

## London FA AGM 2020 #8 – Letter to Members from the Chair, Deputy Chair Senior Independent Non-Executive Director



Dear friends,

### WHAT ARE THE VOTES ON THE LONDON FA AGM PROXY PAPER ALL ABOUT?

Over the last three years with you as our member clubs and leagues and that of the great staff team which Paul Bickerton leads as our Chief Executive, we have worked to grow football in London and at headquarters to put our house in better order.

We made some big changes to our rules in January 2019 and promised that we would finish this work in 2020. So, we have the rest of this work to do and the last group of Articles to change at our AGM this year.

**This letter is to summarise what these changes are, why we are making them and why your directors now ask for your support. Our primary reasons for change are to make the London FA more democratic, more inclusive, more representative and fit for purpose as the body representing grassroots football in our great and diverse capital city.**

Naturally, we also had to take urgent action at an Emergency General Meeting in May, when COVID-19 forced us to change some of our normal timetables and procedures. The remaining changes set out in our proposed new Articles follow recommendations of a special London FA Council Working Party, careful debates in the Board and full consultation with the London FA Council and other members.

There are eight important changes (votes 3 to 10 on the proxy vote form) and eight smaller consequential, drafting and supplementary changes (votes 11 to 18 on the form). All the changes refer to the specific Articles affected, and you can see the Articles as we would wish to change them in the proposed Articles document sent with these papers. All the proposed changes are in red. Here now is the summary - and the number of the Article(s) referred to.

**Vote 3** (Art 103) Until now all notices of general and special members meetings must be sent to members by post, unless members have expressly agreed to receive them by email. With about 1000 members this means substantial postage and other costs and organisational effort every time we have an AGM or EGM. This proposal is to allow us, where it is lawful, in the future to send meeting notices by email (in addition to posting on our website) unless members specifically ask for notices by post.

**Votes 4 and 5** (Arts 35A and 50A) come as the result of how we have had to reorganise our meetings and processes because of COVID-19. Although our emergency powers and government emergency legislation have allowed remote meetings where matters beyond our control make gathering for meetings not possible, these proposals will give the London FA the flexibility to hold remote Council and general meetings by Microsoft Teams or similar where the board chooses to do this, and after consultation with Council, and to allow members to play a full part remotely, including to vote remotely where confidentiality, security and technology can deliver this.

**Vote 6** (Arts 39,57 and 90) is to deal with a longstanding problem, where at the end of three years the outgoing Board in effect has total control over who joins the incoming board and Council for the next three years - which is clearly not democratic, fair or transparent. This proposal allows for the recruitment of a small independent panel whose members will take part in selecting the board and Council from now on, to make sure that selection is on merit not on who knows who best.

**Vote 7** (Arts 36,36A & 51-53) is the big change to sort out and improve the roles and responsibilities of London FA office holders who are not externally recruited but internally chosen. These proposals give additional powers and responsibilities to our President, Vice-Presidents and London FA Representative, but also create new posts of Life Vice-Presidents to replace Life Members in future. Subject to the maximum of three terms of three years now permitted for any director (with a small extension only allowed for the Chair), the President, Vice-Presidents and London FA Representative will also be able in future to stand for election to the board, and to vote in the elections for Council members to be elected to the four places now reserved on the board for Council members. Three Vice-President places will in future be reserved for the three women with the greatest support, and three spaces for the three best supported male candidates, with the last four places open to men or women. Most importantly the ten Vice-Presidents elected will be chosen to take leading London FA roles in specific portfolios to reflect the ten greatest priorities in our strategy - e.g. youth football, coaching, equality and inclusion. Lastly as a result of creating roles for a maximum of ten Life Vice-Presidents, there will be no new Life Members elected in future.

**Vote 8** (Arts 31,43, 49 & 50) is the proposal to make it clear beyond doubt that no one individual can vote more than once on any London FA business or in any London FA elections, that apart from office holders who are allowed also to be Board directors no other individuals can hold more than one role on the Council, and to clarify eligibility for Council. This also makes clear that vacancies which arise during the three-year life of the Council can be filled in a way Board and Council agree.

**Vote 9** (Art 38) makes clear that the rule that sets maximum terms for unbroken board and Council membership applies only when a person has served three full three-year terms at the date of relevant appointment or election.

**Vote 10** (Art 45) is about sacking our President, Vice-Presidents and Hon Vice-Presidents. At present this is an unqualified power with no reasons required or process laid down and is clearly against natural justice. The proposal would set up a proper process and need majority support of Council and board.

Finally, there are a set of much smaller changes to tidy up, update or make our Articles consistent.

**Vote 11** (Art 12) makes clear which elections happen in London FA election year every three years (like this year).

**Vote 12** makes small changes (to Articles 36-39, 41 and 43 and 44) to make clear the definition of Council members who are externally recruited and those who are Council members because they hold London FA posts, sets out the new membership of the Council and the process of external recruitment every three years.

**Vote 13** (Art 47) sets out clearly who has which voting rights at Council.

**Vote 14** (Arts 54, 57, 59 & 63) sets out more clearly the legal and other duties of and rules governing London FA directors, their recruitment and eligibility.

**Vote 15** (Arts 59 -61 & 61A) clarifies terms of office of directors including the Chair and the process for electing the Deputy Chair.

**Vote 16** (Art 65) is to tidy up the wording of the Article governing appointments to Standing Committees.

**Vote 17** (Arts 70 and 75) is to improve the wording surrounding disqualification of directors, including for mental illness.

**Vote 18** (Art 82) is to make clear who chairs meetings if the London FA Chair and Deputy are not available.

**The Board strongly commends all these changes to you and asks you to vote in favour of all of them. The directors also believe that if we can approve all the changes at this year's AGM then there should be no need for extra time to be taken on constitutional matters over the next three years. This will leave us all more time to concentrate on what we love most - supporting our members, clubs and leagues to harness the power of grassroots football to enrich more lives in London over the next three years.**

**We hope you will be able to give your directors and all the proposals your full support.**

Yours gratefully,

**James Middlehurst, London FA Chair**

**Ian Wallis, London FA Deputy Chair**

**Sir Simon Hughes, London FA Senior Independent Director**

*October 2020*