

# Questions & Answers for Candidates for Election to the National Executive in 2022

## **What is the National Executive (NE)?**

CAMRA is led by a board of directors known as its National Executive (NE). The NE sets the direction and strategy of the Campaign and is directly elected by CAMRA's membership at our annual Members' Weekend, AGM & Conference. All members of the NE are unpaid volunteers and one-third of the board stands down each year for election. Members of the NE elect their own chair (known as the National Chairman) on an annual basis.

## **What are the key responsibilities of a CAMRA National Director?**

NE members (or National Directors) are the board of directors of a limited company. They are ultimately responsible for controlling the management and administration of CAMRA, for steering the strategy of CAMRA and are legally accountable for the organisation. In practice, this typically means leading in a particular area of policy, scrutinising recommendations made by fellow volunteers and our paid staff, debating and reaching decisions. A National Director can expect to chair committees and be placed in other positions of formal and informal leadership.

## **CAMRA has a Chief Executive – so isn't he in charge?**

CAMRA is a volunteer-led organisation. We have a paid staff and it is the Chief Executive's role to lead them. The Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team play a key role in the leadership of CAMRA and their advice is important, but ultimately it is the NE that makes the decisions.

## **What is the time commitment? Could I be a National Director while also having a full-time job / family / etc?**

Most CAMRA National Directors are in full time work and some have young families. The time commitment can vary according to the specific role a National Director holds and according to external circumstances, but the organisation recognises that this is a voluntary position and people's "day jobs" must take priority. National Directors can expect to receive email correspondence on a regular basis, and be asked to read and comment on papers from time to time. The NE gathers for formal meetings six times per year (during weekends) and may, when required, also hold telephone/online conference calls. NE members who chair or sit on other committees will need to attend meetings of these (typically four per year) and may, from time to time, be asked to attend regional or branch meetings as guests.

## **Will being a National Director leave me out of pocket?**

National Directors are unpaid, but expenses may be claimed to cover all official travel and other out of pocket expenses. Sadly this does not include food and beer, see the expenses policy.



# Questions & Answers for Candidates for Election to the National Executive in 2022

## **What skills do you need to be a National Director?**

With twelve members, our National Executive is at its strongest when it is most diverse – not just in terms of age, gender, etc, but in terms of experience and professional career background. There are no specific qualifications or skills that are a prerequisite to standing for the NE, but an ability to work constructively with others and an interest in the full range of CAMRA's activities are important. Those elected will be in a position of leadership, so people with an ability to motivate and inspire others are likely to perform particularly well.

## **I'm not a great public speaker – will that prevent me from being an effective National Director?**

Not necessarily. As a National Director there are likely to be occasions when you are called on to speak on behalf of the Campaign – at meetings, events, or occasionally in the media. But guidance, support and training is always available, including from other volunteers, fellow NE members and our professional staff. The strength of the National Executive is in its diversity, and any weakness an individual member may have, is likely to be compensated for by a strength that is just as valuable to the organisation.

## **Do you need to have served in other CAMRA roles (e.g. at a local level) before standing as a National Director?**

No. Some of our National Directors have previously served as Branch Chairs, as Regional Directors, or as members of national committees, but others have not. Experience comes in many forms and someone who has held no formal roles in CAMRA previously may still be able to contribute valuable skills developed elsewhere. You will be given support and encouragement in fulfilling the role, not least from your fellow members.

## **I've heard that there is an expectation of “collective responsibility” among NE members - does that mean I can't express my own opinion about things?**

Decisions made by the National Executive, and those made by the wider membership at Conference, are reached democratically. Of course it is ok for you to express a personal opinion about something you feel should be different in the course of internal discussions, and to seek change. But when representing the Campaign publicly (for example in the media, on social media, or in discussions with politicians) serving National Directors are expected to represent the Campaign and its current policies.

## **If I am elected to the NE, can I choose what specific role I get or committee I chair?**

It is a role of the National Chairman to distribute responsibilities to different members of the NE. An individual member cannot be guaranteed the specific job they want, but naturally people's preferences are taken into consideration.



# Questions & Answers for Candidates for Election to the National Executive in 2022

## **What's the election process? Do candidates get a hard time?**

Candidates are invited to set out their position in written form as well as, if they wish, a short film. Candidates may choose to campaign in other ways, for example using their own personal social media. There are no official hustings events, but candidates may choose to answer questions from members on CAMRA's online forum, known as [Discourse](#). The debate here can be robust at times, but abusive behaviour is not tolerated, it is moderated by independent members and, if you have any concerns, a complaints process is available.

## **It is sometimes claimed that CAMRA is not very diverse – would I feel out of place on the NE?**

Over the course of CAMRA's history, the NE has comprised people ranging in age from their 20s to their 70s; people from all four nations of the UK and born overseas; members of different ethnic groups; women and men; and people from LGBT communities. Nobody's background precludes them from serving on the NE or from being made to feel a very welcome member of the team. Our diversity is our strength.

## **Do I need strong IT skills to be part of the National Executive?**

All of the papers for meetings are produced in electronic format and meetings often take place online. If you need help that will be available. If you are able to cope with the election process, it is likely that you have the IT skills necessary.

## **How can I find out more?**

- Talk to existing NE members – contact details can be found [here](#).
- Go to [Discourse](#), tag us one at a time or collectively.
- Ask [relevant staff members](#) for information.

