

## **BYC Members Handbook - A guide to Annual Council Meeting and how BYC members make policy?**

### **What is Annual Council Meeting?**

The Annual Council Meeting (ACM) is held once a year, usually at the end of August or early September. It is where young people from BYC's member organisations come together to discuss and decide on BYC's policies, its work for the coming year and elect its trustees and committee members. BYC's accounts for the last year and budget for the following year are also presented.

The aim of ACM is to,

- Set BYC's work plans for the year ahead
- Discuss and decide BYC's policies (2 yearly cycle)
- Elect young people to serve as members of BYC's Officers Group, Board of Trustees
- Mingle with delegates from BYC's diverse membership
- Relax and have fun
- Let young people's voices be heard

### **Who goes to ACM?**

BYC Members are allowed to send a certain number of delegates to ACM depending on their size. There are two types of delegates at ACM - voting and observer.

#### *Voting Delegate*

A voting delegate has the right to vote and speak on any matter at the ACM.

All voting delegates receive a voting card that must be raised in the air to be included in the count towards any decision-making. Delegates vote either FOR, AGAINST or ABSTAIN (which is neither for nor against). The supply of these cards is strictly controlled for obvious reasons, it is important to hold on to yours!

#### *Observer Delegate*

An observer can contribute to the debate and any discussions held at council but are not able to vote

*Because delegates are speaking on behalf of all the young people in their organisation it is important that every delegate is able to participate as much as they wish. Everyone at council has a duty to try and create as open, attentive and friendly an atmosphere as possible.*

### **How do I get to speak at council?**

If you would like to speak during council, follow this simple procedure:

- Indicate to the chair that you wish to speak by raising your hand in the air.

- When the Chair acknowledges you, come to the front of Council and stand by one of the microphones.
- State your name and member organisation before either voicing your opinion, raising a point of order or moving a procedural motion.

During a debate session the discussion may result in members wishing to instruct Council to do something e.g. take a vote on an issue. The council has specific rules known as standing orders, these are found in BYC's Rule book; a written document that lists the rules and regulations that the organisation is run by.

The two most important methods a delegate can use to change how council operates are:

- Points of Order: used by delegates to clarify the situation. They can be used to request a vote or ask for a decision by the chair. If you are uncertain about anything that has occurred or is impending on council floor raise a point of order for clarification.
- Procedural Motions: used to change various aspects of council.

Further information on these can be found in the BYC Rule book.

### **How do I make policy at Annual Council Meeting?**

Policy shall be discussed is discussed at the Ordinary Meetings (OM) part of Annual Council (an OM is held every twenty four months) to allow BYC youth policy to be discussed thoroughly and separately from general BYC business.

At Ordinary Meetings proposals for policy can be submitted as motions by either member organisations or the Board of Trustees.

### **What is a motion?**

A motion is something that membership organisations can submit, and then members at the ACM discuss and vote on it to see if it should become policy of the BYC. Members have to submit policy motions before a deadline to ensure everyone has time to read the policies before ACM. If members need to submit motions after this deadline because a recent subject or policy area has arisen they can submit 'Emergency Motions' to be considered at ACM.

Motions for policy can either create new policy or amend existing policy. If a motion becomes BYC policy it will change the **British Youth Council Manifesto**, as it either adds to or deletes policy statements contained in this document. The British Youth Council Manifesto contains chapters on each of the major issues for young people in the UK, such as education, employment, and health.

Another type of policy that members can vote on in ACM is Internal Policy that covers aspects of administration for BYC and ACM that cannot be included in the rule book or standing orders, for example membership fees and equal opportunities monitoring.



A policy will lapse (cease to exist) two years after last adopted at an Ordinary Meeting, unless it is otherwise decided to continue or amend this policy. BYC Board of Trustees will consider current policies manifesto and recommend those areas due to lapse, to be retained or updated.

### **How should we go about deciding what our motion should be about and what it should say?**

Think about issues you care about that are current but also might come up in the future.

Think about a motion that if passed would makes it very clear what BYC believes on a single topic or issue.

Get all the facts and figures you can to support your argument and argue your case.

### **How should it be written?**

If you have never written a motion before it may be worth seeing if anyone in your organisation has experience in this matter and asking them for help.

If you are still unsure, you can seek advice about how to draft your motion from BYC's policy team on 020 7022 6461.

Please see the sample for the format we require motion to be written in.

It is important that in the section '**Text to be inserted into youth manifesto**' that this is a clear statement of believe in the topic and why it is an important issues rather than telling BYC to do something or join.

### **Word count**

Remember that your motion cannot be longer than **500 words**, that it **must be a statement** and that your organisation can only submit **three** motions.

### **Urgent Policy Making.**

Sometimes between Ordinary Meetings, BYC needs to make policy quickly in reaction to development in politics and our society. For example, Bills may be announced in the Queen's Speech or the Government may announce a new initiative that affects young people's lives.

In between Ordinary Meetings, BYC's Policy department works with the BYC Trustee Policy Making Group to draft policy, which then has to be ratified by all BYC trustees. These policies are included in the British Youth Council Manifesto circulated to Members.