

PUBLIC SPEAKERS SLIGO – Agora Speakers

Hot Questions – GUIDELINES

Purpose

- (1) To give members an opportunity to practice speaking “off the cuff”
- (2) To enable all members not filling roles on the night to have a chance to speak.

Rules of Engagement

- (3) Named members will be given a Question.
- (4) The Questions session is not a debate. Once you have spoken you may not come back in on that Question – there is no right of reply
- (5) If you wish to come in on a Question after the first speaker, raise your hand. However, preference will be given to those who have not yet had a chance to speak.
- (6) You are asked to speak for between one and two minutes. At two minutes a warning bell will ring, asking you to conclude. Remember: you are under no compulsion to speak for a full two minutes. If you feel you have made your point at any time before that, don't be afraid to stop.
- (7) Visitors (except for visiting members) will not be given a Question, but if they would like to speak on one may signal the Question-master by raising a hand.

Notes for Question-master

- At the start of the Questions session you accept the gavel from the Toastmaster and are now in charge of the meeting.
- As you are in the chair, you sit at the top table during the Questions session. However, it is good practice to stand while giving out the Question. This helps people to hear you more easily and follows on naturally as you stand to lead the applause and thank the speaker for their contribution.
- Begin by stating (for the benefit of new members and guests) the purpose of Hot Questions and specifying the Rules of Engagement.
- It is entirely up to you who and how many (if any) speakers are let in on a Question after the named speaker has finished. You aim to keep the session moving and varied.
- Do not allow the same person to keep coming in again and again: and do not give a Question to someone who already has a role on the night until all others have had a chance to speak.

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- Remember: as many people as possible should contribute to the evening. Also: people coming in as third or fourth speakers have had plenty of time to think about it and are not really speaking “off the cuff”.
- Don’t waste time with lengthy introductions to each Question explaining why you think it is particularly relevant or interesting.
- Don’t make the Question so long that by the time you get to the end the listener is confused as to just what it is you are asking. One sentence is plenty and there is no reason why a Question cannot be expressed in just one word.
- Nobody should have to ask you to repeat the Question. If they do you are either being too long winded or are not speaking clearly.
- Finally: Politics, sex, and religion are by convention “off limits” in a HQ session. As a matter of courtesy, whatever is selected as a question should not be embarrassing or offensive to the speaker or to the audience.
- At the conclusion of the session thank the audience for their participation and hand the gavel back to the Toastmaster; signalling that he or she now has control of the meeting again.
- Finally, ask the question first, then select a member. This means all members will begin formulating an answer rather than relaxing as the question is not for them.

KKT

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