

RLSS UK
Governance Review

Member's Response to
Consultation – We Have Listened



Message from the President

on behalf of the Trustees of 'Our Society'

Pete Moyes



Member's Response

Earlier this year I invited you all to read the Prospectus for Change carefully. I said that we the Trustees would act upon any feedback you provided. The consultation period has now ended and I'm pleased to be able to summarise the outcome of the consultation for you.

During our week long consultation tour of the UK and Ireland, Di Steer and I met with many members who listened to our explanation of the proposals and offered their views. We have also received formal responses from Branches and members.



Our core purpose is to **'prevent drowning'** and our value proposition is to **'deliver a year on year reduction in the rate of British and Irish citizens drowning'**.

Through the identification of seven challenging ambitions we intend to focus our attentions on having the maximum impact possible on these facets of the work we undertake.

From the feedback, we received overwhelming support for the proposals that we have consulted upon. During the consultation phase we have been able to take advantage of the collective thinking of the membership. You have helped us to reconsider and refine the detail that will be needed to implement the proposals once they have been considered and – as now seems likely – accepted at our Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Thank you all for responding.

What happens now?

Two proposals, “flexible Branches” and “the role of regions” can be delivered without any changes to the Memorandum & Articles of Association (Articles) so they do not require special resolutions. The Board of Trustees have considered the proposals for flexible Branches and the role of regions; they have been influenced by the overwhelming support for these proposals demonstrated by those responding during the consultation process. The Board of Trustees have taken the decision to implement the proposals as outlined in the consultation papers.

Three of the proposals will lead to special resolutions being presented to this year's AGM. Acceptance of the special resolutions will lead to changes to our Articles. Any changes to the Articles need to be supported through the balloting process at the AGM.

The following paragraphs set out what the original proposal was, what you have said to us and what we intend to do about it.

Once again thank you for your help and overwhelming support.

There are 5 areas of governance that we propose are reviewed:

1. Flexible Branches to Enable More Effective Delivery of Our Objectives
2. Appointments to the Board of Trustees of RLSS UK
3. Future Leadership of RLSS UK
4. Changes to Our Voting Mechanisms
5. The Role of RLSS UK Regions

1. Flexible Branches to Enable More Effective Delivery of Our Objectives

We proposed that the Branch Constitution be amended to be less prescriptive about the structure Branches adopt, with the only requirements being that a Branch must have an elected Chair and will have a nationally appointed Safeguarding Officer in post. The Branch can then appoint/elect as many officers as it deems necessary to achieve the Society's objectives.

RLSS UK

Our Ambitions


To be a **WORLD LEADER** in lifeguarding and lifesaving qualifications.

To achieve a **30%** increase in the people engaged and involved in lifesaving activity to build safer communities.

We also proposed that the Trustees issue annual bulletins to Branch committees that outline the Society's priorities for the following year and offer guidance to Branches on how this could be achieved.

Deliver drowning prevention education to **ALL UNDER 18 YEAR OLDS** IN THE UK AND IRELAND.

Be the 'go to' organisation for drowning prevention advice and comment.



Service a diverse range of new sectors by applying a flexible approach to meet market demands.

What you have said:

You showed strong support for this principle. We recognise that whilst a new Branch Constitution may stipulate just two posts you have asked us to set a minimum number of office holders to ensure good governance is maintained. You have also asked for us to include the tasks which are considered essential to be fulfilled by the Branch.

What we will do:

Amendments to the model Branch Constitution do not require changes to our Articles therefore no special resolution is necessary. We will prepare a new Branch Constitution and consult with stakeholders and provide support on its implementation before the end of 2015.



To be one of the **top 8 countries** in world Lifesaving Sport.



Leverage UK and Ireland Lifesaving knowledge and resource to actively influence the reduction of global drownings.

2. Appointments to the Board of Trustees of RLSS UK

We proposed to allow all members the opportunity to become Trustees by simply asking you to vote to elect a Trustee to the Society from a list of interested candidates, as opposed to a specific Branch, region, or project sponsor role.

The exception is the election of the President of the Society via the current Deputy President elections. This would mean that any member could stand for election for one of the six Trustee positions or the Deputy President role and the Deputy President will automatically become the President in line with the existing constitution. The Board of Trustees will continue to be made up of eight Trustees who have been elected from the membership, and one Honorary Treasurer Trustee appointed by the Board of Trustees. This will allow any future Board of Trustees the same degree of flexibility as we are proposing for our Branch structure, the Trustees will have an organisation wide responsibility but can be asked to champion a particular aspect of our work in line with the priorities of the day and the skills of the people available.

What you have said

There was overwhelming support for this proposal from those who responded and a change to our Articles will be required.

What we will do:

A special resolution will be presented at our AGM. Trustees seek your support for this proposal which will be implemented for elections in 2016 if supported by the ballot.

3. Future Leadership of RLSS UK

We proposed that it would be in the best interests of the Society for the membership to split the role of President of RLSS UK and Chair of the Board of Trustees into two separate roles with the President remaining the elected leader of the Society working alongside a Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Chair would be appointed by the President as head of a selection committee, this selection being based on skills and experience basis together with a specific time commitment, and if not already a Trustee would become one. This proposal is designed to increase the resilience of our leadership and encourage a wider selection of our volunteers to lead and influence the future direction of our Society in the role of President.

What you said:

There was once again overwhelming support for this proposal. You asked us to ensure there is a clear job description for the role. You also asked us to ensure the President retains the casting vote on behalf of members. We said the Presidency role will be encouraged to focus on advocacy on behalf of members and the Chair's role will be to focus on the skills required to ensure that the business of the Board of Trustees is effectively fulfilled. You asked for the Appointments Panel to be chaired by the President and to consist of the Deputy President, the Chief Executive and a minimum of one other Trustee. You wanted the term of office for the Chairman to relate to the term of the President.

What we will do:

A change to our Articles will be required and a special resolution will be presented at our AGM. Trustees seek your support for this proposal which will apply to elections from 2016 if passed by the Society's members at the ballot. In addition, we will implement the details you have asked for in policy and process documents that will follow the change to the Articles.

4. Changes to Our Voting Mechanisms

We proposed that RLSS UK adopts the principle of one member one vote in national elections and at the Annual General Meeting of the Society and uses appropriate voting technologies or engages suitable electoral service providers to implement this principle.

What you said:

There was overwhelming support for the proposal from those who responded. You asked Trustees to consult with professionals in the field of electoral processes to determine the most effective process to enable an ethical and credible election to take place. Trustees support the feedback that members who are 16 years and over should be eligible to vote. The implications of this will be considered further. The Trustees also support the members' feedback that any item requiring a change to our Articles in the future should be properly and thoroughly consulted upon prior to being presented to a future AGM or EGM.

What we will do

A change to our Articles will be required and a special resolution will be presented at our AGM. Trustees seek your support for this proposal. The new membership and voting arrangements will be implemented in time for the next meeting of the company members (which is due to be in the AGM in 2016) if this proposal is approved by the members in the ballot.

We will follow the guidance you have given us in working with election professionals to implement our process, we will ensure our membership categories are clear as to who is eligible to vote and include those who are 16 years old or older. It will be a requirement in our policy and procedures to ensure that any special resolution is appropriately consulted upon.

5. The Role of RLSS UK Regions

We proposed that in order to address our members concerns whilst remaining focused on the Business Plan we:

- **will not require you to have regional committees, giving Branches the flexibility to collaborate with other Branches in their area in the way that suits them best; and**

- **reconfigure the role of Regional Chairs to ensure that all Branches are supported by locally based senior volunteers ('ambassador type role'); and**
- **invite the ambassadors to work alongside the relevant Drowning Prevention Co-ordinator to support their work at a local and Branch level in accordance with the priorities in the business plan.**

We have taken your views as to how you are supported by a regionally based senior volunteer and, in particular, whether the proposed senior volunteer should be elected or recruited, through open advertisement, for their skills for the role.

What you said:

You showed strong support for the need to have a respected, experienced, locally based volunteer whose role is bringing together Branches and helping the Drowning Prevention co-ordinators to maximise their impact and support to Branches. However, in some areas you also said, "the region doesn't mean anything to us" and "don't create meetings for meetings sake", One area did say, "we like our regional committee, it keeps us informed" We concluded that you widely supported the proposal outlined.

What we will do:

There are no changes required to our Articles as a consequence of this proposal; therefore no special resolution is necessary. The Board of Trustees have considered the consultation feedback and have agreed to implement the proposal.

During the remainder of this year (2015) a job description will be written for the Area Ambassador. We will seek to appoint Area Ambassadors where there are existing vacancies and work with the Regional Chairs to ensure that there is a smooth transition to them becoming Area Ambassadors by June 2016. This proposal will have no impact on the Regional competitive structure. In the spirit of our flexible principles future arrangements at multi Branch level will be a matter for the Ambassadors and their Branches in conjunction with the Board of Trustees.

The **Drowning Prevention** Charity

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