

ATTACHMENT II

A Proposal for Secretarial Support

Issue

1. The provision of effective secretarial and administrative support to the elected officers of the International Six Metre Association.

Recommendation

2. A new non-elected position of 'Executive Secretary' should replace the existing post of Honorary Secretary. The Executive Secretary would be employed to provide continuity in support to the ISMA Board and other ISMA Committees, including the Technical, Classic and other committees as required. The Executive Secretary would also handle the day-to-day administration of the Association and manage the operation of the ISMA's finances under the supervision of the Treasurer. The Executive Secretary will be designated by the Board, will participate in the Executive Committee and may be paid, if the Board so decides, provided that the ISMA's budget includes the corresponding agreed amount. For employment purposes the Executive Secretary will be responsible to the President of ISMA.

Background

3. At the moment the duties of administering ISMA are divided between a number of people. The Honorary Secretary supports the members of the ISMA Board and administers the Annual General Meeting, the Honorary Treasurer administers the finances of the Association, and there is a separate secretary nominated for the Technical Committee. The Classic Committee has no nominated secretary.

The Problem

4. The existing situation means that there is no single focal point for the administration of the Association and the International Six Metre Class. For example, membership records are collected by the Honorary Treasurer from records of subscriptions paid, and not held by the Honorary Secretary. When the ISMA Journal was distributed in hard copy, the mailing list was held by the editor of the Journal, who happened to be the Association's President. Hence there is no single official list of who is currently a member of the Association, their mailing address and the details of their boat, except for the records collected by the Treasurer. And there was therefore no guarantee that each member would receive a copy of the Journal, except when the Treasurer was able to supply the President with a list of addresses.

5. The problem extends to providing a method for the structured review of matters that affect the Class and the membership. At the moment the only reliable way of introducing a topic for discussion is to submit a paper for publication in the Journal (which may not reach everybody – see paragraph 4 above), to circulate an e-mail (which may not reach the right people) or to raise the matter at the AGM, when there is very limited time and opportunity for any sensible structured debate.

6. A further problem exists when the Association needs to initiate a change, for example to the Class Rule or to a Deed of Gift, or when the Association needs to enter discussions with another authority such as ISAF. At the moment, the pursuit of any discussion and the preparation of any supporting paperwork is entirely dependent on one of the officers of the Association, or another volunteer, giving up their time to administer the debate and act on the results. The result is that there are a number of outstanding issues that the Association ought to deal with, and which remain unresolved. In particular, technical issues such as flotation allowance and proposals for changes to the Class Rule are really far too complex to be handled just by an open debate at an AGM, and require considerable preparation before a proposal can be presented to the Association and put to a vote.

7. The situation is made more complicated by the international nature of the Association. Although it is entirely right and proper that there is a genuine international representation among the officers of the Association, this means that they meet only very rarely and much of their discussion is by e-mail or telephone. The Association would benefit from a single point of contact for all its business.

The Proposal

8. It is proposed that the management of the Association would be much improved if there was a single person to co-ordinate its membership and finances, and to support the Board and the various committees in handling the issues that need to be resolved. This person, for whom the suggested title is Executive Secretary, would take on the duties currently undertaken by the Honorary Secretary and act as secretary to the other committees. The executive secretary would also handle the day-to-day management of the Association's finances.

9. Although it is just possible that an individual may come forward to undertake this new role as an honorary and unpaid position, it is very unlikely. It is proposed that it is now time for the Association to consider the appointment of a paid, but part-time, official to take on the task. Now that the Association has accepted that the Journal has become an electronic publication, much of the expense of publication, and certainly the printing and postage costs, will no longer be incurred. This can free up to €20,000 from the Association's budget. It is suggested that up to €12,000 (£10,000) could be used to fund a part-time Executive Secretary.

10. If the Association appoints a paid Executive Secretary, that person would be employed by the Board rather than an elected officer. Although the Executive Secretary would participate as a member of the Board, support all the members of the Board, and be effectively an employee of the Board, for employment purposes the executive secretary will be answerable to the President of ISMA.

11. Although it makes sense for the Executive Secretary to take on the day-to-day administration of the finances of the Association, this will of course include the payment of his own remuneration. It is therefore appropriate that the Association should appoint someone to oversee this aspect of the Executive Secretary's role, and to remain responsible for the overall management of the association's financial affairs. That role already exists in the Honorary Treasurer, and therefore it is proposed that the Association should continue to elect an Honorary Treasurer to undertake that responsibility.

Conclusion

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12. It is proposed that a new non-elected position of 'Executive Secretary' should replace the existing post of Honorary Secretary. The Executive Secretary would be employed to provide continuity in support to the ISMA Board and other ISMA Committees, including the Technical, Classic and other committees as required. The Executive Secretary would also handle the day-to-day administration of the Association and manage the operation of the ISMA's finances under the supervision of the Treasurer. The Executive Secretary will be designated by the Board, will participate in the Executive Committee and may be paid, if the Board so decides, provided that the ISMA's budget includes the corresponding agreed amount. For employment purposes the Executive Secretary will be responsible to the President of ISMA.

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