



Development Newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of your Development Newsletter

Our objectives are to support each Clubs' development and raise the general interest in public speaking through a range of imaginative initiatives, worthwhile in themselves and also potentially positive in relation to club membership and retention. Let us **extend the benefits and the enjoyment** now offered by our existing Clubs as widely as possible until there is a Club within easy reach of everyone in Great Britain.

The **September Seminars** took place in Castle Donington and Edinburgh on 5th and 6th September 2009 respectively. They were reasonably well-attended and generally considered successful. All of the actions recommended are either covered below or will be taken forward by the Education Committee. During 2010, if it is considered too soon for a repeat, an alternative might be to design a workshop and produce materials for eight District-level events. While late-summer 2010 may be too soon for further national Seminars, an alternative might be to design a workshop and produce materials for 8 District-level events.

The ASC Guide to **Starting Up a New Club** has now been finalised and copies are available through the Materials Officer.

That guide is also seen as part of a wider **strategy of facilitating the establishment of sustainable Clubs** in those localities where none now exists. The basic elements of the system are as follows:

- * An upgraded ASC website with many more people hitting it, and an upgraded Find a Club section on that website (all of which is currently being addressed);
- * A form on the Find a Club section asking hitters who were unable to locate a local club if they are (a) interested in joining with others in forming such a club, or (b) interested in hearing if and when such a club is formed;
- * All of those leaving their contact details and replying (a) or (b) being sent an appropriate letter, along with copies of 'Starting Up a Speakers Club';
- * Area Presidents (cc DPs) are informed and follow up (e.g with a telephone call and sometimes maybe an informal meeting); and
- * When an AP judges it appropriate, activities are organised aimed at helping establish a Club in a particular location.

Your Development Committee had an excellent session with the new **Materials Officer**, Archie Anderson. A wide range of items is available (ask him about lecterns, for example) and others are being designed.

A Self-Evaluation Checklist for Clubs – the '**Quality Quotient**' – has been developed and is currently being circulated in the November mailing. A 'reasonably good' Club scores 100: how doth your Club fare – and can it achieve an even higher score next year?

According **recognition to those responsible for starting new clubs** is favoured and there will be a resolution before General Council along the lines of: 'After a new Club has been in existence for three years, its founder should be awarded free attendance at the forthcoming Conference'.

It might be possible to encourage interested people in, for example, Universities, Hospitals (staff rather than patients) and U3A to get together to improve their speaking and related skills. ASC would, rather than urging them to form Clubs, **offer to provide tutorial, evaluation and judging services**. Some participants might then join our Clubs but, in any case, we would be upgrading public speaking which is an aim of the Association. Comments are invited and this idea will be taken forward by your Development Committee.

Club members are asked to identify **media articles and programmes** relevant (interpreted widely) to public speaking and either to respond to them directly, mentioning their Club and/or ASC (with website details) or refer them rapidly to NEC.

It is proposed that we set up a **Speakers Bureau** including – on a special website – details of those Club members willing and able (e.g. with the Advanced Certificate and/or proven success in speaking outside) to respond to requests by groups seeking speakers. Objectives in descending order are: (i) valuable experiences for our members, (ii) publicity for Clubs and the ASC, (iii) some income for members and the ASC. A detailed proposal will be submitted to General Council.

The first pilot ASC **Online Speech Contest** occurred successfully and more entries are expected for this coming year's pilot competition with a view to its become a regular ASC national contest thereafter. A permanent trophy is being designed and prepared and all Club members are encourage to participate. While it is 'educational' rather than 'developmental', the publicity and other values are recognised.

It has been questioned whether the name 'Association of Speakers Clubs' sufficiently distinguishes the brand. Those believing that an alternative should be considered are invited to '**Come up with a Better Name**'. Suggestions already received include 'Speakwise', 'Speakers Universal' and 'Speakeasy'.

Fewer than 50% of Clubs send **representatives to National Conference**. This is regrettable – for those Clubs not attending and for the Association. The issue of how to achieve higher involvement is being seriously addressed and, in common with all items in this Newsletter, comments are invited.

It was suggested at the September Seminars that, in order to strengthen continuity, and give office-holders sufficient time to understand their roles and develop strategies, and also making a virtue of necessity (as the number of volunteers is limited), the **standard minimum period of service** for an AP or DP should be two years. This needs to be given further attention and, ultimately, it is for Areas and Districts to decide.

A second series of **BBC2's 'The Speaker'** [see www.bbc.uk.org/speaker/] is in the pipeline and we understand that the ASC will be closely involved: we have suggested that they use some former SOYs as judges and advisors. This continuation offers a further opportunity for Clubs to support public speaking in schools – and for teachers and parents (and older students) to be encouraged to join Clubs [one member reached the final 32 last year]. In Powys we are planning a special seminar for interested students.

Our proposed project for inclusion in the **Cultural Olympiad 2009-12** involves a nationwide public speaking contest between sporting clubs and there is every expectation that it will be accepted. More later!

Your NDO has thus far **visited seven Districts** and looks forward to continuing these pleasurable perambulations, to meeting you and your colleagues, to receiving your comments on the above initiatives, and to taking delivery of your own thoughts on how ASC may best help Clubs such as yours. The cheerful cooperation of National, District and Area officers and of Club members nationwide is appreciated.



National Development Officer, November 2009