11 May 2020

To: World Sailing Member National Authorities
    World Sailing Class Associations

cc Council

Dear World Sailing Members,

2020 General Assembly

The Board of World Sailing continues to closely monitor the international travel situation in close co-operation with the Abu Dhabi Sports Council. We are aware that many MNAs and Classes, who can participate in the 2020 General Assembly, will have understandable concerns about the arrangements for the meeting.

The current intention of the Board is to continue to monitor the situation and to make any necessary decisions no later than 1 August 2020. I will of course keep all Members fully informed of the Board’s opinions.

It is sensible that we have a contingency plan. The Board has sought the advice of the Constitution Committee and it has advised us of two important facts. First, by law, we must hold an Annual General Meeting in 2020. Second, we do not have the ability under our current Constitution to hold the AGM by remote means. This means we must make changes in order to have a valid contingency plan and it is much better we put these in place now rather than later.

The Board has two options – we can ask the MNAs of World Sailing to agree to written resolution, signed via email, which amends the Constitution to allow us to hold the AGM this year remotely. Alternatively, we can apply for a court order from the High Court on the Isle of Man authorising a remote AGM. The Board’s strong preference is to ask the MNAs to amend the Constitution.

In order to advise us on this process, we appointed an AGM Review Committee of the Board consisting of one Board member (who is not standing for election), two members of the Constitution Committee and two members of the Election Committee. They have reported to the Board and the Board has accepted all their recommendations in full.

We are today publishing the draft text of the resolution we propose to put forward for a written vote of the MNAs. We are publishing also a set of Q&As to help Members understand the process, along with copies of the advice from the Constitution Committee and the AGM Review Committee. You can find these attached and also published at https://www.sailing.org/meetings/agm.php.

It is important to note that there is no proposal to delay the election of the Board. This would take place as scheduled via such means as the Election Committee approve. There is also no proposal to change the timeline for the appointment of Council or committees.
We are very happy to take consider feedback of Members on both the proposed process and the text of the resolution. However, we do not have the luxury of time. If, for whatever reason, we do not have agreement to change the Constitution by mid-June, we are still obliged by law to hold an AGM and the Board will then need to seek a court order if the AGM is to be held remotely. We hope to avoid this process and its cost.

I know some of you have expressed the view that remote attendance at AGMs should be a permanent option. This was an important part of the Board’s Governance Proposal and the Board still supports that. However, it is not appropriate in this process to make this a permanent position. This is a temporary procedure designed for the current international crisis. If remote attendance at AGMs is to be available permanently, then that decision must be made by World Sailing under our normal procedures.

We look forward to your feedback, which should be sent as soon as possible only by email to office@sailing.org by Monday 25 May. As usual, we ask for one official response per Member. I intend to hold a further ‘Town Hall’ meeting for Members and Council Members to discuss and take feedback as well.

Following this it is the intention of the Board to circulate a resolution for voting on Thursday 28 May. To be agreed, 75% of MNAs who cast a vote must be in favour (not 75% of all MNAs). Voting would close on Thursday 18 June and the result notified by the Executive Office as soon as possible afterwards.

I look forward to hearing from you all.

Best regards,

Kim Andersen
President