

Governance Survey Report: Executive Summary

Civica Engagement Solutions was commissioned by the John Muir Trust (the Trust) to undertake a consultation with its membership on proposed changes to the Trust's Articles of Association. Civica was tasked with:

1. Supporting the John Muir Trust to reach as many members as possible, to inform them of the changes to the 'Articles of Association' and ascertain their views on those changes.
2. Design and disseminate an online and postal survey to the membership. The postal survey was sent via the Trust's communications team, directly to members.
3. Collate response rates from online and paper consultation papers in preparation for analysis.
4. Provide the John Muir Trust with a summary and final report detailing methodological procedure, consultation results, and analysis.

The consultation was held independently of the John Muir Trust, and analysis of the results conducted exclusively by Civica. The consultation was sent to Trust members by post and hosted online. The survey received 1,002 responses overall, 74% received by post and 26% via the online survey.

Methodology

The most appropriate form of research into the membership's views on changes to the Articles of Association was through a survey disseminated to the entire Trust membership. With the assistance of the Trust, Civica designed the online and postal surveys which were made available online via the Trust's website, direct email and a printed material version disseminated by the Trust to the membership.

The consultation on the proposed changes to the Articles of Association ran from 14th October 2020 to 18th December 2020, with the online version of the survey running concurrently with the postal survey.

The survey was segmented into two sections:

1. The first section (**Section 1**) asked specific consultation questions which sought to determine members' views on proposed changes to six areas of the membership (Board composition; Trustee term of office; Number of supporters needed for a candidate's nomination to the Board, Vice-Chair; Conditions for a ballot of all members at a General Meeting; Members' Rights relating to Governance).
2. The second section (**Section 2**) asked members about other areas where the consultation draft could be improved and further observations on what is proposed and/or detailed drafting comment.

Section 1: Consultation Questions

1. Board Composition

a. Do you agree with the proposal to reduce the number of Elected Trustees to 12?

The overwhelming majority of members agreed with the proposal of reducing the number of elected Trustees to 12. Results show: **96%** of members (929 respondents) supported the proposal, versus **4%** (37 respondents) of members who did not.

b. Do you agree with the proposal that the Board has power to co-opt up to 3 Co-opted Trustees (each of whom must be a John Muir Trust member)?

The majority of members (**96%** - 919 responses) also agreed with the proposal that the Board should have the power to co-opt up to 3 Co-opted Trustees, **4%** (43 responses) disagreed.

2. Trustee term of office

C. Do you agree with the proposal that the maximum continuous length of time a Trustee can serve is two consecutive 3-year terms?

92% (888 respondents) of members agreed with the proposal that the maximum continuous length of time a Trustee should serve is two consecutive 3-year terms, only **8%** (76 respondents) of members responding disagreed with the proposal.

D. Do you agree that the gap before re-standing should change from 1 to 2 years?

Members agreed that the gap before re-standing should change from 1 to 2 years, **84%** (800 respondents) agreed with the change whilst **16%** (158 respondents) opposed.

3. Number of supporters needed for a candidate's nomination to the Board

E. Do you think that the number of candidate supporters should stay as it is at 5 or be reduced to 2?

Most respondents stated that the number of candidate supporters should remain at 5, with **70%** (662 responses) of members stating so. However, **30%** (289 respondents) of members believe the number of candidate supporters should be reduced to 2.

4. Vice-Chair

F. Do you agree that the Board should have the power to appoint a Vice-Chair?

Members voted almost unanimously: **99%** (956 respondents) in agreement that the Board should have the power to appoint the Vice-Chair, whilst only **1%** (12 respondents) do not believe the Board should be able to appoint the Vice-Chair.

5. Conditions for a ballot of all members at General Meeting

Do you agree with the Board's view that the current figure of 5% of members present at a General Meeting being required to support a call for a ballot of all members should be increased?

Overall, **97%** (929 respondents) of members agreed a call for a ballot of all members should require a figure higher than 5% of members present at a General Meeting, **3%** (32 respondents) opposed this view and felt it should not be increased.

If Yes, do you think that the percent of members present at a General Meeting should be? (33%, 25% or Other)

Most respondents who believe that the number required to call for a ballot of all members should increase stated that it should increase from 5% to 33%, this group comprised of **65%** (613 respondents) of all members who answered the question. Comparatively, **30%** (281 respondents) of members believe it should be 25% of members present at a General Meeting and **5%** stated other figures. All the respondents who selected other provided a figure higher than the current 5% required.

6. Members Rights relating to Governance

Do you agree with the recommended six-month qualification period?

88% (848 respondents) of members agreed with the recommended six-month qualification period, whilst only 12% (115 respondents) did not agree.

Section 2: The draft Articles

From the 1,002 responses for the survey, there were 335 responses for the free-text responses in Section 2. Of these responses, 319 comments referenced an Article. This section enabled members to go beyond the specific questions in Section 1. The following table provides a breakdown of responses per article section.

Article Section No. (Number of responses)	Amend Article % & (Number of responses)	Agree with Recommendations % & (Number of responses)	Linguistic Amendments % & (Number of responses)	Query/Clarification % & (Number of responses)	Other % & (Number of responses)
Article 1 (2)	100% (2)	0	0	0	0
Article 2 (2)	50% (1)	0	50% (1)	0	0
Article 3 (14)	43% (6)	7% (1)	21% (3)	21% (3)	7% (1)
Article 4 (3)	67% (2)	33% (1)	0	0	0
Article 5 (30)	70% (21)	3% (1)	10% (3)	17% (5)	0
Article 6 (154)	23% (35)	58% (89)	6% (10)	11% (17)	2% (3)
Article 7 (11)	45% (5)	0	27% (3)	27% (3)	0
Article 8 (53)	36% (19)	13% (7)	17% (9)	28% (15)	6% (3)
Article 9 (13)	38% (5)	15% (2)	23% (3)	23% (3)	0
Article 10 (6)	33% (2)	0	0	67% (4)	0

Article 11 (6)	17% (1)	0	67% (4)	17% (1)	0
Article 12 (9)	67% (6)	0	11% (1)	0	22% (2)
Article 13 (4)	25% (1)	0	25% (1)	50% (2)	0
Article 15 (2)	50% (1)	0	0	50% (1)	0
Article 16 (3)	100% (3)	0	0	0	0
Article 17 (1)	0	100% (1)	0	0	0
Article 18 (2)	50% (1)	0	0	50% (1)	0
Article 19 (2)	0	0	50% (1)	0	50% (1)
Article 20 (1)	100% (1)	0	0	0	0
Article 21 (1)	100% (1)	0	0	0	0

Section 2 – N.B – Amend articles references against the relevant clause in the draft Articles (e.g. Art 1.1). View the draft **Articles of Association of the John Muir Trust** online at https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/assets/000/004/603/18_09_20_JMT_-_AA_-_consultation_draft_original.pdf?1601381558.

The complete results of Section 2 can be found in the full report which will be disseminated by the Trust and available online.

Conclusion

In summary, as evidenced by the results stemming from the consultation response to the proposed changes to the Articles of Association, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the membership is in support of those suggested changes as outlined by the Trustees of the John Muir Trust. However, Section 2 enabled members to review existing and revised Articles of Association in more detail, which indicates there is platform for further discussion on the Articles of Association beyond the proposed changes. As the results indicate there was very little discrepancy between postal and online surveys.

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