

# Ding-ding... round two

Peter Ward  
Chief Executive, BDA

Send your comments to the  
Editor-in-Chief,  
British Dental Journal,  
64 Wimpole Street,  
London,  
W1G 8YS  
Email [bdj@bda.org](mailto:bdj@bda.org)

Fast on the heels of the elections to the BDA's Principal Executive Committee (PEC), we now move into the next stage of developing the modernised BDA's democratic process. We are now looking to populate the vitally important country councils of the BDA and this edition of the *BDJ* sees the opening of the period of nominations for those entities (see page 565).

Colleagues in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will already be familiar with the idea of a nationally oriented council which exists to focus on issues within the country concerned. For those colleagues there is no change in process really, we are just at the point in the cycle where the representatives to those councils need to be elected.

## AN ENGLISH COUNCIL

The new development, in line with the constitutional reforms, is the creation of an English Council which will similarly take the responsibility of focussing and advising on matters which are specific to England. Candidates will be drawn from all the BDA branches in England. There will be initially one representative per branch in England, though the new Articles of Association permit the English Council (and the other country councils) to increase its elected representatives if it wishes. In addition to the elected members there will also be representatives from each of the craft committees to ensure that contractual and work-related elements feature significantly in the national debates. And vitally, of course, each council meeting will be attended by the relevant PEC members who will offer a conduit to and from the operational end of the BDA.

## COUNTRY COUNCILS AND THE PEC

The changes aim to make the running of the organisation clearer. We are just coming to the point where the new Principal Executive Committee and its chair will be identified. The country councils will work closely with the PEC to ensure that the PEC is properly informed about how things are working in the four corners of the UK. Whilst the members of the PEC will oversee the way the BDA operates, it must do so with full insight of the issues facing UK dentists in all areas and in all fields and stages of practice. It is that insight that the councils will help to provide and we are hoping to attract a broad range of energised and interested practitioners who can really enrich the debate and help us to make the BDA more and more relevant to more and more dentists.

## UNITY IS VITAL

These are challenging times for dentistry and unity and a common voice are vital if the profession is going to prevail. There are those who frustratedly voice their opinions in isolation and who as a consequence remain frustrated. This is an opportunity to channel that energy into a real purpose. By standing for election to your country council, you will have a chance to air your views, to influence BDA policy and, importantly, to make a real difference in the way that the BDA works.

As a not-for-profit organisation that is owned entirely by its members, the BDA has no other mission than to work in the interests of dentists, and all our resources are devoted and directed to that mission. Establishing what's important in that agenda is by far and away stronger when it is informed by real grass roots dentists facing the day to day challenge of dentistry at the tooth-face.

## YOUR COUNCILS – PLEASE JOIN IN

So please join in. Over the coming years it is ever more important that the real voice of dentistry is heard loud and clear. It is really important that your professional association delivers to your specific needs and represents your views. On both counts we can do that even better if we hear your views and those of your colleagues. We also need to grow our membership in order to maximise our impact and to gain the best advantage from shared resources. So we need passionate advocates who are directly connected to and in control of our future direction.

The nomination period opens today and closes on Wednesday 11 July. When all nominations are in, the voting period opens in contested branches and runs until 12pm on Wednesday 29 August. When the process is over we will have robust and representative councils covering the whole of the UK and the BDA's new constitution will have the necessary elements to make sure that the case for dentistry can be properly articulated. More information about the councils and the nomination and election process can be found on the BDA website at [www.bda.org/councils](http://www.bda.org/councils).

The time commitment isn't huge but the impact of your contribution is.

Please consider standing and help us make UK dentistry stronger.

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2012.471