

## COUNSELLING CHANGE:

What you need to know about the new IAVI National Council structure

**Following the unanimous decision to modernise and restructure the existing National Council during the EGM in June, the IAVI are about to embark on one of the most comprehensive changes in recent memory.**

**In an effort to refresh members' memories regarding exactly what the new structure will entail we have compiled a list of the most popular questions asked about the restructuring and put them to Mr Derry Gray from BDO Simpson Xavier, who are the consultants behind the initiative.**

### **Why did the IAVI need to restructure the old National Council?**

There were a number of reasons to restructure. The principle issue is member engagement with the Institute. Members informed us that the relevance of the institute to them in their daily work was limited, and their engagement with the organisation was even less.

What became clear was the fact that the old Council did not reflect the various areas of specialisation within the industry i.e. residential, commercial property, professional services, overseas advice, valuations or agriculture.

Put plainly, this meant that the old council was not reflecting what was being done by IAVI members on the ground, and in their practices, so fundamentally speaking, the council needed reshaping to reflect the business specialities that were being undertaken by members.

Equally members see the IAVI has having potentially a strong voice for the industry and a more dynamic board should be able to proactively devise fresh policy and initiatives for the sector.

### **Could you please explain to our readers what the main changes to National Council are and what the benefits of it are?**

When we examined the national council we found that it needed to reflect the changed role and the more professional environment that auctioneers and valuers operate in today.

The first change we recommended, which I have mentioned above, was to ensure that the council reflected the relevant business sectors of the property industry. The benefit of this is that you have a more informed group of people making policy decisions about where the future of the property industry lies.

The second change that we recommended was to reduce the size of the council from twenty-eight members to twelve members. Prior to this the council had grown too big.

By reducing it to a manageable number of 12 members, the National Council should be more dynamic and should be a policy maker in regard to members' interests, where the industry is going, and take a leadership position with respect to all aspects of the property industry.

The benefits I believe with a smaller, tighter organisation are greater flexibility and a greater ability to react in terms of creating initiatives for the sector.

### **When the new National Council is elected what responsibilities will it have?**

The new National Council will be responsible for developing policy for members of the IAVI. Policy is something that is critical in terms of the importance of the property sector to the Irish economy and it is important to develop policy that reflects that importance.

There are countless areas where the property sector and the professionals within this sector would be looked on as the experts, but never

really had a voice. This council has that opportunity to bring new ideas and new policies about property forward so that members can offer input into that and that government can be informed by it.

### **With all the changes to the National Council how will the regions be represented and what would you say to members who are worried that their region is not going to be represented properly?**

We had many representations about regionality because that is where we are coming from. People are used to a system where regions had individuals on a very large council.

The effectiveness of that regional representation, in my view was unproven, however in acknowledgment of the concerns that this would become Dublin focused; a mechanism has been created so that the council will represent members from all over this country, including Northern Ireland.

I believe that members are happy that their regional interests are not diluted. Clearly by reducing from 27 to 12 there are fewer bodies around the table but I do believe that we have gotten the regional balance right.

To be fair to everybody there was no point in going forward where concerns about the issue were paramount in people's minds. We had to find a solution to that and we did.

### **How will the new National Council communicate with members?**

The main interaction members have with their representative body is through CPD. At CPD Meetings we have proposed that a briefing of 5 to 10 minutes at the beginning of all CPD sessions would be used to update members on issues coming from what is being discussed at council.

This would also give people who are at the CPD session the opportunity to say "I'd like to raise a point that I would like to see reflected in discussion from council. This would result in a much more interactive relationship between members and council.

In addition to this the IAVI are also developing web based communications tools such as discussion forums in an effort to help members and representatives interact.

### **With the format of the National Council changing, has the role of the council members changed too?**

Yes, council members now reflect the sectors that they work in and equally their responsibilities with regard to forming policy are now much more precise. Now council members are much more involved in creating policy and asking the chief executive and the executive board to carry out that policy.

### **What is the structure of the new National Council and what positions are available for members to put themselves forward for as candidates?**

The way we have structured the council, there will be three seats for residential, three for commercial, one for agriculture, two for professional services and then we have Northern Ireland and the President. There will always be a rolling group from the council.

Thirty three percent of the council will provide continuity among the council so rather than have a council with new faces on it every 3 years, there will be a group of four elected, from within their own number, who will roll through an election. The conclusion is that there will be eight positions available during any one election.

### **From a prospective candidate's point of view, what are the benefits of being elected onto the new National Council?**

What a number of people have said to me is that they want to play a more active role because they want to steer the profession in a particular direction. So for people who have an interest in doing that, and steering the profession in a direction that's benefit number one.

Benefit number two is, we believe, that members on council will now enjoy a higher profile so they themselves, or their practice, would be more visible due to being on the National Council. The thinking behind this comes from the fact that where questions or issues arising around the sectors, be it commercial, residential or whatever, it could well be that the designate from the council table becomes the spokesman for that sector. So there is a greater opportunity for council members to be more visible in the public eye.

Others say they just want to give something back to the industry and feel they have experience they wish to share.

### **When will the election process start and what will it involve?**

The election process will start in September with voting in the middle of October.

### **How will a nominated candidate canvas for votes once they have secured their nomination?**

A candidate will be provided with a database of the membership, so they can send out their own literature to the membership to seek support. The IAVI itself will send out a brief biography and photograph of each of the people on the ballot. It will be up to each candidate after that to move among the members and seek election by what ever means they see fit. Comparable representative organisations have candidates mail or email messages of encouragement or in some cases detailed manifestos are prepared where individuals have particular platforms they wish to raise if elected. Given the widespread support we have achieved for the changes to Council, I expect candidates will get actively involved in electioneering.

### **Are there any restrictions on who can stand for election?**

To ensure a good regional coverage we have devised some rules, there are some restrictions on how many people from any one area can be elected to the council.

### **As a large proportion of IAVI members are general practice practitioners, how will they know which sector to put their candidacy forward for?**

We have been asked this question a lot, what we have tended to say to people is; concentrate on the area that you spend most of your time working in.

### **What will be required from a Council Member once they have been elected?**

Commitment. A commitment to turn up to meetings and a commitment to participate fully in the discussions within their sectors. We don't want people getting elected and then not turning up. People need to be prepared to give it their time. Regarding how much time they will need to give, well people should be able to allocate eight days a year to this, which equates to about fifty hours per year.

### **Why is it important for members to vote?**

It is important for members to vote so they can express their democratic right within a member body that can professionalise their industry. It also gives members the opportunity to choose who they would like to see represent their industry. It puts a face to a name and brings members closer to the centre of the institute. By becoming sector based it becomes easier for members to engage with elected Council members, directly in the area where they need to raise issues or discuss developments.

The IAVI is becoming much more relevant to members, I would encourage all members to vote and ask their colleagues and friends in the business to vote also. I also urge members to follow up by contributing ideas to the subsequently elected members on issues they would like to see raised at Council. ■