

ON WRITING REPORTS AND MINUTES

**A Guide for
Committee Conveners,
Minute Keepers and
Secretaries
in the UPCSA**

INTRODUCTION

A great deal of work goes into the writing of the *Papers* for General Assembly and the Executive Commission and into the recording of minutes. The same applies to a lesser extent to papers for Synods and Presbyteries and the minutes of their meetings. But for reports in any of these papers to be effective and for minutes to be good records, certain conventions of communication and of procedure need to be understood and applied. The guidelines that follow are intended to set these out.

English seems likely to remain our common language. Given our painful history and cultural diversity, that makes for sensitivity when guidelines for proper forms and good English are presented or pointed out. But the clear, correct use of any language is needed to make what is written in it easier to read and understand.

The guidelines that follow are to help you achieve these goals. They are in various sections, so that those who are, for instance, writing reports can consult the sections relevant to that, without needing to read the whole document.

WRITING REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

1. Content and Length

A report can perhaps include a summary of the committee's work during the previous year. It should cover a few issues, show how they relate to the Church and its mission and witness and what action is called for, and then propose relevant decisions. But a report should stick to the subject or area of work the committee was set up to deal with; it should not stray into the field of another committee (unless it has been mandated or invited to do so).

The Assembly has many committees and task teams, and over the years its *Papers* have become longer and longer, to the extent that it has become sometimes quite impossible for commissioners to read through them, to prepare for the meetings! This also discourages others who want to find out what the Church is saying and doing or has said and done. Unless the committee is charged with a major task that *requires* a long report, Assembly reports should be no longer than a few pages. They should be written concisely, cutting out all repetition and unnecessary material.

2. Format

Assembly Reports should be typed in MS Word, in A4 format single-spaced, in portrait orientation, and emailed to the Clerk. The font, format, layout, margins etc. can be left to the Assembly Office to adapt to the required specifications.

(For those who nevertheless want the more detailed specifications for formatting, these are set out below in Appendix 1.)

3. Font

Use **bold font**, not underlining, for headings.

Use *italics*, not underlining, for emphasis and for any words or phrases borrowed from other languages, e.g. *seriatim* or *amadodana*.

(Typewriters, because they had only one regular font, needed to use underlining; computers do not.)

4. Headings

A heading or subheading should never be the last line on a page. To avoid this, select the heading and click on Page Layout > the Paragraph launcher (arrow) > Line and Page Breaks > Keep with next. This ensures that the heading moves to head up the text on the next page.

Where the debate on a report and its proposals continues in a later session, add the word "continued" to the heading when it is repeated to make clear that this is being done.

5. Page numbering

Insert continuous page numbering at the bottom of the page, in the centre.

6. Clarity

"One should aim not at being possible to understand but at being impossible to misunderstand" (Quintilian).

- (a) In order to get ideas and information across effectively, write in the clearest language you can. Use plain, common words and phrases, rather than uncommon.
- (b) Prefer the active voice to the passive, wherever possible.
- (c) Put your points positively, rather than negatively.
- (d) In English the *order of words* needs attention because it sometimes affects or determines the clarity or even the meaning of a sentence. Words and phrases should stand next to those to which

they relate. E.g. in the sentence, "The Moderator asked him to stand on the telephone," the last three words are in the wrong place. Likewise the word "only" comes best immediately before the word or phrase it qualifies. Thus "He only drafted the report in May" strictly has a different meaning from "He drafted the report only in May."

- (e) Write in short and medium length sentences wherever possible. (Keep sentences down to 20-30 words, and never go beyond 50.)
- (f) Split up unnecessarily long paragraphs.
- (g) The device of numbered or bulleted points is sometimes very helpful in reports and in proposals. (See under Proposals.)

7. Relative Pronouns

Take care to use the correct relative pronouns. "Who" is the correct relative pronoun when referring to people; "which" and "that" when referring to (animals or) things. "That" as a relative pronoun is confined to defining relative clauses (see above).

8. The Title "Reverend"

Special titles for ministers like "Reverend" are controversial (see Matt. 23), but whenever this term *is* used, it should be used correctly (according to British, and so standard southern African, usage): not as a title, but as a descriptive adjective preceding the person's title, forename or initial. Thus "The Rev. Mr. Soga", "The Rev. Tiyo Soga" or "The Rev. T. Soga" is correct, but not "Rev Soga" or "The Rev. Soga".

9. Punctuation

It is impossible to cover all the rules of punctuation here; but to make what you write clear to the reader, it is important that you punctuate correctly. Even the humble comma can make a huge difference to what a sentence means. A famous example, in a book on punctuation, is "Eats shoots and leaves." Inserting a comma after "Eats" completely changes the meaning!

Commas also make the difference between defining and non-defining relative clauses. If you write, "The Convener who lives in Johannesburg came to see me," that means that there are several Conveners and identifies (defines) which one of them came to see you. If you write, "The Convener, who lives in Johannesburg, came to see me," that means that there is only one Convener and mentions merely by the way that he/she lives in Johannesburg. (On this point see further, e.g., M. Cutts: *The Plain English Guide*, p.82.)

In particular do not omit the necessary comma after a name or term that stands in apposition! E.g. "The Moderator, the Rev. XY, . . . ", needs the comma after XY. A comma should also not be used as if it were a full stop or a semicolon, e.g. "She arrived in Durban, it was raining at the time"; the two clauses should properly be punctuated as separate sentences (with either a semicolon or a full stop to separate them). Alternatively, a connecting word can link them: "It was raining when she arrived in Durban." Commas can, however, connect a short list of related actions in sequence, e.g. in Julius Caesar's famous boast: "*Veni, vidi, vici*" ("I came, I saw, I conquered").

When "or" joins *two alternatives*, no comma should intervene except that when "or" is equivalent to "*that is*", or "*in other words*", a comma *is* needed both before and after the alternative, e.g. "The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, is pacifist." (Such alternatives are also in apposition.)

A comma should never cut off a subject from its verb.

Every sentence without exception should end with a punctuation mark!

10. **Convener**

At the end of every report, before the proposals, the convener's name should be typed, with the title "Convener" under it, and the convener's email address under that.

11. **Proposals**

(a) **The Proposer**

The minutes should record who moved each proposal, even when the Clerk is the mover.

(b) **Simple and Complex**

As far as possible limit each proposal to one idea or instruction. This makes it easier to understand, easier to discuss, easier to amend and easier to carry out. If you need to link several facts or several actions to be taken, then it is often helpful to set these in a numbered or bulleted list, with an introductory line, clause or phrase. In that case it is important that the wording of all the items follows logically and grammatically after the introductory words:

Mr XY moved that "The Assembly

(a) agrees that . . . ;

(b) appoints . . . ; and

(c) instructs"

This needs a different verb in each clause. But when one introductory verb will do for all the items, the following form is preferable:

- Mr XY moved that "The Assembly resolves:
- (a) to change the date of . . .;
 - (b) to arrange a consultation . . .; and
 - (c) to subsidise . . ."

This is how *not* to do it:

- Mr XY moved that "The Assembly instructs the Clerk:
- (a) to arrange a consultation . . .;
 - (b) notes that . . .; [This does not follow the introductory words coherently]
 - (c) every effort should be made . . . [This loses the plot altogether.]"

(c) **Who is Responsible?**

As every proposal is intended to be adopted by a Council of the Church, it should begin with that Council's name. If the proposal is adopted, this makes clear who made the decision and what authority the decision has.

A proposal should also make clear who is to act on it, as in the following example.

The Presbytery urges congregations to contribute to the Presbyterian Educational Fund.

Thus proposals should always be in the Active voice, not the Passive. It is inappropriate for proposals to begin, "It is recommended that . . ." or "Congregations are urged to . . .")

Proposals should as far as possible be worded so that when they become decisions, they can be understood and carried out without having to read the report from which they arise to find out what they are about. To say, "The Assembly notes the changed situation facing the Committee" will be meaningless to anyone without the report. In any case that is a statement, not a decision.

(d) **Is it Effective?**

The purpose of a Council's decision is to take a stand on an issue, to take an action or to instruct someone to take an action. To say, "The Presbytery appoints an *ad hoc* committee to review XYZ," makes clear who is responsible for carrying out that decision and what they have to do. But if you say, "The Presbytery considers increasing the budget of .

. . ." or "The Assembly continues to address the matter of . . .", that is merely an observation, not a decision; it makes no one responsible for doing anything, and nothing will result.

(e) Is it Necessary?

When a Council receives a report, it automatically notes everything in that report. Where reports are circulated only to members of that Council, a decision specifically to note an important event or development and/or to circulate a decision, for example, to all Sessions within a Presbytery, may be helpful. But Assemblies have much more business to get through than Presbyteries and Synods; proposals to note this or that should therefore be used very sparingly, to avoid cluttering up the agenda and the *Proceedings* with unnecessary items that virtually no one will pay any attention to.

12. Spell Check

Whether you are writing reports and proposals or minutes, reread them carefully to check your *spelling, grammar and punctuation*. All proposals in particular need to be carefully and properly worded. Note that computer spellchecks are not foolproof; if you type a word that is incorrect or unintended but is nevertheless in the dictionary, the computer will likely fail to flag it. Two actual examples from Assembly minutes are:

- Mr A registered his descent [instead of "dissent"]; and
- The Moderator was presented with...a set of frocks [instead of "frogs," the tassels on a Moderator's gown].

If you are at all uncertain about any word, *refer to a dictionary*. And even if English is your first language, never hesitate to ask someone with a good knowledge of English idiom, style and spelling to read all that you have written and suggest any improvements. Fresh eyes in any case often pick up mistakes and may save you embarrassment.

It must be stressed that *it is the responsibility of committee conveners to check and correct the wording of their reports as a whole and especially their proposals, before they send them in to the Assembly Office*. The Assembly Clerk cannot vet all this material. He/she can be expected only to check the wording of *the Proposals*.

13. Committee Approval

The convener of every Assembly committee should ensure that the committee as a whole approves the final form of its Report before submitting it to the Assembly Office for printing. The Assembly may

well refuse to receive any report that the committee as a whole has not approved.

14. Clerk

The Clerk of every Council need to check at least the proposals of every report submitted to that Council before it meets, and if anything in them is obscure or out of order suggest (tactfully) that it be amended.

RECORDING THE MINUTES

Introduction

Some people regard the process of correcting and adopting minutes as boring and even irritating; but it is essential to have clear, accurate and concise records of who was present and what happened in meetings that make decisions on behalf of the Church. When major or controversial issues have been discussed, it is especially important to have clear and accurate minutes, so as to avoid disputes about exactly what was decided. Historians and any others who later want to know what the Church has said and/or done also need accurate records.

There are many paragraphs in the UPCSA's *Manual of Faith and Order* and in the Standing Orders of General Assembly dealing with minutes (see below); but the most important preparation for taking minutes is a good working knowledge of the ways in which various kinds of business are handled and decisions are reached. The traditional, or "Westminster" (not "Westminister"!), procedures are set out in Chapter 14 of the *Manual*, and the "Consensus Model" in the Standing Orders, which are always printed in the *Assembly Papers*. Both are designed to make our debates fair and orderly, to give everyone with a new contribution the opportunity to be heard and to prevent one person or one group from dominating the discussion or riding roughshod over another group. One needs only a little concentrated effort and exposure to these procedures in church Councils to master them.

Resources and Rules

1. *The Manual*

- General rules for keeping minutes: Appendix D4
- Format of congregational meeting minutes: Appendix D6

- Session minutes: paragraphs 7.82-7.86 and Appendix D5
- Financial authority of congregation: Appendix D7
- Presbytery, including special formats: paragraph 10.66 and Appendices D8-11
- Synod: paragraph 11.38
- General Assembly: paragraph 12.65
- Validity of meetings whose minutes are not properly recorded: paragraph 14.2

2. The Standing Orders

Standing Orders of General Assembly, sections 5.3 and 7.1-7.5

What to Record and How to Record it

1. Standard Items

Minutes always begin with the essential formalities:

- the constitution of the Council;
- a list of those present,
- the apologies,
- the list of associates,
- notices of motion,
- adoption of the agenda with any agreed changes, and
- adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting(s), with any amendments.

Similarly the minutes must always end with the time, the date and place of the next meeting and the closure of the meeting in prayer.

2. Reports

The backbone of the agenda of the higher Councils (Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly) is the presentation of reports, which usually need to be circulated beforehand, and the proposals arising from them. It is quite impossible to record all the points made in discussion, and it would be unfair to record only some. Generally all that should be minuted is

- each original proposal,
- the procedural steps taken to reach a decision,
- the wording of any amendments and
- the decision itself.

Occasionally it is necessary to record an important point of information, usually one that has arisen since the writing of the report and relates to a particular proposal. The minutes should retain the

number that is attached to each proposal in the *Papers* and record clearly *whether or not every proposal was adopted or not*. This includes recording whether or not all the proposals designated as “transactional” were adopted (usually together as a group) or not! If a proposal was not adopted, instead of saying that it was “dropped”, the minutes should make clear whether:

- it was lost by consensus,
- it was lost in a vote,
- the presenter was allowed to withdraw it and did so,
- it fell away and why, e.g. because a previous decision made it unnecessary or inappropriate or inapplicable, or
- the Council agreed to pass from the subject.

By the time anyone reads the minutes of any meeting, everything said and every decision made during it will be in the past. A fundamental rule of minute-taking is therefore that *all minutes should be written in the past tense*, except for proposals or other statements in the present or the future tense that are *quoted* as such (and are therefore in inverted commas).

3. Notices of Motion and New Proposals

When Notices of Motion are first presented,

- number them in sequence;
- record who gave notice;
- record when the motion was to be dealt with; and
- keep to the past tense throughout the introduction and any procedural ruling that may follow the text, e.g.

The Rev. AB gave [*not* “gives”] notice that when the Assembly considered the report of the Finance Committee, she would move [*not* “will move”] that “The Assembly . . .”

If the person giving notice is uncertain when the motion should be taken, he/she should give notice that he/she will move it “at a time convenient to” the Council. The minute will then go on to record, e.g.

The Moderator ruled that this motion would be dealt with under the report of the Ministry Committee.

When the time comes for the proposal to be moved, all that the minutes need to say is, e.g.

Notice of Motion 1

The Rev. AB moved the proposal of which she had given notice.

The wording is already in the minutes and does not need to be repeated, though any amendments proposed and the final outcome must obviously be recorded.

In meetings of the higher Councils the general rule is that only proposals circulated beforehand and Notices of Motion can be moved in the meeting. The Moderator does, however, retain the discretion to allow additional proposals, whether moved by the presenter of a report or from the floor. In such cases the minutes should recognise that this is an exception, e.g.

The Moderator allowed AB to move as Proposal 5 . . .

When this happens, subsequent proposals need to be renumbered. If a proposal is withdrawn or falls away, subsequent proposals should also be renumbered.

4. Amendments

If a proposed amendment involves a simple change, e.g. inserting a few words in the middle of the proposal or adding a few at the end, then it is easy for the reader to follow. If, however, a longer portion has to be rewritten or several changes need to be made to the text, it is better to say that so-and-so "moved as an amendment that the proposal read as follows . . ." and go on to reproduce the amended version as a whole. This is not only easier to follow, but reminds commissioners that in the "Westminster" procedure it is *the proposal* that is being amended.

If a proposal is made and seconded, and then an amendment is proposed, seconded and agreed, that is not the end of the matter. All that has happened is that the Council has agreed to consider a modified version of the original proposal, rather than the original form. Up to two further amendments can be moved, but the amended (or re-amended) version, now known as "the substantive motion", must still be voted on. If, for example, A proposes that the Presbytery donate R10 000 to the Salvation Army, B may move as an amendment that the figure be changed to R5 000. If that is agreed and there are no further amendments, the amended version, now called "the substantive motion", still needs to be put to the vote. It could then be agreed, but it could equally well be lost, if the majority have by then concluded that the Presbytery should make no donation at all to this cause.

Sometimes a proposal needs only a minor change to correct an error of fact or of language. In such a case the Moderator may allow the mover

to incorporate the minor change, without its having to be formally proposed. This should be minuted as follows:

The Moderator allowed the Convener to move Proposal 5 in the following form: “. . .”

The additional wording is necessary to show how the wording of the proposal as actually moved came to differ from its original form, even though no amendment to that effect was formally moved.

5. **Overtures and Petitions** (See the *Manual*, paras. 14.18-14.33)

These appear together in the *Assembly Papers* in numbered lists. If they are tabled early in the Assembly proceedings and allocated to suitable points in the agenda, the text of each should be included in the minutes only when that point is reached and the appointed person is asked to speak to the Overture/Petition and move the proposal(s) contained in it. The proposal is then debated and voted on in the normal way. Any amendments obviously have to be minuted, as with any other proposal. Especially in a Petition the request it makes may not be in the form of a normal proposal: either the mover needs to extract the essence of it and propose that as the formal proposal or else the minute should record that “The Assembly granted the Petition that . . .” and follow that by outlining the essence of it. (See also under (7)(d) below.)

6. **Consensus Model** (Assembly Standing Orders, paras. 5.3, 7.1-8.12)

The Standing Orders give a brief description of how this method works and an indication of what needs to be recorded, but it is as well to look at copies of recent Assembly Minutes for examples of how matters are dealt with in terms of it. Note carefully how the proposals are divided into “Missional” and “Transactional” proposals, and record that this was done, along with any changes requested by Commissioners (paras. 8.2.3-8.2.5).

Note that in the Listening Session (paras. 8.2-8.6) in the Consensus Model the committee convener or someone whom he/she has delegated presents the reports, but it is *the Clerk* who moves that each report be received. In the Decision Session (paras. 8.7-8.10) the Clerk moves all the proposals in the form in which they emerge from the Insaka process. The minutes do not record every step in the process of reaching consensus, but must record under the headings of the various reports that the Clerk moved these proposals and whether they were agreed to by consensus or lost.

If the Council decides to switch to operating under the “formal majority procedure” (i.e. the “Westminster” system; see para. 8.12), this decision and the formal procedures that follow must be recorded. This usually happens when no consensus can be reached; but there are also some agenda items that are always decided by this procedure: for guidance see the Standing Orders and Assembly Minutes.

7. **Completion and Confirmation of the Minutes**

Note that para. 7.5 of the Standing Orders for General Assembly lays down concerning the completing and the confirmation of minutes that:

The minutes of the General Assembly shall be recorded during the course of the meeting. All except those of the last three sessions shall be distributed during the course of meeting, but none shall be presented to the General Assembly for confirmation. The completed minutes will be distributed to all Commissioners within 30 days of the end of the meeting of General Assembly and shall be confirmed within 60 days of the same date, after having been scrutinised by persons appointed for the purpose and the necessary corrections, if any, having been made. Any Commissioner may point out corrections to the scrutineers.

8. **Lists of Decisions**

Extracting a list of all the decisions of an Assembly from the minutes and appending the list to the minutes provides a very useful resource for all those who need or want to know what the Assembly decided. A few important points in this regard, most of which apply to other Councils’ decisions as well, are:

- (a) Once proposals have been agreed, whether by consensus or by a vote, they become *decisions* of the Council; they are no longer mere proposals and should no longer retain that label.
- (b) Where proposals were amended, care should be taken to incorporate the amendments correctly.
- (c) A proposal that was lost represents what the Council decided not to do or say. That decision is an important part of the minutes, but does not belong in the list of the Council’s actions, or decisions, unless it was a decision about an Overture or a Petition. (See 7(e) below.)
- (d) It is also unnecessary and inappropriate to repeat in the list of decisions the record of procedural steps, such as that a proposal

was agreed to or the wording of the introduction to a Notice of Motion (“I hereby give notice, etc.”).

- (e) If an Overture is adopted or a Petition is granted, the entry in the list of decisions should have its own subheading, even if it falls under a report. It must record the outcome of the Overture or Petition and quote the decision in the form agreed to, e.g.

Overture No. 1

The proposal contained in Overture 1 that “. . .” was adopted as amended [*or* was lost].

Petition No. 1

Petition No. 1, asking that “The Assembly . . .” was granted [*or* was not granted].

You may want to quote the actual proposals, so as to assure the Council or individual that the Assembly heard them and to show what the Assembly did with the Overture/Petition.

If a proposal is referred to a committee or to some other person or group, the list of decisions should make it clear that no decision for or against it was reached, e.g.

The Assembly referred the proposal that “The Assembly . . .” to the Ministry Committee.

9. Less Formal Council Meetings

(a) Presbytery and Synod

Presbyteries especially tend to be less formal and more flexible than Assemblies, whether they use the “Westminster” procedure or the Consensus Model. Clerks and minute clerks still need to know the procedures of these models well, to help the Moderator follow the correct procedures and not allow anything that is out of order. This promotes fairness and makes it unlikely that any decision can be overturned purely on procedural grounds.

The “Westminster” model has a device that can be used in a Presbytery, a Synod or an Assembly and is particularly useful when many different ideas are being put forward, the debate is becoming complex and perhaps heated and/or the proposal before the Council is clearly inadequate. This device is to move that the Council “go into committee”. What this means is that the whole Council constitutes itself as a committee, and all the rules of debate are suspended; for example, members are then allowed to speak more than once on an

issue. A solution can be hammered out and agreed by general consensus. The Clerk then

- moves that the meeting “come out of committee”,
- reads a report of the decision(s) taken and
- moves that this be the committee’s “findings”.

This proposal is voted on without further debate, and the report then becomes part of the minutes of the meeting. (See the *Manual*, paras. 14.10 and 14.11.)

When confidential matters have to be discussed, whether under the “Westminster” model or under the Consensus Model, it can be moved that the Council (Assembly/Synod/Presbytery) “meet in private” (previously “*in camera*”). Only members of the Council may then remain present during this closed session, and all information given and discussions held in it are confidential. It is quite common to move that the Council meet in committee *and* in private. The minute of this session then has to be approved *before* it can be moved that the Council “cease to meet in private” and, if it is necessary, “come out of committee”. (See the *Manual*, para. 14.16.)

(b) **Sessions and Committees of Councils**

The minutes of these bodies should reflect the much more informal approach that they usually adopt. In these minutes it is much more usual to include information, such as a short summary of a report by the Moderator/Convener or by a member who has been asked to look into a particular matter. There is no need to record a formal process of proposal, amendment and voting, as decisions are normally reached by the informal consensus of the whole group. All that the minutes need to record is what was decided and, in some cases, who made the original proposal. The Moderator/Convener does not have to be an impartial chairperson, as in the higher Councils; so he/she takes part in the debate freely and often puts forward a proposal.

N.B.: Because the Session is responsible for the pastoral care of the congregation, it has to discuss personal and sensitive issues from time to time; so its meetings are closed, or private, and its discussions and decisions (and thus its minutes) are confidential. The decisions need to be recorded in the minutes in the normal way, however, unless the Session in its discretion decides to the contrary. If the Session needs to communicate such decisions to the congregation or to other bodies, it does so with due sensitivity and concern for any needed privacy.

PREPARING FOR MEETINGS

Whatever medium you use to take notes at a meeting, it is very helpful to prepare a framework, or template, beforehand into which you can fit the proposals, decisions and other procedures under each heading. If you have the agenda of, say, a coming Presbytery meeting, you can write/type out almost all the routine items that come at the beginning and at the end of the meeting beforehand. (See above under What to Record and How to Record It, 1. Standard Items.) Only the names and other details then need to be filled in during (or after) the meeting, e.g.

Apologies

The Clerk moved, "The Presbytery sustains apologies from the following: . . ."

This was seconded and agreed.

[After the meeting you fill in the names from the attendance and apologies lists.]

Minutes

The Clerk moved, "The Presbytery adopts the minutes of the meeting of 12th March 2019 with the following changes:

- in 18/188.4, line 2, delete the words ` . . .'; and
- in 18/190, at the end of the proposal, add ` . . .'."

This was seconded and agreed.

In the case of reports already circulated fill in the agenda number and the heading and note that "The Convener/Interim Moderator presented the report, as circulated, and moved Proposal 1: 'The Presbytery receives the report.'"

If in the meeting a number of consecutive proposals arising from the same report are all agreed to without amendment, you can group them together as follows:

The Convener presented the report, as circulated, and moved,

1. . . .;
2. . . .; and
3. . . .

These proposals were seconded and agreed.

The wording can then be filled in later. The more you can write or type in beforehand, the more time you will have in the meeting to fill in the procedural steps that are followed and any new proposals that are allowed. If someone moves a long proposal or amendment, ask immediately for it in writing. The same applies to Notices of Motion. Movers of any proposals that have not been circulated with the papers

for the meeting should be required to bring at least three copies of such proposals to the meeting: one each for the Moderator, the Clerk and the mover.

Appendix 1: Detailed Formatting Specifications

Format

The format for Assembly Reports is portrait orientation, top and bottom margins 2 cm (.79 inches), left and right margins 1.9 cm (.75"), gutter 1 cm (.39") and mirror margins with 1 cm (.39") for binding.

Font

Main heading Verdana 10-14, centred.

Secondary headings Verdana 9 or 8.5.

All other text Verdana 8, except any footnotes, which should be 7.5.

Spacing and Headings

Space consistently throughout. Ordinary line spacing should be *single*, and *the spacing between all paragraphs 6 point*. Space 18 point before and 9 point after all the *main headings*, and 12 point before and 6 point after all other headings. Use the same size and kind of font for all main headings and for all subheadings.

Note that if any item (say, a Notice of Motion or an Overture or a Petition) is indented in the minutes, then all such items should also be similarly indented.

Appendix 2: A Short List of Recommended Books

- Martin Cutts: *Oxford Guide to Plain English* (Oxford: OUP, 2013). A good book on how to communicate more clearly in English
- E. Gowers: *Plain Words* (Penguin, 4th ed. by R. Gowers 2014)
- W. Strunk and E.B. White: *Elements of Style* (Penguin, 5th ed. 2008.). A good small paperback on English style (available online)
- *The SA Pocket Speller* (Cape Town: OUP, 1991). A standard speller
- G.V. Carey: *Mind the Stop* (Penguin, 2nd ed. 1978). A good small paperback on punctuation
- L. Truss: *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, on punctuation (various publishers including Profile Books, London, 2003, and Penguin Books, Harmondsworth; also available online)

D.S. Bax and A. Rodger, 2024.