



Incorporating the Variety Artistes' Federation

Variety Branch Rules and Standing orders

1. CONSTITUTION

- 1.1 Subject to the approval of the Council of Equity (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) a Branch may be formed and maintained in any area in which there are, in the opinion of the Council, sufficient members who desire the establishment of such a Branch.
- 1.2 Any member of Equity in the area in question, whether resident or temporarily employed there, shall have the right to participate in all Branch activities and to take part in Branch affairs, subject to 6.3 of the Standing Orders for Branch Meetings (Appendix 1) and Rule 14.2 of these Branch Rules.
- 1.3 The Branch shall carry out the Objects of Equity incorporating the Variety Artistes' Federation (hereinafter referred to as “Equity”) as set out in Rule 3 of the Rules of Equity. The immediate financial requirements of a new Branch will be met by a direct grant from the Council, and the Branch funds may be supplemented by such methods as shall first be approved by the Council. All Entrance Fees and Subscriptions collected shall be forwarded directly to the appropriate Area Office of Equity.
- 1.4 All the Rules of Equity and all amendments thereof shall be binding on the Branch. In the event of inconsistency between the Rules of Equity and those of the Branch, those of Equity shall prevail.
- 1.5 In all matters in which these Branch Rules are silent the Rules of Equity shall apply.

2. OBJECTS

- 2.1 The Objects of the Branch shall be the Objects of Equity as set out in Rules 3 thereof, primarily in the interests of Variety Artistes.

3. MANAGEMENT AND OFFICERS

- 3.1 The Officers of the Branch shall be:
 - 3.1.1 Secretary
 - 3.1.2 Assistant Secretary
 - 3.1.3 Chair
 - 3.1.4 Vice-Chair
 - 3.1.5 Treasurer
 - 3.1.6 P.R.O.
- 3.2 All Officers shall be ex-officio members of every Branch Committee
- 3.3 Only registered members of a Branch may nominate or be nominated for office.

- 3.4 Auditors shall be appointed by the Branch, but must not be members of the Branch Committee.
- 3.5 The Duties of the Secretary shall be:
- 3.5.1 To transact the business of the Branch in accordance with the Rules of Equity and act under the instruction of the Branch Committee in consultation with the Area Organiser and/or Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising
- 3.5.2 To correctly record the minutes of the Branch and/or Committee meetings and furnish a copy of such minutes to the Area Organiser and/or Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising, after such meetings.
- 3.5.3 To keep an up-to-date Register of Members of the Branch. He/she shall be the custodian for the duration of his/her office of all books, correspondence and papers, or other property of the Branch shall be kept either by the Branch Secretary or at any other such place as the Branch Committee may direct, and shall exercise due and proper care to ensure their preservation. All paperwork relating to the Branch (excluding minutes and financial documents) may be securely destroyed after a period of 4 years.
- 3.5.4 To sign all cheques approved by the Branch Committee.
- 3.5.5 To convene meetings of the Branch and Branch Committee when the business of the Branch so requires after consultation with the Area Organiser and/or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising.
- 3.5.6 To draw up the Annual Report for the Branch to be submitted to the Branch Annual General Meeting. All such documents shall also be sent to the Area Organiser and Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising after such a meeting.
- 3.5.7 To submit quarterly Branch expenses to the Area Organiser.
- 3.5.8 When the Branch does not elect any of the Officers stipulated by these Rules, he/she shall fulfil those duties until those Officers are elected at the next Annual General Meeting.
- 3.5.9 To attend all meetings called by the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising or Area Organiser, as a representative of the Branch.
- 3.6 Duties of the Branch Assistant Secretary shall be:
- 3.6.1 To work under the direction of the Branch Secretary and to act as Branch Secretary in his/her absence.
- 3.7 Duties of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be:
- 3.7.1 The Branch Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Branch. He/she shall not have a vote at such meetings, but in the event of there being an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote which he/she may exercise.
- 3.7.2 The Branch Chair shall sign cheques approved by the Branch Committee in accordance with Rule 5 herein.
- 3.7.3 If the Branch Chair is unable to attend any meeting of the Branch, the Vice-Chair shall preside. In all other instances a Chair for the meeting shall be elected from amongst those who are present.
- 3.8 The Duties of the Treasurer shall be:
- 3.8.1 To keep up the entries in the Bank Books, Cash books and other such books and accounts as the Branch may require, and satisfy the Branch from time to time that the Rules relating to finance are being observed.
- 3.8.2 To make a financial report at each Branch meeting.
- 3.8.3 To sign cheques approved by the Branch Committee in accordance with Rule 5 herein.
- 3.8.4 To draw up an Annual Statement of Accounts of the Branch finances to be submitted for approval at the Branch Annual General Meeting.
- 3.9 The Duties of the P.R.O. shall be:

- 3.9.1 To publicise the affairs of the Branch generally, provided that any material which is to be published in any newspaper or any other form of publication shall not be published until and unless it has been approved by the Area Organiser or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising acting on behalf of the Council.
- 3.10 The Duties and Composition of the Committee shall be:
- 3.10.1 The elected Committee shall consist of the Officers and an agreed number of other members which shall be decided at each Annual General Meeting and shall not in any case be less than 5 other members. The Branch may co-opt up to the agreed number of Committee members should it prove necessary during the year provided that the number of additional members does not exceed the number agreed at the Annual General Meeting.
- 3.10.2 Generally to supervise, control and manage the affairs of the Branch, subject to the approval of the Branch.
- 3.10.3 The Committee shall have the power to appoint such Sub-Committees as it deems necessary, in consultation with the Area Organiser and/or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising acting on behalf of the Council, and may invite any member of the Branch with the necessary qualifications, to be a member of any Sub-Committee.
- 3.10.4 Any additional Committee members shall be elected at a Branch meeting.

4. THE OFFICERS OF THE BRANCH

- 4.1 Officers of the Branch shall be 'Honorary' and all Officers shall be subject to the approval of the Council or the Deputy for the General Secretary Industrial and Organising acting on behalf of the Council.
- 4.2 No Officer or Branch Committee member shall be an Agent or an Employer or any person with a financial interest in an artistes' employment agency or in the employment of persons in the entertainment industry, or shall be employed in an artistes' employment agency.
- 4.3 In the event that any Officer of the Branch is unable to continue in office, his/her deputy shall carry out his/her duties. If there is no deputy to carry out the duties, the Branch Secretary shall undertake those duties until the next Annual General Meeting.
- 4.4 Should the members of any Branch wish to remove any Officer or member of the Committee from office during his/her year in office, a motion requesting the removal of the Officer or member of the Committee, proposed and seconded by two registered members of the Branch in full benefit and signed by 20 other registered members of the Branch in full benefit, and setting out the grounds for the request, shall be sent to the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, at least 21 days before the Branch meeting at which the motion is to be discussed. The Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, shall immediately inform the person about whom the complaint is made and shall decide whether the request is acceptable. If he/she accepts the request, he/she shall inform all Branch members within 14 days of the Branch meeting at which the request is to be discussed.
- 4.5 If, at the Branch meeting, the request is carried by a two-thirds majority of those present then the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising. Provided that, should the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising, decide that the proposal is not acceptable, the proposer and seconder shall have the right to appeal to the Council for final decision.

5. FINANCE

- 5.1 Branches shall open a Banking Account in the name of Equity authorised by the Council. All cheques drawn on this account shall be signed by the Branch Secretary and either the Branch

Treasurer or Branch Chair. Subject to the approval of the Council a separate banking account may be opened into which all monies from the Branch's own special activities shall be deposited. Such an account shall be known as "Equity [Title of Branch] Branch Benevolent Fund" and shall be used at the discretion of the Branch. Cheques drawn on this account shall be signed by the Branch Secretary and either the Branch Treasurer or Chair. All Branch funds shall be the property of Equity.

6. ANNUAL MEETING

- 6.1 The Branch shall decide at a Branch Meeting at least two months before its Annual General Meeting whether to opt to allow postal voting for the Committee and Officers at the Annual General Meeting. If no such decision is made then postal voting shall not be allowed.
- 6.2 The Branch Annual General Meeting shall be held on a date arranged by the Branch Committee in consultation with the Area Organiser and/or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising.
- 6.3 The quorum for an Annual General Meeting shall be as for a Branch meeting.
- 6.4 The Annual General meeting shall be subject to the Standing Orders for Branches amended to include Rule 6.6 herein.
- 6.5 If the Branch has not opted to use postal voting for the election of the Committee and Officers or no such decision has been made then the following procedure shall apply.
- 6.6 Election Procedure without postal voting
- 6.6.1 Each registered member of the Branch will receive notification of the date of such Annual General Meeting together with an official nomination form at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. All nominations shall be returned to the Area Organiser not less than two days before the Annual General Meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted only when no nominations have been received for a position of a branch officer or a smaller number of committee nominations than places have been received by the closing date for postal nominations.
- 6.6.2 The election of the Officers and the Branch Committee shall be held at the Annual General Meeting under the direction of the Area Organiser or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising, and each Officer and Committee member shall be eligible for re-election. Upon the commencement of the electoral procedures, the previous Committee members and Officers shall cease to hold office and the Area Organiser or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial & Organising, shall remain in the Chair until the electoral procedures are completed.
- 6.6.3 Voting for Officers and Committee members shall be by secret ballot at the meeting. If there is a tie then there shall be a recount and, if there is still a tie, a further election will be held at the next Branch meeting. If the present Office holder is one of the candidates in the event of a tie, he/she shall continue in office pending the next Branch meeting.
- 6.6.4 If the Branch has opted to use postal voting for the election of the Committee and Officers then the following procedure shall apply.
- 6.7 Election Procedure with postal voting
- 6.7.1 Each registered member of the branch will receive notification of the date of such annual general meeting together with an official nomination form and a request form for a postal voting form at least 6 weeks before the annual general meeting. A postal vote can be used by a branch member who is unable to attend the annual general meeting and where there is more than one nomination for any of the positions of branch officer or a larger number of committee nominations than places.

- 6.7.2 All nominations and postal vote requests shall be returned to the Area Organiser not less than 21 days before the annual general meeting. The Area Organiser shall send out postal ballot forms to those members registered for a postal vote to arrive at least 14 days before the date of the annual general meeting when there is more than one nomination for any of the positions of branch officer or a larger number of committee nominations than places. Ballot forms shall be returned to the Area Organiser not less than two days before the annual general meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted only when no nominations have been received for a position of a branch officer or a smaller number of committee nominations than places have been received by the closing date for postal nominations.
- 6.7.3 The election of the Officers and the Branch Committee shall be held at the Annual General Meeting under the direction of the Area Organiser or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, and each Officer and Committee member shall be eligible for re-election. Upon the commencement of the electoral procedures, the previous Committee members and Officers shall cease to hold office and the Area Organiser or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, shall remain in the Chair until the electoral procedures are completed.
- 6.7.4 Voting for officers and committee members shall be by secret ballot at the meeting. Votes cast at the meeting shall be combined with any postal votes received. If there is a tie then there shall be a recount and, if there is still a tie, a further election will be held at the next branch meeting and a further postal ballot will be sent to those members who had previously requested one and are unable to attend the next branch meeting. If the present office holder is one of the candidates in the event of a tie, he/she shall continue in office pending the next branch meeting.
- 6.8 The elected Officers and Branch Committee shall be subject to the approval of the Council or Deputy for the Secretary, Industrial and Organising, acting on behalf of the Council. However, the Council shall have the power to remove any member from office.

7. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

- 7.1 The Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, may authorise the Branch Committee to call a Special General Meeting if he/she deems it necessary. Each member shall receive at least 14 days notice of such a meeting.

8. COMMITTEE MEETING

- 8.1 See Standing Orders for Variety Branch Committees, Appendix 2.

9. BRANCH MEETING

- 9.1 Each member of the Branch shall receive at least 14 days notice of such a meeting. No resolution made at any Branch meeting shall be considered operative unless and until approved by the Council or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, acting on behalf of the Council. See also Standing Orders for Variety Branch Meetings Appendix 1.

10. INSPECTION OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS & MINUTES

- 10.1 Any registered member and/or Officer may inspect financial accounts at a Branch meeting. Minutes of previous meetings may be inspected at a Branch meeting provided prior notice has been given.

11 ANNUAL REPRESENTATIVE CONFERENCE

- 11.1 In accordance with Rules 37.2.3 to 37.2.8 of the Rules of the Union, the Branch Committee shall elect annually from among its members by ballot of all members of the Committee, two representatives to attend the Annual Representative Conference except that, if the Branch represents fewer than 200 members, it shall be entitled to only one representative. Co-optees to the Branch Committee may not take part in this election.
- 11.2 In accordance with Rules 37.2.14, 37.2.15 and 37.2.17 of the Rules of the Union, the Branch shall be entitled to submit one motion and one amendment to a motion to the Annual Representative Conference.
- 11.3 In accordance with Rule 37 of the Rules of the Union, elected representatives shall discuss the Conference agenda with Branch members at a Branch meeting prior to the Conference and shall report back to a Branch meeting afterwards, or submit a written report if for good reason they are unable to attend.
- 11.4 In accordance with Rule 37 of the Rules of the Union, elected representatives shall not be mandated by the Branch meeting, but each representative shall be free to decide how to vote after listening to the debate at the Conference. They shall have a single vote each.

12. NOMINATION AND SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATES IN EQUITY ELECTIONS

- 12.1 The branch may nominate eligible candidates for elections to the Council, in accordance with Rules 14.1 and 15.3 of the Rules of the Union, or the national, industrial, specialist, equality or young member committees.
- 12.2 The branch may support the candidacy of a member or members already nominated and standing for elections for the President, the Council or the national, industrial, specialist, equality or young member committees. 12.3 Any proposal for nomination or for support must appear on the agenda circulated in advance of the branch meeting and the member or members should be informed of and consent to the proposal.
- 12.4 The decision shall be made by a simple majority vote of those present, voting for and against and entitled to vote under Branch Rule 1.2, and must be recorded in the minutes. The branch may also report the fact of such a decision through a branch newsletter but nothing further. It may report further detail on the Branch website or on social media.
- 12.5 When nominating candidates, an officer of the branch must complete and sign the relevant section of the candidate's nomination form stating clearly the name of the nominating branch.
- 12.6 The branch may take a decision to support the candidacy of a member or members already nominated and standing for election at any time up to the close of poll.
- 12.7 A member who is nominated or supported by the branch shall be entitled to make that support known in their election statement and any election materials they produce themselves which do not use union resources.

13 LOCAL AND REGIONAL TUC STRUCTURES

- 13.1 Branches are encouraged to affiliate to local Trades Union Councils within their area.
- 13.2 Affiliation to a local Trade Union Council shall be agreed at a branch meeting and shall be sent to the Equity Council for endorsement.

- 13.3 A branch may elect one representative for each local Trade Union Council affiliation. Any affiliation without an elected representative shall be deemed by the Equity Council to have lapsed.
- 13.4 The General Secretary shall be notified of the identity of each elected representative.
- 13.5 The elected branch representative shall provide a written report to each meeting of the branch on the activities of the local Trade Union Council meeting they attend. Reasonable travel expenses will be paid on receipt of the report.
- 13.6 Where a local Trade Union Council area intersects with the areas of two or more Equity branches the General Secretary shall determine which branch affiliates.
- 13.7 Motions to a regional TUC structure and a request to send a representative to that regional TUC structure must be submitted to the Equity Council.
- 13.8 Nominations shall be decided by decision of a Branch meeting. The General Secretary will propose formal nominations from Equity officials to specific bodies where this is requested or felt necessary.
- 13.9 Council must endorse participation and where there is more than one nomination Council shall determine the Union's representatives by a ballot of its members.
- 13.10 Reasonable travel expenses will be paid only for one representative for each Regional TUC structure endorsed by the Council. Other representatives endorsed by Council may only participate on a purely voluntary activist basis. Council shall determine the nominated representative who may receive expenses and claims shall be paid only where a report to Council on the meeting accompanies the expenses claim form.
- 13.11 Motions to Regional TUC Conferences must be submitted by Branches to the Regional Equity official who will co-ordinate with Branch Secretaries which motions to forward to the Council for endorsement.

14 GENERAL

- 14.1 Any member may apply to be placed on the Branch Register if resident or temporarily employed with the area of the Branch. The onus is on the member to ensure that he/she is in that Branch Register.
- 14.2 All members of Equity shall be eligible to attend Branch meetings but may not vote on Branch matters unless their names have appeared on the Branch Register for a period of 14 days prior to the meeting at which the member intends to vote.
- 14.3 No alteration shall be made to these Branch Rules and Standing Orders except by the Council, but the Branch Meeting shall have the right to refer a request to alter any Rule or Standing Order to the Council whose decision shall be final.
- 14.4 Each member of the Branch will be supplied with a copy of the Branch Rules on request.
- 14.5 The Council shall interpret these Rules and their decision shall be final and binding.

15. DISSOLUTION OF THE BRANCH

- 15.1 This shall occur when a Branch Meeting tables a motion to dissolve the Branch and obtains a two-thirds majority for the motion. Subject to the approval of the Council or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, acting on behalf of the Council, a ballot of all members of the Branch who were in benefit at the time of the Branch meeting will be held. The Branch shall only be dissolved subject to two-thirds of members of the Branch voting in approval.
- 15.2 Upon the dissolution of the Branch, all monies at the time remaining in the Fund shall be allocated to the relevant Branch(s) to which the members are transferred.

APPENDIX 1 - Standing Orders for Variety Branch Meetings

1. MEETINGS

- 1.1 Branch meetings shall be held as often as deemed necessary but in any event not less than four shall be held every twelve months.
- 1.2 A quorum for a Branch Meeting shall be ten members of the Branch, where the Branch has two hundred registered members or more, or eight members of the Branch, where the Branch has fewer than two hundred registered members.
- 1.3 Members attending by remote means shall count towards the quorum, however no more than four members shall be permitted to attend by remote means at each meeting.
- 1.4 If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting to commence, the meeting shall be dissolved.
- 1.5 Any business unfinished at the meeting shall take precedence at the following meeting.
- 1.6 Admittance to Branch meetings shall be by paid up membership cards provided that a Branch shall have the power to admit guests to meetings if the Branch so decides.

2. AGENDA

- 2.1 An agenda shall be prepared by the Branch Committee and circulated to all members with the notice for the meeting in accordance with Branch Rule 9.1. The agenda should include all or some of the following items:
 - 2.1.1 Apologies for absence;
 - 2.1.2 Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting and matters arising therefrom;
 - 2.1.3 Branch Chair's report;
 - 2.1.4 Branch Secretary's report;
 - 2.1.5 Branch Treasurer's report;
 - 2.1.6 Guest speaker/topic for discussion, if any;
 - 2.1.7 Motions, of which notice has been given;
 - 2.1.8 Equity Council report;
 - 2.1.9 National Committee and other reports;
 - 2.1.10 Organiser's report
 - 2.1.11 Walk On & Supporting Artists
 - 2.1.12 Recruitment & retention;
 - 2.1.13 Health & safety;
 - 2.1.14 Equality & diversity;
 - 2.1.15 Any other business.
- 2.2 All the items on the Agenda shall take precedence over any other business.
- 2.3 Any member wishing to ensure that business is considered at any Branch meeting may do so by giving seven days prior notice in writing to the Branch Secretary of his/her intention to raise the matter(s).

3. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

3.1 The suspension of any one or more of these Standing Orders may be moved by a member and the mover of the motion must state specifically which Standing Order or Orders he/she wishes to have suspended and for how long, but this suspension shall apply only to the meeting at which the suspension is moved.

3.2 A majority vote of two-thirds of the members present and entitled to vote shall be required before any Standing Order can be suspended.

4. MOTIONS

4.1 No motion previously accepted and recorded in the Minutes can be rescinded or re-discussed without prior notice of at least seven days having been given, and no motion may be re-discussed more than once.

4.2 Any motion, apart from the acceptance of the accuracy of the Minutes or procedural motions, shall be subject to the approval of the Council.

4.3 The mover of the motion shall be allowed 10 minutes and all other speakers, including seconds, five minutes.

4.4 No speaker shall speak more than once on any motion or amendment (except on a point of order or clarification) except the mover of the motion who shall have the right to reply. After the mover has replied, or, if he/she does not exercise the right to reply, no further discussions shall take place, and the resolution shall be put to the vote.

4.5 Any member who has not spoken on the motion being debated may move, "that the question now be put" (meaning that the matter has been sufficiently debated) or "next business" (meaning that the meeting shall proceed to the next business and allow the matter under discussion to drop). A motion "that the question now be put" or "next business", shall be put to the vote immediately and without discussion. If a motion "that the question now be put", is carried, the mover of the original motion has the right to reply before it is put to the meeting.

4.6 The Chair's ruling on any point whatsoever shall be binding unless it be challenged by any member, in which case the ruling shall be immediately submitted to the vote of the meeting by the Secretary without discussion.

5 RULES OF DEBATE

5.1 Addressing the Meeting

5.1.1 Speakers must address the Chair and give their names.

5.1.2 No member shall interrupt a speaker except on a point of order which must deal only with procedure.

5.1.3 A member may raise a point of information only with the consent of the Chair. A point of information is to seek rather than give information.

5.1.4 Should the Chair stand during a debate, the member speaking shall give way and neither he/she nor any other member shall speak until the Chair gives leave.

5.1.5 All contributions to the debate must adhere to the Guiding Principles for Branch Meetings set out in Appendix 3.

5.2 Disorder

5.2.1 Any member refusing to obey when called to order shall be named from the Chair. If he/she still refuses to come to order, he/she shall be expelled from the meeting.

5.2.2 An expelled member may also be expelled from the following meeting of the Branch if so determined by a two-thirds majority of the members present and entitled to vote at the meeting from which he/she was first expelled.

5.2.3 The Chair may, at any time, if he/she thinks it desirable in the interests of order, quit the Chair and declare the meeting temporarily adjourned for a time to be named by him/her, which shall not exceed 30 minutes.

6. VOTING

6.1 Voting shall be by a show of cards except where a ballot vote has been specifically agreed.

6.2 All members shall be allowed one vote, but the Chair of the meeting at which the voting takes place shall only be entitled to a casting vote.

6.3 Only Branch members who have been registered for 14 days shall vote upon matters specifically concerned with the Branch. Matters of policy concerning Equity as a whole may be voted upon by all members present regardless of whether or not they are members of the specific Branch.

7. DATE OF MEETING

7.1 The date of the next Branch meeting shall be announced before the closure of the current meeting, and members of the Branch who are absent must be given at least seven days notice of the date of the next meeting.

8. ALTERATION TO STANDING ORDERS

8.1 No alteration shall be made to these Standing Orders provided that any Branch shall have the right to refer a request to alter any Standing Order to the Council whose decision shall be final.

APPENDIX 2 - Standing Orders for Variety Branch Committees

1. MEETINGS

- 1.1 Committee Meetings shall be held as often as deemed necessary but in any event one shall be held every eight weeks.
- 1.2 A quorum for a Committee Meeting shall be five members.
- 1.3 If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting to commence, the meeting shall be dissolved.
- 1.4 Any business unfinished at the meeting shall take precedence at the following meeting.

2. AGENDA

- 2.1 An Agenda for all Committee meetings shall be prepared by the Branch Secretary in consultation with the Branch Chair.
- 2.2 All the items on the Agenda shall take precedence over any other business.

3. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 3.1 The suspension of any one or more of these Standing Orders may be moved by a member of the Branch Committee and the mover of the motion must state specifically which Standing Order or Orders he/she wishes to have suspended and for how long, but this suspension shall apply only to the meeting at which the suspension is moved.
- 3.2 A majority vote of two-thirds of the Branch Committee present shall be required before any Standing Order can be suspended.

4. MOTIONS

- 4.1 No motion previously accepted and recorded in the Minutes can be rescinded or re-discussed without prior notice of at least seven days having been given, and no motion may be so re-discussed more than once.
- 4.2 Any motion, apart from the acceptance of the accuracy of the Minutes, shall be subject to the approval of the Council or the Deputy for the General Secretary, Industrial and Organising, acting on behalf of the Council.
- 4.3 No speaker shall speak more than once on any motion or amendment (except on a point of order or clarification) except the mover of the motion who shall have the right to reply. After the mover has replied, or, if he/she does not exercise the right to reply, no further discussion shall take place, and the resolution shall be put to the vote.
- 4.4 Any member of the Committee who has not spoken on the motion being debated may move "that the question now be put", (meaning that the matter has been sufficiently debated) or "next business", (meaning that the meeting shall proceed to the next business and allow the matter under discussion to drop). A motion, "that the question now be put" or, "next business", shall be put to the vote immediately and without discussion. If a motion, "that the question now be put", is carried, the mover of the original motion has the right to reply before it is put to the meeting.

- 4.5 The Chair's ruling on any point whatsoever shall be binding unless it be challenged by any member of the Committee, in which case the ruling shall be immediately submitted to the vote of the meeting by the Secretary without discussion.

5 RULES OF DEBATE

5.1 Addressing the Meeting

- 5.1.1 Speakers must address the Chair and give their names.
- 5.1.2 No member shall interrupt a speaker except on a point of order which must deal only with procedure.
- 5.1.3 A member may raise a point of information only with the consent of the Chair. A point of information is to seek rather than give information.
- 5.1.4 Should the Chair stand during a debate, the member speaking shall give way and neither he/she nor any other member shall speak until the Chair gives leave.
- 5.1.5 All contributions to the debate must adhere to the Guiding Principles for Branch Meetings set out in Appendix 3.

5.2 Disorder

- 5.2.1 Any member refusing to obey when called to order shall be named from the Chair. If he/she still refuses to come to order, he/she shall be expelled from the meeting.
- 5.2.2 An expelled member may also be expelled from the following meeting of the Branch if so determined by a two-thirds majority of the members present and entitled to vote at the meeting from which he/she was first expelled.
- 5.2.3 The Chair may, at any time, if he/she thinks it desirable in the interests of order, quit the Chair and declare the meeting temporarily adjourned for a time to be named by him/her, which shall not exceed 30 minutes.

6. VOTING

- 6.1 Voting shall be by a show of cards except where a ballot vote has been specifically agreed.
- 6.2 All members and ex-officio members of the Committee shall be allowed one vote, but the Chair of the meeting at which the voting takes place shall only be entitled to a casting vote.

7. DATE OF MEETING

- 7.1 The date of the next Committee meeting shall be announced before the closure of the current meeting, and members of the Committee who are absent must be given at least seven days written notice of the next meeting date.

8. ALTERATION OF STANDING ORDERS

- 8.1 No alteration shall be made to these Standing Orders provided that any Branch shall have the right to refer a request to alter any Standing Order to the Council whose decision shall be final.

APPENDIX 3 - Guiding Principles for Branch Meetings

- 1 Members taking part in Branch meetings shall:
 - 1.1 treat fellow members with dignity and respect regardless of their sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or other status or personal characteristic;
 - 1.2. pay careful attention to what fellow members say and write;
 - 1.3 avoid, or clearly explain, use of acronyms and technical jargon;
 - 1.4 not use discriminatory language;
 - 1.5 not discriminate on grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age or other status or personal characteristic;
 - 1.6 respect the confidentiality of discussions and disclosures;
 - 1.7 leave any personal disagreements outside the meeting;
 - 1.8 allow fellow members the opportunity to speak or comment, without interruption;
 - 1.9 keep to time and stick to the agenda;
 - 1.10 arrive prepared by reading all the relevant papers prior to the commencement of the meeting;
 - 1.11 respect decisions that have been reached and agreed to;
 - 1.12 refrain from making personal attacks on another member which are both undesirable may also be in breach of Equity's rule on harassment (Rule 3.1.1.8) and could give rise to a complaint under the Rules by a fellow member.
- 2 Recording meetings of Equity business could breach the Data Protection Act and must not be done unless the express approval for the recording, retention and/or use of the data is obtained from the General Secretary and subsequently by all members attending each meeting.

APPENDIX 4 - Guidelines for attending Branch Meetings by remote means

Members are encouraged, whenever possible, to attend meetings of their Branch in person. In the event of being unable to attend in person a Branch member may attend by using remote means, where such facilities exist, and the following arrangements shall apply:

1. No more than four members shall be permitted to attend by remote means at each meeting.
2. Quorum: Members attending a Branch meeting by remote means shall count towards the quorum.
- 3 Confidentiality:
 - 3.1 The meeting must not be recorded.
 - 3.2 No person other than the member shall be present when the member is involved in the Branch meeting. At the start of the Branch meeting the member will be asked to state their name and confirm that there is no one else present.
 - 3.3 An exception to the above guideline shall be made for any Branch member who requires a support worker or personal assistant to be present or have a dependant or dependants who need to be present while they are attending a Branch meeting by remote means.
4. A member attending by remote means shall be entitled to participate fully in the meeting – to propose or second a motion, to speak and to vote. Should a member attending by remote means wish to speak they should simply say so and the Chair will add them to the list and give them notice of when they will be called to speak.
5. The Chair will ensure that a member accessing a Branch meeting by remote means will be regularly acknowledged and their vote requested as appropriate.
6. A member who wishes to access a Branch meeting by remote means must inform the Branch Secretary no later than two days prior to the Branch meeting being held so that arrangements can be made, if possible.
7. Members are encouraged to attend at least one branch meeting in person before using the above facility. Where this is not possible they are encouraged to contact either the Chair or Secretary of the branch to gain understanding of the procedure of the meeting.

APPENDIX 5 - Involvement of Student Members in Branches

1. A student member in benefit shall have the right to join any branch as a member and attend meetings of that branch.
2. A student member in benefit shall be entitled to speak, vote and propose and second motions at meetings of their branch.
3. Student members shall not count towards the quorum for branch meetings, nor shall they count towards the size of the branch for determining the quorum for Branch meetings under 1.2 of the Standing Orders for Variety Branch Meetings (Appendix 1).
4. A student member shall not be entitled to stand as a candidate but may nominate candidates and vote for the Branch Committee if in benefit.
5. Student members shall not count towards the size of the branch to determine the number of representatives sent to an Annual Representative Conference under Rule 37.2.3 of the Rules of the Union.
6. Student members shall not count towards the size of the branch for funding purposes.