



Helping Your Club Survive COVID 19 Restrictions

Now, more than ever before, the ASC and all our clubs are going through a crucial time. Surviving and thriving the current lockdown situation is going to be a challenge for even the most successful clubs. Whilst there is no one size fits all solution to surviving, what is clear is that work needs to be done now, to ensure we maintain our club membership.

With that in mind, the following document provides some ideas of what can and should be done. This is an evolving situation and we'll add to this guidance as and when possible. Equally, we know we haven't got all the answers, so we invite you to share your experience and ideas.

Keep in touch

Emailing

Keeping in regular contact with club members is an important part of keeping your Club's sense of community and spirit going. We would suggest regular emails to your club members (once or twice a month minimum) which informs them of the current situation in terms of meetings and as far as possible, what your plans are for the next two or three months.

Social media

If you haven't got a Club Facebook page, we suggest you set one up. Contact us at the ASC if you need help with this. Invite members to join and try and post two or three times a week. Encourage members to post as well and or to join the ASC Facebook group.

If you're stuck for ideas about what to post on Facebook, have a look at the ASC FB group or search for material online about public speaking. Share Ted Talks and try and think of it as a place to have a conversation with your club members.

Zoom

We'd encourage you to arrange club meetings online. We recommend using Zoom and your District President can facilitate this for you, but other online platforms are available. Many ASC clubs are now meeting twice a month via Zoom but if this is too much, consider meeting once a month just to keep in touch.

You can organise online meetings any way you wish. You might want to try and deliver a near normal club meeting with prepared speeches and evaluations. Alternatively, just use the online meeting as a social event such as a quiz or an informal catch up.

Other ideas for a Zoom meeting include holding a debate, just having a Topics session, playing a public speaking game such as Rhetoric or having an educational session.

Summer plans

Many clubs take a break over the summer, but in light of the current situation, consider having some sort of online get together, even if it's just once over the summer or once a month. Let your members know you will be meeting (even it's by Zoom) in September.

Committee meetings

We do recommend that club committees continue to meet (online) regularly to review the situation and plan how to proceed.

Strengthening your Foundations

Websites

Frustrating as it is not to be able to meet, it does create an opportunity to prepare for a strong re-opening. If your club does not have a website, now may be the time to build one. If you're not sure how to do this, contact the National Development Officer (NDO). We have arrangements with a web designer and can provide content and advice.

If you have a website, does it have a blog? Can you use the lockdown period to update your blog and share it online to a wider audience? Again, if you need help with this, contact the NDO.

Raising awareness of your club

Just because you are not meeting, doesn't mean people aren't interested in developing their public speaking skills (online or off), so consider how you can get the word out there about your club. Here are some ideas:

- Write an article for your local paper/s.
- Contact local networking groups – many of which are now meeting online. Join an online meeting and tell them about your club. Bear in mind, you'll probably need to attend more than once!
- Advertise your online meetings on Meet Up or Eventbrite.
- Invite people you know to come to an online meeting.
- Contact local institutions (i.e. Rotary) and offer some online training.
- Ask any members of your club who have a LinkedIn profile to make sure they have included details of their ASC membership. Set up a LinkedIn page for your club.

Encouraging people back

The time will come when we can meet again, and now is the time to consider how you could encourage people back and attract new members. Whilst you can't make any concrete plans, you can start discussing ideas. Open days, flyers, discounts, as well as all of the above ideas.

Take action

We're not suggesting it's easy. Without a firm idea of when we can reopen our clubs, it's very tempting to think there is nothing we can do at this stage. However, if we're not proactive now, our existing members may drift away. It is therefore absolutely essential to keep our current members

engaged as well actively plan how we are going to hit the decks running when we can meet again. There is much we can do to prepare and be ready. The worst thing we can do at this stage is nothing.

Please get in touch with the NDO at national.development.officer@speakersclubs.uk if you need any further assistance. We are here to support you.