



ROCA National Committee

Report to the 2014 Annual Delegates Meeting

Following a brief lapse in continuity, after the death of the former Chairman, the **Way Forward Group** was reformed in April last year. It now consists of the following members:- **Michael Marks** 7 Group Bedford (Chair).

Jenny Morris 12 Group Bristol - **Tim Kitching** 20 Group York - **Gordon Johnston** 8 Group Coventry - **Terry Penn** 3 Group Oxford - **John Millidge** 3 Group Oxford - and **Lawrence Holmes** 10 Group Exeter.

Having reviewed much of the earlier reports and summaries, a meeting of the new group was held in Northampton, on April 12th 2014. All but two of the members were in attendance; the two absentees had submitted their own reviews for discussion.

It is important to stress that there is not a serious problem with the Association. Our present constitution has held us in good stead for over 25 years, but now the time has come to take a look at it in the light of our ageing and declining membership.

Some of the earlier issues, raised at previous ADM's, had been dealt with. We looked at two areas that were considered most important:-

Firstly the **composition of the National Committee**; Secondly the ongoing **decline in membership** numbers across most Groups.

Nat Com present composition: Office Bearers. For the past 25 years we have had an elected council of ten – (two from each Area) - from within which the key office bearers have been selected. This has worked well, and still does because we've been lucky in having suitable candidates for these key posts for many years now. However, with the ongoing decline in membership numbers, we need to make sure that the best possible candidates for the key officers - **Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer** - are selected in the future.

To achieve this we propose electing candidates for these posts from the Full Membership list, not from within the circle of ten elected Area Reps as at present.

Area Representatives. Representation of the members interests, on the National Committee, is essential. Currently we have ten such representatives, two per Area. The original concept of these "Area reps" - travelling round their respective territories - was OK many years ago. Membership numbers were higher than today, and for many years – when the ROC was still operational - the Area idea worked well. But the building blocks of the Association today are the Groups, not Areas, it was therefore felt that the election of 'Members representatives' would be more appropriate. The need to travel round the groups doesn't happen all that often in today's climate. Costs are much higher than before and we have to consider the ageing

membership too. Under today's set up the three key office bearers are fully tied up with their main duties and have little spare time to be a representative.

Today's alternative means of communicating - such as the website, e-mail, and telephone, is more than adequate to maintain effective contact with one other.

The Proposals:

The National Committee should consist of **nine** members made up as follows:

Executive Officers:- Four seats Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, & Treasurer. Elected from the whole membership base. Open to **Full Members only**. Nominees to be forwarded via Groups. Election by postal vote, one vote per Group..

Members Representatives:- Five seats on the committee, candidates to be elected from the whole membership base. Open to **Full or Associate members**. Nominees to be forwarded via Groups. Election by postal vote, one vote per Group..

Voting in committee: Vice Chair, and the five Members Reps have one vote. Chair to have casting vote in the event of a split decision.

Introduction and timing:

Interim. Executive Continuity must be maintained. We cannot change everything in one go. Accordingly it is proposed that the Key Officers – Chair, Secretary, & Treasurer, remain in post under the present rules.

The ten area reps to stand down.

Five new 'Members Representatives' to be elected.

All Groups are asked to discuss these proposals over the next few months so that a draft resolution for electing the new Members Reps can be debated at next year's ADM. Once established, we can then bring in the changes to the election of the Officers

Michael Marks
Chairman
Way Forward Discussion Group

October 2014