



## Episode 13 Running the Room

### Formal Rules of Debate — the Basics

*For use when formal rules are invoked.*

The Chair or any other Committee member may invoke the formal rules of debate when discussion is complex, sensitive, going in circles or becoming unacceptably heated. Once invoked, all the following apply:

#### 1. A motion must be on the table

There must be a formal motion — a specific, clearly worded proposal — that has been moved by one member and seconded by another before formal debate can begin. If there is no seconder, the motion lapses and discussion does not proceed.

#### 2. You may only speak with the Chair's permission

No one speaks without being recognised by the Chair. Raise your hand or say 'through the Chair' and wait to be acknowledged before speaking. Wait for the Chair's nod before you begin. The Chair manages the order of speakers without fear or favour.

#### 3. All comments go through the Chair

Speakers direct their comments and questions to the Chair — not to other members. Raise your hand or say 'through the Chair' and wait to be acknowledged before speaking. The Chair alone decides who speaks and when. Interrupting is not permitted.

#### 4. Speaking limits may apply at the discretion of the Chair

The Chair will call for speakers for and against the motion. Speakers for and against alternate and may be limited to two or three on each side. The Chair may set a consistent time limit at the start of debate and will indicate when time is nearly up. 3 to 5 minutes is generally a reasonable time. Speakers who exceed their time will be asked to conclude.

#### 5. The original mover has the right of reply

After all other speakers have had their say, the member who moved the motion has one final opportunity to respond before the vote is called. No new arguments may be introduced at this stage — the mover can only respond to what has been said.

#### 6. Offensive and improper language is prohibited

All debate must be conducted with respect. Offensive, abusive, threatening or personally directed language is not permitted. The Chair may call a member to order and, if necessary, ask them to withdraw a remark or leave the meeting.

**After debate:** The Chair calls the vote. All in favour — count. All against — count. Majority carries (unless it is a special resolution as detailed in your Constitution, in which case a 75% majority may be required). The motion, mover, seconder and result are recorded in the minutes.