

10th February, 2016

How to OGM

Introduction

This document hopes to clarify the procedure of an OGM, stating what happens when and how JCR members can contribute positively to discussion. The template agenda of an OGM will be given, followed by an explanation of each component part of the agenda. Particular detail will be offered on the subject of motions, the final element of the agenda.

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JCR President 2015-16

Contents

Template Agenda	2
Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting	3
Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting	3
Ratification of the Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting	3
President’s Business.....	3
Committee Business	3
Ratifications of any Dismissals or Minutes of Emergency or Extraordinary General Meetings held since the previous Ordinary General Meeting	3
Questions to the JCR Committee	4
Any Other Business	4
Hustings and Elections	4
Motions.....	5
Structure	5
Good Practice during motions.....	5
Procedural Motions.....	6

10th February, 2016

Template Agenda

- i. Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting.
- ii. Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting.
- iii. Ratification of the Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting.
- iv. President's Business.
- v. Committee Business.
- vi. Ratifications of any Dismissals or Minutes of Emergency or Extraordinary General Meetings held since the previous Ordinary General Meeting.
- vii. Questions to the JCR Committee.
- viii. Any Other Business.
- ix. Hustings and Elections.
- x. Motions.

10th February, 2016

Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting

It is verified that the minutes of the previous OGM have been sent out as required.

Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting

JCR members may contest any aspects of the Minutes that they deem an inaccurate reflection of the previous meeting's events.

Ratification of the Minutes of the previous Ordinary General Meeting

If there are no objections, or following the resolution of any objections, the Minutes are ratified. Steps i-iii usually take no longer than 30 seconds.

President's Business

The President gives a verbal update on what they have been doing recently and what they are intending to do in the future. They may also flag up notable upcoming events.

Committee Business

The rest of the Committee give brief updates on their current projects and any upcoming events.

Ratifications of any Dismissals or Minutes of Emergency or Extraordinary General Meetings held since the previous Ordinary General Meeting.

It is rare for this section of the agenda actually to occur in an OGM. However, if a member of any of the JCR's various committees is dismissed or if an Emergency General Meeting has taken place since the last OGM, any decisions made must be ratified in the following OGM.

10th February, 2016

Questions to the JCR Committee

If a JCR member has a question for any member of the JCR Committee, perhaps relating to an item brought up in the last OGM or during Committee Business, this is the time to ask it.

Any Other Business

Ronseal: does what is says on the tin.

Hustings and Elections

This section of the OGM is chaired by the IRO. For each JCR Committee position that is husted, the outgoing representative will give a short overview of what the role entails. Candidates are then invited to come forward, introduce themselves, and give a short speech stating why they would like to do the role, what ideas they have, and why they would be a good choice. The IRO will then call for questions from the floor. These questions should be address to *all* candidates. The IRO may disallow any questions that are felt to be irrelevant, malicious, or lacking in impartiality. Similarly, the IRO may curtail the period of questioning at their discretion.

10th February, 2016

Motions

Structure

Any motion brought to the OGM is first read aloud by the Chair. This is followed by short factual questions (SFQs). NB these questions should be **short** and **factual**. After there are no more SFQs, or at their discretion, the Chair will ask if there is any opposition. If not, then the motion passes automatically. If there is opposition (there must be two opposers to speak on behalf of the opposition), then formal debate follows.

The structure of formal debate is relatively simple: the proposer of the motion gives a speech in favour of the motion, followed by a speech from the first opposer. The seconder to the motion gives a second speech in favour of the motion, followed by another response, this time from the second opposer. Following these speeches, the Chair invites points from the floor. After the Chair is satisfied that a range of views have been expressed, the first opposer is invited to make a summary speech for the opposition. The proposer of the motion ends the discussion with a summary speech supporting the motion, and then a vote is taken.

At any point during the discussion of a motion, an amendment may be proposed and this amendment may be accepted into the motion if there is no opposition. In the event of opposition, formal debate is held over the amendment. In such circumstances, the proposers of the amendment take the role of the proposer and seconder of the motion in the process described above. Once the amendment is either accepted or rejected, debate resumes over the original motion in its new (or continued) form.

Good Practice during motions

It is often the case that the OGM sees the weaponisation of Short Factual Questions. A JCR member may in general support a motion, but have uncertainties about some of its phrasing for example. As such, since they do not want to oppose the motion but have certain doubts about its contents, there is a temptation to ask questions which are not factual, and often not short, in order to convey that doubt.

If anyone has any doubts about a motion, I would encourage them to oppose it rather than to misuse SFQs in this manner. A key principle to remember about motions is that those proposing or opposing motions are always doing so in what they perceive to be the best interests of the JCR; in that sense,

10th February, 2016

everyone is on the same side. Opposition should therefore not be seen as a personal sleight on the proposer or an expression of hostility, but as a desire to analyse the effects and ideas present in any given motion in order to see whether the motion is sound. Consequently, it is perfectly reasonable to oppose a motion in formal debate even if you suspect you will vote in favour of the motion when the vote is called; it is far better for a good idea to be passed after scrutiny than for a mediocre idea to pass unopposed.

If it is apparent that a motion by in large has the room's approval, but there is one particular sticking point that is causing apprehension in the meeting, it is good practice (and incredibly helpful) to propose an amendment to solve the problem. This is another reason why members should not refrain from opposing motions that have general but not unanimous approval from the room: formal debate allows for a range of views to be aired, and this in turn allows for more pertinent amendments. If the motion does pass, it will undoubtedly pass in improved form because of the opposition it has faced.

Procedural Motions

The Chair's role is to ensure the fair and good-spirited conduct of an OGM. However, the need for impartiality from the Chair can limit the speed with which they can hurry on discussion and naturally restricts their ability to express a view on matters; a Chair is doing a bad job if any member of the meeting feels that they have been prematurely silenced or victimised by the chair, and that their particular opinion has been omitted as a consequence. As such, it can be helpful for other members of the meeting, who are not bound by impartiality, to propose procedural motions when they feel such an intervention could improve proceedings. The procedural motions are listed below:

- i. *Quorum Count*: the Quorum Count shall proceed automatically if allowed by the Chair; the Quorum of the General Meeting is thirty members; the General Meeting shall be assumed to be quorate unless a Quorum Count is requested; if found to be inquorate, the General Meeting shall adjourn for five minutes; if quoracy is still lacking after reconvening then this shall be recorded in the Minutes and the meeting shall proceed in an advisory capacity only; further motions passed shall not become policy until the Minutes of the inquorate meeting are passed at the next Ordinary General Meeting.
- ii. *Challenge to the Ruling of the Chair*: the Proposer of this motion must state what they think that the ruling should be; resolution is by simple majority vote of those present.

10th February, 2016

- iii. *Secret Ballot*: requiring a simple majority vote to pass, this Procedural Motion shall force any Vote in the process of being held, but having not yet begun, to be held by Secret Ballot. The conduct of the Secret Ballot shall be fair under the charge of the Secretary to the General Meeting and the IRO, and Voting must be done through use of ballot papers. If possible the General Meeting should continue whilst the result of the Vote is determined.
- iv. *No Confidence in the Chair*: this requires the support of two-thirds of those present to be passed; if passed, the member acting as Chair shall vacate the Chair for the remainder of the meeting; the Chair shall pass to the Treasurer, the Information and Returning Officer, the Academic Affairs Representative, either Welfare Officer, either Entertainment Representative or a competent member of the JCR Committee from the floor, in that order.
- v. *Expulsion of Strangers*: pursuant to S.O. 8.1 and requiring a simple majority vote to pass, Expulsion of Strangers shall result in all non-members of the JCR being asked to leave the General Meeting.
- vi. *Expulsion of a Member*: any member may be expelled from the meeting for disruptive conduct with the support of two-thirds of those present.
- vii. *Removal of Silent Observation*: any member may propose this Procedural Motion in favour of any stranger present at the General Meeting; requiring the support of a majority of those present. If passed, the stranger in question shall be allowed to contribute to the debate but not to Vote.
- viii. *Adjournment*: A member may move that the meeting be adjourned until a specific time; adjournment requires the support of two-thirds of those present.
- ix. *Deferral*: by simple majority vote, a motion on the agenda of an Ordinary General Meeting may be deferred to the subsequent Ordinary General Meeting. Motions before Emergency or Extraordinary General Meetings may not be deferred.
- x. *Voting in Parts*: requiring a simple majority vote to pass, this Procedural Motion shall force the meeting to debate and vote upon the motion under consideration in the parts in which it was submitted; Voting in Parts does not force the meeting to move to a vote.
- xi. *Vote by Physical Division*: requiring a simple majority vote to pass, this Procedural Motion shall force any Vote in the process of being held, but having not yet begun, to be held by Physical Division.

10th February, 2016

xii. *Move to a Vote*: requiring a simple majority vote to pass, *Move to a Vote* will force debate to be curtailed and the General Meeting to proceed directly to speeches of summation and then to a *Vote*.