



VOTING PROCEDURE FOR ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

APPROVED OCTOBER 2021

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedure for electing Board members at Annual General Meetings (AGM) of the Conservation Council where required, in accordance with Rule 14(f) of the Constitution.

2. Nominations before the AGM

2.1 Under Rule 14(a), persons seeking election to a specified position on the Board must -

- 1) be a member of a current member organisation;
- 2) be nominated in writing by two members of different member organisations (one of which may be a member organisation of which the candidate is a member);
- 3) consent in writing to being nominated by the nominators.

2.2 A standard nomination form endorsed by the Board will be provided to all potential nominees for completion. Nominees will also be given the opportunity to provide a supporting statement of up to 200 words.

2.3 Under Rule 14(a), nominations for a position on the Board must be given to the Secretary not less than 7 days before the date of the AGM.

2.4 Nominations may be submitted via a paper copy of the form, or by email provided that all the information required under 2.1 is included in the email.

2.5 As soon as practicable after nominations close, the Secretary or Executive Director will email all nominated representatives of member organisations and all nominees with the names of all nominees, the positions they have nominated for, and their supporting statements. A copy of this policy will also be provided.

3. Appointment of Returning Officer

3.1 If there is likely to be a need for a ballot at the AGM, i.e. the number of nominations received for particular positions exceeds the number of vacancies, or there are insufficient nominations and further nominations can be received at the meeting, then the Board will appoint a Returning Officer before the AGM.

3.2 The Returning Officer is responsible for all necessary preparations for the conduct of the ballot, e.g. preparation of ballot papers, and will conduct and count the ballot at the AGM.

3.3 The Returning Officer must be independent of the ballot process. They cannot be a nominated representative, current Board member or staff member, or have nominated any of the nominees.

3.4 Any disputes about a ballot will be resolved by the Returning Officer and their decision is final.

4. Presentations by nominees

4.1 Each nominee participating in a ballot will be given the opportunity to speak to the AGM for not more than 2 minutes, and will answer questions from AGM attendees (not including other nominees) for not more than 5 minutes.

5. Ballots for office-bearer positions

5.1 The optional preferential voting system will be used for the ballot of specific office-bearer positions.

5.2 The order of candidates on the ballot paper will be randomly selected by the Returning Officer.

5.3 Voters are required to mark ballot papers by marking 1, 2, 3 etc next to the nominees in their order of choice. If a vote contains more than one marking of the same number, the preferences of the vote are not counted from the number which is repeated. (e.g. if a vote was 1, 2, two 3's and a 4, only the first and second preference would be counted)

5.4 Voters can vote for as many nominees as they wish, but a first preference vote must be clearly indicated with a 1, tick or cross next to only one candidate.

5.5 Ballot papers that do not have a clear first preference vote are invalid.

5.6 The nominee who has over 50% of the total valid votes after the count of first preferences is the winner of the ballot.

5.7 If no nominee has over 50% of the vote after the count of first preferences, then the preferences of the lowest ranked nominee will be distributed, and this process will continue until one nominee is remaining, who will be declared the winner.

6. Ballot for ordinary board members

6.1 The order of nominees on the ballot paper will be randomly selected by the Returning Officer.

6.2 Voters can vote for as many nominees as they wish up to a maximum of the number of vacant positions by using ticks or crosses only (no preference order is required).

6.3 Ballot papers that contain more votes than the number of vacant positions are invalid.

6.4 The result of a ballot is determined by counting the number of votes for each nominee. The nominees who have the highest votes are elected to the vacant positions.

6.5 If two or more nominees have equal votes, or have no votes, and are vying for a final position then a further ballot will be held with only those nominees. Voters can only vote for their preferred nominee and the candidate with the most votes wins.

7. General rules regarding ballots

7.1 Only nominated representatives of member organisations can vote in a ballot. Rule 3(b) sets out the number of nominated representatives each member organisation is entitled to have.

7.2 Only nominated representatives present at the AGM can vote in a ballot, and they may also lodge proxy votes on behalf of other nominated representatives who are not at the meeting, as per Rule 31.

7.3 All ballots will be conducted as secret ballots.

7.4 Any mark on a ballot paper that indicates who may have cast that vote makes that vote invalid.

8. Electronic voting

8.1 If the AGM is required to be held as an online meeting due to COVID restrictions then the Returning Officer will establish an online voting system for the nominated representatives participating in the online meeting that follows the ballot processes outlined above.

8.2 If the source of an electronic vote becomes known to the Returning Officer, e.g. it is sent from an identifiable email address or user name, then the vote is still valid but the Returning Officer must not disclose the identity of the sender of individual votes to anyone else.

9. Declaration of Results

9.1 At the end of a ballot the Returning Officer will announce to the meeting the successful candidate, or candidates in the case of the ballot for ordinary board members, and also the number of first preference votes achieved by each candidate.