

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF VERBATIM REPORTERS

Company Registration No. 23811

131st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on:

Saturday, 11th May, 2013
at 2.00pm

Held at :

Premier Inn, Reading Central
Letcombe Street, Reading
Berkshire. RG1 2HN

Council Members:

Sheryll Holley (President)
Helen Edwards (Vice President)
Georgina Ford
Susan Humphries
Jean Lukins (co-opted)
Ann Lloyd
Ian Roberts (co-opted)
Leah Willersorf
Elisabeth Willett

Present:

Shelley Dutton, Helen Edwards, Georgina Ford, Pat Frith, Jean Gough,
Sheryll Holley, Susan Humphries, Ann Lloyd, Jean Lukins, Wendy Osmond,
Ashleigh Roberts, Ian Roberts, Mary Sorene, Michele Sowerby,
Leah Willersdorf, Elisabeth Willett

THE PRESIDENT: Can I welcome everybody and thank you all for attending this year. Can I ask the Secretary to read out the Notice.
(The Notice was duly read)

Thank you, Mary. Apologies for absence.

THE SECRETARY: I have Amanda Bavin, Lindsay Bickers, Carole Tasker, Margaret Beaumont, Jill Mason, Helen Davies, Joan Webb, Julie Whitaker, Stephanie Stamp, Ian Sinclair, Iris Butcher, Diana Tapper, Sue Wiltshire, Sandra Khan, Pauline Miller, Angela Chew, Chris Armstrong, Pam Crooknorth, Jackie Roper, Amanda Taylor, Barbara Bennett, Rebekah Roberts, Julia Jacobie, Andrew Howell, Natalie Bracken, Hilary McLean, Mirella Fox, Jane Norman. And I guess Davina Hyde, who was on remote this morning.

THE SECRETARY: That's all I have, unless anybody else has any? No? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Minutes of the last meeting have been circulated to members. We have spares here, if anybody would like a copy? Does anybody wish to highlight anything from the minutes?
(Pause) Is there anything to raise?

Are they agreed? Is everybody happy? Yes? I see nodding heads, so I think they are agreed.

(The Minutes were signed by the President)

THE PRESIDENT: It's the Presidential address next. It says that I need to keep an eye on the time after 45 minutes, but we don't need to do that now for the exam, so I won't bore you for 45 minutes, I can assure you.

Good afternoon, and it's great to see you all. As outgoing President, I have the pleasure of giving my speech. I now know how a best man feels on the day of a wedding! This year, as always, has gone so quickly. This year I find myself personally seeing my last baby's 18th birthday, and now I am starting to feel old.

Looking at the last year, BIVR Committee has continued to serve you and meet on a regular basis. We have sought to make BIVR more widely known and I firmly believe that our profession isn't in imminent danger of dying; we just need to re-invent, train and advertise.

We have the website, and I would encourage all members to regularly log in and check out job offers on there. During the past year, a few of us have been

interviewed. Mary did a very good interview on the radio, along with Natalie Bracken, and Leah had her job profile published. I can't remember what the name of that was now.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: What People Do.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that was detailed in the newsletter, so you could look at that. BIVR is represented on a few committees, one of which is the ACE Committee, which stands for Access to Communication in English. Mary and I took a stand at a UKCoD conference. UKCoD is the UK Council on Deafness. Unfortunately, this wasn't one of the better conferences to be at, but we were there, and we did generate a bit of interest. We gave out sweets and it was really good. One or two BIVR members came, and we chatted and went through some software, so it was interesting for those of the profession who came, as well as people who came to see the stand.

We were at the Olympics. Diana Burden and Sue McIntyre were doing the Olympics, and I think that went down really well.

Jean represented both AVSTTR and BIVR at the ECOS 2012 Conference. Jean gave a comprehensive report detailing what happened out there, and that, again, was in the newsletter. If you haven't read it, it's really good to revisit that and see what other people in Europe are doing. It was really interesting.

On the subject of newsletters, following Paul's suggestion at last year's AGM, we continue to give small snippets of what the Committee has been up to in the previous few months. I don't know whether Paul has actually commented on them at all. It's quite interesting. I do wonder whether he is watching the footie this weekend!

We are all concerned about the way the digital recording has taken over the sector. As a result of this, BIVR will be making a Freedom of Information request on how the changeover to digital has or hasn't worked.

Following Mary's request, we did have some horror stories sent in, and I have a selection here. Lots of them are about the recordings. There are a number of different issues with microphones not being switched on.

“Still have the same problems as ever, coughing and ripping up of paper, mics not working etc. I have just done a family court case from Swansea where someone was using what sounded like a PAID stamp. It went on through all three hours of the hearing!”

“...the recording was atrocious, the microphones aren't placed in the correct spot to get a clear recording. Even if they were, in my particular instance, certain parts were inaudible due to shuffling of papers.

At times it is nigh on impossible to identify who is speaking, if it is not mentioned on the log. So if you are doing defence mitigation and don't know who he/she is, you need to go back to the very beginning of the recording when, hopefully, the prosecution introduces counsel. Very time consuming.”

“I don't do DARTS any more. The pay is ridiculously low for the time spent in trying to make a full and accurate transcript.”

“Witness lists. The Court of Appeal always ask for a list of witnesses when they order a summing-up. When listening to the summing-up, it frequently becomes clear if the list is not complete. Witnesses whose statements are read never seem to be included in the list. It can be very frustrating if witnesses have unusual names. There are often difficult choices to make with simple names such as Miller/Millar; Brown/Browne.”

“Google is much more use sometimes than the court log.”
Interesting!

“Multi-handed trials. You do not always realise how many defendants there are, until you look at the sentencing in the log.”

“I am forced frequently to resort to the words ‘Unidentified Counsel’ or ‘Unidentified Speaker’.”

“Microphones. There should be regular checks by the court staff to ensure that all the microphones are recording at a decent volume. For instance, there was suddenly a crash and a bang, something must have come out of a hole, and there was no further recording of an opening speech.” I have visions of a big mouse coming through the hole!

“Finally, I think it can be likened to a jigsaw puzzle. You do your best with inadequate information to make a decent transcript, but it is frustrating if you care about the work you produce.”

And so on. There are just lists. I think there have been some retrials as well through no recordings, and I don't know how widely known that is.

THE SECRETARY: That's what we need to find out through the Freedom of Information Act.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. One person has “spent hours Googling Muslim names to try and get a half-decent transcript”. It is an absolute nightmare. Do we actually publish the horror stories?

THE SECRETARY: No, not yet.

THE PRESIDENT: If people request to see them, are they allowed to?

THE SECRETARY: Yes. I will just take out the names. I shall anonymise them.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. So, that's what we are doing in that regard. Back in November, we held workshops in Leeds. They were well attended. Also, members attended remotely, which worked well. We were acting on feedback and we will continue to offer training for the sector.

There is still work out in the field both UK based and internationally. Shortly after the November workshops, I had the privilege of going to Baku, Azerbaijan, to work with Georgina and Ian at the UN International Governance Forum. This really gave me a huge insight into working with transcripts in a live situation, as mostly I have only provided speech to text support. The training I provided and sessions received during the BIVR training weekend certainly helped me during this time.

Technology is advancing and, during that week, we used Total Eclipse Audiosync along with remote streaming and the live CART screen. It was a challenging environment, let alone having to cope with the worldwide accents, and we were doing that simultaneously. So, it was a testing time, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was seat-of-your-pants stuff, wasn't it?

GEORGINA FORD: That was just the journey to and from the venues!

THE PRESIDENT: It's the first flight I have been on with free alcohol, which was lovely! And they give you a blanket to wrap yourself up in, so that was good. No. It was a good flight. I have to say, there was an elderly gentleman on the flight, who I think had Alzheimer's. He was dressed in his pyjamas, and he would walk down the aisle every half an hour, in his pyjamas, to go to the toilet, and then come back. It was so sweet. The hostess had to escort him back to his seat.

GEORGINA FORD: Yes. It was so cute.

THE PRESIDENT: But, coming back, the turbulence was atrocious, wasn't it? (Georgina shuddered) It was made up for by the fact that, when we flew back over London, it was a beautiful clear night. I have never seen London so close, yet from that height.

ANN LLOYD: It is lovely. It's beautiful.

THE PRESIDENT: Magnificent. I have never experienced that before.

Anyway, I digress.

During this year, we set up BIVR Tweets, with a Twitter account. Although we haven't tweeted a huge amount, we would value any tweets. Remember it's just 140 characters. If anyone has any information or funny stories, please let us know, and we can tweet it. Or you can tweet it yourself and put BIVR_tweets.

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: You could tweet the horror stories you just read out, or a link to the page with them on.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Well, we could do. Yes. "Check out the digital horror stories!" Maybe. (Laughs) I don't know.

THE SECRETARY: Shall I be American and say, "I will take that under advisement"?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think so. This morning we had a presentation from Opus 2, and Opus are now using realtime stenographers for their Cloud Magnum work, so I think that was a real plus. It was a really interesting presentation and, hopefully, the more work they get, the more work they provide for everybody in the sector. So, let's hope that takes off, and we wish them all the best in that.

I hope the workshops this morning have generated some interest and your feedback is very much appreciated, along with suggestions for future workshops. I found it really interesting, and I hope everybody else found it interesting.

If you have suggestions, or any more questions, apart from Nick, I think everybody else is here to take questions. It is important to share knowledge, certainly, within the sector, within softwares. There may be advice tips that you know, and sometimes it can be a simple thing that can go on the BIVR Tweets. I put one on the other day about a new trolley case that's come out, and I think Georgina commented on it as well. It's a rucksack that's a scooter.

GEORGINA FORD: Julia put that up, I saw, on Facebook.

ANN LLOYD: That is a good idea, isn't it, for speeding round the airport!

THE PRESIDENT: I think you might get fined for using it in the airport! (Laughter) Don't go on the escalators with them! So, yes. Any interesting stuff, let us know.

We have continued to work throughout the year, and I wish the incoming President a productive year. My hope is that we will continue to train and support you as a profession. (Applause)

Are there any questions? (Pause) No questions? Right. Treasurer's Report, Mary?

THE SECRETARY: It has been circulated, but there are a few copies here, if anybody wishes to have a look at them. Really, what we want you to do is to ask questions, if you have any, and if I can answer them, I will. Then I hope that you will approve them - adopt them, as it's called - and they can be signed. So, if you want to hand out the few copies that are here. (Copies circulated)

THE PRESIDENT: Any questions on the report? I think we broke even on the last training weekend. Certainly, I have really enjoyed the training that I have taken part in, and I think we should have more, definitely, because it's important.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I agree.

THE PRESIDENT: We just need some more ideas of what people want to be covered.

GEORGINA FORD: We really need to get the membership to come back and tell us, but most of the time you ask and it's the same group of us who get together all the time.

THE SECRETARY: I can't remember who asked, but the macro question was answered. Somebody had said to me, "I want to know about macros", so that's why I asked Carryl to put it in.

JEAN LUKINS: Is it possible to have, say, an e-mail address like training@bivr, and then people can send in ideas or requests.

THE SECRETARY: We possibly could.

JEAN LUKINS: It was just an idea.

GEORGINA FORD: That's a good idea.

JEAN LUKINS: Or offering to train.

THE PRESIDENT: Perhaps we could use technology a bit more as well, and have online training or online meetings.

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: I think that would make a difference. A lot of people don't come because they don't want to travel.

THE SECRETARY: We did offer remote access to today's meeting. Three people, I think, originally said they would attend remotely. In the event, we

just had one. It was a lot of work for just one person, but that one person is still important.

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: If you have something like a webinar, then it's specifically designed to be remote. A lot of people miss out on some things by not actually being here. If the whole thing is online, then they don't miss out on anything.

THE PRESIDENT: We could look at webinars.

GEORGINA FORD: I watch the Eclipse webinars like this, as recordings, because they are always at silly times.

THE PRESIDENT: TeamViewer is probably the best one for that, or what you did today with Adobe Connect. Did you have to pay for that?

THE SECRETARY: I will have to, if I buy it.

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: But that would reduce the expense for BIVR as well, and not just the members.

GEORGINA FORD: But then couldn't you charge for each one, and sell each of them?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, for trainees, it would be good to have speedbuilding webinars, and maybe just pay two or three pounds to join. That would be really good.

JEAN LUKINS: I think we discussed it when we were doing the website. Say we had two different speed tests or a webinar on a topic, and you pay two or five dollars to download it - something nominal - people might think that you could have the first three as free, and then, if you want more, you can pay for that.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean online dictation?

JEAN LUKINS: Or anything which is provided. If it's a product, you can pay to download it. That pre-supposes you can put the documents on the website in a downloadable format and you can pay instantly, and both those things are quite expensive to set up. I think that's what stopped us from doing it.

THE SECRETARY: We do have audios online for our members - you have to go into members' downloads and you can download them - but we don't have the pay portal set up. It was going to cost another couple of thousand pounds to have a pay portal put in.

THE PRESIDENT: We could circumvent it by maybe assigning an evening, and saying something like, "Between eight and nine we will have speedbuilding sessions ranging from 180 to 230. If you want to join in, then please let me know. Send your payment of £2 to this account number, or you can send a cheque." Most people have online banking now. Whoever is in charge then invites them into the meeting, so they can't actually get to the meeting unless they have paid their bit.

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: I wouldn't even know how to pay anybody not online. I don't even know how you would do that.

THE PRESIDENT: Cheque book! That is something we could set up that wouldn't cost any money, but it would generate some money.

JEAN LUKINS: Maybe there is a cheaper portal option now, because firms make money out of this.

THE PRESIDENT: We could use Adobe Connect, or TeamViewer, which works in a similar way. I would send you a link to the meeting and you would just join in. It automatically downloads a patch from the Internet, and then disappears when you have finished with it.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: That's what we used for Leeds.

THE PRESIDENT: No. We used Go To Meeting for Leeds, which is really expensive. It costs about £80 a month.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: What about the IPS meetings? Have you thought of opening those up?

THE SECRETARY: I have. I tried to use it on Skype, but it didn't work very well. Again, there was a slow Internet connection at Bishopsgate.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Because you are already doing that, therefore, it would be ideal.

THE SECRETARY: I agree.

THE PRESIDENT: Are there any other suggestions? Sorry, is there anything to add to the report?

BETTY WILLETT: Not to add to the report. Personally, because of where I live, and because of where Sheryll lives, I know Sheryll has attended a Council meeting by remote, and I have done it. It's a most peculiar feeling. You are just sitting there talking to yourself in a room, basically, listening to people over the phone. You have to keep on changing hands, because you are attending a two-

hour meeting and you are on the phone for two hours perhaps. Nothing beats face to face; I don't care what anybody says. It's modern and it saves journeys, but, when you get face to face, you iron out problems more quickly.

THE PRESIDENT: You do.

BETTY WILLETT: Reporting is a very lonely profession. You are always, or most of the time, working on your own. If you don't get together for AGMs and Council meetings, when are you ever going to see anybody?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we need a good mix. We can utilise the technology and get more training online, but then tackle the bigger issues face to face. Maybe we can look at more technical software issues, with hints and tips for working, especially with deaf clients. Maybe we could do something along the lines of a bit of deaf awareness for future training. I don't know about anybody else, but, certainly from a speech-to-text point of view, we will have done our deaf awareness training years and years and years ago, so maybe we could do a top-up of just current tips? Maybe we could invite a deaf person in for just an hour?

BETTY WILLETT: Talking of deaf awareness, what we ought to have mentioned - and I don't know whether we can or not, but I will do it, and edit me out afterwards - is the rather acrimonious correspondence that's been coming forth from Signature about what speech to text reporters have to do in the future, and how much they are going to have to pay, et cetera, and the letter that AVSTTR sent to them. Was it a joint letter from BIVR as well?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It was from BIVR and AVSTTR.

BETTY WILLETT: It was a joint letter, which I took some hand in compiling, and to this day we have not had a proper reply. This week, I did say to Ross Trotter, who is Chairman of the National Association for Deafened People, "What has happened to Paul?", who is the guy at Signature who was supposed to have replied, and Ross said, "I think he is up over his head in letters. No-one seems to be getting any reply."

Somebody else, who, for obvious reasons, must remain nameless, expressed the view to me - and whether this goes in the minutes or not, I don't know; it will be for Mary to decide - "What is your view if Signature goes belly-up? What about qualifications for reporters?" I said, "Well, the qualifications do exist within the professions", so she said, "That is exactly the answer I wanted to hear, and why I would much prefer to have those qualifications than Signature's qualifications."

Now, whether she has any weight in taking us down that route, I know not. I just report this as somebody who was at a conference having a private

conversation, and I am going to see her again. She lives not far away from me, and I am going to push this. If Signature cannot reply to a letter within six months ---

THE PRESIDENT: No, it was January.

BETTY WILLETT: It's still five months. We are in May now.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it went out until the end of January.

BETTY WILLETT: I know I was looking at it over the Christmas holiday. Are they worth worrying about, and all the money they are going to charge everybody for being registered?

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: I don't see why you should listen to them about what you ought to do. AVSTTR and BIVR should be the authority on who gets registered; not some random guy who won't even write back to a letter.

JEAN LUKINS: Is anybody above Signature? Do they answer to anybody?

THE PRESIDENT: There is nobody.

JEAN LUKINS: There is always somebody else you can approach, or you can change the argument or debate.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose it's deaf people as a whole, really.

BETTY WILLETT: I think the deaf people would be quite satisfied if they knew the person they were using was qualified; not that it's a Signature qualification but that it's a professional body's qualification. What they are asking reporters to do, and asking them to pay, per year, is absolutely monstrous.

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: Isn't it only AVSTTR and BIVR members who are registering?

THE PRESIDENT: All the communication professionals are registered with NRCPD, which is Signature. You have ALS, which is the Association of Lipspeakers, ANP, which is the Association of Notetaking Professionals, you have ASLI, which is the Association of Sign Language Interpreters, you have ourselves, speech to text reporters, and you have deafblind communicators. They all register with NRCPD. They are all on the register.

Now, from my point of view, I think Signature/NRCPD represent the views mainly of sign language interpreters. That's my view, and I think that's all they care about. I think, all these side bodies, we are not big enough for them to

worry about. It's the same with the notetakers; half of them are not qualified.

There was something that we got to know of a few weeks back. I won't mention any names but, basically, a notetaker complained to NRCPD that there was an agency professing to use qualified notetakers. They weren't, and they were taking the majority of the market. She wrote to NRCPD about it, and she was told to go to Trading Standards. Signature advised her to go to Trading Standards.

If that's what they are going to do to represent us - to just tell us, "We want your money but you can go to Trading Standards to sort your issues out," then I am not interested. If that's what ---

GEORGINA FORD: They don't understand. They have a trainee sign language interpreters section, and there is a specific role for trainee sign language interpreters. They also now have one for trainee speech to text reporters, which they are going to charge you £75 a year to join. Underneath, it says, "You are a trainee speech to text reporter if you are enrolled in an NRCPD or a Signature approved training programme", or something. Have you not seen that? It's ridiculous. That makes Ashleigh one. She is not on an approved training programme, but she is learning how to do it. Why should she pay £75 when she is not even earning any money yet? So what are they playing at? That's just a complete cut and paste from the sign language interpreters' page, and they have just changed the title.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. We have an argument with them over CPD. The American NCRA expect ten hours a year of CPD. I'm sorry. NCRA in the States require ten continuous professional development points, ten hours a year. Signature/ NRCPD are looking for us to do 35 in one year. That's what it's going to go up to, which is crazy. It's either 32 or 35.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Are they going to provide the opportunities for those?

THE PRESIDENT: Apart from what BIVR are doing.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: They are not providing them; just saying you have to do them, but not laying anything on for you to do?

BETTY WILLETT: You have to remember, they are allowing very, very few points for your dictionary work. I was shouted down at the last ACE Committee meeting I went to, when I stressed the importance of dictionary work. I said, "You know, if you go into a job, and work for a deafened person without having prepared, or without doing the necessary updates afterwards", they would be yelling from the roof tops and they would notice the difference. Nowadays, technology is so much better than it was when I was working, so you have the

facility to update more quickly, but they were allowing something like half an hour per week of dictionary work. It's far more than that.

THE PRESIDENT: They said you couldn't use dictionary work unless it was for a different subject. For instance, when we did a conference on Beethoven, we spent hours going through websites, so that kind of prep could be included, but they say, "No, your dictionary work cannot be included for your everyday meetings."

GEORGINA FORD: It's absolutely none of their business.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Can I just ask, who is going to police that?

THE PRESIDENT: Exactly. You just fill a form in online that says you have done it. To be perfectly honest, you could make it up.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I was going to say, you can't prove what you have done.

THE PRESIDENT: Today's AGM and workshops would be structured because Mary has produced a form to be signed.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: But what about your example of the Beethoven conference, or the dictionary work?

THE PRESIDENT: You can put website references. You can say you have read something. You could get a list of websites from the Internet and say, "I read that, and I read that." You don't have to read it. Perhaps I shouldn't say that on the record, but it's the attitude people go with, if they are going to make you do stupid stuff.

BETTY WILLETT: They don't recognise the most basic thing of our job, next to taking the job down or being there.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: The preparation is part of the job.

BETTY WILLETT: That is the most important part of the job.

THE PRESIDENT: So, I think we will have to watch that space and see what happens. I think things will get shifted very quickly. There is an e-mail that has just come out through AVSTTR Committee. I think things are about to happen. At the moment, members are about to be told, "Please chase up NRCPD and ask what's happened to this letter." So if we individually write ---

BETTY WILLETT: I did ask Ross, and he said he was having a meeting with Paul Parsons. He said he was up over his head and he couldn't cope, so

I said he shouldn't be doing the job then. Even in my retirement, I have to cope with about 50 e-mails a day from people who want things, and he should be able to do it because he is paid for it.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Has there been an acknowledgment of the letter?

BETTY WILLETT: Wasn't there a two-line acknowledgment?

THE PRESIDENT: There was an acknowledgment to say we would get a response by 15 March, and we have heard nothing since then.

GEORGINA FORD: I am not a Committee member any more, but I really do think AVSTTR should just withdraw their support for registration. They haven't replied to the letter. If I was still on the AVSTTR Committee, that is exactly what I would say.

THE PRESIDENT: Like I said, I think things are about to start moving. But, also, another bit of information has come out. I don't know whether people are aware, but Action on Hearing Loss have shut their Communication and Technologies Department, and there have been quite a few redundancies. When one of our members approached Action on Hearing Loss to say, "Can I be registered on the next lot of exams?" she was told, "We are not holding any because we have no department. It stops as of 10th May." That was yesterday.

JEAN LUKINS: Have they had major funding withdrawn?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. It's from within Action on Hearing Loss.

BETTY WILLETT: They were at one time going to run an assessors' course for us. Now, in theory, it means that we have no qualified assessors. If we want to do any exams, we still have to go down the route we have been using up to now, which is to use a sign language interpreter as an assessor.

THE PRESIDENT: If we want to go down the recognition of National Occupational Standards route, we will have to abide by what they have said, but do we have to abide by what they have said if we are doing it from within? It depends on what we want as a profession. If we want it accredited by NOS, then, yes, we have to follow that route; but if we are doing it from within, I don't know. It is something for the wider membership to discuss and to sort out.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: If everything with Signature is up in the air, is it worth doing a deaf awareness course, if you wanted to move into STT?

BETTY WILLETT: Oh, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That would be one of the things we would have

to tackle as well.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Perhaps we could set up the basic things. Do you remember at that meeting in London, where you had to be a member of BIVR or AVSTTR, and have the QRR or a speed test, and the deaf awareness course, because they are all essential to the job? If you have those, then we could maybe sort out the final testing, if you like.

BETTY WILLETT: It comes into your everyday life. I belong to a bereavement friendship group, and we have three gentlemen there who all wear hearing aids. They always say to me, "You are the only one in the meeting we can ever hear," because I am aware that they are deaf, so, when I am going to say anything, I make sure I look at them. I do it automatically, because of dear lovely Heather Jackson, who taught me that's what I should do. The others can hear me without looking at me, but they have to see me. You do it automatically, and for that reason alone it is making you a better human being.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Are there any more comments on the Treasurer's report, or anything else to raise to do with finances?

JEAN LUKINS: We probably need to move that somewhere else later!

THE SECRETARY: Can we have a show of hands?

THE PRESIDENT: A show of hands for the Treasurer's report to be accepted? (Show of hands. Passed nem con)

Jean, did you want to say something?

JEAN GOUGH: No, I had better be quiet! (Laughter)

BETTY WILLETT: Ross would say, "We will allow you to come out of role."

JEAN GOUGH: I think, with the assessment process, Action on Hearing Loss really took a front seat, didn't they, Betty, in making sure the assessments took place? I think that was always intended to be an interim measure.

BETTY WILLETT: It was.

THE PRESIDENT: Hmm.

JEAN GOUGH: I think that interim measure has come to an end. I believe it had come to an end, in fact, probably before Action on Hearing Loss closed that particular department.

Susan, as you said, I think a lot of the requirements are already in place; so, for example, having a deaf awareness course, and some sort of speed certificate. The thing is, it has to be accredited, doesn't it? I think the BIVR realtime exam has been accredited. It would be good if we can get another deaf awareness training course organised.

I think the one advantage of what has happened in the last 18 months is that a lot more people have been able to register because that assessment process was put in place. Personally, I think that we can take it back, perhaps as a joint effort with AVSTTR and BIVR. There is an awful lot of work that is going to be involved, though.

I am not quite sure how many more people will be coming forward to register, certainly with NRCPD. I don't think there will be anybody wanting to come forward for that. I think the cost of NRCPD registration will become prohibitive.

THE PRESIDENT: It is £135 this year and it is eventually rising to £205, I think.

MEMBERS IN THE ROOM: What!

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

JEAN GOUGH: Plus it is mandatory to have professional indemnity insurance and also a CRB check, so there are all these extra costs which are coming in.

THE PRESIDENT: And all we get is a name on a register, basically, on a website.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: And trade union? We get that as well.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think anybody has registered for the trade union, as far as I am aware.

JEAN GOUGH: I am very disappointed that there has not been any response to the AVSTTR/BIVR letter to Paul Parsons.

BETTY WILLETT: It was a very, very good letter. I had some part in it, although I just got the bare bones and put it into my kind of English, and it was

a very good letter. It had terrific emphasis on what was important, and that anyone can just ignore it, I find insulting, quite frankly.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think I was a bit terse in that letter to begin with because I put my thoughts down.

BETTY WILLETT: It was slightly, when I got it. I thought, "Oh, dear!" I had to use the blue pencil a little bit. It was a polite, professional letter in the end, and I just find it absolutely incredible that no one has replied to it.

GEORGINA FORD: Do we need a joint BIVR/AVSTTR meeting, to get together and send a response?

THE PRESIDENT: I really think the time has come where BIVR and AVSTTR need to come together. We are a really small profession; there is no room now for being separate. We need to join forces and sort this out, otherwise we are going ---

GEORGINA FORD: This issue is a good starting point for that, but, because it is a joint letter, I think we need to come together jointly and discuss the response.

THE PRESIDENT: I think there might be a platform now to start, and I notice one or two really prominent figures within the STT world have started to allow themselves to be moulded a little bit, shall I say? They are not so terse; there is a bit more bend in them, I think.

BETTY WILLETT: Before AVSTTR was set up, we did have a section for STT reporters within BIVR. It is perfectly logical to have an STT section within BIVR, with their own sort of little sub-committee and representatives on the main Council.

THE SECRETARY: Perhaps as a branch rather than a sub-committee?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

BETTY WILLETT: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: It would be great if everybody, rather than be two separate entities, we all just be one, and we all pay one fee. That means you get more members then, because a lot of people are registered with AVSTTR and not with BIVR. It would be a way of getting more members in, and generating a bit more income between the two.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: How many members are there within AVSTTR?

GEORGINA FORD: Forty?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

THE SECRETARY: Not huge.

THE PRESIDENT: Anything else to raise on that one? Jean?

JEAN GOUGH: I had better be quiet. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That's fine. We have accepted the report and accounts. Now the election to Council. There have been two nominations for vacancies, therefore no election is necessary, and we can have up to 12 Council members. We welcome Ian Roberts and Jean Lukins, who were co-opted last year.

Election for President for the following year. Ah! Georgina Ford, Susan Humphries, on the back table, and Leah, also on the back table! Susan narrowly missed last year, and I don't know how that happened, Sue!

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Because the better person won! (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Do I have any proxies I can use this year? (Laughs)

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I am hoping not!

THE PRESIDENT: Right. So, voting papers to be handed out.

(Two tellers were appointed. Votes cast, collected and counted.)

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, drum roll! And the winner this year for presidency, is... (Pause) It's not Leah. It's not Georgina. It's Susan! (Applause)

Sue, do you want a recount?

HELEN EDWARDS: It wasn't that close. I don't think it will make a difference.

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid George had seven and Susan had eleven.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: You must have had a casting vote, or did you use it?

THE PRESIDENT: I had two votes this year, but I was kind to you.

SHELLEY DUTTON: And gave one to each of you! (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, Sue. I was thinking of revenge for last year, but I thought, "No, I will be kind." Actually, I think it was Mary who did it last year! From recollection, I think she had five proxy votes, and she gave them all to me!

THE SECRETARY: I voted according to the people's choice, but, if they left it to me, then I made my choice.

THE PRESIDENT: So, that's the election of the President done. Now we have a special resolution to put to the membership. Basically, it's just a tidy-up, and I think it's to do with the Treasurer.

THE SECRETARY: The special resolution is to amend the wording of paragraph 64 under "Treasurer" to change the wording from:

"The accounts, before adoption, should be examined by a member of BIVR who could be either a Council member or a non-Council member to verify them."

to:

"The accounts, before adoption, should be examined annually by an independent examiner, who is not a member of BIVR, to verify them."

so that the paragraph reads:

"64. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all monies due and to make payments in accordance with policies determined by the Council, operate the bank account, to keep appropriate records and to make regular reports to the Council as to the financial position of the Institute. The accounts, before adoption, should be examined annually by an independent examiner, who is not a member of BIVR, to verify them."

I do have some copies of the Mem and Arts, as they were amended last year, if anybody would like to just look at them. Other than that, we would like your vote for or against.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anybody need time to look through that.

BETTY WILLETT: Do we need a seconder? If so, I will second it. I don't know whether we need one.

THE SECRETARY: That is proposed by the Council, seconded by Betty. All in favour? (Show of hands. Passed nem con.)

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, so that's that. We no longer appoint an accountant. We listened to you last year.

BETTY WILLETT: Excuse me. We obviously had our accounts examined this year. Can we propose a vote of thanks, or is that on the agenda later on?

THE SECRETARY: No, it's not. Do it now, by all means.

BETTY WILLETT: I know it was Helen's daughter. Could we propose a vote of thanks to her, please.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Noted. Proposed. Thank you. The date of the next AGM will be within 18 months of today's event, May-June 2014. We have previously clashed with Disability Awareness Week and the Cup Final, and also we will try and avoid the Bank Holiday weekend. I am sure Paul will be amused to note that we will try and avoid the footie date!

BETTY WILLETT: Can I suggest that perhaps it's time to go back to London for one year.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I second that.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I don't. I say God's own county, thank you!

HELEN EDWARDS: I second that. Ripon!

GEORGINA FORD: Maybe do something for our Northern members.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Yorkshire would be quite good, actually, because it's quite pretty.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: You didn't know where it was a minute ago!

THE PRESIDENT: Ladies!

BETTY WILLETT: I thought it was agreed at last year's AGM that we were going to Wales. May I ask why we didn't go there?

THE PRESIDENT: (Don't look at me like that, Helen!) I was honestly of the opinion that I didn't think we would get many people coming down to Wales. There is only myself and Hilary down there, and obviously now Helen as well, so I didn't think we would get a good turnout.

BETTY WILLETT: How many of us here are from Reading?

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: York would be good.

BETTY WILLETT: The Reading people aren't here.

THE PRESIDENT: May I suggest it will be for the next President to decide! (Laughter)

Before the date of the next AGM, is there any other business, ladies, gentlemen? Shelley?

SHELLEY DUTTON: Yes. I would like to know what Helen is wearing around her neck?

HELEN EDWARDS: Funny you should mention that! This is my latest merchandising idea. I am wearing my certificate.

JEAN LUKINS: It's a bit small; you need to enlarge it.

HELEN EDWARDS: I suggest we have the flash of blue of the BIVR logo. Here we have the Trinity St David's thing, but you can get these quite cheaply. Perhaps we could have a BIVR one. I only go downstairs to work, of course, but I always wear this when I go downstairs to work! (Laughter) Just that! And my pyjamas, of course! It was just an idea.

BETTY WILLETT: I can give you the name of somewhere you can get the lanyards. I bought some for my pensions group. You have to buy a thousand, though. I have a boxful.

HELEN EDWARDS: You might be able to do 100. How many members do we have?

THE SECRETARY: We could have 150 or 250 done.

ASHLEIGH ROBERTS: I think they are a really good idea because, if everybody is wearing one, you will notice if somebody doesn't have it.

BETTY WILLETT: And may I suggest that you have a photograph on it? (Nods of agreement from members present)

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Name tags would be good.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: We have had the nameplate for the last two years. When I went to the GMC, there were always comments. I was even asked, with the QRR bit, was I a "Queen's Representative Reporter"! There were always questions and comments made about that, and the Institute. They were quite good.

HELEN EDWARDS: Yes. I was asked at HPC, "Do you have a Masters?"

JEAN LUKINS: Did I pick up from someone about having a photograph?
We discussed this about four years ago.

ANN LLOYD: We did, didn't we?

JEAN LUKINS: Did we decide it wasn't a great idea?

ANN LLOYD: I think it was expensive.

JEAN LUKINS: Is it? You can get a photograph and put the laminate
over it.

ANN LLOYD: I don't think it's as expensive now.

HELEN EDWARDS: We can provide our own photo.

JEAN LUKINS: As long as you say it has to be a certain size.

THE SECRETARY: They can be inserted.

JEAN LUKINS: Unless you change the certificate and put the photo on
the back.

HELEN EDWARDS: I do think it should have the nice BIVR logo, because
it's a bit boring otherwise, and have the photograph on the back.

JEAN LUKINS: Why don't you have the logo and photo on one side, and
then the certificate on the other, so you can choose which side to show.

THE PRESIDENT: We can all scan photos and send them to Mary, and
then she can resize them.

THE SECRETARY: If you would care to send me the wording you think
could go on, but it does have to fit on. Some of them are a tight fit.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Anything else under any other business? No?

The date of the next AGM should be within 18 months of today's date.
Hopefully, there will be no clashes with stuff that's going on. We will announce
the date. There are no other activities organised for this afternoon, but I am sure
the bar is open, if people want to go and partake.

We have this room booked until five o'clock. If anybody has any

questions, anything they want to go through, or any problems with software that anybody can answer, can I direct that to Georgina, because she is the font of all knowledge, and Susan.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: No, no. You!

THE PRESIDENT: We will do our best to answer any questions. For those on Eclipse, the Facebook site is really handy. There are lots of things going on, and lots of issues being raised. It's very helpful, so thank you for putting me on that.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: There are some Case Catalyst sites as well.

BETTY WILLETT: Before we close, could I propose a vote of thanks to our outgoing President, please. She has worked very hard with a great sense of humour all the year, which is very difficult sometimes with the Council that she has had to work with!

THE PRESIDENT: Pleasure!

BETTY WILLETT: And I am sure we owe her a great debt. She has great knowledge and great charm.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't know about the knowledge bit! (Applause)

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I propose a vote of thanks to Mary, our Treasurer and Secretary, of course.

THE PRESIDENT: Definitely. (Applause)

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Without which BIVR wouldn't exist. We wouldn't be an organisation without Mary, so, well done, Mary.

FROM THE ROOM: Hear, hear.

THE SECRETARY: Before we finish, we should have a short Council meeting with the new President, just to sort out dates.

(The meeting closed at 3.58 pm)