



Registered charity no. 1101348

## **NAFAS Renewal Programme Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **What is the difference between the Board and the National Area Council (NAC)?**

The Board is the charity's governing body. It is made up of Trustees who are legally responsible for NAFAS, its finances, strategy, and compliance. The Board sets direction, oversees risk, and makes formal decisions on behalf of the charity. The National Advisory Council (NAC) is a wider representative forum, which brings together Area Chairs, alongside the Board and senior staff, to discuss national issues, test proposals, and ensure the voices of Areas and Clubs are heard before major decisions are taken.

The NAC is the main forum where NAFAS Areas come together with the Board to discuss and decide on important national matters. Each Area is represented by its Area Chairman, alongside members of the Board and senior staff. NAC plays a key role in shaping the direction of NAFAS, testing proposals, and ensuring that the views and concerns of Areas and Clubs are heard and reflected in national decisions.

In practice, the Board holds the legal responsibility and final accountability, whereas NAC plays a critical role in scrutiny, discussion, influence and (in some cases) formal approval, depending on the issue as it is the NAC (formed of the Trustees and Area Chairman) who are the Voting Members of NAFAS and changes to the Standing Orders and Articles of Association require ordinary or special resolutions to be approved by the Voting Members.

### **Why is the Renewal Programme needed?**

**Short answer:** Because NAFAS is under real pressure, and doing nothing is not an option.

**Longer answer:** Over recent years, NAFAS has been losing members while costs have continued to rise. Many Clubs are finding it harder to recruit new members, demonstrators and volunteers, and some are at risk of closing. At the same time, communication between Clubs, Areas and NAFAS centrally has not worked as well as it should, leading to frustration and loss of trust.

We are also relying on systems, structures and ways of working that were designed for a different time. This makes it harder to support Clubs properly, explain the value of NAFAS, reach new audiences, or respond quickly when Clubs are struggling.

The Renewal Programme brings these issues together. It is about modernising how NAFAS works, reconnecting all levels of the organisation, and putting better tools in place so Clubs and Areas can grow,

not just survive. The aim is simple: to give NAFAS the best possible chance of thriving in the future, while respecting what members value today.

### **Why are we doing this now? We've heard it all before.**

You're right to say that many of these issues have been raised before. What's different now is the scale of the challenge and the urgency. Membership is falling, costs are rising, and some Areas and Clubs are at real risk of closing. Doing nothing is no longer an option. The Renewal Programme is about acting on these issues, not just talking about them again.

### **Is this just another review that won't change anything for Clubs?**

We understand that concern. The aim of Renewal is practical change – better support, clearer communication, and tools that actually help Clubs run, recruit and grow. Some changes are already happening, and more decisions are coming soon. We know trust will only be rebuilt by action.

### **What exactly is the Renewal Programme trying to fix?**

In simple terms, it's trying to fix things that make life harder for Clubs today, including:

- falling membership and difficulty attracting new people
- too much admin falling on too few volunteers
- poor communication and broken information chains
- systems that don't help us understand or support Clubs properly
- difficulty explaining the value of NAFAS to new audiences

Renewal is about putting stronger foundations in place so Clubs can thrive, not just survive.

### **Is this all about the database?**

No. The database is only one part of Renewal. It's a tool to help us understand who our members are, communicate better, and support Clubs more effectively. Renewal also includes governance changes, a better website, and a refreshed brand to reach new audiences.

### **Why do you need more information about me? Isn't this about control?**

The purpose of collecting information is to support Clubs and Areas better, not to monitor individuals. Right now, NAFAS does not have a clear picture of its membership, which makes it harder to plan, support struggling Clubs, or grow. We hear that members feel they do not hear from us nor can they communicate with us – the database is the key way to help improve information flow and building trust. What data is collected, why it's needed, and who can see it will be explained clearly before it is implemented.

### **Will this create more work for Club Officers?**

The intention is the opposite. Renewal should reduce duplication, confusion and administration over time. We know many Club Officers are already stretched, and we are very conscious not to add unnecessary burden. This is something we will continue to test and listen on.

### **How will this help us get new members?**

Better tools, clearer messaging, stronger promotion, and a brand that speaks to new audiences all play a part. Some Clubs are already seeing results from improved digital support and communications. Renewal is about making this easier and more consistent for all Clubs, not just the confident ones.

### **Is NAFAS forgetting about long-standing members?**

No. Long-standing members are the heart of NAFAS, and what they value – friendship, fun, creativity, learning and pride in standards – matters deeply. Renewal is about keeping those strengths alive, while also making space for new people so Clubs remain healthy into the future.

### **Why can't we just have some quick fixes?**

We hear this clearly. Some quick, practical support is already being developed – such as templates, guidance, digital help and clearer communications. At the same time, some problems need deeper changes to avoid repeating the same issues again. We are trying to do both and are moving at pace to do this since the arrival of new staff

### **What help is there for Clubs that are close to closing *now*?**

We recognise that some Clubs are under immediate pressure. Head Office and the Board want to help where they can. If a Club would find it helpful for a Board member or senior staff member to attend a meeting, or if you have ideas for urgent support, please get in touch.

### **Do Areas and Clubs actually have a say in this?**

Yes. Area Chairmen along with Trustees are the Voting Members and therefore they do have a say in the Renewal Programme; it is about listening, discussion and collaboration. Richard is visiting Areas to listen directly. Feedback from Clubs is shaping the work as it develops. Key decisions will be discussed at NAC, not made in isolation.

### **Are we being pushed into decisions we don't understand?**

No decisions are being rushed through without explanation. Proposals will be shared, discussed and explained before decisions are taken. We know people want clarity and confidence before voting or supporting change. We have heard from Area Chairmen and the urgency of change and renewal and are acting on this, but in a way that is open and transparent including Richard's visits to the Areas

### **What if we don't like what's proposed?**

That's a fair question. Not everyone will agree on everything, but this process is about listening, adjusting and finding workable solutions together. Silence or disengagement helps no one – feedback does.

### **What about things like risk assessments, policies and guidance we keep asking for?**

These have been clearly heard. Practical tools such as templates, policies and guidance are being developed and will be shared, regardless of the longer-term Renewal decisions.

### **Will this cost us more money?**

No decisions have been made about future costs beyond what has already been agreed. Financial pressures are real, which is exactly why Renewal is needed. Any future proposals will be explained clearly.

### **What happens if Renewal doesn't work?**

That is exactly the risk we are trying to avoid. Doing nothing would almost certainly make things worse. Renewal is about giving NAFAS the best possible chance of success in a changing world.

### **What questions don't we have answers to yet?**

There are still areas where work is ongoing, including:

- the final shape of governance changes
- the detailed design of the database and access rights
- how the new brand will be rolled out in practice

We will be open about what is still being worked through and update Clubs as decisions are made.

### **Is this Renewal really about money? Are we in financial trouble?**

**Short answer:** NAFAS is not in immediate crisis, and we know that some Clubs are closing because of financial pressures (while other are closing because of governance pressures, but we are under financial pressure, and that does matter.

**Longer answer:** At the moment, NAFAS is spending more money than it brings in. This means we are running at a loss, and we expect that to continue for a period of time while we work to turn things around through investing in this Renewal programme. This situation is manageable in the short term, but it is not sustainable in the long term.

Controlling our costs is an important part of the response, and we are actively looking at this. However, cutting costs alone will not solve the underlying problem. The central issue is declining membership. If membership continues to fall, financial pressure will continue, whatever savings are made.

That is why the focus is on Renewal as a whole. Renewal is about stabilising and growing membership, improving how NAFAS supports Clubs, and putting stronger foundations in place so that the organisation can become financially sustainable again over time.

### **What can we do right now?**

Stay engaged, ask questions, share feedback through your Area, and make use of the support that is already available. Renewal will only work if it is shaped with Clubs, not just for them.