



Royal Naval Amateur Radio Society

President: Commodore Paul Sutermeister DL RN

Chairman: David Firth 2E0GLL

Hon. Secretary Joe Kirk G3ZDF 111 Stockbridge Road
Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8QR

MINUTES

RNARS EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 13th October 2018

Following the AGM

Held in the WO&SRs Mess, HMS Collingwood

1. Introduction

The purpose of the EGM was to consider and decide on the proposed changes to the RNARS 2014 Constitution (attached).

2. Comments on the proposed changes

Comments were received from David G3PLE, Doug G0LDJ and Wally G4DIU.
Comments attached.

3. The Chairman introduced the background to the proposed changes and explained why he felt they were necessary.

He said that late in 2017 one of our members had expressed himself on the RNARS Yahoo Group in a way that two members of the Committee had taken exception to and had called for that member to be expelled from the Society as they felt the member had brought the Society into disrepute. The Secretary contacted the member to tell him that other members were unhappy with the way he had expressed himself. The member immediately issued a sincere apology through the Yahoo Group for any offence he might have caused by his 'use of an unfortunate turn of phrase to air a personal opinion'. This was considered an inadequate response by the two Committee members and they restated their proposal that he should be expelled from the Society.

The Committee considered their proposal and set up a Sub-Committee of 5 members consisting of the former Chairman Doug G4BEQ, a long-standing Committee member Doug G0MIU, the Secretary, Joe G3ZDF to investigate the charges against the member.

The main conclusions of the Sub-Committee were that:

- This was a matter for the Yahoo Group and not for the RNARS.
- The matter was resolved by the Yahoo Group Moderator/Owner banning the member from the Yahoo Group.

- The Sub-Committee considered that the matter was now closed.

The conclusions were accepted by a majority of the Committee.

Two members of the Committee and one other member then resigned from the Society.

The Chairman said throughout this period and following it he and some members of the Committee had been subjected to harassment, bullying and intimidation, their characters maligned and their judgement questioned. In addition, the original member who had expressed himself inappropriately had received a package of hate mail which was targeted at himself and his wife. The package was referred to the Metropolitan Police.

4. Changes 1, 3 and 4 were agreed unanimously.
5. Change 2 was agreed with 2 abstentions by overseas members.
6. A Vote of Thanks to the Sub-Committee for the work they had done was passed unanimously.
7. The EGM closed at 16.51.



PROPOSED ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS TO THE RNARS CONSTITUTION 2014

Changes in bold italics

Change 1

Section 3. MEMBERSHIP - Grades of Membership

New sub-section (f) within the grades of membership:

f) Under 25s who may qualify as either grade (a) or grade (b)

As ratified at the 2017 AGM. Following sub-section headings below to be adjusted to read (g) and (h)

Change 2

Section 3.1 Constitutional Requirements For Membership

Changes to sub-section (c) and the addition of sub-sections (d) through to (e):

MISCONDUCT

- c) No member shall be expelled without first having ***been informed of a complaint made against them, and shall be*** given an opportunity to appear before the Committee. ***If it is found there is no case to answer, the Committee shall have the authority close the investigation.***
- d) ***All representations shall be investigated by the full Committee, a quorum of Committee members or a sub-committee appointed by the Chair. Sub-committees shall report their findings and conclusions to the Committee at the next committee meeting or, at an extraordinary committee meeting called for that purpose. All information; whether material or otherwise; will be deemed confidential to the Committee, and not publicly made available during investigation. The Committee will discuss and vote on the most appropriate action to take, and will then inform the parties of its decision which is final. And where discretion allows, the outcome published accordingly.***
- A clash of interest in these circumstances is where a representation of misconduct is a personal matter involving a Committee member, or where a Committee member is the subject of a misconduct complaint. The Committee member shall not take part in any further enquiries or discussions (except as defined in (c) above) of the Committee during its investigation and its findings made known.***
- e) ***Any attempt to influence the outcome of Committee hearings, etc by bullying, obstruction, harassment or intimidating behaviour, or publicly divulging personal or confidential information, or otherwise will be viewed as misconduct.***



PROPOSED ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS TO THE RNARS CONSTITUTION 2014

Changes in bold italics

Change 3

This is a new section that reflects upon the necessity of adherence to legal requirements.

6. POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Occasionally, laws are passed requiring the Society to produce policies and procedures that are in compliance with national legislation. Breaches of the rules may call for corrective action within the sphere of the Society's influence, but may otherwise be offences that have to be reported to the authorities and further actions may lie beyond the remit of the Society. All members are required to read such documents and act in accordance with Section 3 of the constitution.

All other following sections to have their numbering adjusted accordingly.

Change 4

SECTION 8 COMMITTEE STANDING ORDERS

- i. Section renumbered resulting from earlier additions.
- ii. The addition of two further sub-sections (f) and (g): including the reinstatement of the principle of sub-committees from the original constitution:
 - (f) The Committee shall have the power to appoint such sub-committees and representatives, and co-opt members onto the committees, as they may deem necessary in the interests of the Society.***
 - (g) At meetings of the Committee, or any Sub-Committee appointed by the Chair, each member shall have a vote and the Chair of each committee shall have a casting vote.***



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PROPOSED CHANGES TO RNARS 2014 CONSTITUTION COMMENTS

David Barlow G3PLE 4304

As someone who has written organisations constitutions, disciplinary and grievance procedures, works rules, rule books etc. in my professional and private life both for major companies and small clubs and societies I have never read anything so inappropriate to a Society such as RNARS.

I have seen the underlying cause of these proposed changes and made my comments to those involved.

I do not think the section called "misconduct" is appropriate or necessary. Whatever happened to the term "shipmates" and how can so called ex Royal or indeed (as I (am) ex Merchant Navy men. Ladies and officers who are members of a radio amateur club or society not behave and act as adults.

Firstly I do not think the management committee are the right members to make a decision. Even at the end of the line a Court Marshall comprises people not involved in the original dispute or misconduct.

Secondly if you are to use a word like "misconduct" then there should be a proper procedure of complaint or grievance before it reaches a final stage.

It does appear that those involved in the matter that initiated this move defined a comment made which contained a particular name as misconduct. This would not have even arisen if those involved had not taken intractable stances and perhaps looked for an intermediary to try to sort it out.

Thirdly what constitutes "misconduct"? Having spent my working life lecturing and running a legal section in charge of Industrial Tribunals (these days Employment Tribunals) and explaining the difference between minor breaches of rules right up to Gross Misconduct it does seem to me that, for example, there is a big difference between failing to send your call sign at the required intervals and throwing a hand grenade into the GB2RN shack. The old verbal warning, written warning and final written warning or instant dismissal in the case of gross misconduct seems to be missing from the unnecessary proposals to alter the RNARS constitutions.

Quite honestly there should be no alterations to the constitutions. But as with other organisations there needs to be an RNARS Rule Book which covers this matter.

I do not hesitate to say that if, as there should be, a vote of the membership I will vote against the change of constitutions under the heading of misconduct.

Could these changes be indicative of what caused the row in the first place?

I do hope that RNARS can sit back and rethink the whole matter.

David Barlow 4304 G3PLE

Doug Cansfield/G0LDJ RNARS 3686

Please see below a list of questions, not exhaustive at this stage, I have put together for you to cogitate, muse and review accordingly; prior to the actual date of the EGM in October.

Reference the EGM – PROPOSED ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS TO THE RNARS CONSTITUTION 2014.

Change 2

Section 3.1 Constitutional Requirements For Membership

Changes to sub-section (c) and the addition of sub-sections (d) through to (e)

***MISCONDUCT***

Questions:-

1. How will the member being subject to a complaint be informed. Will it be in written form, delivered by what means, if Royal Mail system utilised, will it be by registered mail and requiring a recipient to respond within a given time frame (e.g. 28 calendar days) or longer depending on circumstances. Letter to contain such information as to proposed timing/location of hearing and give recipient adequate time to agree such arrangements.
2. How must the member receiving the complaint, respond and time frame allowed.
3. Will the society pay for all expenses incurred by the alleged offender in attending a hearing , including food/accommodation costs if overnight travel/stay required. Stay of destination location and maximum allowances agreed by both parties.
4. Will the alleged offender be allowed appropriate legal representation of his/her choice and who will pay the costs of such legal representation.
5. If the decision is to expel the member for PROVEN MISCONDUCT, how long will the expulsion last; like the criminal justice system in the UK, there is a period of time, depending on offence, for the sentence to be deleted from the records, to allow that person to continue with rehabilitation and integration into civil life without a criminal record being constantly 'hung around their neck'.
6. With reference to 5. Above, will the expelled member be invited to re-join RNARS at any time in the future.
7. If the society should be approached at any stage by any organisation as to the suitability of the member whom has been expelled from RNARS, to join their organisation/outfit; what procedure will be adopted to carryout that request.

Thankyou

Doug Cansfield/GOLDJ RNARS 3686 RAIBC 2450 (volunteer)

Wally G4DIU RNARS 0391

I wish to make the following thoughts known to the Society and Committee:-

I have no problem with the introduction of the new item 3 F concerning new under 25 years of age.

I have some reservations the items regarding 'MISCONDUCT' :-

c) If a member has, in some way, Offended any other member or members, by whatever means, that person knows already what he or she has said about any other member, then he or she does not need to be informed about any action which will be brought into effect by the Committee as this is already contained within the Conditions and Regulations and such action is already and automatically within the Society Committee remit.

d) The Chair does not have the power to appoint an investigatory Committee or Sub-committee as he only has a casting vote on any item of Committee decision. Any such decision cannot be held as confidential to such a committee as the Society needs to know how and why any such decision was made and thus why such action was made in regard to the specific complaint.

e) This is, in my opinion, an attempt to enforce a regulation which does not have any legal backing in law, as far I know.

Policies and Procedures.

The Society and its Committee should always be aware of any legal requirement upon its actions etc. Therefore there should be no need for outside legal enforcement on any matter which is entirely within the remit of the Societies regulations to take action upon.

The Chair does not have the power to appoint any Committee or Sub-committee - this remit is only for the Committee only, and therefore does not require any action by the Chair.

The calling of Committee or Sub-committee meetings and or E.G.M's is a prerogative of any member of the Committee and not of the Chair and all decisions shall be made know to the Society as a whole.

Once again it is my opinion that the Chair-person shall not be able to dictate any terms or conditions to the Committee which he or she deems necessary as any such action can only be made after being raised and considered at a full committee meeting.

Wally G4DIU RNARS 0391
