

CHAIRING A WIMBLEDON SPEAKERS CLUB MEETING

Chairing is a challenging and important task as the tone of the meeting emanates from the Chair. **PLAN** as much as you can **BEFOREHAND**. On arrival, which should be **EARLY** consult the Vice President to make sure that all the tasks on the agenda are allocated to someone present. Take a friendly but formal manner. Follow the agenda carefully and watch the timing. If the meeting is running over time, draw this to members' attention. Introduce each segment warmly and thank every participant for their contribution. Lead the applause before and after each segment. Watch that everyone does their job properly and try to fill in for them if they omit something. Remember, the Chair has control of the meeting. Be friendly, efficient, and explain events to newcomers.

1. **OPEN** the meeting by banging the gavel at 7.30 pm. Commence standing up, but you will conduct the rest of the meeting sitting down.

2. **WELCOME** everyone, with a special mention of any visitors and anything significant that has occurred since the last meeting.

3. **INTRODUCTIONS**. Ask the members to introduce themselves, a good 'icebreaker', indicating that you require one or two sentences on a subject or question of your choice. Keep the applause for this segment until everyone has introduced themselves.

4. **TOPICS** Sometimes a separate Topics Chair will be assigned, in which case all you need to do is introduce them. He/she will probably be expected to remain in the chair until the break. (Make sure this is clarified beforehand) Otherwise you will need to have prepared at least 20 topics. They should be short and easy to understand (You can use the introductions section to allocate them). **If the meeting is very well attended you cannot give everyone a topic;** make sure that those who have no task on the agenda are given priority. Include visitors and, if they are new to Speakers Club, ask them if they would like a question. Keep topics super-simple for an inexperienced visitor.

Announce the timing for the topics (generally 2 minutes) and explain the lights (1, 1.30 & 2). It is better to ask the question before naming the 'victim'. Lead the clapping before and after each speaker. When the questions are finished (or you run out of speakers or time) ask for numbers for tea and coffee in the break and then call the Topics Evaluator to the lectern (timing 10 minutes: 8/9 &10). **Aim to finish the questions by 8.30 pm so that the evaluator concludes at 8.40/845 pm.** Timing is very important here. If you are running out of time, answers could be shortened to one minute each.

5. **FINISH FIRST HALF** by introducing the President for a Business Session and afterwards announcing the time for reconvening. (Usually 15 minute break, returning by 9.05, unless the second half is rather sparse)

6. **SPEECH SEGMENT** - During the break ask the speakers the **TITLE**, the **TIMING** and the **PURPOSE** (Manual assignment) of their speech plus a few personal details. Remind them to give the sheet from their manual to their evaluator. You could start this segment by mentioning all the speakers and all the evaluators to make sure that the evaluators are awake.

Announce the first speaker and say a little about them to help them relax. Explain the purpose of the speech (from the manual) and the lighting for the timer.

Repeat the speaker's name and then clearly announce the title of the speech. Lead the applause, clapping until the speaker arrives at the lectern. Lead the applause when he/she has finished, thank him/her and refer to the speech in some way to show that you have been listening.

In the same way announce all the speakers, then call upon the evaluators one by one and thank them too. Timing for evaluators is 4 minutes (lights: 2, 3 & 4). You may decide whether you wish to invite each evaluator to follow the speaker or, to give them time to collect their thoughts, group them together after all the speeches.

7. There may be a **WORD GAME** instead of speeches, in which case chair as instructed by the Vice President.

8. **BIG EARS** usually follows the speeches: introduce, thank and applaud: timing flexible here (Usually about 3 minutes)

9. **GENERAL EVALUATOR** (at about 9.50 pm) has a 10 minute slot to round off the meeting, which should finish by 10 pm (Lights: 8, 9 & 10): Introduce, thank and applaud.

10. **INVITE EVERYONE TO THE PUB** and bang the gavel to close the meeting.

September, 2004 - Sally D'Innella