

Election Voting Procedure Cover

Introduction

The Election Voting Procedure (EVP) document below was discussed at the Open Forum in July 2020. It received positive support, but asked that the dealing with 'edge cases' and ties be explicitly addressed. This has been added to the document below.

Subsequent feedback identified an issue with the STV proposal as drafted in that, in some circumstances, it could lead to undemocratic decisions e.g. if 2 vacancies and 4 candidates and A gets most of the votes so hits the quota, but the surplus is not transferred there is a possibility that the second vacancy is not filled or a candidate is elected with potentially fewer votes than eliminated candidates.

Having reviewed the feedback and after further discussions it was decided that the paper should be returned to members to decide on the system that was appropriate to the BMC.

Requested Action

To review the options and agree the principle of the system to be used for multiple candidates for 1 or more positions.

Option 1 – Full Single Transferable Vote

The EVP would state

If there are **multiple candidates or multiple positions (so anything other than the above situation)**, the vote will be by a ballot conducted by an independent third party election service. The selection of this service would be conducted using the BMC procurement policy.

Pros	Cons
Would implement a well known, used system	Can't be administered by staff at a face to face meeting as too complex, so:
Fair and democratic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would need registrar at AGM and employing a third party for electronic/postal votes = additional cost
Does not lead to edge cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would mean a decision may not be possible at the meeting

Option 2 - Alternative Single Transferable Vote (ASTV)

The EVP would remain as per the document below.

Pros	Cons
Can be administered by staff at AGMs	Currently not used by others so not peer reviewed.
Decision can be reached on day	Can lead to undemocratic decisions e.g. if 2 vacancies and 4 candidates and A gets most of votes so hits quota, but surplus not transferred possibility second vacancy not filled

	or candidate elected with potentially fewer votes than eliminated candidates
	Need a process to deal with edge cases

Option 3 – Use Consecutively halved positional voting (CHPV)

The individual who identified the issue with the ASTV has experience in this field and has devised an alternative system as documented in www.geometric-voting.org.uk. He has provided a spreadsheet that implements his proposed system and this has been tested in various scenarios by the Governance & Compliance Officer and others. The system appears to show fair and balanced results; balancing popularity and broad support; in a number of tests; noting the comment in cell J3 of sheet 1. In principle this approach is potentially more appropriate for a members organisation than STV.



CHPVRB20C10E6V
(1).xlsx

The EVP would state

If there are **multiple candidates or multiple positions (so anything other than the above situation)**, the results will be calculated using the embedded CHPV spreadsheet.

If for any reason it is not possible to use the CHPV, the results will be calculated by an independent third party election service. The selection of this service would be conducted using the BMC procurement policy.

Some further text would be provided about how to use the spreadsheet.

Pros	Cons
No edge cases, though uses a randomised approach in the event of a tie	Currently not used by others so not peer reviewed.
Can be administered by staff at AGM or by a third party using the spreadsheet.	We are dependant on Peter continuing to allow free use of spreadsheet ¹
Decision can be reached on day	

Notes:

1. We could ask if he will grant use in perpetuity for BMC.

Next steps

Dependant on the decision made the EVP will be updated as describe above, and noting any further comments made, and recirculated to gain final agreement.

BMC's Election Voting Procedure

This procedure sets out how any elected positions at any General Meeting or AGM of the BMC are to be decided. These voting systems are to be used for voting on the day, the equivalent electronic voting process will be used for electronic votes.

Where an 'edge case' occurs, or a tie, then the chair of the General Meeting or AGM (who has to take account of the mood of the meeting and would normally be the President who is the members' representative), a member of National Council (who also represents members) and the chair of the Board (who represents the BMC as an organisation) advised by the Governance & Compliance Officer (who has a professional duty and knowledge to do the 'best thing') have the absolute right to decide the result or the method by which a final decision is made.

Any elections to be held by Areas may also apply this Election Voting Procedure if it is appropriate, if it is not appropriate Areas may use a voting system that is more appropriate to the circumstances of the election e.g. Areas may want to use a simple majority if they have three or more candidates standing for one position.

Simple Majority

If there are **two candidates for one position**, all those persons entitled to vote (Voters) shall:

- If the vote is by way of a ballot, be asked to put a cross (X) next to their preferred candidate and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes will be elected
- If the vote is by way of a show of hands, be asked to put their hand up when the candidates name is called out and the candidate receiving the highest number of votes will be elected

Single Transferrable Vote (STV)

If there are **multiple candidates or multiple positions (so anything other than the above situation)**, the vote will be by a ballot, all Voters get one vote and will be asked to rank the candidates in order of preference using the numbers as set out below:

- Preferred candidate = 1
- Second preferred candidate = 2
- Third preferred candidate = 3
- Fourth preferred candidate = 4
- Etc.

A Voter can rank as many or as few candidates as they like, or only vote for one candidate, as shown in the example ballot cards below. If a Voter wishes to abstain, they should put a cross (X) next to abstain.

Ranking all the candidates

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	5
	Lucia Wall	4
	Rosa Crag	2
	Alex Rock	3
	Zac Ice	1
	Abstain	

Abstaining

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	
	Lucia Wall	
	Rosa Crag	
	Alex Rock	
	Zac Ice	
	Abstain	X

Ranking some of the candidates

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	
	Lucia Wall	2
	Rosa Crag	1
	Alex Rock	
	Zac Ice	
	Abstain	

If a Voter completes a ballot card as shown below, this is counted as an abstention and therefore the rankings on the ballot card will not count.

BALLOT PAPER		
Place the candidates in order of preference (1,2,3 etc)		
Rank as many candidates as you wish		
	Chris Mountain	
	Lucia Wall	1
	Rosa Crag	
	Alex Rock	
	Zac Ice	2
	Abstain	X

STV – how are candidates elected?

There are a number of stages in the counting of votes process following a STV, which are set out below.

In order to be elected each candidate needs to reach a quota. This is the minimum number of votes calculated according to the number of positions and votes cast. There is a standard equation to use for this which is:

$$\text{No. of votes cast} \div (\text{no. of positions} + 1) + 1$$

So, if there are two positions and 1,500 votes are cast the quota would be: $(1,500 \div (2+1)) + 1 = 501$

Stage 1

The first preference votes **only** for each candidate are added up. Candidates who achieve the quota e.g. 501 are elected. So, if Rosa Crag gets 550 votes as number 1, she is elected.

Stage 2

The lowest ranked candidate is eliminated from the election.

Stage 3

All of the votes for the eliminated candidate are passed on to the next preference on those ballot papers. So, if Chris Mountain at the end of Stage 2 is the lowest rank candidate with 100 votes, he is eliminated and those 100 votes are transferred to the next preferred candidate i.e. the second choice on those ballot papers.

This process of eliminating the lowest rank candidate and transferring the vote to the next preference on ballot papers continues until candidates reach the quota and the positions are all filled.

Example

Using the ballot paper above, there are 1,500 votes cast (no abstentions) and all Voters ranked all of the candidates. There are two positions to fill. The quota is therefore 501 ($1,500 \div (2+1) +1$).

The first preference votes only are counted and the following is the result:

	Ranked
	1
Chris Mountain	100
Lucia Wall	250
Rosa Crag	550
Alex Rock	250
Zac Ice	350

Rosa Crag is elected as she was the first preferred candidate of 550 Voters, but there is still one position to decide. So we move to stage 2: Chris Mountain is the lowest ranked candidate, so he is eliminated.

Stage 3 – the second preferred candidates on the ballot papers that had Chris has their first choice are transferred to the remaining candidates. Those numbers are

Lucia Wall – 40		Lucia Wall– 290
Alex Rock – 10	this takes their total votes to	Alex Rock – 260
Zac Ice – 50		Zac Ice – 400

No-one meets the quota, so the lowest rank candidate is eliminated i.e. Alex Rock.

Alex Rock’s 260 votes are then transferred to the third preferred candidate on those ballot papers. Those numbers are:

Lucia Wall– 100		Lucia Wall – 390
Zac Ice – 160	this takes their total votes to	Zac Ice - 560

Zac Ice is therefore elected to the second position.