

A protocol for the treatment of club visitors

There are four stages in our overall experience with a visitor

1. initial contact and booking
2. final confirmation and reminder
3. the visit itself
4. follow up correspondence

Most of these fall in the brief of the Programme Secretary, but all members have a duty toward the visitor, especially those on the committee. Except for true professional speakers, our visitors are usually giving us their time as enthusiasts, claiming their transport costs only. We should always bear this in mind.

Note also that although tasks are assigned to specific Committee Members, we are all responsible for the visitor being properly treated, and in the absence of a particular Member, for whatever reason, another Member should step in, without being asked, to ensure the comfort of the visitor.

To describe the overall process,

1. The Programme Secretary decides (in liaison with the Competition and Outings Secretaries) on the layout of the programme. The programme varies little from year to year, with competitions and talks distributed as evenly as possible, bearing also in mind the need to include external as well as internal competitions.

Initial contact should be by telephone, which in the case of a totally new contact, gives the opportunity to “sell” the club a little. As well as the subject of the visit, be it talk or competition, such matters as expenses and technical requirements should be discussed. Having agreed a date for the visit, a booking form should be emailed the same day, with the visitors name, technical requirements and expenses already filled in, but with a request that various other defined sections be completed including a resume of the talk, biodata and photo honours. In the case of a judge, we simply need his/her photo honours for the purposes of our published programme.

2. About two weeks before the meeting, a final confirmation should be emailed, incorporating final timings for the event and directions to the College. This should be acknowledged by the visitor, and if an acknowledgement is not received within a couple of days, he/she should be called.
3. On club night, the visitor needs to be greeted by the Programme Secretary (but see also below) and immediately introduced to the Chairman, the Competition Secretary (when appropriate) and whichever Committee Member is responsible for the technical requirements of the speaker. He/she should then be assisted in unloading, and in setting up should that be necessary. He/she should be offered refreshments, especially if they have travelled a long way, and their order taken for the break. Water should be provided for the talk. Before the meeting, notes need to be provided to the Chairman showing as a

minimum, the title of the talk and a little about the speaker and his/her experience, plus a reminder of our upcoming meetings or outings. (We need also to get better defined the positions of the switches that control the room lighting and have someone ready to hit the right switch).

At break time the visitor should be served quickly by the Chairman, and should never need to queue. His/her expenses should also be dealt with now, so that following the meeting, he/she can get away promptly.

At the end of the meeting, a vote of thanks should be offered and the speaker should be offered assistance in reloading his/her car.

4. Having completed the meeting, The Programme Secretary should email a formal thank you on behalf of the Club within 24 hours.

In Summary our responsibilities are as follows

Booking	Programme Secretary
Confirmation	Programme Secretary
Greeting and assistance plus refreshments	Programme Secretary or whichever Committee Member is present when the visitor arrives
Room lighting	A Committee Member
Breaktime refreshments	Chairman
Expenses (breaktime)	Treasurer
Thanks (meeting)	Chairman
Thanks (formal)	Programme Secretary