

Format of National Council Meetings

Proposal 1: That one National Council meeting each year should normally be held on-line. It would be for National Council to determine each year which meeting should be held on-line. It is envisaged that National Council would decide this at the first meeting after the AGM but this could be varied depending on the circumstances at the time.

Proposal 2: For all National Council meetings, National Councillors should be permitted to join the meeting on-line.

Rationale for the Proposals

The option of holding some National Council meetings on-line was discussed at the October 2020 meeting. The relevant paper is on the website and the discussion is recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting, also on the website.

Various advantages of on-line and face-to-face meetings were discussed. The advantage of on-line meetings included that they reduced costs, and for many National Councillors long journeys and/or overnight stays were avoided – making it easier to attend meetings. Many National Councillors were now familiar with on-line meetings as a result of their widespread adoption during the pandemic. The advantages of face-to-face meetings were that they provided lots of opportunities for engaging with fellow National Councillors. Not all National Councillors had access to the appropriate technology for on-line meetings.

Given the range of views expressed, it was decided that the Chair should seek the views of National Councillors on holding meetings on-line. Two questions were put to National Councillors with the responses indicated.

Question 1. Which of these options do you prefer:-

- A. All meetings should normally be held face to face: 8
- B. All meetings should normally be held on line: 3
- C. Some meetings should be held face to face and some on line: 10

Question 2. Regardless of your answer to Q1, do you think a councillor who is unable to attend a face to face meeting should be permitted to join the meeting on line?

Yes 20

No 1

Changing the format of National Council meetings should be on the basis of that it has broad, consensus support. Based on the responses to the questionnaire, the two proposals outlined above are an attempt to adopt a format that should have such consensus support.

Clearly, some will want more on-line meetings whilst others will only want face-to-face meetings. Hopefully, the two proposals outlined above provide a way forward that everyone can accept.

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