

## **AGM CONSTITUTION CHANGES**

Ahead of the AGM we received a submission from a member, Suzanne Cruikshank.

She asked the committee to consider putting three constitutional amendments to this Members Meeting. At a meeting, the committee has considered them.

One was surrounding suspension of membership and rules of termination of membership. The committee considered this but decided this issue was better dealt with in a Compliments and Complaints Procedure which Standish Voice will implement in the New Year.

Another was allowing 21 members to call an Extraordinary General Meeting. The committee decided that allowing around 3% of the membership to call and EGM would disrupt the work of the elected committee to the detriment of the whole membership.

A third was preventing the committee from withholding such constitutional changes from a Membership Meeting. The committee decided the proper way to alter Standish Voice's constitution, which people agree to when becoming members, was to stand for election to the committee to instigate that change.

Therefore, a meeting of the committee unanimously agreed not to put those constitutional changes to this Members Meeting and Suzanne has been notified about this.

Standish Voice's constitution only allows the committee to put forward changes to that constitution. The committee would only do that if it believed the changes were in the best interests of Standish Voice.

When people become members of Standish Voice, they sign up to that constitution and the rules and regulations of the organisation.

We recently asked Locality, the national organisation which oversees Neighbourhood Planning and Neighbourhood Forums, their advice on our constitution and also sought the expertise of MACC, Manchester's voluntary, community and social enterprise sector support organisation on how we could strengthen that constitution.

They both advised us that our organisation is very vulnerable as the current constitution allows the whole of the committee to be deselected every 12 months. They said this was unusual and could have the effect of removing highly effective people from the organisation without a chance for new people to take on their expertise, contacts or knowledge.

We have to tell you, that if our committee had been deselected at this meeting, we believe next month's Christmas Market would have been cancelled on safety grounds.

Locality and Macc advised us that the election of posts on the committee should be done in thirds, a third elected each year. This would mean each post would have a three-year term, in line with many other voluntary organisations, and other posts like school governors.

We also believe that an AGM held just a fortnight away from the Christmas Market is not ideal and may actually put people off standing for the committee if they feel they have to assume responsibility for this straight away.

Therefore, the committee has agreed to put forward to this meeting for approval changes to the constitution which would bring these changes about.

We believe AGMs should be held in January, posts should be held for a maximum of three years and no more than a third of posts should be elected at each AGM.

Practically, this means the next AGM would be in January 2019, with the cycle of three-year posts beginning in January 2018. With five posts up for election in 2019, five in 2020 and the remaining five in 2021. Therefore, the majority of posts would come up for election well before the three-year maximum. Which posts or persons that involves would be decided by the committee at a later date.

This only requires small changes to our constitution, which we are asking you to approve tonight.

In the constitution, item 5F currently states: Members of the Management Committee must stand for re-election at the Annual General Meeting

We would like to replace this with: “Management Committee members will serve a term of no more than three years before standing for re-election at the next available AGM. Election of no more than one third of Management Committee members will take place each year at the AGM.”

In item 9b5 on Management Meetings, we would like add: “AGMs must be held in January, beginning with the AGM of January 2019.”

These changes were put to the AGM of Standish Voice on November 15, 2017, and approved, with 87 votes for, four against and four abstentions.