall determine whether the motion shall be considered in public or confidential business. In considering this, the implications of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it applies to the Society shall be taken into account.
- 10.4 No motion shall be accepted if the issue addressed by the motion is already included in the agenda for the meeting.
- 10.5 The Chairman may, if it is in the interests of the Society, declare a motion out of order.
- 10.6 No motion to rescind any motion which has been passed by the Council within the preceding four months nor any motion to the same effect as any motion which has been negated within the preceding four months shall be in order.
- 10.7 Exceptionally, where a matter of urgency has arisen after the deadline for submission of motions, consideration will be given to accepting an emergency motion. The Chairman of the meeting will decide if such a motion is in order.
- 10.8 Motions of which notice shall have been given shall have precedence over other motions.

- 10.8 The Secretary shall insert in the agenda of any meeting of the Council all motions for which notice shall have been received in accordance with 7.1 above.
- 10.10 Once a motion is proposed to the meeting an amendment may be moved without notice.
- 10.11 When an amendment is moved no other amendment may be taken until the previous one has been cleared. If carried, an amendment becomes substantive and is put as a new motion upon which a further amendment may be moved. If the amendment is not carried, a second amendment may be moved but only one amendment shall be submitted to the Council for discussion at one time.
- 10.12 The mover of every original motion, but not of any amendment, shall have a right of reply, immediately after which the question shall be put from the chair.
- 10.13 No member, unless expressly mentioned in these Standing Orders, may normally speak more than once on the same motion unless permission be given by the Chairman to give information or if the attention of the Chairman is drawn to a point of order.
- 10.14 If, during a debate upon a motion, it is moved "That the question be now put", the Chairman shall decide whether the debate has proceeded long enough to justify accepting the motion. If the motion is accepted and seconded, it takes precedence over all other business and must be put to the meeting immediately without discussion. If the motion is carried the motion under debate shall be put to the meeting immediately without further discussion, subject to the mover being permitted to reply to the debate. If the motion under debate is an amendment and it is defeated, the main question is not affected by the above procedure and the debate upon it may continue.

11. Voting and Recording of Votes

- 11.1 Should a consensus not be reached or if in the Chairman's view it is expedient to do so, a vote shall be taken on any proposals before the meeting.
- 11.2 When a vote is taken it shall be determined by a simple majority of votes cast unless expressly mentioned otherwise in these Standing Orders, the Regulations (or for the time being Byelaws) or the Charter.
- 11.3 On the motion of a member of the Council, duly seconded, names of members of the Council voting for and against a recommendation or resolution and those abstaining from voting will be recorded.
- 11.4 The Chairman shall have a substantive vote and a second or casting vote in any case of an equality of votes.
- 11.5 The Standing Orders relating to voting shall also apply to motions brought under section 8 above.

12. Any other business

- 12.1 The Secretary & Registrar should be informed in writing before the meeting of any matter that is to be raised under Any Other Business. In exceptional circumstances a matter can be raised with the Chairman or the Secretary & Registrar verbally before the meeting.
- 12.1 Matters not raised with the Secretary & Registrar or the Chairman prior to the meeting or which could have been raised under a more appropriate mechanism will not be discussed at that meeting and may be ruled out of order by the Chairman. Should an item be raised inappropriately, guidance will be given on the appropriate mechanism.

13. Conduct of Council members

- 13.1 The Chairman may order a Council member to withdraw from a meeting if, in the opinion of the Chairman, that member has persistently disregarded the ruling of the Chairman or is behaving improperly, offensively or in a manner which is obstructing the business of the meeting. The member may be readmitted having made a suitable apology.
- 13.2 In the event of a general disturbance which, in the opinion of the Chairman, prevents the orderly conduct of business, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting for such a period as the s/he considers appropriate.

14. Dealing with Confidential Matters

- 14.1 Confidential business is conducted in private and in the presence of relevant members of staff and, exceptionally, expert advisers to the Council.
- 14.2 On occasion the Chairman may propose that an item under discussion is to be treated in total confidence, in which case members of Council (and any external adviser present) may be asked to sign an undertaking to maintain confidentiality. Staff present are bound to maintain confidentiality by the terms of their contract of employment.
- 14.3 The Council may, in the course of public business, decide a particular item(s) should not be reported, for example when disclosure of certain information may be prejudicial. In these circumstances the Council shall defer discussion of this item to confidential business, or shall ask those members of the public present to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion of the matter.
- 14.4 The Council may decide that decisions reached in confidential business should be put into the public domain. If such a decision is not taken then the discussion and decision(s) remain confidential.

15. Suspension of Standing Orders

- 15.1 Any Standing Order may be suspended in case of urgency by resolution of the Council carried by a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting.
- 15.2 In proposing the suspension of one or more of the Standing Orders, the member making the proposal must state the number(s) of the Standing Order(s).
- 15.3 If such a motion is agreed the suspension shall be for the duration of the item under discussion.

16. Public access to meetings

- 16.1 Members of the public may attend meetings of the Council but may not participate in them. The public may be excluded from part of a meeting during any item of business to be dealt with in confidential proceedings.
- 16.2 Electronic recording of Council meetings without prior permission from the Chairman is prohibited.
- 16.3 The Council may resolve that any member of the public be required to withdraw from a meeting if the person's conduct is such that it seriously disrupts the Council's consideration of the business of the meeting.