

Contest Committee [CC] members are elected by the people they represent, usually on an annual basis. None of the present CC members have been elected but merely selected by existing CC members resulting in stagnant ideas and leaving people with the impression of 'an old boys network'. There is no indication that a 'churn' as recommended has taken place recently. Will the Board please address this and implement election of CC members in the time-honoured way by voting. Robert Brown, MOORO

Answered by Stewart Bryant, G3YSX

First I would like to talk about RSGB Committees as a whole. The RSGB Members get a huge benefit from all of its committees. These committees enable the RSGB to deliver a scope and depth of service to Members that would be impossible without their work. We are lucky to have access to their dedication, competence and professionalism. We could not afford to employ such talent even if it was available for hire. I would ask all Members to thank the committees for their enormous contribution to amateur radio both in the UK and internationally. To function at the level they do, the committees require specialist skills and it is unlikely that a simple election process would provide the RSGB Members with the strength of depth of the talents that the current process provides. The way accountability works is that Members elect the Board of Directors, the Board appoints the Chairs and the Chairs appoint the committee members. A named member of the Board is responsible for each committee and is in routine contact with them. The Board Liaison Member [BLM], as they are known, usually attends the committee meetings and is copied on their internal correspondence. At regular intervals the Board review the performance of the Chair and, if appropriate, re-confirm their appointment. If an RSGB Member has a concern about a committee, they should first address their concern to the committee Chair. If that does not result in a satisfactory conclusion, they should raise the matter for review with the appropriate BLM.

To the matter of contesting, some years ago we split the contesting committee into three. Two committees to focus on the specialist and difficult task of setting rules for HF and VHF events and a third committee to run the contesting service. I cannot overstate the amount of work that these teams put into running 276 contests in 2020. Note that these were enjoyed by 1650 UK radio amateurs, of whom 1475 were RSGB Members. In terms of contest innovation, in 2020 the Contest Committee organised the HOPE daytime series of contests at short notice. These were designed to provide a focussed amateur radio activity for those in lockdown. The contests were constructed so as to provide maximum enjoyment for the participants that suddenly lacked routine face-to-face contact with family, friends and colleagues whilst using a time and motion plan that minimised the disruption to regular users of the bands.

As Dave said [Dave Wilson, MOOBW in the President's round up of the year earlier in the AGM], 6600 logs have been received from just the first series alone. In addition, the Contest Committee has been experimenting with the FT modes, organising FT4 events on HF and FT8 on VHF. This to understand how you would run and MGM [Machine Generated Modes] based contest. During my tenure of the Board, the Contest Committee has complemented the highly successful, and in itself innovative, VHF AC series of contests with an FM mode to encourage beginners with simple FM equipment to learn about contests.

Finally, and most recently, the Contest Support Committee [CSC] worked with the RSGB Awards Manager to construct a new Friendship of the Air award. This is an award intended to encourage UK radio amateurs to hold conversations on the bands and were solely possible through the novel and innovative use of the specialist software that the CSC has developed over time.

If Members have new innovations that they believe would make contests more enjoyable to more Members, I would strongly encourage them to make contact with the appropriate committee Chairs.

