

Future of ILEC

Chairman, I would like to congratulate all who have contributed to this presentation so far. I can understand why you might want to formalise ILEC, but I would like to put forward an opposing case. First, let me say why I like ILEC as it is.

The benefit of ILEC is in the contacts we make, the communications we have between meetings and the debates we have at meetings. We meet and learn from each other in a relaxed atmosphere. We are all afforded equal status with the hosts chairing the meetings and doing the administration. It is simple, it has worked well and there is no reason why it shouldn't continue to work well in this form.

Next, let me explain why I think formalisation would be a bad thing. In my experience of joint groupings, problems arise when we think in terms of Rules, Standing Orders, Objectives and Statutes. Words and terms become confused and endless hours can be expended on argument and clarification. I think we all know why we are here, what we will get out of the experience, and how we can explain that to our home organisations. We are all senior representatives of our organisations and because of that I feel free to say that we don't need the type of guidelines and constraints we sometimes all rely on at home to keep unruly or destructive members in line.

Another certainty to cause dispute and rancour is the election of office-bearers and introducing financial subscriptions into the equation. These simply expose differences and cause arguments and divisions which need never arise. Before you know it, the real business is forgotten about or becomes secondary to the time and energy wasted in meetings in looking up one's own exhaust pipe.

Not only that, but when we should be relaxing in the evening trying to drown out the sound of Norrie Flower's singing, we will be huddled in cliques and groups plotting and campaigning.

And last on my list of problems, is a real problem for the UK representatives here. We are restricted in law, specifically, Section 47 of the Police Act, from affiliation to any organisation which has as its objects, or one of its objects, to control or influence the pay, pensions or conditions of service of any police force.

This ladies and gentlemen, is what is being proposed here, and put simply, if that becomes one of the objectives of ILEC, the UK organisations are going to have serious problems.

Chairman, in summary, this is an extremely useful forum in its current form and I believe formalising it, in the way proposed, would damage that and would have serious consequences for the UK.

But finally from me, I never like to speak against a proposition without having something to offer in its place. If ILEC is determined to have a framework beyond the one we all understand now, let me put this forward as an alternative.