



## **Aspiring Barristers Book Club**

Welcome to Aspiring Barristers Book Club!

This pack provides further information about the Book Club including its purpose and how each session will run. Frequently asked questions are also included.

Should you have any further questions about the Book Club that are not covered below, please email the Aspiring Barristers team at:

[aspiringbarristers.team@gmail.com](mailto:aspiringbarristers.team@gmail.com).

We look forward to warmly welcoming you to the Book Club soon!



## **Why was Aspiring Barristers' Book Club created?**

The Aspiring Barristers Book Club was created to serve three principal purposes:

1. To offer students an opportunity to develop their own oral advocacy skills;
2. To do so within a less formal and more relaxed environment; and
3. To do so among their peers.

Compared with alternative oral advocacy development opportunities (such as mooting, debating, public speaking competitions etc), Aspiring Barristers' Book Club allows aspiring student barristers to enhance their own oral advocacy skills through the sharing of thoughts, ideas and discussion points in a less formal environment amongst their peers and the session's Chair.

The intention is that the Book Club will also allow students who may not yet feel ready to enter more formal oral advocacy competitions and initiatives, the opportunity to develop their confidence speaking in a group setting.

## **Who is eligible to join the Book Club?**

Joining the Book Club is open to both Aspiring Barristers members and non-members. This means any student can become a Book Club member and attend the monthly sessions. Students who may not be aspiring to the Bar but wish to develop their oral advocacy skills, are permitted to be in attendance.

## **When do the Book Club meetings take place and how long is each meeting?**

Each Book Club meeting takes place on the last Thursday of each month (unless informed otherwise). Each session lasts for approximately 1 hour, starting at 6:30pm-7:30pm.

## **Are all meetings conducted virtually or are some sessions held in-person?**

All Book Club meetings are conducted virtually using Zoom. All Book Club members can expect to receive the Zoom joining details 24 hours in advance of each monthly meeting. Prospective attendees are kindly asked to email the Aspiring Barristers team in the event that they do not receive such details by that time.

### **How is the book to be discussed chosen?**

The Book to be discussed at each monthly meeting is selected entirely at random by a member of the Aspiring Barristers team. Any suitable book recommendations offered by attendees will also be added to this list as part of the random selection process for future Book Club sessions.

### **Are the Book Club sessions recorded?**

No Book Club session is recorded.

### **Will my oral advocacy be assessed during the Book Club meetings?**

No attendee's oral advocacy will be assessed or scrutinised during any Book Club meeting.

The purpose of the Book Club is to provide students with an environment where through trial and error they can present their thoughts and ideas before their peers and learn from that experience what advocacy methods and styles work for them, whilst also benefiting from seeing the methods utilised by their peers.

The Book Club is a learning experience in developing one's oral advocacy abilities, but to do so within a pleasant environment whereby ultimately students enjoy engaging with discussions about the book with their peers. Attendees can therefore rest assured that their advocacy contributions will not come under scrutiny.

### **What is the set-up of the Book Club?**

Whilst a member of the Aspiring Barristers team will introduce each monthly session, the set-up of the Book Club is that of the Chair and the attendees.

Whilst guided by the Chair, ultimately the discussion to be had at each session is led by the attendees who largely determine how they wish to share their own thoughts and ideas about the book being discussed.

The Book Club session will end at the instigation of the Chair once the 1-hour time period has concluded. The Zoom software will then be closed by the Aspiring Barristers representative present.

### **Who Chairs the Book Club meetings?**

Each monthly Book Club meeting is chaired by either a Barrister, Solicitor, Judge or Academic. The Chair will be a practitioner in the area of law relevant to the book to be discussed.

The role of the Chair is to assist the Book Club attendees in generating further discussion points in light of the discussion that is taking place, and is available to pose further questions and other conversational points.

### **Can attendees make book recommendations for future meetings?**

Absolutely! Any book recommendations for potential use at future book club meetings can be passed on to the Aspiring Barristers representative who is present at the particular Book Club session in question.

### **Is there a set structure for each Book Club meeting?**

There is no set structure for how the 1-hour Book Club session is to be conducted.

The Chair and attendees may decide amongst themselves at the start of the session, whether or not they unanimously wish to adopt a more structured approach to discussions with each attendee having a certain amount of time to speak in a certain order.

Alternatively, the Chair and attendees may decide to keep the floor entirely open, preferring to adopt a more conversational approach to discussions, with each contributing as and when they have points that they would like to share. What structure to adopt for the session is a decision entirely for those present at the particular session to agree.

### **What preparation should I do ahead of each Book Club meeting? Is there an expectation that I read the book cover to cover ahead of each meeting?**

Whilst reading in advance the entirety of the book to be discussed will ensure a breadth of discussion at the session, it is appreciated that this may not always be



possible. We encourage attendees to engage with the book to be discussed to the extent that enables them to suitably contribute to the discussions at the session. For example, if unable to read the entire book, by instead focusing on a certain chapter that they found of particular interest.

### **What can I expect to gain from the Book Club?**

Participating in Aspiring Barristers' Book Club provides a great opportunity for aspiring student barristers to enhance their oral advocacy skills in a relaxed environment by contributing to discussions alongside their peers. It also broadens one's reading choices by engaging with a variety of different literature including (but not limited to) books, novels, poems, graphic novels, journal articles and autobiographies. Aspiring Barristers' Book Club enables participants to discuss with other individuals and professionals interesting and thought-provoking literature covering a broad range of topics and writing styles.

It is hoped that from engaging with the Book Club that students enjoy the process of developing their oral advocacy abilities, whilst doing so amongst their peers and in the presence of practitioners.

### **What can be expected of me as a Book Club attendee?**

It is expected that all attendees come prepared to the Book Club meetings to the extent that they can suitably contribute to the discussions. Practitioners who Chair Book Club meetings do so on an entirely voluntary basis, giving up their time to make the Book Club sessions possible. Out of courtesy to them and to your fellow peers who have also used their time to come prepared, we kindly ask that preparation is undertaken ahead of each meeting to ensure the session can run properly.

It is expected that all attendees will be courteous and respectful at all time to their fellow attendees, the Aspiring Barristers representative, and the Chair. You are expected to not engage in any abusive, offensive and/or discriminatory conduct of any kind. Aspiring Barristers operates a zero-tolerance policy for such behaviours. As such, any engagement whatsoever with such behaviours will result in your removal from the session and an automatic ban with immediate effect from future Book Club meetings.



**Is there a dress code for the Book Club meetings?**

We kindly ask all attendees and the Chair adopt a smart-casual attire for Book Club meetings.