Manchester Lit&Phil

Topic & Speaker Suggestions Guide

Version

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Point of Contact

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Data Protection

By engaging with this process, you consent to the society retaining your details in accordance with our privacy statement, available at: www.manlitphil.ac.uk/policies

Thank you for taking the time to share your ideas with the Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society. Your contribution sustains the Society's purpose and intrinsic value: to provide an independent, courteous forum where ideas from across the arts, sciences, and public life can be explored, challenged, and celebrated for the benefit of our community.

Fresh thinking is the lifeblood of our programme. We warmly welcome new suggestions and remain open-minded about subjects, formats, and perspectives. Whether your proposal sits firmly in one discipline or bridges several, we are keen to hear what you believe matters now and why.

As we plan ahead, we are prioritising events that help us reach and reflect new audiences people who may not yet know the Society, as well as diverse voices across our city and region. We especially value proposals that broaden participation, encourage dialogue between disciplines, and foster inclusive, intergenerational curiosity.

You do not need to have a specific speaker in mind; the subject and its significance are paramount. If you can suggest possible speakers or partners, that is certainly helpful, but it is not a requirement.

Thank you for helping us shape a programme that is rigorous, outward-looking, and welcoming. We look forward to developing your idea with you.

Alan Wareham

President, Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society
(Manchester Lit&Phil)

How the process works

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on how the process works, and on information we need from you as the proposer.

Who makes the decision?

The society's speakers are arranged by one of three sections within the society: 1) Science & Technology, 2) Arts and 3) Social Philosophy. The sections each have a chair and committee decision-making structure, and meet approximately eight times each year. The Planning Programme Group (PPG) oversees proposals from the sections, to ensure a balanced and varied programme of lectures throughout the year.

How are decisions made?

The sections consider the suitability of a topic or speaker on a number of variables, and the questions on page four of this document will help inform their decision, if you would share with us as much information as you can.

Speakers and topics are selected against a number of criteria, including meeting the society's charitable terms of reference, wider societal trends, and the society's priorities for the year; there will also be less obvious factors such as whether the topic or a similar topic has been used in recent years, the aligning of diaries with venue availability, or cost: bear in mind that the more famous personalities tend to ask for a large fee, and as a charity we have to consider very carefully how to allocate resources.

Members of the society expect high standards of speaker: whilst we don't expect lectures to be given by expert public speakers as such, we do need them to be authoritative in their field, be able to structure a narrative and engage an audience, and deal with questions from a well informed and considered audience.

Please respect that the decision of the respective committee is final, and it is unlikely that we will be able to provide feedback if a suggestion is not taken forward. Please be assured however that once a suggestion is in the system, it will be given full consideration.

How quickly will a decision be made?

It is not uncommon for the society to be engaged with a speaker for over twelve-eighteen months before they can find a mutually suitable time for the lecture, and there are often a number of variables for the sections to consider: as such, these things can take time. The society is of course run by volunteers, so please bear with us.

Submission Guide

Please provide a brief response to each of the following questions, where possible, regarding your suggested speaker or topic.

If you are proposing a topic:

- Has the topic, or something similar, been the subject of a Lit & Phil lecture recently?
- Are there obvious speakers on the topic whom you can suggest (subject to the points on speakers below)?
- Does the topic have any specific links to Manchester or the North West of England?

If you are proposing a specific speaker:

- How authoritative are they in their field?
- Events normally last around 1–1.5 hours, including the lecture and the subsequent discussion. Is the speaker capable of presenting and responding to questions for this length of time?
- Can you provide examples of their public speaking (such as website links or YouTube videos)?
- Do you have contact details for the individual?
- Are you aware of whether they charge a fee for public speaking?
- Are they based in the UK?
- To your knowledge, is the speaker associated with any proscribed political movement?