

RI Board Adopts New Zones Structure: At its January 2017 meeting, the RI Board adopted a new zones structure for the Rotary world. The RI bylaws require the Board to undertake no less often than every eight years a comprehensive review of the 34 Rotary zones so as to ensure that there are an approximately equal number of Rotarians in each zone. The Board’s previous review of the zones occurred in 2008.

The Board had earlier approved the creation of three regional workgroups to develop rezoning proposals for Asia, Europe/Africa, and the Americas. These workgroups comprised one representative (either a current director, incoming director, or immediate past director) from each zone in the region. The regional workgroups submitted their proposals to the Zones Review Committee, chaired by past RI vice-president Michael K. McGovern, which consolidated them into a single, worldwide plan for the Board’s consideration.

Going forward, the Board will consider other zone-related issues such as sectioning, pairing, and director election rotation at its June 2017 meeting.

What does this mean for Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland?

Zones within Rotary International (RI) are areas decided by the Board for the appointment of the RI Board of Directors. The Board confirmed this year that they would not increase the number of Directors worldwide as this would put the cost of Rotary higher. Therefore, the zones committee looked at the whole Rotary World and put forward their recommendations following consultation with Directors and Directors-elect in those areas. The rezoning for RIBI (effective 1/7/20) is as follows:

19	England (northern), Ireland, Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales	1010, 1020, 1030, 1040, 1060, 1070, 1080, 1090, 1100, 1150, 1160, 1180, 1190, 1210, 1220, 1230, 1260, 1285
20	England (southern) Portugal, Spain, The Netherlands	1110, 1120, 1130, 1145, 1175, 1200, 1240 Plus 1550, 1560, 1570, 1580, 1590, 1600, 1610, 1960

The zone committee is appointed every 8 years and has to look at the current membership at that time; the Rotary World has changed over the past 8 years and we in GB & I had not heeded the warning from the last change when we were rezoned to align with Belgium resulting in us losing a Director for a 2 year period.

In the period to date we have lost a further 25% of our membership which is why we are faced with further change. North America, South America, Europe, Scandinavia and Australia also dropped on membership while the Far East increased considerably. North America has lost 2 complete zones and Africa has become 1 zone (their old zone covered the Eastern Block, Middle East and the whole of Africa).

With our membership going down so much it would be unfair for the Rotary World to treat us differently; by example when we look at Africa we can see an area with many different countries and languages in one single Zone. If we want to have 2 separate zones again then we need to get our membership back up in the next 8 years...

The key question for us as a result of rezoning is when will we have a Director and in which years – the zone committee are looking at this so they can put proposals to the June Board Meeting. RI Director Peter and RI Director Elect Brian have been consulted and have put some suggestions forward ensuring fairness to Spain, Portugal and The Netherlands as well as RIBI.

Rotary International (RI) Rezoning Information

Whilst considering how the RI Zones will operate, it should be noted that the territory of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland remains unaltered consisting of 25 Districts working in harmony together. Support will still come from the Rotary Support Centre for all 25 Districts and the clubs therein and the benefits of insurance cover and subscription payment direct to RIBI in local currency remain unchanged.

One question that has been asked is in the years that a Director is appointed to one of the other countries (Spain, Portugal or The Netherlands) will that Director sit on the RIBI General Council – the answer is no; also, will we come under the Zurich office and not Alcester – the answer as detailed above is no. We will continue just as we are but will not have a Director on the Board every year however the General Council can of course ask the immediate past Director or Director Nominee for advice from the Board as required. If we had been joined as one single zone we would have had a Director every other two years, but now we should get an extra Director depending on the formula the Board decide.

The final question being asked is what happens to the appointment of coordinators – this is not being considered by the zone committee but by a separate task force being set up by President-elect Ian Riseley and again, RI Director Peter and RI Director Elect Brian will put suggestions forward to the new committee. It is hoped that all Districts in Great Britain and Ireland will remain as one unit with either a single coordinator and assistants or two coordinators. Fundamentally though, the work put in by all coordinators especially on membership is something that this change must not disturb.

If you have questions relating to rezoning please contact RI Director Peter Offer.