

UPDATE ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CIWM CONSTITUTION

Background

Some time ago Trustees began a series of review meetings to consider the present Constitution. It is necessary for organisations such as the CIWM periodically to review their Constitution to ensure that it continues to meet the changing requirements placed upon it by society, by our Members and by evolving legislation. We have been aware that the current Constitution, largely as set out at the time of the award of our Royal Charter in 2001, no longer provides us with the best possible means of achieving our goals. Consequently, General Council decided to undertake a thorough review of the Institution's Governance.

Early in the review process the Trustees resolved to empower staff, improve member involvement and reduce some of the burden on Trustees because of the difficulty many members have in volunteering for Trusteeship due to time pressures and work commitments. It was necessary to ensure that our future structure and constitution create the conditions that will allow younger, employed professionals to volunteer.

This review involved a consultation with Members towards the end of 2016 to ensure that the process is transparent, inclusive and meets the needs of a rapidly changing sector. Responses from Members on the principle of changing the Constitution and a review of the membership grades have been incorporated into the wider review discussion.

General Council/Trustees

The responsibilities of Trustees of registered charities and Chartered organisations are increasing and many organisations similar to ours have recently or are currently reviewing their constitutions. A review of what is required of our General Councillors ie our current Trustees and how they are selected has led to a fundamental revision of the constitution of the CIWM regarding the proposed way forward.

The present General Council of 27 is too large and meets too infrequently. The Centre-based election process restricts democracy and leads to the belief that Trustees are elected to represent Centres.

It is proposed to reduce the General Council to between 9 and 15 Trustees, which would meet more frequently and also replace the current Executive Committee. The Chairman would be elected by and from the Trustees.

It is proposed to introduce a new appointment process which will include a selection through role descriptions, person specifications, specific skills, experience, knowledge and in respect of areas of devolved Government a geographical requirement. Elected Trustees will generally be voted on by the whole membership rather than Centre by Centre as is currently the case.

Members' Council

A Member's Council will be established and will consist of representatives from each of the Centres and will be expected to discuss key issues that will inform strategy and operations. Those representatives would usually be the Centre Chairman and Secretary but that would be at the discretion of individual Centres.

The current Presidential team arrangements (Junior Vice President, Senior Vice President, President, Immediate Past President) will continue, with the Member's Council electing the new Junior Vice President each year. The current President chairing the Council and all the Presidential team will also be members of that Council.

This approach – a Members' Council chaired by the President, attended by the full Presidential team and involving representation from all Centres – will offer status, defined roles and communication opportunities sufficient to maintain the very close links with Centre volunteers.

Presidential Team

Currently the Presidential team of four are all Trustees, in the interests of keeping the General Council to a manageable number, in the new arrangements only the current President would be a Trustee and would represent the interests of the Members' Council on the General Council.

Outside of this and the appeals and discipline function, the role of the President will be largely ceremonial and ambassadorial.

Committee Roles

In line with best practice, the Audit Committee and the Corporate Governance and Professional Ethics Committees will continue, reporting to the General Council. Both are chaired by independent professionally qualified persons.

The Scientific and Technical Committee fulfils a vital role in the life of the professional Institution and will continue to operate.

The work of other committees (Education, Training, Membership and Communications) will be undertaken by staff, calling on less formal groups of Members and other relevant experts for support and overseen by the General Council, usually via a lead Trustee.

Membership Grades

Work to put together a proposal to revise the grades of CIWM membership continues. Aspects of that will need to be reflected in the final package and Members will continue to be consulted as things develop.

Timetable

If the AGM agrees the principle of these proposed changes to the Constitution, work will begin in earnest to redraft the Constitutional documents. Drafts will be shared with Members, Trustees and the Privy Council.

The timetable includes presentation of redrafted documents to the General Council in 2018 before finalised documents are presented either to the AGM 2018 or an EGM later in the year. The process for sharing documents with the Privy Council will dovetail into that timetable.

Note

This is not a comprehensive list of Constitutional issues which may be put before Members in the AGM (or EGM) in due course, since further work is underway to bring other aspects up to date. As the process unfolds Members will be provided with draft papers for comment. At the same time discussions will take place with the Privy Council as they are the ultimate arbiter for changes to elements of the Constitutional documents.

16th August 2017