

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF VERBATIM REPORTERS

Company Registration No. 23811

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on:

Saturday 13th May 2006

Held at:

The Elizabethan Room
Civil Service Club
13-15 Great Scotland Yard
London SW1A 2HJ

Commencing at 12:00 noon

COUNCIL MEMBERS/DIRECTORS

Caroline Booth, Lisa Cordaro, Valerie Doyle,
Frances Dobson, Jean Lukins,
Ann Lloyd (President),
Robyn Nott, Virginia Wason, Julie Whitaker,
Miriam Weisinger, Betty Willett

Secretary)

Treasurer) Mary Sorene

Registrar)

IN ATTENDANCE

Lindsay Bickers, Natalie Bracken, Paul Brinciau,
Iris Butcher, Lisa Cordaro, Ian Dawson, Frances Dobson,
Pat Frith, Jean Gough, Ann Hill, Juliet Levy, Ann Lloyd,
Jean Lukins, Kate Maree, Pauline Miller, Robyn Nott,
David Pritchard, Mark Roberts, Mary Sorene,
Leah Willersdorf, Betty Willett, Karen Young

Notice of Meeting

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to firstly welcome everybody here today. It is so nice to see you, and friends I have not seen for a long time particularly. Mary will now read the Notice convening the meeting.

MRS SORENE:

“Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of this Institute will be held on Saturday, 13th May 2006 at 12:00 noon in the Elizabethan Room at the Civil Service Club, 13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HJ for the purposes of considering and if thought fit passing resolutions as to the ordinary business of the Company relating to the Council Members, accountant and accounts; to receive and adopt the Report and Accounts; to elect members to serve on the Council for the year 2006 to 2007; to pass a Special Resolution to elect Robyn Nott as President for the current year; to elect a President-elect for the ensuing year; to elect an Accountant for the ensuing year; and to appoint the date of the next Annual General Meeting, and any other business.”

That was signed by me, from my address, dated 21st April 2006.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. First of all, do we have any apologies for absence from anybody?

Apologies for Absence

MRS SORENE: I will read out this list I have:

Franny Barrett, Barbara Bennett, Roger Bell, Caroline Booth, Ruth Bronzite, Amanda Colton, Jenny Chandler, Victoria Davies, Valerie Doyle, Helen Edwards, Mirella Fox, Sharon Golder, Sheryll Holley, Pauline Humphreys, Karen Jobson, Sandra Khan, Christine Lawton, Heather Morris, Jackie Roper, Stephanie Stamp, Kath Sykes, Diane Tapper, Virginia Wason, Joan Webb, Julie Whitaker, Miriam Weisinger.

Minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting

THE PRESIDENT: The Minutes from the last AGM should have been put on the table for you to have a look at. They were already circulated to members before. Did anyone want to raise anything in respect of the Minutes from the last meeting? No.

MRS HILL: Can I just raise one thing? I am sure we refer to Mary as the “Registrar”, and not the “Register”.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we do!

MRS SORENE: Duly noted.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Ann. We will take the Minutes as agreed. There are no other remarks.

Special Resolution

THE PRESIDENT: We have a Special Resolution now to put to the membership to elect Robyn Nott, whom I am sure you all know (who is on my right here) as our President for the ensuing year. Unfortunately, Lisa was supposed to be President for this coming year but she has family commitments and some other commitments too, so it was thought that we would elect Robyn to be President by a special Resolution, and we need to ask if that is agreed by the membership.

MRS SORENE: Do you wish me to read out the Special Resolution or can you remember it from your documentation?

THE PRESIDENT: Would you just read it?

MRS SORENE: Special Resolution: to consider and if thought fit to pass the following Special Resolution:-

“That Robyn Nott be elected President for the ensuing year by virtue of Clause 22 of our Memorandum and Articles of Association, which state:

‘The President shall hold office for one year and shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of three years after the termination of his year of office. Provided nevertheless that the Institute may from time to time in General Meeting by a resolution (of which due notice shall be given in the notice convening the meeting) passed by a majority of two-thirds of the Fellows and full Members present and voting thereat declare that any Fellows or full Members who but for the period of disqualification mentioned above would be eligible for election as President shall be so eligible for the then ensuing year, and upon such resolution being passed any Fellow or full Member affected thereby shall be qualified to hold the office of President.’”

If I just say, the reason for that is that Robyn has, in fact, been the President within the last three years, and so we are able to pass that Resolution, if you agree to it.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we have a show of hands, please, to agree?

MR BRINCAU: You need a Seconder.

MRS SORENE: By all means. Paul seconds it. I did not see the show of hands. That was unanimous? It is a Special Resolution, so it just needs a Seconder.

MR BRINCAU: It is a Special Resolution and it comes from the Council.

President's Address

THE PRESIDENT: Moving on, my address this year will be in two parts. First of all, I will attempt to deal with the court situation as it exists at the moment, and then go on to give some explanation for the departure from our usual style of AGM and the reasons for the workshops on offer today.

Before doing so, I would just like to draw to everybody's attention here the fact that our Registered Address has recently changed. All enquiries concerning the Institute should now be addressed to the Secretary at her home address or by email. I happen to know from first-hand experience that Mary is especially good at replying very quickly to email, and so any issues that you may have can probably be dealt with most efficiently in that way.

This past year since we last met has been, by our standards, a relatively quiet year with, thankfully, no major changes in the courts. The Crown Court contracts have been extended for a further year to 31st July and the Tape Panel has also been extended for a further six months until 31st January 2007, although it will be interesting to see whether this decision is altered before next January.

One matter of some concern is that it has come to our attention recently that the Court of Appeal (Civil Division) has been testing digital recording alongside CAT writers. It is the perception of some that it is only a matter of time before those reporters will be replaced, although this has yet to be confirmed.

I really want to begin my address today by allaying the fears of some members who I know are very concerned about the imminent introduction into the Crown Court of voice-activated software. Before you pack up your machines and take to the hills, I really must stress that this software is being trialled in only one court centre at the moment, and is not, as was suggested in an extract from a report published in an earlier Newsletter, being introduced nationwide later on. The results of the trial will not be known until later this year, and therefore I am unable to say now how the software is performing.

My opinion, and I stress it is only opinion, is that, as we all know only too well, fewer people than ever speak perfect English in our Courts. Regional and foreign accents are all part of the rich tapestry reflective of our multi-cultural

society and I for one will be very surprised if this software could produce a transcript that was even close to the quality of one produced by a highly skilled reporter.

This year the members of the Council, who have continued to meet regularly throughout the year, took the decision that we should perhaps take a fresh approach to the format of our AGM. Over recent years, attendance at the AGM has dwindled, so in an attempt to make the meeting more accessible to more members it was decided to hold the meeting on a Saturday. Mindful of the fact that this would mean members giving up part of a precious weekend, we thought long and hard about what we could offer today to the membership that would be both useful and informative.

Having canvassed members' opinions about what they would find most useful in respect of various workshops, hopefully today we have managed to put together an agenda from which everyone will be able to take away something, and feel that they have either learned something totally new or just picked up a useful tip-off, for example, how to manage Word files more efficiently.

Whatever you do ultimately take away from today, we would welcome your feedback, as it is only by having your opinions and input on what you as members want and require from your Institute that we can hopefully go some way to meeting those needs.

This leads me on to the question of diversification and what we hope today will be all about. We cannot stem the tide of change sweeping through our court system as well as the wider world beyond, and therefore those who embrace change and those who are willing perhaps to learn a new skill will be those who are more likely to find themselves in continual demand. Continuing professional development is very much an essential practice in all walks of life, and something of a cornerstone on which to build if we are to continue to provide an efficient service to the legal profession and any other area in which we may be gainfully employed.

With that thought very much in the forefront of our minds, the Council has put together a package for this afternoon from which it is hoped that members will perhaps gain an insight into a system used in conjunction with verbatim reporting in all its forms with which they may not be completely familiar. Voice writing is a tool which is now being extensively used in place of the traditional reporter at, in particular, the BBC for subtitling work, where training of voice writers takes far less time and is therefore far more cost effective with trainees apparently being qualified in around three to four months. There will be a demonstration of the voice mask this afternoon by Frances Dobson which I am sure we will all find very interesting.

There will be two demonstrations of CAT software, Eclipse and Case Catalyst. Gary Nagle will be here this afternoon to demonstrate his Palantype machine, and Kelly Wesson will be speaking to us about TV captioning. Some of these are areas where advances in technology have meant that new areas of employment have opened up to those who are willing and able to retrain or to those wishing to learn a new skill.

Many verbatim reporters are using digital recorders as a back-up to their note in place of the traditional cassette tape recorder. This negates the need to carry around vast quantities of blank tapes and also means that there is no gap in the recording while either the tape turns over or is replaced. The software for playing back these digital files will be demonstrated, together with the software required for transcribing the MP2 format files from the High Court.

With regard to work in the private sector, this market continues to expand year-on-year with experienced reporters being in high demand, particularly in the medical field. It seems that on many occasions there are just too few reporters to cover the vast amount of work available, and therefore many organisations have been left with no choice other than to resort to recording their proceedings and then afterwards having that recording transcribed.

Tape transcribers, who are usually verbatim reporters themselves, know only too well the ever-increasing demands being placed upon them to meet often ludicrously short deadlines.

STTR continues to be a growing field of work which attracts many experienced reporters. However, we were as a Council rather disappointed with the recent decision taken by the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP) not to require BIVR membership for STT reporters. Accreditation by an independent body such as ours really does carry more weight than those issued in-house. Perhaps we need to embark upon some sort of campaign to raise awareness among verbatim reporters who are not currently members of BIVR that in 21st century Britain membership of a professional body really is a prerequisite, especially when negotiating fees in an ever-demanding and cost-conscious marketplace.

However, the latest news from CACDP, which is the registration body for sign language interpreters, lip speakers and STTRs is that they are planning to introduce an STT qualification later this year. It will be based on a series of NVQ units, initially Levels 1 to 3.

To be accredited, an aspiring STT will have to study a series of subjects. At the moment there are five building blocks to reach the necessary standard. Level 3, which is where the STT qualification is pitched, is the equivalent of 'A' Levels. The qualification will be accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). This is very good news indeed because it means that there will

be a nationally recognised academic qualification available to one section of our profession, and, if we ever manage to set up training courses again, it will be a good recruiting point.

As one subject in one of the STT building blocks will be qualification by a professional body, the Council does not see the CACDP qualification as a threat to our own membership recruitment, and we can only welcome such a step as an enhancement of the status of the profession.

Our website continues to be used as a forum by members for discussion and work opportunities. I know that Robyn, who will be your President for this coming year, has some exciting plans for the website, and so I will say no more about it.

Turning to the Manual, this has long been in the process of updating and is almost ready. It had been hoped to have it completed by today, but, pressures of work being as they are, it is unfortunately still incomplete. We are, however, grateful to many members for their invaluable contributions.

There is to be a new addition to the Manual of a Code of Professional Ethics. We ask members to take note of it and to abide by the Code at all times. We had thought that a Code was unnecessary, but, as there has been the odd occasion in the past of a member acting in, shall we say, a less than professional manner, it was decided that the new Manual should include such a Code. Any breach of the Code could result in a member being excluded from the BIVR.

It is with some sadness that we learnt of the death of Val Tanner (or Val Bone as some of you may know her) three weeks ago following a recurrence of the breast cancer against which she had battled so valiantly two years ago. Val started her career at the Central Criminal Court in the 1970s but more latterly worked in the private field on write-outs at home and abroad. She was very popular with all those who knew her and will be deeply missed by her friends and colleagues. This following on so soon from the untimely death of Inez See last October further goes to illustrate that we really must seize the moment and live life to the full, and not be totally consumed by transcripts and acceptable delivery dates.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Mary for all her help over the past year in making my year as President such a pleasant experience. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that meetings always run smoothly, and it is largely thanks to her efforts that today has been possible. I would also like to thank Caroline Booth and Julie Whitaker, who have both recently resigned from the Council, for their contribution over the past year, and to wish them well.

If any member feels that they can contribute in any way by being a member of the Council, could they please make themselves known to Mary, as

we now have several vacancies which need to be filled. It really is not too onerous a task as we only have five meetings a year plus an AGM. We are a very friendly bunch and our meetings are always very interesting affairs, so please consider whether you could possibly spare us just a few hours of your time.

On behalf of the Council, I sincerely hope you will all leave here today feeling that you have benefited in some way from today's agenda and that the departure from our usual format has been worthwhile.

I now open the meeting to questions from members. Does anybody have anything they would like to raise, as this is now your opportunity?

MRS GOUGH: On the Code of Ethics point, I always thought that there was a little something in the Memorandum to do with the way that we should behave, so what different things have we put in there since?

THE PRESIDENT: We have decided that we will put this in the Manual. It has not yet been completed. It concerns the way we treat colleagues and the way we behave professionally when dealing with clients, and also negotiating fees for a job before you take a job on and not afterwards. One or two issues have arisen where people have said that they should have a higher fee. Members need to establish the groundwork before accepting work. It is mainly things like that.

MRS GOUGH: I seem to think there was some general reference to appropriate behaviour, say, in court, and that sort of thing, so this is just applying that benchmark.

THE PRESIDENT: This Code spells it out. We have put brief bullet points which will be at the front of the Manual.

MRS HILL: Is anything going into the Manual regarding the importance of proof-reading of transcripts as well?

MR BRINCAU: Why?

MRS NOTT: That has always been in the Manual. There is a whole section on proof-reading, and it is still in there.

MRS HILL: I certainly have not got it.

MRS NOTT: It is in my Manual.

MRS HILL: Unless there has been an updated Manual, because I certainly do not have that.

MRS NOTT: There is a section on reading over, and reading over the work, and it covers it quite a lot.

THE PRESIDENT: It is quite detailed about reading it over.

MR BRINCAU: One would think that we do not need to put that in the Manual. It is like saying to a writer, "Make sure that your transcript is accurate."

THE PRESIDENT: One would hope that members would do that.

MRS NOTT: It is all in there, about reading over and checking.

MR BRINCAU: We all fall down on that sometimes.

MRS BICKERS: I rather beg to differ there because I think some people do not take the greatest of care, and we have seen lots of examples of it.

MRS GOUGH: I think it is since the introduction of and basically ever since we have been using computers as opposed to typing our transcripts. Obviously, when you type a transcript you proof-read it from the hard copy. Some people may just work from the computer screen, and it is much easier to miss things.

MRS HILL: Yes, I totally agree.

MRS GOUGH: Then they maybe print it off and assume it is okay.

MRS WILLETT: Another awful thing is that I have seen people just spell-check.

MRS BICKERS: We have to remember that when we are proof-reading on a computer, we can make a very much better transcript. I do not mean sworn evidence being changed, but most of the work I do requires heavy editing, and the computer has been absolutely wonderful for that.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I agree there.

MRS BICKERS: I am sure that our transcripts are of a much higher standard now than they were when we typed them on typewriters because we do change the sentences around for punctuation. We do not think, "Oh no, that will mean re-typing the page." So computers have been a great help to us.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, they have. Does anyone else have a question?

MRS WILLETT: I would support Ann. I think it is one of the most important parts of our work, and I think it is a part that people do neglect.

MRS BICKERS: You are judged on the final thing, not whether you are very clever and write 200 words a minute on CAT, and that is good. You are judged on what the client reads, and, if it is rubbish, he knows it is rubbish.

MRS WILLETT: Let us be fair, though. That is if you are working in a Parliamentary or conference setting, when you have to have a better transcript. For people who are doing STT and Cat, it is a different matter altogether, and we should make sure that is clear.

MRS BICKERS: I was not referring to that.

MRS GOUGH: Will the new Manual be available in electronic form or hard copy?

MRS NOTT: Yes. At the moment, the Manual is only in electronic format.

THE PRESIDENT: Just to save costs, really, it is only electronic at the moment, unless we have a high demand for having a hard copy.

MRS NOTT: You can always print out the hard copy yourself.

MRS GOUGH: Yes. Sometimes the electronic forms just stay on the computer, and you think, "I will print that out some time."

MRS NOTT: I know. That is up to you. I like hard copies of things, but I think it is more useful to have it on your screen because then it is easier to flick up and look up various sections.

THE PRESIDENT: Wherever you are.

MRS NOTT: Exactly. Especially if you have a laptop and you are traveling. I do not travel with my Manual.

THE PRESIDENT: It is easier to have it on the screen.

MRS HILL: Can I just ask when was the last Manual actually produced.

THE PRESIDENT: In 1986.

MRS NOTT: Yes, in 1987 – 1987, it was.

MRS HILL: I certainly have not got that.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh you do not have that one.

MRS HILL: I got one when I first came in.

THE PRESIDENT: There was one was produced in 1986. That is the one I use.

MRS WILLETT: Can I just explain, because I was around at the time when the new Manual was around, and when everything was done, I think? (Laughter) The 1987 Manual was a white manual with a black spiral binding. If you were a member of the BIVR, you got it automatically. If you were a member of the APSW, you got one if Mrs Wort gave you one, because Mrs Wort, who was the President of the APSW at the time, bought about a hundred from the BIVR and she distributed them to her membership, she told me, but obviously not all of you got one.

MRS HILL: Thanks for that, Betty.

MRS WILLETT: Is there anything else you want to know about the Dark Ages? (Laughter)

MR BRINCAU: I have got a point about raising awareness about the Institute and people who are not at present members of the Institute. You said to raise awareness amongst the shorthand writers who are not members. I think the problem is not with the shorthand writers who are not members. Sometimes it is the principals who employ some of them. They are discouraged from joining the Institute.

THE PRESIDENT: I know.

MR BRINCAU: Really, awareness should be raised to as it was before. It was great to walk into a court. I remember when I used to do some work in Isleworth not many years ago. I was talking maybe five years ago, with Jean as well. They did not see much of me because I was in the Air Force then. As soon as I walked in, they asked me for my card. I am sure they have asked me at the Old Bailey and the High Court, in those days, before they would let me in the court. Now that has gone.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not the case now unfortunately.

MR BRINCAU: It is not the case now, so really awareness should be raised. If they had to do that at the High Court and the Old Bailey, there would not be any writers there. Sometimes I think the principals do not look very kindly on people joining the Institute and it has not been encouraged.

MRS WILLETT: The reason why your card is not asked for now is because the Lord Chancellor's Department decreed a few years ago that accreditation was not necessary and that it was up to the employing body or the principal to decide whether a person was up to going into court. If the principal decided that they were up to going into court, they went in. There was no independent registration of them, which is when we used to have the little cards.

MR BRINCAU: That is right.

MRS WILLETT: So those cards in effect do not exist any more, although our cards still do say that we are accredited.

MR BRINCAU: However, if you try and depend on the principal to say who goes into court and who is qualified to sit in a court, the principal will send anybody that is available. I had two trainees when I was in the Air Force who wrote at somewhere in the region of 80 words per minute, and they were put into court with a tape recorder because the people who were training them used to stick them court -- bums on seats. So if a principal is sending people in, it does not necessarily mean that the people sitting there are qualified to do the job.

MRS WILLETT: No. It is a very, very sad situation.

THE PRESIDENT: It is just a sad situation because we cannot force principals.

MR BRINCAU: It really takes a lot from being a member of the Institute and saying I am a Member of the British Institute, unless you are going to get a position. The Americans insist that you are a Member of the Institute.

THE PRESIDENT: You are absolutely right. Yes, they do.

MRS DUTTON: I always put my name at the end of every transcript with the date I produced the transcript, and the fact that I am a Member of the British Institute of Verbatim Reporters.

MRS DOBSON: Some firms take it off, though.

MRS DUTTON: Not the ones I work for.

MR BRINCAU: Oh dear!

MRS DUTTON: But if you all start doing that perhaps that might go with the flow sort of thing.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we really need to do it more often, and make sure it is done all the time.

MR BRINCAU: The comment has just been made that some firms take it off. I am not sure they are allowed to or they should be allowed to unless the people allow them to do that, depending on their position.

MRS DUTTON: I should think it depends on your position within the firm. If you are a forceful person, you make your point.

MR BRINCAU: Like it or lump it!

MRS WILLETT: You could always put "Produced by Bloggs on behalf of Bloggs".

MRS DUTTON: I only put it on the final page. I do not put it on the front page. The front page has whoever the firm is. It is only done on the end of the transcript.

MRS GOUGH: I did think that was a requirement for a lot of transcripts. I have not done that recently, but certainly I always put it.

MRS GILBERT: In the olden days, we had to put a certificate: "To the best of my skill and ability", and name and date.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is right. Correct.

MR BRINCAU: Yes.

MRS HILL: I think you still have to do that on Crown Court work anyway.

MRS WILLETT: Could we remember we have a verbatim reporter present, please, and only speak one at a time? (Laughter) Shall we set an example?

MRS HILL: Well said!

THE PRESIDENT: Paul, do you have any other issues you want to raise? You seem to have a list.

MR BRINCAU: Yes, on digital recording, somebody said it is the "in thing" now. Actually, that is not what I heard.

THE PRESIDENT: Go on, then.

MR BRINCAU: Just two days ago, I was talking to another writer, and she said, "Listen to this." Apparently it is not as good. I do not do tapes, but recently somebody asked me as a favour if I could do a tape. I sent it straight back. It

was a digital recording. From what I gather, it is not all that terribly good. I do not know if anybody else has got any other experience of it. I never use it, and I would not.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you use a tape recorder?

MR BRINCAU: Yes, I use a tape.

THE PRESIDENT: And you do not think it is as good as the tapes?

MR BRINCAU: From what I have heard, no. I use my tape with a nineteen quid mike on a Panasonic hand-held, which I got from the States. It is a bit better quality than your average Walkman. The quality I get on it is excellent.

THE PRESIDENT: The microphone is always the most important thing in any recording.

MR BRINCAU: As I say, I have a nineteen quid lapel mike, and remember it is a back-up, so you are not going to rely on it.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR BRINCAU: In the job yesterday, for example, the tape was useless. You try to make the best of what you are hearing and put something together and maybe try and refer to it on occasion. But in depositions, you get a videographer, and you need to transcribe everything verbatim, and it is good to have a tape for American accents. It is excellent for things like that. I do not know if anybody else uses digital and has used tapes before, and whether they have any experience of whether it is better or as good. People sort of say, "Digital! We are going digital."

MRS MAREE: Can I just ask what is digital as opposed to tapes? I do not know what the digital is.

THE PRESIDENT: The digital is a sound file. This is a digital recorder, which I am using to record now. It makes a sound file, which I will load into the computer. Then you play back normally, as if you were just using a tape recorder. It is no different. It is just that you do not miss anything if the tape turns over.

MRS GOUGH: So you still need to have a microphone on there, or is it an integral microphone?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not use a microphone on mine. In a room this size, it will pick up everything in here.

MRS NOTT: Of course, with the CAT software, the digital recording is tracking with the transcript as it is going through, and that makes a huge difference.

MRS MAREE: Have you a disc in your little thing there?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Nothing.

MRS MAREE: So what do you put into the computer?

THE PRESIDENT: I attach it up. I will be dealing with this later on when I do the digital workshop, so as not to take time now. I will show you how it all works.

MRS HILL: Paul asked the question if anybody uses digital recording. May I say that I use digital recording and I find it is far superior, but specifically I have an excellent microphone on it.

THE PRESIDENT: The microphone makes the difference.

MR BRINCAU: It is the microphone that does it, then. A girl showed me one of those a couple of days ago. She said, "Look, this is what I have just got." I think she spent hundreds on it.

MRS DUTTON: Yes, they are £400.

MR BRINCAU: She said, "It is not as good as what I had."

MRS HILL: Also I think, without the microphone, it is still very good.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it is good without the mikes. I do not use a mike with mine.

MR BRINCAU: I just ask.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we move on? Paul, have you finished?

MR BRINCAU: Yes. Thanks.

Treasurer's Report

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call on the Treasurer to give the report, please.

MRS SORENE: Can I say that you have all had the Treasurer's report. There are a few spare copies here. Does anybody have any queries on them?

No. Can we accept the Report and Accounts? Do we have a proposer? Shelley is proposer, and seconder is Frances.

Election of President-elect

THE PRESIDENT: We now need to elect the President-elect for the ensuing year. Mary is handing round the voting forms. Only Members or Fellows are eligible to vote. Can I appoint two Tellers, please?

MRS WILLETT: The two gentlemen here.

(David Pritchard and Mark Roberts were duly appointed Tellers)

(A short pause)

THE PRESIDENT: The President-elect for the ensuing year will be Frances Dobson. (Applause)

Appointment of Accountant

THE PRESIDENT: We need to appoint the Accountant for this year too. Mr Kypri, who is a Certified Accountant who trades as Alliance Accountancy is happy to continue. Are we all agreed that he should continue being the Accountant?

MRS SORENE: Can I ask for a Proposer and Secunder?

MRS WILLETT: Can I ask a question? Have it proposed and seconded, and then I will ask a question. I will propose it and I will ask a question at the same time. Jean has seconded. Do we have the cheapest form of audit we can have, because we are not registered and we only have to have our accounts examined?

MRS SORENE: Yes, that has been so for some years.

MRS WILLETT: So that is what we do?

MRS SORENE: That is correct. The full audit would take a lot more work, and he would charge, obviously, a lot more.

MRS WILLETT: And apropos the accountant, because this would have some effect on the accountant, I think it is about time the BIVR went for charitable status. I think it would make life a lot easier for us. If we did have it of course that would mean we had to have a different accountant, or at least a different set of accounting rules. Would Mr Kypri be able to do it?

MRS SORENE: I am sure he would. I have spoken to him about this. He is involved with another organisation for which he applied for charitable status, and it took seven years for him to get it, but that is not to say he cannot try.

MRS DUTTON: We had better start now.

MRS BICKERS: We had it once.

MRS WILLETT: Yes, we did have it once.

MRS BICKERS: We did have it once, and we gave it up.

MRS SORENE: I never understood that we had it.

MRS WILLETT: We had some form of charitable recognition.

MRS SORENE: Then we need to look into it.

THE PRESIDENT: Anything else?

MRS WILLETT: Date of the next meeting.

Date of next Annual General Meeting

THE PRESIDENT: We need to decide the date of our next AGM.

MRS WILLETT: Do we need to ask people whether they like Saturday or whether they want to go back?

MRS BICKERS: I think this was a very good idea, and we seem to have got a lot more people coming, and people that have not been for years, and there are new people, and it is absolutely lovely. It is a very good idea.

THE PRESIDENT: So, to continue in this format?

MR BRINCAU: Can we avoid the FA Cup Final? (Laughter) It is the first or second week in May, I think.

THE PRESIDENT: We need to avoid the first weekend in May because that is Deaf Awareness.

MRS WILLETT: Yes, that is why we changed our date.

THE PRESIDENT: So maybe the third weekend in May?

MR BRINCAU: Yes.

MRS SORENE: I will confirm the date, to be placed into the Minutes. The third weekend in May: does anybody know what it is? I had the 12th down, so seven days after that would be the 19th.

THE PRESIDENT: So it will be very provisionally the 19th May for the next AGM. That concludes the business for today.

MRS BICKERS: Can we thank the President and Mary and all the Council for all their hard work? They have obviously put a lot of work into this, and we are very grateful to them.

MR BRINCAU: Hear-hear! (Applause)

(The meeting was closed at 12:40 p.m.)

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