



Membership Pilot Programmes

Guidance for Clubs

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Membership Development and Retention Committee**

July 2015

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Introduction

Pilot programmes provide opportunity for club innovation. Is your club looking to regenerate and to become more attractive to potential new members? Would it like more flexibility in determining its membership requirements? Or perhaps you'd like to try different meeting logistics, but didn't think you could because your ideas would violate the standard RIBI Standard Club Constitution or RIBI Club By-laws.

In January 2011, Rotary International wrote to every club giving each the opportunity to test new models of Rotary club membership by participating in innovative pilot programmes authorised by the RI Board of Directors. A limited number of clubs were allowed to participate. The programmes for this pilot scheme began on 1 July 2011 and have now been extended to run until 30 June 2017. In RIBI, a number of clubs applied and a small number were selected to take part.

However, the RIBI General Council 2011-2012 decided that any club might, with the agreement of the district governor, apply to run pilots programmes outside the official Rotary International scheme. So, provided your DG agrees, your club can adopt one or more of the pilot models. In May 2015 the RIBI General Council agreed that the pilot schemes would be extended to 30 June 2017 and progress evaluated in due course.

The pilot schemes are:

- Associate Membership
- Corporate Membership
- Innovative and Flexible Clubs.

Initially Satellite Clubs were part of the pilot but they are now included in the RIBI Standard Club Constitution and information is available in the Satellite FAQ publication and through e-learning.

During 2015-2016 RIBI is continuing with the Rotary Growth Opportunities programme and will encourage growth through pilot programmes and developing clubs both conventional methods, satellites and eclubs. Earlier in 2015 webinars on these subjects were developed. These are still relevant and can be viewed at <http://www.rotarygbi.org/members/club-district-support/membership-development-retention/rotary-go/go-webinars/>.

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ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

What is Associate Membership?

The RIBI Associate Membership Pilot Programme allows an individual to become associated and acquainted with a Rotary Club, its members, its programmes and projects and the expectations of club membership with the intent of becoming an active member within a designated period of time. Individual clubs can devise their own programme and guidance is given below.

Is there an established membership approval process to be used by clubs in RIBI?

No, it is up to each club to decide what this process should be. It is best to develop this process before inviting individuals to join as associate members.

Is this type of membership the same as being 'A Friend of Rotary'?

Many clubs do have supporters who are considered Friends of Rotary but no official programme is in place. Many of the friends turn up to support clubs at events rather than have an interest in joining. The associate membership pilot is in place to give people the opportunity to experience at first hand the work and fellowship of Rotary without the need to become an active member. It can easily work alongside any programme that a club has with Friends. As a simple comparison a Friend of Rotary is more likely to be a valued supporter but is unlikely to become an active member whereas an associate member is a potential active member.

How does the Rotary club approve prospective associate members?

This is for each club to decide. Processes may vary from club to club but it will be helpful if that process is shown to prospective members. The process can be informal or a more formal 'seven day letter' method.

Does the associate member have a classification?

The classification of the associate member will be established by the club. Because the associate member is not an official member of the Rotary club this classification does not count towards the classification limits set out in Article 8 of The Standard RIBI Club Constitution.

What are the attendance requirements of an associate member?

It is for the club to decide the attendance requirements of an associate member as well as what is expected in club service projects and club social events. Make-ups should be determined by the club.

Are associate members registered with RI?

At present associate members are not listed on the RI database as official members of Rotary. It may be possible to register them on club or district databases depending on which type of database is in use.

Do associate members wear badges?

Yes, if the club wishes this. It is up to the club to consider what references should be on the badge in line with the club traditions. Some Rotary suppliers have associate member badges available.

Do associate members have a vote on club matters?

For the purpose of general meetings it is up to the club to decide whether an associate member may vote on club matters. Because associate members are not official members of Rotary International they cannot take part in RI or RIBI voting. Districts have the right to decide whether they will accept an associate member as a voting member of a club.

Can an associate member hold office in the Rotary club?

Associate members are not entitled to hold any club officer position but they are encouraged to work with club committees.

What are the fees for an associate member?

There are no RI or RIBI dues for an associate member. Districts may decide if they wish to charge a fee. Clubs may also decide if they want to charge a fee. It is acceptable that fees vary from club to club as they do with active members.

Will an associate member have to pay the RIBI affiliation fee?

No. Associate members are not official members and do not pay the affiliation fee.

Can an associate member convert to active membership?

Yes, this can be done at any time and the club should determine a process of how this can be achieved and record this. This will take into consideration the way in which the associate member was introduced to the club in the first place. For example, if the club used the 'seven day letter' process it may not wish to go through the full process again. On conversion to active membership an affiliation fee is payable to RIBI as with all new active members. This is £15 in 2015-2016.

Can an active member of the club convert his/her membership to associate?

No. This pilot is about ways in which new members may be introduced to Rotary. Under the pilot it is not permissible to convert from active to associate.

Is there a process for terminating the membership of an associate member?

The club should consider a process for terminating membership. Article 12 of The Standard RIBI Club Constitution may be helpful.

Is there a designated time for an individual to be an associate member?

It is for clubs to decide. However, the purpose of this pilot is to encourage new active membership so clubs may wish to consider how long active membership should continue to maintain this goal. Two years is a suggested guide.

It seems that clubs can make a number of decisions about the processes they use with regard to associate members. Surely, it would be better if RIBI agreed upon these processes.

We are still at the stage of piloting these processes within RIBI. In due course, an evaluation will be carried out and good practices from that may be spread to clubs.

Do clubs need to record the way in which they are introducing pilots for their own purposes?

There is no instruction to do this. However, for clarity and so that all understand the way their pilot is conducted clubs may wish to consider amending the club By-laws or by adding short Standing Orders to their Club Constitution.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

What is Corporate Membership?

The RIBI Corporate Membership Pilot Programme allows an organisation or company in a club's area to become a member of the Rotary club, through an established membership approval process, and to appoint up to four designees as the individuals attending club meetings, serving on projects, voting on club matters, and serving as club officers and on club committees and so on.

Is there an established membership approval process to be used by clubs in RIBI?

No, it is up to each club to decide what this process should be. It is best to develop this before organisations are invited by the club to consider corporate membership.

What is a good way to get started?

Once you have identified an organisation that wishes to be considered for corporate membership the Rotary club might establish the background to the organisation and whether it maintains the high ethical standards expected of Rotarians.

How does the Rotary club register the corporate member?

In due course this will be available on the RIBI website but in the meantime a simple form can be used to register the corporate member and be retained with club records.

Who chooses the proposed designees?

This is up to the corporate member but it is suggested that one should be a senior executive of the organisation and the others of leadership status.

What sort of process should the club use to agree these individuals?

This is up to the club to decide. The organisation is the corporate member of Rotary and as such has the right to decide who its designees are. When deciding the process of agreement of designees the club may not wish to use the 'seven day letter' but may use a shortened or alternative process. The club could decide that it will simply accept those individuals whose names are put forward by the corporate partner. What will be important is that the club discusses with the organisation the process that it will put in place. It is recommended that any designees fill in the standard membership form suitably amended as the designee will not require a Rotarian sponsor.

How does the corporate member go about changing designees?

The club needs to discuss with the organisation the process it will put in place. This might be a simple process of the organisation advising that a designee is being changed.

Is the individual designee inducted into the club?

It is suggested that the induction of a designee is inducted in line with the traditions of the club in relation to new members.

Does the corporate member and the designees have a classification?

The classification of the corporate member and its designees will be established by the club. Article 8 of The Standard RIBI Club Constitution deals with classification. It is for each club to manage classifications but it is suggested that each designee takes the classification of the corporate member and that this classification is counted once only when considering Article 8, Section 2.

What are the attendance requirements of a corporate member?

It is for the club to decide the attendance requirements either of the corporate member or of individual designees although a degree of regularity would be expected. For example, collectively, as a minimum the designees could be expected to represent the corporate member at the expected frequency for an active individual member.

Are Designees registered with RI?

Each designee is listed as an official member of the Rotary club. The club secretary should ensure that they are listed on the RI database and included in returns to RIBI and district as appropriate.

Do designees wear badges?

Since all designees are full members of the Rotary club it is expected that they will wear a badge. It is up to the club to consider what references should be on the badge in line with the club traditions.

Do designees have a vote on club matters?

Designees are full members of the Rotary club and for the purposes of general meetings and club matters designee voting can be established by the club. Although clubs have discretion they should bear in mind that active members of clubs normally have full voting rights.

Can a designee, as an individual, hold office in the Rotary club?

Yes, a designee can hold office. It is up to the club to determine the number of designees of a corporate member who can hold office at any one time.

What are the fees for a corporate member?

Many corporate members will pay for their designees in relation to subscriptions. Currently, any designees will be registered with RI and will be required to pay the annual RIBI (including RI) subscription. Districts and clubs can decide to charge a fee other than the usual annual dues.

Will designees have to pay the RIBI affiliation fee?

Yes. Either the corporate member or the designee will need to meet this cost. The affiliation fee is £15 per member for 2015-2016.

Can a corporate member designee convert to individual membership?

Yes, this can be done at any time and the club should determine a process of how this can be achieved. Bear in mind that the individual is already an active member of Rotary so no special arrangements might be required other to observe that the designee is no longer representing a company.

If a designee leaves the corporate member organisation can he/she convert to an individual membership?

Yes. Again it is up to the club to establish a process and bear in mind the comments immediately above.

Is there a process for terminating the membership of a designee or the corporate member?

The club should consider a process for terminating membership. Article 12 of The Standard RIBI Club Constitution may be helpful.

It seems that clubs can make a number of decisions about the processes they use with regard to corporate members. Surely, it would be better if RIBI agreed upon these processes.

We are still at the stage of piloting these processes within RIBI. In due course, an evaluation will be carried out and good practices from that may be spread to clubs.

Do clubs need to record the way in which they are introducing pilots for their own purposes?

There is no instruction to do this. However, for clarity and so that all understand the way a pilot is conducted clubs may wish to consider amendment to the club By-laws or by adding short Standing Orders to their Club Constitution.

Can a club introduce other ways of getting corporate members? For example, could all the designees be associate members of the club?

The 2011-2012 RIBI General Council agreed that the RI Pilot Programmes could be introduced in RIBI clubs subject to the agreement of the district governor. The intention was that the RIBI pilots followed the format of the RI pilots. The advice given in this part of the FAQ does this for corporate members. However, clubs who wish to explore other methods of recruitment should use the 'Innovative and Flexible' pilot.

INNOVATIVE AND FLEXIBLE CLUBS

What is the purpose of the Innovative and Flexible Club Pilot Programme?

The RIBI Innovative and Flexible Club Pilot Programme focuses on clubs' ability to self-determine their operations to fit better with the needs of their members and the community. Innovative and flexible clubs are fun, dynamic, resilient, tolerant, interested in trying new things, proactive and members driven.

What sort of things could we do?

The club could try out different meeting logistics (time, day, frequency, location, online, use of social media, club event or social activity, and so on).

How does this fit in with The RIBI Standard Constitution and Bylaws?

Clubs are authorised to make changes to the Standard RIBI Club Constitution and their By-laws in any area other than the RIBI (and thus RI) membership dues requirements.

Did CoL 2013 decisions make Rotary more flexible?

Many people need flexibility to become or remain involved with a Rotary Club. Following CoL 2013 more flexibility was given to attendance requirements so that members may now use service as part of the attendance requirements. However, members also like to keep in touch and instead of / as well as conventional meetings members can communicate through social media.

If a 'traditional' club is working well but not attracting new members what could they do?

Because people may now have tighter working hours those clubs which meet at lunch time may find it difficult to attract new members. The club could consider 'additional meetings' at time which is more attractive to working members. For example, in the evenings with or without a meal.

Could we have more than one meeting time in other circumstances?

Yes, it is for the club to decide how and when they wish to meet. It is perfectly acceptable to have more than one meeting time or location. Whilst one meeting might include a meal another could be of shorter duration.

Could an extra meeting be on-line?

Yes, this is perfectly acceptable.

What other types of mix of meeting could we have?

Clubs may establish alternate meeting formats including combinations of on-line and in-person meetings or a combination of service activities, social events and weekly club meetings.

If clubs have more than one meeting time and location could one group split and form its own club?

The idea of a satellite club fits this situation. A FAQ is available separately. Generally, a satellite club will become a club on its own once it has gained 20 members whereas additional meetings will not be used to form a new club.

What is the difference between a satellite club and a satellite meeting?

At the start of the pilot these terms were used interchangeably. CoL 2013 approved the use of Satellite Clubs as a method of forming new clubs. To avoid confusion where a club runs meetings in addition to the regular weekly meeting these are probably best referred to as 'additional meetings' but it is the club's decision how they refer to this

Can we change membership qualifications and requirements?

Decisions at CoL also widened the membership qualifications as contained in Article 7 of the RIBI Standard Club Constitution. However, it is up to the club to interpret the membership qualifications laterally and create relevant membership qualifications that meet the needs of the community.

Can we change the way we lead the club?

Yes. For example, a club could consider a President in post for two years to build continuity.

Can we change attendance requirements?

Yes. Clubs may do this.

Can we use this pilot to build our own type of corporate membership scheme?

Yes. You may do this. Whilst we encourage clubs to follow the RIBI Corporate Membership Pilot clubs may devise their own schemes. Where designees of a corporate member are active members they must pay the RIBI dues. However, a scheme might be devised with some representatives of the organisation as associate members.