

Proposed modification of the Club Constitution & Rules

Background

The 2017 AGM ratified a complete replacement to the Club Constitution & Rules, largely brought about by the need to recognise the increasing impact of modern technology on the way the Club's officers and members conduct their respective business.

The Committee has received a petition from a member challenging two aspects of the documents ratified by the 2017 AGM and asking for them to be revised and offered to the 2018 AGM for adoption. After careful consideration, the Committee has decided to support these changes and has re-drafted the relevant sections, which are offered to the AGM for consideration and ratification.

The issues are:

1. The 2017 documents introduced the term Head Coach rather than using the term Coaching Co-ordinator, which has been in use since the early days of the Club. The petition calls for the original term to be reinstated as the coaching staff do not recognise a hierarchy and therefore the term "Head Coach" is inappropriate. This change is purely typographical: all duties of the "Head Coach" / "Coaching Co-ordinator" remain unaltered.
2. At §5.3 of the Constitution, it could be inferred that the number of Committee posts is flexed to provide every candidate with a post. The text has been clarified to avoid this mis-interpretation.
3. The election of the Committee is intended to take place as a secret ballot of members present at the AGM. The ballot allows members to express a preference for candidates, but there is no concept of voting against a candidate. The revised Rules took the logical view that it would be nugatory to hold a ballot unless there are more candidates than posts: candidates would merely need to vote for themselves to be automatically elected.

Whilst recognising that every member has the right to stand for election, the Committee agreed with the petitioner that it is essential that there should be more endorsement of the suitability of a candidate to represent the membership on the Committee than a single self-vote or a handful of votes by friends. Hence the Committee proposes to modify the rules under which candidates are elected to form the new Committee by defining a threshold number of votes that must be cast in favour of every elected candidate. The proposed threshold is 50% of the number of members attending the AGM.

Any candidate failing to secure the threshold number of votes will fail to be elected to the Committee even if that means that a post remains unfilled at the end of the election process.

Codification

Points 1 & 2 result in essentially trivial typographical changes, however point 3 invokes profound change to the governance of the Club. The relevant passage in the present Rules document together with the revised text that the Committee recommends are laid out overleaf.

The outgoing Committee recommends to the members that these revisions to the Rules be adopted and that they should take immediate effect in regard to the election of the 2018/19 Committee.

Existing Rules		Proposed amendment	
7.2e	If there are more candidates than there are Committee places available, the matter shall be resolved by a secret ballot of the candidates. If there are the same number of or fewer candidates than there are Committee posts, all candidates shall be automatically appointed without the need for a ballot.	7.2e	Election of candidates to the Committee shall be by secret ballot. All candidates whose applications have been received by the due date shall be entered into the ballot. The Chairperson shall call for a volunteer from the assembly to act as the ballot returning officer.
7.2f	In the event of a ballot being required, all candidates whose applications have been received by the due date shall be entered into the ballot. The Chairperson shall call for a volunteer from the assembly to act as the ballot returning officer	7.2f	Only fully paid-up members (of any category of membership) shall be entitled to vote in the election of candidates to the Committee.
		...	
		7.2j	Being a member of the Committee is a serious undertaking, requiring a responsible attitude, an ability to work effectively in a team, a willingness to accept tasks and deliver corresponding results, skills and experience, and a fervent desire to achieve the best outcomes for members. Recognising that there are frequently no more candidates than places available, a candidate could be elected with no more endorsement than he or she voting for his or herself.
		7.2k	To guard against such undesirable automatic selection, each successful candidate must achieve a threshold number of votes cast in favour, set at 50% of the number of voting members in the assembly, rounded up to a whole number. E.g. if there are 100 people present, of which only 97 are paid-up members and therefore eligible to vote, no candidate will be elected who receives fewer than $97/2 = 48$ votes, even if this results in some Committee posts remaining vacant at the end of the ballot.