



Standing Orders

These Standing Orders set out how the Ulster Farmers' Union (the Union) Groups, County Committees, Policy Committees, Board, Executive Committee and Council (Unions' Committees) meetings should be managed. These rules ensure that meetings are conducted efficiently, fairly, and consistently, providing a framework for decision-making processes.

1. Meeting Membership

Membership of Union Council or Committees meetings shall be restricted to full members paid up in the current or preceding calendar year (7. UFU Constitution and Rules).

2. Meetings

- 2.1. Meetings shall be held at the frequency, time and location determined by the Union's Constitution and Rules.
- 2.2. Notice of meetings and the agenda should be issued at least seven working days in advance and should normally notify the place, date, and time of the meeting. In exceptional circumstances, allowances may be made for a shorter notice period, provided all participants are informed promptly.
- 2.3. Conflicts of Interest must be a standing agenda item at every meeting to ensure transparency and integrity in all discussions and decisions.
- 2.4. Each meeting will adhere to the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders, the Chairperson will ensure all attendees are reminded of their responsibilities and the framework within which the meeting operates at the outset of each meeting.
- 2.5. The meeting Chairperson can refuse discussion on matters raised in the meeting outside the agenda.
- 2.6. Any Other Business (AOB) points should be raised to the Chairperson no later than three working days before the meeting and a decision will be made on whether the point will be raised at the next meeting or a future meeting. AOB points for Policy Committees is half a day. This will allow adequate preparation time to ensure members can be fully informed. AOB points for the Executive should be raised to the Chief Executive.
- 2.7. To expedite the business of any meeting of the Unions' Committees the Chairperson may change the order of precedence from that on the agenda.

3. Participation in Meetings

- 3.1. Meetings can be conducted 'virtually', 'in person', or as a 'hybrid' format that includes both in-person and virtual participants. The format for meetings of each of the Unions' Committees may be determined by a number of factors, including member availability, attendance trends, agenda items, and/or mitigating circumstances.
- 3.2. Members may take part in a meeting by being present in person or by attendance virtually should the option be available. Participation virtually shall be by video conference, online meeting facility or similar equipment designed to allow everybody to take part in the meeting and to exercise their right to vote on any matter.

- 3.3. The default position of the Union is that meetings of the Unions' Committees should take place in person. Subject to the approval of the Chairperson, any meeting may take place exclusively via virtual means or in a hybrid format.
- 3.4. At Executive meetings Policy Committee Chairpersons should lead the discussions on the pressing issues of committee business.

4. Quorum

- 4.1. Unless otherwise specified in the UFU Constitution and Rules, one third members shall form a quorum.
- 4.2. For Council, 50 members of Council shall form a quorum.
(48. UFU Constitution and Rules)
- 4.3. 20 members of the Executive Committee shall form a quorum.
(39. UFU Constitution and Rules)
- 4.4. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes after the scheduled start time, the meeting may be adjourned to a later date.

5. Meeting minutes

- 5.1. The Union adopts a Minute Writing Policy to ensure consistency across the Unions' Committees.
- 5.2. Minutes shall be taken documenting all key decisions taken, action points and brief summaries of the discussions.
- 5.3. Minutes of the previous meeting should be reviewed, proposed, and seconded for approval at the next scheduled meeting.
- 5.4. Minutes should be signed off by the meeting Chairperson.
- 5.5. Any member of the Union can request a copy of minutes from any of the Unions' Committees.
- 5.6. Board minutes will be made available to members of the Executive Committee and are not for general distribution due the nature of discussions. Confidentiality and data protection must be adhered to as per the Code of Conduct.

6. Conduct of Meetings

- 6.1. Meetings shall be chaired by the Chairperson or, in their absence, the Vice Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson the committee is empowered to appoint one of its members for that meeting.

- 6.2. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee shall be a current Office Bearer. In the absence of current Office Bearers, the Executive is empowered to appoint one of its members for that meeting.

(40. UFU Constitution and Rules)

- 6.3. Members shall conduct themselves in a respectful manner and adhere to the rules outlined in the Unions' Code of Conduct.

7. Decision making

- 7.1. Resolutions should be made known to the Chairperson before the meeting so that they can be added as an agenda or AOB item depending on the timeframe in which they are received.

- 7.2. Where a resolution is brought from another of the Unions' Committees, representation from the relevant committee should be in attendance to present the resolution otherwise it will not be scheduled. The proposer and seconder of the resolution must be made known to the Chairperson in advance of the meeting.

- 7.3. Proposers of resolutions shall be allowed up to a maximum of five minutes, seconds three minutes. The first opposing speaker up to five minutes and all other speakers three minutes.

- 7.4. The proposer and first opposing proposer shall have the right to sum up in reverse order before the resolution is put to the vote.

- 7.5. All decisions shall be resolved by a simple majority of those present, eligible, and voting.

- 7.6. If a resolution is proposed and seconded, and no opposing resolution is proposed, the Chairperson must facilitate a thorough discussion to gauge the views of all members and ensure there is a decision taken.

- 7.7. All decisions shall be recorded in the minutes.

- 7.8. Members can ask for their dissent to the decision to be recorded in the minutes.

- 7.9. Proposed votes of no confidence for any of the Unions' Committees should be scheduled for a future meeting so that notice, facts and implications of the resolution are made clear to the members of the committee in advance. In addition, the proposed resolution must be clearly worded.

- 7.10. Proposed votes that affect the internal structure of any of the Unions' Committees should be scheduled for a future meeting so that notice, facts and implications of the resolution are made clear to the members of the committee in advance.

7.11. The Chairperson has the discretion to defer any resolution to a subsequent meeting if it is considered controversial or requires further deliberation. This deferral allows for additional discussion, research, and member consultation to ensure informed decision-making. The Chairperson must communicate the reasons for the deferral and outline the steps to be taken before the resolution is revisited.

8. Voting

- 8.1.** Voting rights shall be restricted to full members paid up in the current or preceding calendar year.
(7. *UFU Constitution and Rules*)
- 8.2.** Student, Rural Dweller, and Corporate members have no voting rights.
(4.2.1./4.4.1./4.5.1.) *UFU Constitution and Rules*)
- 8.3.** Each qualifying member shall be entitled to one vote on matters brought before the members at the meeting.
- 8.4.** The Chief Executive and Internal Service Manager of the Union shall have no voting rights at Board meetings.
(37.2.5. *UFU Constitution and Rules*)
- 8.5.** Voting may be conducted in person or electronically, as determined by the Executive Committee and the UFU Constitution and Rules. No voting by proxy is permitted.

8.6. A simple majority of votes cast shall be sufficient to pass ordinary business, unless otherwise specified in the UFU Constitution and Rules.

8.7. Voting shall be taken on a show of hands and/or electronic means if available, unless a secret ballot is requested and approved by majority of qualifying members at the meeting.

8.8. The meeting Chairperson shall have the right to vote and, in the event of a tie-break, the right to exercise an additional casting vote.

9. Collective Responsibility

All members of the Unions' Committees will be bound by decisions of those Committees. Their dissent can however be recorded in the minutes. Where a member of the Unions' Committees transgresses this rule, the Committee shall in the first instance ask the member to resign from that Committee but if the member does not resign, the Committee can decide to suspend or remove this member from that Committee. The member shall have the right of appeal to the Executive.
(50. *UFU Constitution and Rules*)

10. Members can be asked to exit a meeting

The meeting Chairperson can request a member leave the meeting if:

- 10.1. It is felt by most eligible attendees that the member's attendance will inhibit the discussion of the topic.
- 10.2. The member discloses a pecuniary interest or other form of conflict of interest.
- 10.3. The member uses objectionable words and refuses to withdraw them or to offer a satisfactory apology.
- 10.4. The member's behaviour is not in line with the Unions' Code of Conduct.

11. Amendments

These standing orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members present at the UFU Executive Committee meeting with notice of the proposed amendments given to all members for comment at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

12. Interpretation

In case of any ambiguity or dispute regarding these standing orders, the decision of the Executive Committee, shall be final.

13. Adoption

These Standing Orders shall take effect upon adoption by a majority vote of qualifying members present and voting at the Union's Executive Committee.

*Approved by the Executive Committee on
23 September 2024.*