



Since the last issue of *Recreation* was published, there have been a number of developments linked to the proposed creation of a new professional body. Here, we round up some of the most significant ones

## Members back Trustees' recommendation

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ISRM MEMBERS LAST month voted to back their Trustees' recommendation and say 'no' to plans for a new professional body – at this time.

More than 100 members attended the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Institute on 15 May at Braunstone Leisure Centre, Leicester, while others voted by post or using a proxy vote. The final count ended with a majority of

more than 75 per cent voting against the current plan to merge the ISRM together with the Institute of Leisure and Amenities Management (ILAM) and the National Association for Sports Development (NASD) into a new Institute of Sport, Parks and Leisure.

However, ISRM members present strongly backed the plan to create a single new professional body. At the meeting, they agreed the following

motion: 'That the members of the ISRM present today request that the Trustees continue to discuss and negotiate with all other parties with a view to achieving acceptable terms and conditions for establishing a single new professional body.'

As highlighted in the May issue of *Recreation*, ISRM Trustees had recommended that members should vote not to accept the merger proposal at this time, because of

their concerns with a number of the proposals in the published prospectus. However, they have always stressed their commitment to creating one professional body.

Andy Varnom, chairman of the Trustees, said: 'We remain as committed as ever to creating a single new professional body. The views expressed by our members at today's meeting have only reinforced this position.'

## New parks institute to be launched

A NEW INSTITUTE is to be set up specifically to serve the parks and green space sector. The proposed institute would be created by the national charity, GreenSpace, which announced in May that it felt the green space sector increasingly needed a strong and dedicated institute to address a range of issues.

ISRM chief executive Ralph Riley has been in contact with GreenSpace, expressing his wish that the two organisations might be able to work more closely in the future.

In a statement of intent, Martin Page, chair, and Paul Bramhill, chief executive,

said they planned to officially launch the new institute in September. 'The decision follows GreenSpace's increasing concern and involvement in the skills debate, and pressure from within the sector for an effective parks and green spaces institute that will address CPD and meet the information, support and accreditation needs of those working within the sector.'

They added: 'There are growing concerns that the proposed merger of ILAM with the ISRM and NASD may mean parks and green space issues will be a low-priority, marginalised area of interest.'

They have promised to consult with

ILAM and the 'many other organisations and individuals that have an interest in securing a strong institute, which is dedicated to all those working in the parks and green space sector'.

GreenSpace said it would investigate the possibility of affiliation with the new sports body 'where it may be beneficial to the parks and green space sector'. But it stressed: 'Any such affiliation or partnership agreements formed, will be on the basis that [our] new institute is the representative body for parks and green space issues, and carries responsibility for policy development as it affects the sector.'

## ILAM/NASD to go it alone

FOLLOWING THE ISRM EGM, the Development Board, which was formed to create the new professional body, pressed the green button to begin the new process of getting the new body up and running.

Despite the fact that ISRM will not be involved at this stage, a statement from the Development Board said the new Institute of Sport, Parks and Leisure would be ready for business this autumn.

The statement followed a meeting of the Development Board's ILAM and NASD members, which was held without any representatives from ISRM. It said a number of decisions had been taken to get the new Institute set up, including the fact that the company would be registered 'as soon as practical'.

The Development Board said it had agreed a process to appoint three new independent people to represent the different sectors of the industry. At the same time, the post of chief executive would be advertised in the near future and an appointment made in time for when trading began in the autumn.

The Board said it had undertaken to 'strengthen dialogue' with the Home Countries and would be taking early steps to ensure their views were fully integrated into the decision-making process. 'I have been speaking to industry leaders... and have received complete support for the new body,' said Nick Gibbs, president of ILAM. 'One united industry body is within our grasp.'

Bev Smith, chair of NASD, added: 'I have high expectations that the new body will receive support from both the industry workforce and the Government.'

Carole Hassan, the independent chair of the Development Board, commented: 'An enormous amount of effort has been put into getting us to where we are today and I am so pleased that ILAM and NASD have decided to continue. During my time in working with the Board, I have come to realise the importance of one new professional body for the industry and I am confident this will be it.'

'I have been invited to continue my work in creating the future with the Shadow Board and I am delighted to do so. I call on all parts of the industry – both public and private sector – to unite behind this important initiative. Everybody must now act powerfully and move on.'

As *Recreation* goes to press, the ISRM Trustees were still hoping to hold a further meeting with Sports Minister Richard Caborn to try to iron out the concerns that they and ISRM members had expressed with the current plans.

At the EGM, members debated long and hard about the Trustees'

Members expressed a range of opinions, varying from concerns about going into a merger with organisations that did not 'seem to speak the same language' as ISRM to the political repercussions of saying 'no'. The motion following the vote – urging Trustees to continue to discuss and negotiate with all other

## 'We remain as committed as ever to creating a single new professional body'

original recommendation to members. This recommendation said that: 'The Trustees of ISRM have a legal and fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the Institute. After assessing all the risks associated with the proposed merger of ILAM, ISRM and NASD, we recommend members vote "no" to ISRM's participation in the merger at this time.'

parties with a view to achieving acceptable terms and conditions for establishing a single new professional body – was given unequivocal backing.

Andy Varnom thanked everyone who had attended: 'As Trustees, we are 110 per cent behind this motion. And the debate today has shown your passion and commitment to the ISRM and to the industry.'

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