

Exercise 1

As many political reporters begin their careers as local government reporters, these exercises look at local government reporting.

Imagine you are the local government reporter for *The Dominion Post* newspaper in Wellington.

You are to attend a meeting of Wellington City Council's culture and recreation committee. A variety of council officials are to give their reports to the committee, and the councillors have to make various decisions.

You are going to interview the chair of the committee, Councillor John Gilberthorpe, after the meeting.

This video is an excerpt from the meeting plus the interview with Mr Gilberthorpe. It is about 75 minutes long:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1fdtJ_JNzz0

Below, you will find the agenda for this part of the meeting, which starts at item number 3.2. An agenda, also called an "order paper", details what a meeting will discuss.

The agenda here includes a few explanatory details in square brackets to help you with this exercise.

A seating plan of the meeting is also below.

Watch the video and take notes throughout. Come up with at least **five** story ideas from the meeting. Stay attentive, as you'll never know when a good story and/or good quotes will occur!

Exercise 2

Write an article of about 250 words on the lion-enclosure story for tomorrow's *Dominion Post*.

Write your article in a journalistic style, with a strong intro and an inverted-pyramid structure. Do not start with "At a meeting of the Wellington City Council's..." or "The Council's culture and recreation committee decided...."

Your story must be accurate and use correct grammar/punctuation.

Do not use council-meeting jargon. Write for your *readers*, not the council.

Agenda

Culture and Recreation Committee

Wellington City Council

...FADE IN

3.2 Culture and Recreation Division Report

a) City Art Gallery Report: Director Paula Savage

[Including:

- Brodsky and Utkin "Pilaza Nero" exhibition at International Festival of the Arts
- Metropolis forum, featuring Herbert Muchamp
- Art structure at "Homemade Home" art exhibition]

b) Michael Fowler Centre Report: Manager Gillian Houser.

c) City Library Report: City Librarian Brian McKeon.

[Pages 4 and 5 of the actual agenda covered:

- Pōhutukawa tree on The Terrace. There was talk of putting a net back up above the tree to keep birds off the tree. The birds were a nuisance because of the mess they made on The Terrace. The SPCA opposed the net, saying it endangered the birds and that returning it was possibly an offence under the Animal Protection Act.]

And sundry Culture and Recreation items, including:

- Karori Chapel, Freyberg Pool, Wright's Hill

d) Zoo Report: Zoo manager Kerry Muller. [This was page 7 of the actual agenda.]

3.3 Zoo evenings.

3.4 Lion enclosure, capital expenditure item, addition to the annual plan. ["A to C" are a list of three recommendations in the officials' report recommending that tenders be called for.]

3.5 In committee. [That is, the public are excluded.]

FADE OUT...

Following this, local government reporter Eileen O'Leary interviews John Gilberthorpe about the meeting.

[Te Aro Park was famous for a costly sculpture of a waka (Māori canoe), commissioned by the Council.]

Seating plan

("Cr" = Councillor)

