

► Final Agenda and Papers

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WEA Conference 2018

Saturday 12th May 2018

Conference theme: 'Social impact and citizen engagement'

University of London, Student Central

University of Salford, Chapman Building

University of Edinburgh, John McIntyre Centre



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WEA

Adult Learning
Within Reach

Trustees Report

Since the Member Event in May 2017 Trustees have continued to monitor the financial position of the WEA. Greater detail on the financial position is set out below.

With regards to the financial performance in 2016/17, WEA closed its accounts with a surplus of £0.4m (2015/16: £0.2m deficit) which was mainly attributable to an actuarial gain on the defined benefits scheme of £1.4m. Prior to this adjustment there is an operating deficit of £1.0m which is mainly attributed to unrestricted funds offset by a surplus of £0.04m on restricted funds. This slightly exceeded the budgeted operating deficit of £0.8m which was expected in 2016/2017 due to the agreed investment in the SWIFT programme of transformation.

The initial forecast outturn for this year shows there will be an adverse variance to budget on unrestricted funds. This issue has been raised with Trustees, and the Finance and General Purposes Committee, as a delegated Board Sub-Committee has agreed a number of actions to improve this situation.

Many of the matters that Trustees have considered have also featured in Ruth Spellman's monthly detailed updates from the General Secretary/Chief Executive's office. These valuable updates indicate clearly how important it is that WEA maintains its national visibility and makes use of valuable contacts to retain its position as a major force in adult education.

In addition, in their governance role, Trustees have also considered the strategic implications of a number of matters that have the potential to affect the wider and longer-term operation and success of WEA:

- ▶ The success in our recent OFSTED inspection and the lessons to be learnt if WEA is to achieve an outstanding assessment at next inspection.
- ▶ The continuing development of the Membership system
- ▶ In light of recent events in the wider Charity sector, the crucial question of Safeguarding practices
- ▶ The important matter of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations – legal requirements that are so crucial in a Membership organisation
- ▶ The continuing implementation of SWIFT and arrangements for post-implementation audits.
- ▶ Educational strategy and developments
- ▶ Developing a longer-term strategy, jointly with Council, to prepare WEA to provide suitable adult education for society as it may emerge over the next 5/10 years.
- ▶ Emerging Government proposals for funding through the WEA's national contract process and the implications for business planning

Election of Officers to the Trustee Board

As reported in the papers accompanying the Preliminary Agenda, only one nomination was received for each of the two Officer roles of WEA Deputy President and WEA Treasurer that were open for election in 2018.

This means there was no contested ballot for these positions. The current incumbents Cliff Allum, Treasurer and Ruth Tanner, Deputy President will stand down at the end of Conference on 12th May 2018. They will be replaced by Cliff Allum, Treasurer and Marc Sherland, Deputy President when Trustees formally approve their appointments at their meeting on July 17th

The supporting statements received as part of the formal nominations are printed below:

Statement in Support of Candidature: Cliff Allum, Treasurer

The WEA faces a most challenging period. We operate in a country that seems not to value educating adults. We have seen recent governments oversee a decline in the funding for further education of a level that diminishes the provision for many working class young people and adults who for various reasons have missed out on formal education. We have a higher education provision where students leave with huge debts.

In a world where successive governments appear to believe that education is something people have to buy rather than an investment for the benefit of our society as whole, we need to remember and promote that education is something that people fought to have. That we came out of a movement that said education is not just for the few, but for the many.

In standing for my final term as Treasurer, I am minded of the contradictions we face. On one side we must ensure that operationally we can engage with the fast changing, internet and social media focused world that many of our students – current and potential – inhabit. Yet we need to embrace that historic sense of movement that sets the WEA apart, to challenge the idea that education is a commodity to be bought, but a right to be fought for.

So while our resources must focus on delivering the best possible educational opportunities for the people who will need and benefit from them most, we must also embrace the principle and practice of people having control of their own education and the organisation that provides it.

If I am elected treasurer, I will be resolute in advocating the democratic values of the WEA. We have become more professional in our approach, but this does not mean we should move to be a technocratic organisation. There is no contradiction between being professional and democratic. I have confidence in the members of the Association to make decisions about the future of the WEA and give effective guidance to the Executive. I am committed to devolving decisions as far as possible to regional level within a commonly agreed strategic framework. In the climate we currently face it would be easy to become defensive and more centralised. This would be a mistake. We must devolve decision making and our resources and resist any tendencies to become just another corporate education provider.

Statement in Support of Candidature: Marc Sherland, Deputy President

I am well known to the WEA both in the UK and in Scotland, as their Convenor for the last five years and as a member of the WEA Council, with chairmanship of the Conference Planning Group. A Humanist, performance poet, writer and folklorist, I am also a tutor, Burnsian and genealogist. I have worked with prisoners in Dumfries HMP, with individuals referred through the National Health Service and Positive Mental Attitudes Group and with the LGBTQ community.

Though living in Glasgow, I was born in Kent, and both my parents were WEA Adult literacy tutors in Chatham. I have been involved in aspects of education all my life, becoming a WEA tutor of creative writing and later in history, genealogy and other specialist topics. As the outgoing President of the Scottish Association of Writers I helped to reforge their Mission and direction through the creation and adoption of a five year Strategy Plan, and have been credited with turning around the fortunes and reputation of that Association.

I believe passionately in the benefits of adult education and that it should be within the reach of peoples of all beliefs, circumstances and backgrounds. Recently I helped to steer WEA Scotland through a difficult period of restructuring and refocusing and as a member of the MVGM committee have sought to engender an effective and inclusive membership system for the whole of the WEA. I bring to the role of Deputy President a clear vision, intensity of purpose and hope for the successful development of the Mission of the WEA as it continues to develop and adapts to the modern context.

The WEA faces many challenges, many not fully within its control and I am certain that I can bring my creative energy to harness opportunities to the benefit of all. I believe in democracy, in listening to the Membership and helping to formulate solutions through dialogue and effective decision making. If given the support of the WEA Membership, I am confident that my varied experience and many useful connections in the political as well as civic spheres will help further the objectives and aims of the Association. This is an unprecedented time of change and challenge and a time which demands a person able to recognise and realise the potential to allow the WEA to not only survive but thrive.

Council Report

Introduction

Since the last conference on 12th March 2016, Council has been focused on progressing the motions passed or remitted and introducing the new membership scheme.

Constitution

The two motions put forward by Council in 2016 were intended to promote a more inclusive and engaging approach to involvement in WEA democracy. Changes have been made to the Governing Document to enable an annual conference. 2018 will see the first formal annual conference. In 2017 WEA Council piloted a Members Event in a new format seeking to involve more people with a multi venue event linked by video conference and streamed to individual members.

The remission at the 2016 conference of the One Member One Vote (OMOV) motion to Council has enabled much discussion to take place both in the Constitutional Working Group and in Council itself, exploring how OMOV could be implemented. Presently there is an all member ballot for all Officer elections to the Board of Trustees. Council took the decision not to propose this as an option or a motion to conference because of the strong opinion that attendees should be able to hear the debate before voting and because conference motions are advisory not mandatory. The motion before conference is that any member attending future conferences, and not voting on behalf of a delegated body, should be able to vote on conference motions. While Council promoted full OMOV in 2016, Council opinion on this latest more limited approach to allowing individual members to vote was not agreed upon by a minority of Council members.

Further information on how Council has progressed the motions passed at Conference 2016 over the past two years was given in the Trustee report circulated with the Preliminary Agenda. This can be downloaded by logging in to the member website wea.org.uk/conference-2018 or by calling the membership team on 02074263460

WEA Membership

The new membership scheme was introduced at the member event last May and launched in August 2017. The motivation for introducing the new scheme was to harmonise the schemes across Scotland and England and ensure that WEA democracy is self sustaining in the long term. Vibrant and inclusive democratic structures such as

conference and Regional Committees require both active members and financial support. The request for voluntary donations following the conference in 2013 was of limited success, so Council asked for a review of how membership was defined and later took the decision to recommend a paid for membership scheme to Trustees, with the proviso that anyone giving their time as a volunteer or on a low income or under 25 years of age should be able to opt out of the fee. In the first 6 months over 2,700 people have joined the scheme and as more people join we will be able to increase the engagement in local events and activities. Members will also receive a new Highway magazine and Council would encourage members to take ownership of this publication and suggest content they would like to see in each edition. Other benefits to be gained from membership continue to be explored.

SWIFT

Council has contributed actively to the governance and implementation of organisational change through SWIFT. Council members and Council nominated and member elected Trustees have been involved in the wider consultations, the membership of the SWIFT Steering Group, a variety of focus groups and discussion at Council meetings.

Succession Planning

To maintain our vibrant democratic structures, with a Trustee Board where two thirds of Trustees are selected from the membership, we need to ensure more people are coming forward and are prepared to stand for election or nomination. Members directly elect four of our Trustees, the Officers, by an individual ballot. In recent years there have been few opportunities to exercise this right as the roles have not been contested (other than the election for President in 2016). Members are also represented on the board by four Association members, who are selected by, and from within, WEA Council. Outside of the Trustee Board's activities, WEA Council is also able to nominate three individuals to each of the Trustee sub-committees. Any member can be part of this latter process if they have the appropriate expertise. If you have specific expertise or interest in education, finance, marketing or risk assessment you can get directly involved in the governance of the Association via the sub-committees or consider joining your Regional Committee and becoming part of the Council.

Marc Sherland

Chair of Conference Planning Group

On behalf of WEA Council

Final Agenda

Motion 1

Conference calls on the Trustees to bring forward amendments to the governing document, so that every member of the WEA who attends conference shall have the right to vote on any motion and in any election thereat.

It should be noted that nothing in this motion diminishes the role of constituent bodies such as Branches and Regional Committees to send delegates, though no member attending shall be entitled to have more than one vote at conference

WEA Council

Amendment from North East Region

Paragraph 1: Delete "attends conference" and replace with "is delegated by a branch or region or their Scottish equivalent to attend conference"

Paragraph 2: Delete

Motion 2

Conference notes that one of the aims of the WEA includes "providing for the needs of ... those who are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged ... by providing education and teaching skills for employment, voluntary work and social inclusion".

While the move to on-line enrolment and electronic fee payment creates greater efficiency and reduces operational costs, it also creates barriers which may prevent disadvantaged students, including those who are socially or digitally excluded, from accessing WEA courses. This is particularly true for potential students who do not have debit or credit cards or access to electronic or telephone banking.

Conference calls upon the Trustees to ensure that manual procedures remain an option for students enrolling on courses and that this option continues to be advertised in brochures, leaflets and other publicity materials.

Conference also calls upon the Trustees to devote resources to providing more outreach events to attract socially excluded students and remove barriers to their engagement in learning.

Women Leading Learning Branch, Nottingham

Motion 3

Recognising the importance of developing strong and vibrant opportunities for women within the WEA, this conference calls on Trustees, governance and members to consider, encourage and help establish the formation of women's education branches within the WEA.

West of Scotland Local Association

Motion 4

Noting that 2019 marks the centenary of a "landmark" in the evolution of adult education in the U.K, i.e. the publication of the "1919 Report", this conference asks Trustees to convene a working group to celebrate the centenary, as a platform for raising the profile of adult education in the 21st Century.

North East Regional Committee

Motion 5

Recognising the importance of a vibrant membership base this conference calls on WEA Trustees and Regional and Scottish committees

- a. To promote the appointment of a membership development secretary/ group within every local branch/association/regional and Scottish committee, whose role should include the oversight of local membership and the promotion of a membership recruitment, retention and sustainability strategy;
- b. To amend the governing documents and statements of representation to facilitate this.

West of Scotland Local Association

Council commentary on motions

Council commentary on Motion 1 and the NE Amendment

Article 83.4 of the governing documents makes clear that the purpose of Conference is, amongst other things, “to hear the views of WEA Council, English Regional Committees, the Scottish Committee, the committees of Branches in England and Local Associations in Scotland Association Members and nationally Affiliated Organisations and patrons...”,

In November 2014 Trustees, Council and the Senior Management Team met to discuss leadership and governance in the Association. One outcome was to establish an evidence base on which to base recommendations for more effective and responsive Governance informed by member involvement.

This was followed by a large consultation and research programme which resulted in the motion to conference in 2016 and the adoption of the new Membership system which further reinforced the importance of the role of members as a key and central characteristic of the WEA as a whole. For instance in the latest application form for membership, which extols the virtues of membership to “Have your say in how WEA is run....”

In light of the fact that under article 83.4 individual members may speak, but not vote, at Conference, Council promoted the principle of One Member One Vote (OMOV) in Motion 2 to Conference 2016. A variety of initiatives at Regional and Trustee level have taken place since 2016 to widen the diversity of engagement in decision making and this initiative towards OMOV mirrors those developments at Conference level.

The Motion in 2016 was remitted to Council for further consideration but was not voted down. As described above consultation and discussion has taken place within Council as to how the OMOV principle may be implemented. During those discussions it became apparent that some parts of the WEA, both represented in the membership of Council and beyond, have concerns that replacement of current constitutional provisions simply with OMOV would lead to the disenfranchisement of various bodies currently able to vote under the governing documents. Those bodies that might be excluded if OMOV is the sole criterion for voting, are set out in Regulation 4.2 and are:

- ▶ Trustees,
- ▶ WEA Council members,
- ▶ 5 representatives of each Region,
- ▶ one representative of each Branch,
- ▶ fourteen Scottish Association representatives,
- ▶ two representatives of each Scottish Association,
- ▶ two representatives of each nationally affiliated member organisation,
- ▶ one representative of any voluntary structure recognised by a Region or Scottish Association and agreed by Trustees.

However, there are individual members of WEA who do not have a direct relationship to a voluntary governance structure (for instance our very valuable classroom and administrative volunteers) and under the current constitution they can have no direct influence over conference decisions (but are freely able to vote in officer elections or national consultations on constitutional changes.) So it is a current paradox that individual members can vote outside the forum of conference but not vote at conference.

In light of concerns expressed during the consultation process Council considered that the most appropriate immediate response is that stated in Motion 1. This simply allows that in addition to current voting rights, a further bullet point is added to Regulation 4.2 to the effect that individual Members who register for, and attend, conference are able to vote, if they are not voting under another category as delegates. No voting rights are to be removed with this change and each individual can only vote in one category.

At present those making a booking to attend conference provide details of their membership number and are then asked, if seeking to vote, for which body they are a delegate. It would be a simple task to add a line to identify an individual voting member and then allocate a distinct voting card for that category of voting delegate – as this extension of franchise only applies to those actually attending there should be no significant difficulty arising of a practical nature.

Amendment promoted by North Eastern Regional Committee

“Conference calls on the Trustees to bring forward amendments to the governing document, so that every member of the WEA who is delegated by a Branch or Region or their Scotland equivalent to attend Conference, shall have the right to vote on any motion and in any election thereat.”

Council recognises that the decision to submit Motion 1 was not unanimously endorsed and that NE Regional Committee had a different view. The NE view is that individual members, not delegated by Branch or Region or the Scottish equivalent, should not be able to vote on an individual basis. Council considers that this approach does not accord with the principle underlying the Motion from 2016 which sought the widening of the franchise to individual members from all parts of the association and not just from Branches or Regions (or their Scottish equivalents). Moreover the amendment could be interpreted as going much further than simply preventing the introduction of an OMOV element by apparently disenfranchising most groups who currently are able to vote (see bullet point list from Reg. 4.2 above). The amendment is directly contrary to the concept of widening democracy in the WEA.

Council commentary on Motion 2

Council entirely agrees with the expressed view that the widest range of options for registration and course engagement should remain available. This matter has been discussed in the context of reports provided to Council on the continuing implementation of the SWIFT programme and Council is satisfied that students and potential students will retain non-digital options for course application etc.

Council consider that outreach resources are essential to the wider engagement of students, especially those less likely to engage with the conventional cultural studies Branch programme. How such facilities should be realised and utilised will be a matter for the Regional Education Manager locally in light of the particular characteristics found in Region.

Council commentary on Motion 3

Council supports this motion as it recognises that circumstances exist where the promotion and development of single sex branches may be appropriate. Historically WEA has actively supported women's branches. Educational teams and volunteers should continue to support such groups where a need is found or emerges.

Council commentary on Motion 4

Council supports this Motion and will consider how such a working group might be established. It may be expected that NE RC takes a leading part in that working group in light of its skills in campaigning and its promotion of this motion.

Council commentary on Motion 5

Council supports the underlying principle to this Motion and would be happy, itself, to encourage these bodies to consider how to develop roles to encourage a growth in membership. However each Region, Branch or Scottish Local Association area has its own characteristics and it would be inappropriate for any national body to seek to impose a national model by specifying the approach to be adopted locally. None of the national governance documents would prevent such roles from being created immediately.

Marc Sherland

Chair of Conference Planning Group
On behalf of WEA Council

Standing Orders Committee Report

1 Introduction

The Standing Orders Committee (SOC), in line with the appropriate Regulations, has carried out its remit from Conference in the consideration of Motions and Amendments submitted. This SOC report provides supplementary details on timing and procedures, including a section covering the special points relating to the multi-venue structure. This report also includes details of the committee activities and a report on the Officer elections.

2 Meetings and membership

We have met on a number of occasions: 11 August 2016, 13 July 2017, 7 September 2017, 4 December 2017 and 20 February 2018. There have also been interchanges of emails to consider items relating to various matters concerned with the development of changes to the Regulations (see 4 below).

Prior to the 2016 Conference, there had been a vacancy on the committee and the call for nominations had resulted only in the four existing members being elected. Following conference, the Council proposed that Colin Barnes be nominated to fill the vacancy and this was duly agreed. At our first meeting of the cycle it was agreed that Frank Colls should continue as SOC Chair.

3 Preparations for the 2018 Conference

Initial discussions concerned the review of documentation for issue with the Preliminary Notice, issued in October 2017, this including a call for motions and a call for two Officer nominations. By the due date 5 motions had been submitted (see 5 below). Also, two officer nominations had been received for the two positions of Treasurer and Deputy President (see 11 below).

4 Notes on proposals on Regulations

Following the 2016 conference, the Constitution Working Group had begun discussions on possible changes to the Regulations, including matters concerning conference arrangements and procedures. The Chair of SOC had been informed of these moves and was invited to contribute to the discussions by correspondence and by attendance at one of the meetings. A number of points were covered and it was clear that there were differences of opinion on some of the suggested changes. The process is ongoing and may cover more concrete proposals arising from the 2018 conference.

5 Motions and Amendments

Following the issue of the Preliminary Notice, 5 motions were submitted and found to be in order after some minor wording alterations. The initial list was made available to WEA Council as required by Reg. 4.23A and they suggested a slight change in the order. This was accepted and the 5 motions were issued as the Preliminary Agenda. By the due date, one amendment had been received and found to be in order after a slight change in the wording (agreed by the sponsor). The Final Agenda of 5 motions, one with an amendment, is a separate document.

6 Arrangements related to Trustee and other reports

The order of business includes time for the Trustees to introduce their reports and accounts covering the period since the last conference, as well as the report covering actions arising from the resolutions from that conference. Delegates seeking any further information on any matter contained in these reports should submit their questions in advance to the General Secretary, with a final date for such queries as given in her covering letter. This is to allow any points of detail to be investigated and so enable a meaningful response at conference itself. Questions on other points from these reports may be taken from the floor at the discretion of the Chair.

7 Debating Motions and Amendments

The "Guidelines for Conference Participants part 2" outlines the general debating procedure. Each person addressing conference shall announce his or her name and the body they represent. Note that Reg 4.44 requires motions and amendments to be proposed by an accredited representative of the sponsoring body. If this not possible the SOC will allow an alternate delegate provided that SOC is notified in advance.

No delegate may speak more than once on any Motion or Amendment except that the mover of a Motion shall have the right of reply. Movers of a Motion shall be allowed up to 3 minutes and all other speakers shall have up to 2 minutes to present their case. Conference usually appreciates brevity so these times should be regarded as limits not targets.

In accordance with Reg 4.49, voting will be by a show of voting cards with each representative having one vote. All counting will be by tellers chosen from those attending in a non-voting category (such as staff).

8 Remission of motions to WEA Council

Reg 4.48 allows for motions to be remitted, this needing a procedural motion to come into effect. Whenever the procedure is suggested, the President may allow the debate to continue so that all delegates wanting to speak on the actual motion are given the opportunity to do so before the Procedural Motion is considered. The person proposing remittance shall summarise the specific points of concern so that conference is clear on the reason behind the proposal to remit. The mover of the original motion shall be given the opportunity to respond on the remittance suggestion before the President asks Conference to vote on the procedural motion. If remittance is agreed, the justification shall be noted for the conference minutes. If remittance is not agreed, the sponsor of the original motion shall, if they wish, be allowed the right of reply before the actual motion is voted on.

9 Additional points relating to the 3-venue Conference

Voting delegates (ie in one of the representative categories) will need to specify their chosen venue so that voting cards can be prepared and issued at registration, and so that valid lists of those entitled to vote are available. The general approach to the debates as given in Reg 4.39 to 4.53 is to be observed as far as is practical but with the following variations.

The President will be based at the London venue and will be in overall control assisted by the SOC Chair. The Manchester and Edinburgh venues will have a Chair assisted by an SOC member (names to be advised later). Speakers at each venue will need to indicate that they wish to contribute and venue Chairs will advise the President accordingly.

Motions and Amendments will be taken as listed in the Final Agenda and the President will ensure that there is a fair spread of contributions across the venues. As usual, any amendment will be taken after the initial motion has been proposed; the amendment will then be debated and voted upon. If the amendment is carried the initial motion, with the altered wording, is then debated and voted upon. If the amendment is lost the original wording is debated and voted upon. The right of reply is available to the mover of a motion (but not an amendment) should there be points which could be clarified arising from questions or issues mentioned by other speakers.

In a situation where there are no speakers in opposition, a counted vote should not be needed. The President will simply ask for a show of cards, for and then against, and the venue chairs will assess and report on the outcome

and the President will declare the motion or amendment carried.

When there have been speakers against a motion or amendment, or there is any doubt, actual voting will be counted by the tellers. Each venue will have 2 or 3 tellers chosen from appropriate staff members. The President will ask for cards to be clearly raised at all venues, firstly those in favour and then those against. At each venue the Chair will conduct the vote and the tellers will report the numbers of votes, for and against, to the venue chair and SOC member who will relay these to the President and SOC chair. The overall totals will be decided and the result announced.

10 Conference business and emergency motions

No business which does not arise from items in the previously circulated programme and agenda shall be considered by Conference, with one exception. Reg 4.51 allows for matters of an emergency nature to be raised by any of the constituent bodies by submitting the text of their motion to the Conference Secretary (see note below) by 5pm on Wednesday 9th May 2018 along with details of the body concerned and their contact details. The item will be considered by the SOC to decide whether it belongs in the emergency category. The SOC will report orally on any such items when their report is taken at the start of the conference.

11 Officer Elections

There were 2 elections scheduled, Treasurer and one of the Deputy Presidents. One valid nomination was received for each post hence no ballots were needed. We are pleased to congratulate Cliff Allum as Treasurer and Marc Sherland as Deputy President and they will take up their duties from the end of the 2018 Conference for a four year term.

12 Thanks

The SOC is grateful for the assistance and support provided by the General Secretary and relevant staff. In particular we would like to record the work done by Pearl Ryall which has been invaluable,

Signed:

Gill Aldridge, Colin Barnes, Frank Colls (Chair),
Martin Sundram, Betty Wolfenden

Note on email contact details: pryall@wea.org.uk

Election of members to Standing Orders Committee

Standing Orders Committee (SOC) is made up of five members, appointed by Conference. Only five nominations in total were received and therefore there is no contested ballot to be held. The five members of SOC in place for the next conference are therefore confirmed as:

Frank Colls (Chair)

I have been involved with the WEA since 1972, initially in London and continuing after I moved to Gloucester in 1990. I have been active at all organisational levels, holding various posts and am currently on South West Regional Committee. I was elected to the Standing Orders Committee in 2003 and became its chair in 2014. I think I have provided the right level of leadership in our activities and I have taken a close interest in the development of the regulations relating to conference business. I would continue to maintain the independent role of the SOC in its main task of protecting conference as an effective democratic forum for the whole Association.

Martin Sundram

I have spent most of my working life in roles in or allied to adult education in both further and higher education, as well as the trade union movement, currently working for UCU, the main lecturers' union in the UK. I have been involved in the governance side of WEA for a decade and a half, as Chair of the London Region for nine years, and as a member of the Standing Orders Committee on and off since 2006. I am committed to what makes us different to other adult education providers, in particular the democratic nature of the organisation and its history. I am honoured to be a part of this process, as the WEA evolves and adapts to the modern world while retaining its unique qualities of member participation and involvement, and its broad provision of learning relevant to an organisation committed to supporting democracy, citizenship and skills for all its learners and members.

Colin Barnes

I have served on the SOC for the last year and would wish to continue as a member. Although a key role of the SOC is overseeing the business of the Conference it also has to be involved with a number of related issues such as membership, democracy, relationships with WEA Council etc. The SOC has to be an independent body and its members should be experienced and comfortable with governance issues and, most importantly, ensure that 'rules' are followed and we are compliant with appropriate regulations and protocols. I think that I fulfil the requirements having been active in all aspects of WEA governance issues over many years and taken part in the governance of many statutory and charitable organisations. The work of the SOC is important and I look forward to continuing in my role.

Betty Wolfenden

There was an active WEA branch in the cotton and coal-mining town in which I grew up; most courses there were rather different from those I found in the Harpenden Branch which I joined in 1966. Each year since I have enjoyed WEA courses, frequently acting as Class Secretary as well as contributing to the running of the branch as Treasurer, Secretary and Chair at various times. I bring an in depth knowledge of the WEA at various levels: I represented the Branch on the District Council and represented the Hertfordshire Federation of Branches on the Regional Committee. Elected as Regional Vice Chair I joined both the Finance and General Purposes and the Education Committee, chairing the latter for some years.

Nationally I have served on various Committees, including the SOC for several years. Here skills which I developed in my working life – analytical skill, the necessity to be accurate with wording and precise in planning skills, have all proved to be essential. My commitment to the Vision, Mission and Values of the WEA is total. I believe that learning is a lifelong activity and WEA courses play an increasingly critical role in helping to fill the gaps in provision for students of all ages, contributing to employability and personal fulfilment. If elected I would attend all meetings, cooperate fully with fellow members and enjoy the challenges of producing clear comprehensive motions and a workable timetable so that members can participate fully in a democratic conference.

Gill Aldridge

I have been a member of the Standing Orders Committee since 2003 and believe that this committee should continue to support the Association by promoting and enabling constructive debate on Adult Education and the democratic ethos of the WEA. To help achieve this, I have taken a lead role in developing the "Guidelines for WEA Conference Participants".

I have extensive experience of managing agendas and planning conferences, within the WEA and other organisations. As a WEA student for more than 40 years and a recent Part-time Tutor, I have a strong commitment to lifelong learning. Currently I am: member of the Standing Orders Committee, member of the Education Strategy Committee, East Midlands Regional Treasurer (currently acting), Nottinghamshire County Forum Chair and Chair of Nottingham Branch Committee. I have also held office as: East Midlands Regional Chair (2003-2008), Nottingham Boots Branch Secretary.

Speaking to motions and amendments at conferences

This guidance is aimed mainly at Branch and Regional delegates who may lack experience or confidence in speaking in conference debates. The general advice is equally applicable to other delegates such as Trustees or members of the Association Council.

Does your branch or region have a motion or amendment on the Agenda?

A delegate from the branch or region which proposed a motion or amendment (the sponsor) **MUST** be in the conference hall to move it. If the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) is made aware prior to the opening of conference that no such representative will be present to move it, they may permit another accredited delegate to move it. If you are a regional delegate you cannot move your own branch's motion unless permission is given as above.

If your branch has submitted a motion but is unable to attend the conference, you must tell your Regional Education Manager or Chair so that they can arrange to notify SOC and find another delegate to move the motion.

How can you speak effectively in the debate?

At our conference, all motions and amendments do not need to be seconded. This does not prevent other delegates speaking in support. Remember that a well-presented argument on a controversial subject can sway the opinions of otherwise uncommitted delegates. The following points are important:

1 Starting off

Always address the president and conference and introduce yourself e.g. "President, delegates: Jane Smith,

2 The introduction – tell them what you are going to say

If you are not the mover, say whether you are speaking for or against. Then, briefly introduce your points.

3 The argument – say it

It is advisable to limit your speech to a few key points. Write clear notes and use them to help you keep to the point.

4 The conclusion – tell them what you said

Summarise the points. Your last line should be "Conference, please support (or reject) this motion (or amendment)."

5 Should you write out your speech and read it?

If you read your whole speech it can sound very flat and lifeless. If you are not a confident speaker, write out and rehearse the first few sentences to start you off.

6 Don't exceed the time allowed

Movers of motions and other speakers are allowed a limited amount of time (typically 2-3 minutes) as detailed in the SOC Report. If the amber warning light comes on, move swiftly to your conclusion. If the red light comes on, finish your sentence immediately.

Speakers who try to continue after this time may lose the support of delegates for an otherwise valid argument.

WARNING – If speaking time limits are reduced during the conference, revise your speech accordingly.

7 Don't repeat points

If someone else has already made the point you were going to make, don't repeat it unless you have something significant to add. If you have nothing new to say, do you really need to go to the rostrum?

8 How many times can you speak?

With one exception, a speaker can speak only once in the debate on any one motion. The mover of the motion has "the right of reply" usually done if other speakers have spoken against the motion or have raised points which need to be addressed.

Rules for debating motions and amendments

Association Conference has rules, or standing orders, to ensure that all motions are debated fairly and a wide range of views is heard. These rules are operated by the President and SOC.

The sequence to be followed in debating a motion

- 1 The mover of the motion makes a speech.
- 2 If there is an amendment, the mover of the amendment makes a speech.
- 3 The amendment is debated and voted on.
- 4 Steps 2-3 are repeated for any other amendments.
- 5 The substantive motion, i.e. incorporating any amendments, is debated.
- 6 The mover, if necessary, exercises his/her right to reply.
- 7 The substantive motion is voted on.

Voting is carried out by Delegates raising their coloured voting cards when requested by the President. If the result appears clear the matter is declared either "Carried" or "Lost". Where the show of voting cards indicates a closer result the President will ask for the vote to be retaken and counted by the Tellers.

What if there are several amendments to the same part of a motion?

The amendments are taken in the order in which they occur in the wording of the original motion. Depending on the wording of the motion and amendments, SOC may rule that if one amendment is carried then another amendment falls e.g. if the first amendment removes the wording which the second amendment proposes to amend.

What if the branch/region proposing the motion agrees with the amendment?

Amendments are often not controversial and the mover may indicate that their branch/region is willing to accept an amendment. In this situation, the amendment should still be moved, debated and voted on.

What if there are several motions with similar content?

SOC may invite sponsors of motions and amendments to create a composite, i.e. a single motion which incorporates all the significant points. If the sponsors cannot agree on a composite or if the motions are not sufficiently similar to composite, SOC may recommend that the motions be moved separately, with a common debate.

For further details see the guidance document Part 1 on "The role of the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) in dealing with motions and amendments for conferences".

Procedural motions asking for Remittance

The procedure to be followed is detailed in the SOC report.

The Governing Document of the Workers' Educational Association, which includes the regulations by which the Association operates, is available online at wea.org.uk/about/whoweare/governance or in paper copy from:

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