



THE FUTURE

**Background and rationale to proposals to the
2018 Business Meeting**

The paper is presented by RIBI President 2017/18 Denis Spiller on behalf of General Council. The video presentation can be found online at <https://www.rotarygbi.org/members/events/abm/>

Rotary International Great Britain and Ireland – The Future

Successive General Councils have recognised that fundamental change is required within the Association of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland.

Changes to the Association's committee structures and training models were implemented this Rotary year and in February 2017, the Rotary 2 membership programme was launched and is demonstrating excellent results.

However, these developments alone are not going to secure the future of Rotary in these islands. Behind the introduction of new flexible clubs, we must build new district structures and most importantly a much-changed administrative territorial unit. The future of Rotary will be in the hands of the millennial generations and our structure must be suitable for 21st century service delivery.

To set the scene, Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland is 104 years old and sadly public perceptions of our clubs typically reflect the same. Rotary members of today mostly draw upon the baby boomer generation, demonstrated by our average age of 74 years.

Since the 1990s, we have continued to recruit boomers and our working membership has reduced from perhaps 60-70%, down to maybe as low as 15% and we are still around 80% male. It is our duty to create a Rotary attractive to today's working population and this is why Rotary 2 has been introduced.

In proposing change, we must understand why it is required, and to recognise that this is not change for change sake. Further, this change is not as has been implied before, simply moving the deckchairs around on the Titanic. Moving the chairs, gave the crew something to do whilst waiting to sink, but didn't affect the outcome. The General Council is proposing change that has consequence, has a purpose and potentially has influence throughout Rotary International.

If we do nothing to change our membership profile, Rotary as we know it in these islands will be gone in 10 years. Rotary International has demonstrated its recognition of the situation with major rule changes, providing relaxation on attendance and the removal of the vocation criteria on membership. It is now up to clubs to recognise our vulnerability and take advantage of these changes.

Additionally, Rotary International is seriously looking at regionalisation, of which Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland is currently the sole example, therefore now is the time to change and become the role model for the world.

There are many drivers for change, not least that in these modern times, evolution is key to survival. Darwin was right. Rotary must reflect the needs of the Millennials and not just the Boomers, and senior Rotary roles, such as District Governor and Association President must be open to, and deliverable by, working Rotarians. Rotary must look like and act as an organisation fit for people of the 21st century.

The plan is to implement innovative, and ultimately radical, change for the Association that it should be remembered is an administrative territorial unit of Rotary International. This administration includes: General Council; Executive Committee, Service and Administration Committees and the Presidency itself. Not everything can be changed at once and these changes do not directly affect the clubs and districts, but they will influence the wider perceptions of Rotary and aim to influence wider thinking.

The evolutionary change programme brings important benefits of streamlining, increased accountability and cost effectiveness, bringing our structure into one recognisable by our counterparts as one that is designed for today. In some areas, there will be a name change, but a change in name to one that has meaning not just within Rotary, but within the modern world.

Proposed Change Plan

Service and Administrative Committees

Big changes were made in 2017 with the Home and International teams. They are called teams, because teams work together to get things done, whereas committees can spend a lot of time meeting and talking, without opportunity to deliver.

Executive Committee

This is the operational body that directs the teams and the work of the support centre. The aim is to optimise reporting by bringing team leaders directly on to the Executive instead of operating through a layer of liaison governors. This increases accountability, improves communications and potentially reduces cost as less people are involved in wider team meetings.

General Council

As a title, this means nothing other than 'old fashioned', so instead it will be known as the Governing Council. This describes what it does, being responsible for driving policy and strategies.

The RIBI Presidency

This has remained untouched for 100 years and has been a bone of contention for Rotary International, other parts of the Rotary world and even some of our own members, for much of that time. It is unique, but in truth, outside of the club, there is just one real President of Rotary, and that is our global one.

Life has changed, expectations have changed, demands by clubs and individual Rotarians have changed and being retired, must not be a criterion for this role.

The proposal moving forward over 3 years is that the RIBI Presidency is ended.

In its place we shall have a Chairman of the Association, whose role is to Chair the Governing Council and the Executive Committee, and to support the General Secretary in the delivery of Rotary support services in Great Britain and Ireland.

To date, the President has delivered many of the duties performed elsewhere by the RI Zone Director, but without a seat on the RI board. So instead, the role of our RI Director will be refreshed to reflect what every other director in the Rotary world does, and that is to visit and support districts in their Zones, thus considerably reducing the demands on the Chairman.

In fact, there is no shortage of senior Rotarians including the Chairman, the Director, General Secretary and six Rotary International Coordinators, whose role it is to visit and support districts and clubs, potentially offering far greater delivery than a single President has been able to do alone.

The Chairman is still an elected officer and the process of election is open for review over the three-year change period, particularly as only 40% of clubs currently take part in the democratic voting process they are entitled to.

Both internal and external marketing are considered an issue for most Rotarians. With the new model, internal promotion can be addressed by a larger group of senior officers than ever before. External coverage is still a challenge without budget, but the Director, the Chairman and the General Secretary are the figurehead officers to lead on announcements and media interviews.

We cannot complete this change in a day or even a year, as by-laws and constitutional changes such as the final removal and replacement of the Presidency must go to Council on Legislation, and the next is in 2022. However, we can pilot the model and ratification of the planned stages will take place at Association Business Meetings between 2018 and 2020.

A bright future is ahead of us if we adopt change and rejuvenate membership and a revised Administrative structure will:

- enable efficiency in operation and greater accountability;
- reflect the structure and operation of similar 21st century organisations;
- motivate Districts and Clubs to adopt change and modernisation;
- enable working Rotarians to aspire to leadership roles.

The future of Rotary is in your hands. Changes both major and minor will affect how we work but importantly, they have the potential to build new perceptions of Rotary and open up leadership opportunities to younger people with modern experience and drive, to take our organisation into a future of growth in membership and stature, instead of an accelerating decline that will otherwise dominate the next 10 years.

In the spirit and beliefs of Paul Harris himself Rotary must change and evolve to retain relevance to both its members and the community.

You are asked to support this proposal for change and to demonstrate to the Rotary World that as with club creation programmes in the 1930's, the Satellite model in 2011 and Rotary 2 in 2017, RIBI is again innovating for a Rotary fit for the future.



Denis Spiller

RIBI President 2017/18