

Discussion Paper

Consultation on Remits

Paper No. 01

[V3 Final / 17_08_18 / Consultation on Remits]



Purpose

To propose a new way of introducing remits promoting new initiatives, which will provide a greater opportunity for member and stakeholder consideration and input ensuring well thought through remits that will succeed when they go forward for voting.

Measure of success

100% of remits submitted for vote succeed with at least a 60% 'For' vote.

Method

Develop a discussion paper to be circulated to members, posted on both website and face book. Discussion to be facilitated through District Councils which will send their feedback to RAS Head Office for discussion with the appropriate bodies such as the Horse Stewards Council Executive, United Breed Society Executive and the RAS Executive.

Background

Bringing new ideas usually means instituting some level of change. Whilst some might embrace new ideas and concepts right away, others will be hesitant or resist. Where people do not feel fully informed or involved in decisions that affect them, experience tells us that in this organisation there will be a backlash.

To a large extent our traditional remit process sets us up for this backlash. Changes or additions to any competition or exhibit rules or regulations of the Society are made by remit.

Any remit must be submitted to the Society by the 15 March and Members receive copies of all remits no later than the 15 April. Voting is exercised by way of a postal ballot and the closing date for the ballots is 15 June. That leaves a very small window of time to enable meetings and discussions about the remit, especially if it promotes something completely new, before it must be voted on.

Who makes the decisions?

Those who get to make the decisions are the member organisations, and often they do not have the time to call their committees together to discuss, checkout questions, and reach decisions before someone in the organisation is expected to cast their postal vote.

Other Stakeholders

This year for the first time another group of important stakeholders were encouraged to attend meetings and express their views on new initiatives which would affect them. The competitors are the customers of the member organisations, and they, quite reasonably, expect to be able to have an opinion and be heard on matters that are ultimately going to affect their ability to compete.

The current process of implementation

The result of the ballot is reported to the Annual General Meeting of the Society and will take effect as from immediately after that meeting.

This creates the classic situation:

- Ideas seem to be sprung out of the blue
- They appear to be 'top down'
- There is little warning or time to consider and debate
- Big changes have little time to prepare for the implementation
- Key stakeholders are not given reasonable opportunity to be involved.

Therefore it should come as no surprise those who are affected by the changes have no sense of ownership and feel aggrieved they have not been involved.

Implementing new ideas

Creativity and new ideas are completely useless, unless, we can make our ideas a reality. New ideas challenge the status quo, something which should happen continuously in dynamic organisations. We know challenge and change can make people uncomfortable even combative.

Sadly the implementation of new ideas is not simple. People often resist new ideas simply because of who is suggesting them or because they are not sure the results will be worth the risk and or cost. Ideas seem wonderful when they are being dreamed up, but frightening when it comes to time to implement them.

New ideas gain better traction if stakeholders have a vested interest in the process. They should have a say in the decisions about actions that will affect their involvement in the organisation. Their participation should include the promise that stakeholder's contribution will influence the decision. The value of stakeholder engagement reduces the risk of missing important perspectives.

To remain relevant to survive in a challenging environment requires a more effective interaction with our stakeholders. And that interaction should primarily be managed through the District Councils.

The role of the District Councils

The Constitution notes that it is encouraged for remits to be tabled at a District Meeting for approval first.

There is an excellent opportunity for District Councils to play a significant part in the effective operation of the RAS by facilitating the discussions of proposals in the area, gathering opinion and feeding back to the RAS Head Office or whichever body is going to be advising the Executive on the remit i.e. Horse Stewards Council Executive, United Breeds Society Executive, the RAS Executive.

Of course the District Council will have to demonstrate that they have fully involved members and stakeholders such as competitors.

The Constitution supports this role of the District Council at:

10.1 District Councils

(b) Subject to directions from the Society, each District Council shall be responsible for promoting the Objects of the Society within the area covered by that District Council.

13.1 (g) Generally, carry out any activity that furthers and advances the purposes of the District and promotes the objects of the Society within the District....

It's ok to disagree but, disagree without being disagreeable

Effective discussion engages everyone and results in good decisions. There are ways to disagree at meetings both positively and productively.

We should not be shy about heated debate or passionate discourse, but when people get crazy or rude, that's a buzz kill. There's got to be a better code of conduct, some basic etiquette.

Sharing opinions during meetings, even if they are contrary to what others might be saying, is necessary for others to see you as part of the conversation. It is important for everyone at the meeting to take part in a collaborative process that involves various individuals stating their points of view. People add to what others are saying, and ultimately reach a solution, direction, result or action plan.

Good meetings are where many people contribute and feel safe and comfortable to do so.

The proposed process

No remit promoting new initiatives should go forward that has not been developed out of this process with at least 6 months lead time for discussion, debate and refinement of a proposal. The only exceptions will be, *"...if in the Executive's sole opinion the remit is likely to result in a breach of any law or regulation."* [Constitution at 13 (h)]

1. The process will follow a similar format to that of the Remit, forming a Discussion Paper noting:
 - The name of the member proposer.
(Only members can propose remits. This will not necessarily stop an individual making a proposal, but they will need the support of a member organisation for it to proceed.)
 - The new initiative or idea the proposal seeks to address
 - Proposed new idea
 - Benefits
 - Potential obstacles / objections and suggested responses
 - Steps involved in implementing the preferred solution / new idea
2. Submit the proposal to the Executive for Review

(The purpose is to help ensure the proposal considers all implications and rules etc. The Executive may send some suggestions to improve/develop the discussion paper)
3. The Executive will forward the Discussion Paper to the Chairpersons of the District Councils along with a Feeding Back report template. Councils will be responsible for determining their own process of engaging widely. They will only be required to return the feedback they have developed from the consultation process, and a report of that process.

4. The Executive or appropriate advisory group draft the final remit with an implementation programme included, and return to the District Councils for review.
5. Executive finalise remit for voting.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree in principle that remits promoting new ideas / initiatives should be developed out of discussion papers?
2. How long a period of consultation should there be for productive discussion and drafting of an appropriate remit?
3. Should District Councils facilitate discussion and forward feedback to RAS Head Office for discussion with appropriate bodies such as the Horse Stewards Council Executive; United Breeds Society Executive; RAS Executive?
4. Should stakeholders other than members be able to participate in the discussions?
5. In general, do you agree with what is being proposed in the discussion paper?
6. Which RAS District are you in? Find out which District here:
<http://www.ras.org.nz/about-ras/districts/>
7. Are you answering as a member of an A & P Society or Breed Society or as a Competitor / Exhibitor or as a member of the Youth Council / Youth Advisor Panel? If you answered on behalf of a member Society, tell us which Society.

How to feedback

The paper is posted on the RAS Website and Face Book. It is also being circulated to members, District Councils and through the face book pages of others interested.

You can provide feedback directly to your District Council. You can check which District you are in and how to contact them here: <http://www.ras.org.nz/about-ras/districts/>

There is a Survey form, which takes 2-3 minutes to complete here:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BWLW7C3>



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