



# Cumbria Local History Federation

“talking history”

## DELIVERING A PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS

To minimise misunderstandings and avoid possible confusion, we offer this guide for local groups and speakers.

### GROUPS

1. If possible, one person from a group should take responsibility for communication with a speaker. Agreed arrangements should be noted on a pro forma (see the example below) and a copy of this should be lodged with each party.
2. Book your speakers well in advance: indicate date, time and venue and, if there are options, the topic you would prefer. A year in advance is not excessive, six months is helpful, and at least three months is desirable. This should not deter you, in an emergency, from approaching someone at short notice, but it is helpful to all concerned if the person constructing the programme is ahead of the game. If, e.g. in the wake of a sudden cancellation, you have difficulty finding a speaker, contact a member of the Federation Committee, who will help you.
3. Engage with the speaker to make sure you understand the nature of the topic and that it is suitable for your group. Speakers will be glad to have this kind of conversation. Agree on the precise wording of the topic. And, most importantly, agree on the time to be allocated: commonly, 50-60 minutes for the talk, and up to 15 minutes for questions. Do not attempt to shoehorn your speaker into a timing which s/he regards as too tight.
4. Identify the journey to be made by the speaker and how they will be travelling. Be helpful about your location, e.g. by providing a map of the route to your venue. Indicate the likely size of audience; whether there will be a lectern or microphone, who will chair the meeting, and if some group business will be conducted either before or immediately after the talk.
5. Make sure precisely what equipment will be required, and who (the speaker or the group) will be responsible for providing it. It is likely that the following will be needed: a projector, a laptop, and a USB (a universal serial bus – a device for connecting peripherals to computers); also possibly a screen. It is very helpful if groups can provide these, and many do; but most speakers can provide some or all of the above, if required. It is essential to agree who will provide what. Although the quality of any illustrations relating to the talk will be enhanced by a reduction in the available lighting, the venue should not be in semi-darkness during the proceedings. Take care to find the right balance for the benefit of all
6. Contact the speaker again in advance of the meeting, preferably a fortnight or so before, to recap the arrangements, particularly those relating to equipment. Speakers have been known to forget an appointment or to allow themselves to be double-booked. Safety first may be tedious, but it pays.

7. On the day, arrange for someone to meet the speaker on arrival, show them round the venue and help them to set-up. Offer refreshment and ensure water is to hand during the talk.
8. As a matter of courtesy, speakers should be carefully introduced, with an indication of where they are from, brief words on their career to date, how they have developed their interest in the chosen topic, if they have published on it, etc. If this information is not readily available, ask the speaker for it in advance (e.g. during the further contact under 6. above). Chairpersons should take the lead during question time, if necessary repeating the question so that all in the audience might hear.
9. At the end (after questions) someone (it does not matter who) should thank the speaker on behalf of the audience.
10. Payment of the speaker (fee and/or expenses) and any other business with him/her should be concluded before departure.

#### SPEAKERS

1. Be punctilious in making arrangements with the representative of a group. Complete and return the pro forma carefully, noting in particular the equipment you will need and who will be responsible for providing it. If a pro forma is not offered, compile and return one yourself, retaining a copy. Be sure to provide enough information to facilitate an appropriate introduction of yourself and your topic.
2. Be strict with yourself about time and do not speak for more than an hour. Points can still be introduced or elaborated at question time.
3. Speak clearly and project your voice towards the audience. Do not read from the screen, nor unduly from notes. If you doubt that your voice is strong enough for the venue, ask for a microphone.
4. Be careful to obtain, and retain, eye contact with listeners. Especially when pointing to a screen, stand sideways – do not turn your back on the audience.

#### EXAMPLE OF A PRO FORMA

Name of the Group

Group Contact Details: Name, Address & E-mail Address of the Group Representative; Phone No. (Landline and/or Mobile)

Guest Speaker Details: Name, Address & E-mail Address; Phone No. (Landline and/or Mobile)

Fee Requested

Travel Expenses Requested

Title of the Talk

Date, Venue & Time of the Talk

Equipment Required & Source

Brief Summary of the Talk (e.g. for prior publicity purposes)

Information about the Speaker (for Introduction)