Member consultation - proposed changes to the Constitution

Dear Member,

Below are draft changes, under discussion, to amend the current constitution of the Society.

These are to be reviewed with the main constitution which is available on the website at www.thethorneyislandsociety.org.uk . Observations on the changes are in italics. We have added questions below on points raised by other members in the initial review, which we hope you will give consideration too.

Item 1 - Amend 'society' to 'Society'. Add at the end of the sentence, a new sentence, 'Further references to the Society will mean The Thorney Island Society.'

Item 2 - In the first paragraph, delete all within the brackets (…) . Add to the end of the first paragraph, 'The area of the Thorney Island Society, will include all within a closed loop boundary from Westminster Bridge/Great George Street, to Vauxhall Bridge/Vauxhall Bridge Road, to Victoria Circus/Buckingham Palace Road, to Birdcage Walk/Great George Street, in addition to St James's Park and The Green Park, by virtue of being fully participating members of the Royal Parks Forum. With the exception of Bird Cage Walk, all roads and rivers on the boundary line will be from the middle of the road or river.'

Item 2 - Under (iii) add a comma, after 'preservation' and 'protection' and 'development', to read …'preservation, protection, development'...

Item 2 - Under sub item 9, delete after 'or otherwise;' the remaining statement starting with 'providing that the society…'

[These changes are to note that it may be reasonable for the Society to create trading activities where it helps to supplement the funds of the Society in accordance with its objectives.]

Item 2 - Under sub item 12, delete after 'Executive shall think fit', and delete the following sentences so that the line ends as ….'Executive Committee shall think fit'.'

[These changes remove any inference of a limited liability dispensation, which is not in line with the unincorporated function of the charity.]

Item 3 - Delete from 'There shall be the following categories…' to 'Such others to read 'Membership categories to be created and changed as the Executive…']

Item 3 - Amend 18 to 16, to read ‘Members under the age of 16 shall not’

[These changes are to reflect the overall inclusion of younger members that may wish to actively get involved and to reflect that membership categories may vary from time to time in wording’.]

Item 4 - Subscriptions: Amend in the second paragraph, 'from 1 November each year until 31 October the following year' to 'from receipt of payment', and amend 'payable on or before 1 November each year.' to 'payable upon renewal on each annual anniversary.' In the same paragraph, delete from 'The subscriptions of a member joining the Society in the four months preceding 1 November in any year shall be regarded as covering membership for the Society's subscription year commencing on 1 November.

[These changes are to reflect that the membership can now join the Society at any time, and do not need to renew on 1 November. The Executive Committee is also keen to ensure that those that seek nomination to join the Executive Committee get to know the Society and understand the roles better for three months prior to being nominated.]

Item 5 - General Meetings: Amend the first sentence, to read ‘An Annual General Meeting shall be held within 13 months of the last Annual General Meeting to receive the …’

Item 5 - In the first paragraph, amend ‘written request of 15 or more members’ to read ‘written request of 10 per cent or more members’...

Item 5 - General Meetings: In the third paragraph, amend after 'to take the chair, the current Executive Committee Chair shall take the Chair, if they are unable to do so, the Meeting'... and then amend 'the chairman' to 'the chair'

[These changes are to reflect the accepted practice of managing General Meetings and also to allow the potential to move away from a November meeting to support other events or financial reporting changes that may take place. The change of quorum to a percent is representative of the growing membership of the Society.]

Item 6A - Officers: Under the third paragraph, after the sentence ending 'obtained in writing’ insert ‘or by e-mail.' and add the following sentence 'Nominations must be received at least seven days prior to the meeting.'

At the end of the final paragraph in 6A, add the following sentence: ‘Any person who has been a member of the Society for more than three months may be nominated for election as an Officer.

Item 6B - In the second paragraph, split into two paragraphs at the start of ‘The Committee shall have the power to co-opt…’

Item 6B - The Executive Committee: In the fifth paragraph, after the sentence ending 'obtained in writing’ inserting ’ or by e-mail.' add the following sentence 'Nominations will be received at least seven days prior to the meeting.'

At the end of the second paragraph in 6B, add the following sentence: ‘Any person who has been a member of the Society for more than six months may be nominated for election as a Committee member.

In the final paragraph of 6B, which starts with ‘The Executive Committee shall have the duty to consider, and power to determine…’ remove this final section to the start of Item 9.

[These changes are to reflect the need to ensure the meeting is organised better and that any administrative actions can be undertaken at the General Meetings]

Item 6B - Sub-committees, amend ‘Sub-committees shall be wholly subordinate to the Executive Committee, which shall at all times…’ to read ‘Sub-committees shall be wholly subordinate to the Executive Committee, except where the Executive Committee unanimously agrees to delegate clear decision making and documented Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee, which shall …’

[This is to enable Sub-Committees where strongly supported by the Executive Committee to be delegated with decision making responsibilities as established in a written and agreed Terms of Reference documents.]

Item 9 - Start of section updated with final reference in final paragraph of 6B as above.

Item 9 - Declaration of Interest: Amend in the first sentence 'elect ion' with 'election'

[Amended typo in the Constitution, move of conflicts of interest from 6B to item 9]

Item 10 - Expenses of Administration: In the last sentence, amend after 'to protect the' to read 'to protect the Officers, Executive Committee and'... amend 'their Trustee duties to 'all their duties.'

[This is to widen and clarify that insurance will be in place for Officers, the Executive and Trustees]

Item 14 - Notices: delete the word ‘prepaid’

[Update to reflect normal postal conditions]

Item 15 - Amend the final sentence, amend to read ‘On dissolution the minute books and other records of the Society shall be deposited with the City of Westminster Archives or similar body.’

[Update to reflect that the Civic Trust is no longer in place and another alternative, such as the Westminster Archives may be appropriate.]

Additional questions and observations from early feedback:

- Under item 2: Do you think a map of the boundary area should be added as a better method?
- Under item 5: Would you prefer minimum quorum numbers to be expressed as a percentage or exact number of members?
- Under item 6A: Do you think this should be one or three months rather than six?
- Under item 6A: Should a deputy chair be nominated, either by the AGM or by the committee at their first meeting from the existing Officers?
- Under item 6B: Should the provision of a ballot be outlined, in the event of more than one nomination for any position?
- Under item 6B: Would extended terms of offices for a number of years, say 3, be more appropriate than annual elections?
- Under item 6B: Do you think sub-committees should be delegated accountabilities of the Executive with strict Terms of Reference, not requiring a member of the Executive to be part of the sub-committee?

Let us know your views!

Please note, all changes are dependent on discussions with the Charity Commission to ensure they are in line with expectations - we will also seek for them to approve any relevant changes. We will look to propose any finalised changes to a future AGM or SGM of the Society at a time when the review is complete.

We’d like to invite you to respond with your views, you can do so by emailing the Chair, Glenn Murphy, at chair@thethorneyislandsociety.org.uk