

BASIC RULES OF ORDER FOR SOCIETIES

The following are basic rules of order, which may be useful to societies that have not adopted rules of order in their bylaws or otherwise. The bylaws determine many key procedural matters, but often don't say anything about rules of order – Robert's Rules of Order don't automatically apply, and can be challenging to understand and apply.

These rules should not be used without considering whether they are consistent with what the bylaws require, and amendment as needed. If they are used, they should be approved by ordinary resolution at the start of a general meeting – unless the bylaws state otherwise, a meeting has the power to determine its own rules and procedures.

If these rules are used, they should be approved by ordinary resolution at the start of the meeting.

1. The meeting will be governed in accordance with, in order:
 - a) The Societies Act, and any other applicable laws.
 - b) The constitution and bylaws.
 - c) The following rules.
2. Democratic principles, the rule of law, an orderly meeting that addresses the business at hand, and common courtesy are paramount. The meeting is only for the purpose of transacting the business of the society and its members.
3. Only voting members in good standing have the right to speak, to make motions, and to vote. Other persons attending may speak at the discretion of the chair. Each member present in person or by proxy has the right to vote on every issue.
4. A member who wishes to speak should wait to be acknowledged by the chair, and begin by stating her/his name, and any other pertinent information.
5. A motion or resolution must be seconded before it can be debated.
6. The person moving a motion or resolution has the right, except for undebatable motions, to speak for up to five minutes at the start of debate on it, and for up to two minutes at the close of debate on it. (An undebatable motion usually relates to procedural matters, and is voted on without debate.)
7. Each member has the right to speak twice to a motion or resolution, for no longer than three minutes each time. A member may only speak a third time, or for longer than three minutes, if permitted to by ordinary resolution.
8. A member may only speak a second time on a motion or issue when all members who wish to speak to it a first time have spoken.
9. Discussion, comments and questions must relate to the pending motion, report or issue. All other matters will be referred to the appropriate part of the agenda, or new business.
10. Debate on a motion may be closed by general consent, or by a motion to close debate. Such a motion is not debatable, and must be approved by a 2/3 majority.

11. A special resolution has the effect of amending the constitution or bylaws, and so is binding on the organization and the directors. A special resolution cannot be amended, there must be not less than 14 days written notice of the resolution to all members, and 2/3 of the votes cast at the meeting must be in favour for it to pass. A special resolution does not take effect until filed with Societies OnLine (the Registrar).
12. Ordinary resolutions include all resolutions notice of which has not been given. They cannot change the constitution or bylaws, and may not be legally binding on the society, except for elections and other matters specified in the bylaws or the Societies Act. They must be passed by a simple majority – more members vote in favour than are opposed. The chair may require that the mover of an ordinary resolution write it down before it can be debated.
13. Voting is by show of hands, unless a secret ballot is required by the bylaws, or when so decided by a simple majority of the voting members present. A secret ballot must be requested by or before the end of debate on a matter, and the vote on the request must be made by show of hands.
14. A motion to adjourn is always in order, and is not debatable.
15. Any procedural question not addressed by the Societies Act, the bylaws, and the foregoing, will be determined by the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.