

OMOV motion

Speaking as a Direct Members' Representative for Bronze members I'd like to oppose the motion.

I should first thank the Commission members for their report. I think it contains many valuable recommendations – for example, on the Structure and Operation of the Board.

But I'm concerned about what is stated in sections 5.1 and 5.2 of the report (starting on page 11) – these address the issues of Concentration of Voting Power and Representation of Direct Members.

Much of the analysis in these sections is simply wrong – and I wonder where the report authors got their information from?

I'm concerned about three aspects in particular. First, in section 5.1 it's stated

'...we recommend that, in appointing a Representative Member, each Member Organisation should choose an individual who expects to attend all Finance Meetings and Annual General Meetings'.

And later (in the same section),

'We have no doubt that the majority of Representative Members already follow the recommendations we make above'.

Well, if the report authors didn't have doubt then, they should have doubt now: at the current meeting the majority of representatives aren't here; 172 of 324 votes – more than 50% - have been passed to proxies.

Further – *and this is worse* - at April's Finance Meeting, which the report references and which decided on the important matter of membership fee increases, 102 votes (I calculate) of 317 - very nearly a third - weren't exercisable as representatives were absent and hadn't appointed proxies. Two of the three leagues in which I play didn't consult their affiliated clubs.

In fact, one of those leagues, for the current meeting, didn't even consult its committee about its appointment of a proxy.

The second concern is this: The report states (at the end of section 5.2):

Any direct member who feels that their views are not otherwise represented may submit their views to their respective Direct Members' Representative. The fact that very few complaints of this nature have been received by these representatives supports the view that under-representation of Direct Members is not currently a major issue.

How do the report authors "*know*" that "*very few complaints of this nature have been received by these representatives*"? As it happens, many of the responses I got as a Bronze Members' Direct Representative for the April Finance Council meeting [I received 64 responses – AF, 30 March 2016] suggested to me that the ECF is out of touch with ordinary league players. I believe John Wickham got similar responses as a Silver members' representative. During the meeting – in particular when the proposal to increase membership fees was discussed - both John and I expressed concern on behalf of the members we represented.

The third concern is this: the report states:

We think that any change to OMOV would involve the ECF in considerable expense...

Why would it involve considerable expense? Would not an inexpensive way to implement OMOV be to adapt the membership system to include a voting facility?

We're a membership organisation. There needs to be a better connection between members and those who make decisions on their behalf. And - dare I say - Council representatives need to be made more accountable.

I'm keen – on behalf of those I represent – that one-member-one-vote investigations are continued. I oppose the motion and I'd like to suggest, instead, that the Commission/Working party reconsiders the matter. I'd like it also to consult with Direct Members' Representatives.

Angus French, Bronze Members' Direct Representative