

Wolverhampton Speakers Club

WSC Etiquette - Our Speaking Conventions



Jasmine - why do we need speaking conventions at WSC?

Well Dave, we need to make sure that our meetings go smoothly and also that we speak sensitively and don't cause discomfort to our audience.



Addressing the Chair - Salutation

Each meeting has someone to chair the meeting and we address that person (and the audience) at the beginning of each speech, and maybe during the speech as well. This is called the 'salutation'.

We try to cover different expectations regarding appropriate gender recognition and we use one of the following forms of salutation:

- Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen
- Madam Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen
- Mr Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen
- Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

If the Chair of the meeting specifies a particular salutation for the evening, please use it.

Being sensitive during speaking

We do try to make members and guests feel comfortable during our meetings. That means we should always try to be sensitive about peoples' concerns, background and beliefs.



Normally you can speak about anything you choose but we do not explicitly talk about subjects that might offend members and guests. These subjects are ...

I'll explain about this on the next page ...

Sex

Politics

Religion

Our conventions explained

Sex

We do not want our speeches to be smutty or prurient and some of the audience might feel embarrassed about the subject.

We would not want to veto speeches about genuine gender issues but we must be sensitive about questions of gender identification and sexual orientation.

Politics

We understand that many issues have a political dimension, so the only things we veto are party political speeches or propaganda. Again, sensitivity is the watchword.

Religion

Religion can be a very sensitive subject and some views can be upsetting or even insulting to some.

Let us remember that some members and guests may have no faith.

In our multi-faith and multi-cultural city reference to religion should be avoided and the club is no place for evangelism.

However ...



Having said all that we should try to avoid making our speeches ***bland and boring*** - a little care and we can deliver vibrant, entertaining and inspiring speeches

What can the audience do?

The audience can help with the success of a meeting - at WSC we do this as a matter of course by being friendly, open and encouraging.

Meetings are not a free-for-all and we always support the speaker with applause and being attentive - even if they fall short - they will improve!

We do not heckle, nor do we call out - if you can't hear a speaker **DON'T** shout 'speak up we can't hear' - the Evaluator will pick this problem up later: give the speaker a chance, especially a learner who may lack confidence.

