

# S. W. R. I.



## CONDUCT OF MEETINGS AND BUSINESS PROCEDURE

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S RURAL INSTITUTES

42 HERIOT ROW, EDINBURGH, 3

Price 1/-

# CONDUCT OF MEETINGS AND BUSINESS PROCEDURE

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## Meetings

There are various kinds of Meetings, but the most common are :—Ordinary Meetings such as the Monthly Meeting of an Institute ; Committee and Sub-Committee Meetings which are attended only by the Members elected to serve on them ; and Annual Business Meetings at which the Committee and Office-bearers are elected, reports for the past year's work and financial statements are given, and plans for the future discussed.

**1. Ordinary or Monthly Meetings.** These should be held regularly at a fixed time and date, preferably in a Hall or School and are presided over by the President or Vice-President. If both the President and Vice-President are absent from a meeting, some other member of the Committee must take the Chair. She should be proposed and seconded and the members should signify their approval before the meeting starts. It should be remembered that the Secretary should never take the Chair.

The programme, which should last about 2 - 2½ hours, should include business, a talk or demonstration, tea, and some form of entertainment and competition. The business should not normally last more than 30 minutes, but care should be taken to ensure that members receive all relevant information.

It is desirable that only a small proportion of monthly meetings be devoted to Whist Drives and Dances.

It is recommended that one monthly meeting a year be devoted to the study of life of women of another country.

In order to keep in touch with the work of the Movement at National level, Institutes shall invite a Central Councillor to visit them to speak at least once in every two years.

All business shall be referred to the Institute members for decision. These decisions shall be arrived at by a definite vote.

The Monthly Meeting may occasionally take the form of an Open Night, which means that non-members are admitted. An item of general interest should be the reason for an Open Night, and Institute business should be done by members before the public are admitted.

Members should be asked for suggestions for the year's programme. Well planned and interesting programmes contribute greatly to the value and strength of the Institute. While taking their full share of activities for the good of the community, Institutes should not allow themselves to be used too much for raising money for other organisations. See pages 11 and 12 of the S.W.R.I. Handbook.

**2. Committee Meetings.** The Committee must realise that they are the representatives of their Institute elected to carry out the wishes of the majority of the members. All matters affecting the running of the Institute shall be decided by majority vote at a monthly meeting, the Committee thereafter carrying out the details.

Committee meetings shall be called by the Secretary at the instance of the President, Vice-President (in the absence of the President) or any three members who demand it. An Agenda should be sent with the notice calling the meeting.

Committee meetings shall begin with the reading of the Minutes of the last Committee meeting, which shall be signed by the Chairman when passed as correct by the Committee.

The Treasurer shall read a statement of finance when required. Any letters received by the Secretary should be read and put to the Committee by the Chairman. The Secretary should reply in accordance with the decision of the Committee.

All discussion of business at the meeting shall be addressed to the Chairman. The business discussed at Committee meetings must always be treated as confidential and never be disclosed by Committee members to members of the Institute in general. Decisions or recommendations of a Committee will, of course, be intimated to the general body of members by the President, who should not add any personal comments.

No member shall hold an official position, nor serve on the Committee of more than one Institute.

A majority of the Committee constitutes a quorum.

Because Committee and Sub-committee meetings are confidential the Minutes should be kept in a separate book. Any member who wishes to see the Minutes of the monthly meetings is entitled to do so, but not the Minutes of the Committee. See Pages 9 and 10 of the S.W.R.I. Handbook.

**3. Sub-Committees.** Sub-Committees may be of two kinds—those which are appointed for the whole term of office of the Committee which appoints them, and “ad hoc” or special Sub-Committees appointed to deal with one piece of work only. Of the first kind, a Sub-Committee to deal with Entertainments or Competitions would be an example. An “ad hoc” Committee would be one set up to deal with a specific Dance or Whist Drive.

The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Institute are ex-officio members of all Sub-Committees.

No Sub-Committee can hold office for longer than the Committee which appoints it, nor can it add to its numbers unless special powers of co-option be given it by the Institute.

Every Sub-Committee must be careful not to exceed its terms of reference—i.e. the powers and duties given it by the Committee. For instance, an ad hoc Sub-Committee appointed to make arrangements for a dance has no power to do anything except make arrangements for the dance—anything else is totally out of order. The terms of reference of a Sub-Committee should always be entered in the Minutes of the Committee meeting at which the Sub-Committee was appointed, so that in case of doubt, the Sub-Committee can refer back to the Minutes to discover the extent of its powers. Sub-Committees must report their proceedings to the Committee. The Committee has power to ask for a report at any time during the term of the Sub-Committee's office. See Pages 10 and 11 of the S.W.R.I. Handbook.

**4. Annual Business Meeting.** At the monthly meeting prior to the Business meeting, each member shall receive a list of all the members of the Institute. To vote, she shall put a X opposite the names of those she wishes to elect to the Committee, and she shall bring or send this marked paper to the

of the original motion has a right of reply, and she should claim this right after all discussion is over, and immediately before the motion is put to the vote. Members should not be allowed to address the meeting after a vote on any matter has been taken.

It should be kept in mind that once a motion is carried, it becomes a Resolution of the meeting, and the Office-bearers may act at once to carry out this decision. They need not wait until the Minutes are approved at the next meeting, but may act immediately the Resolution is passed.

## **Glossary of Terms used in Business Procedure**

### **Ad hoc**

(for this purpose). A sub-Committee formed for a special purpose which goes out of office when the purpose for which it was formed is accomplished.

### **Addendum**

(or Rider). May if seconded and voted on separately be added to a resolution after it (the resolution) has been passed. Unlike an amendment it does not alter the sense of the resolution.

### **Agenda**

The programme of the business to be brought up at a meeting.

### **Amendment**

A proposed alteration to a motion with a view to amendment or improvement of the original subject, by addition, deletion or modification.

### **Audit**

Examination of accounts by duly authorised person.

### **Co-option**

The power given to the Committee to add to its number.

### **Ex-officio**

(by right of office). The right of sitting ex-officio on a Committee or Sub-Committee is confined to the Office-bearers' term of office as these rights belong to the office, not the person. When Sub-Committees are appointed it should be decided whether their ex-officio members shall or shall not have voting powers.

### **Leave of Urgency**

A motion which has not appeared on the Agenda may only be brought up if leave of urgency is granted by a meeting.

### **Leave to Withdraw**

Must be asked of the meeting if the mover and seconder wish to drop a motion which has appeared on the Agenda. Unless leave to withdraw is granted by the entire meeting the motion cannot be withdrawn from the Agenda. A motion cannot be withdrawn after it has been voted upon.

### **Lie on the table**

When a meeting decides that a particular letter or paper shall "lie on the table" it is agreed that no action is to be taken meantime on the matter concerned.

### **Minutes**

The official summary of proceedings at a meeting, kept in a Minute Book.

### **Motion**

A proposal at a meeting for action to be taken. When proposed, seconded and agreed a motion is termed a Resolution.

### **Nem Con**

means a motion has been carried with no one voting against it, but some have abstained from voting.

### **Nominate**

To put forward the name of any person as candidate for an office. Before nominating anyone it is necessary to find out whether or not she is willing to serve if elected.

### **Point of Order**

To call the Chairman's attention to any irregularity, inaccuracy of statement or wording, or to ask a question.

### **Previous Question**

To move that the meeting proceed to the next business. This must be put to the Meeting and if carried the motion under discussion will be dropped. Cannot be moved on an amendment.

### **Proxy**

A person authorised to act for another.

### **Question be now put**

If seconded and carried the motion or amendment under discussion must be put to the meeting without further discussion beyond the right of reply granted to the mover of a motion.

### **Quorum**

The least number of members necessary to transact business. By the S.W.R.I. Constitution more than half the members of the Committee must be present at a meeting to constitute a quorum.

### **Rescind a Resolution**

The cancelling of a previous decision. This cannot be done unless prior notice has been given.

### **Sine Die**

Meeting adjourned without deciding the date of next meeting.

### **Substantive**

When the original motion is displaced by the passing of an amendment, this amendment becomes the "substantive motion".

### **Unanimous**

All of one mind and no one has failed to vote.