

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF VERBATIM REPORTERS

Company Registration No. 23811

132nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on:

Saturday, 7th June, 2014
at 11:15 a.m.

Held at:

Premier Inn
Blossom Street North
York, YO24 1AJ

Council Members:

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

Julia Jacobie (Co-opted)
Norma White (Co-opted)
Nicole Harrison (Co-opted)

Present:

Paul Brincau, Victoria Davies, Frances Dobson, Sandra Evans, Louise Frith, Jean Gough, Sheryll Holley, Julia Jacobie, Susan Humphries, Jean Lukins, Mary Sorene, Michele Sowerby, Kathryn Sykes (after lunch), Miriam Weisinger, Leah Willersdorf and Elisabeth (Betty) Willett.

Natalie Bracken, Georgina Ford, Sharon Golder, Nicole Harrison, Louise Pepper, Ian Roberts and Norma White via Skype (internet connection)

Neil Holley (Technical adviser/operator for Skype connection)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask everyone to give your name before you start speaking.

BETTY WILLETT: Are all the microphones live all the time?

NEIL HOLLEY: I am using the other one because somebody said that wasn't as good, so I am using the one on the desk that's live all the time.

THE PRESIDENT: Therefore, can you speak loudly and clearly, and can we give our names at the beginning. If I don't mention it, can you just say who you are and take it that way? I am sure you will agree with that. When we get to the resolutions and things like that, you might be time-limited because we've got a lot to get through, so I might be giving you two minutes, if we are running out of time, and I've got a stopwatch. Just to put you under pressure!

Is everybody ready to begin?

Okay. Welcome, good morning. The Secretary will read our notice to open the meeting.

(The Notice of the meeting was duly read)

NEIL HOLLEY: We have a comment. Please slow down so they can understand you.

THE SECRETARY: They have already had the notice. It's a formality.

(The Notice of the meeting was again duly read - slower)

JULIA JACOBIE: I have had a message from Natalie. She says that herself, Nicole, Sharon, Georgina and Ian can hear each other but not us.

(Pause to check the Skype connections)

Should we just do a round table to let everyone on Skype know who's here?

THE PRESIDENT: Can I just ask everyone around the table to just announce your name, and then we will ask the people on Skype to do the same, and then we'll get started. Start with Sheryll:

Sheryll Holley.

Julia Jacobie.

Frances Dobson.

Sandra Evans.

Victoria Davies.

Michele Sowerby.

Jean Lukins.

Miriam Weisinger.

Leah Willersdorf.

Paul Brincau.

Betty Willett.

Mary Sorene.

Susan Humphries.

Louise Frith.

Jean Gough.

Neil Holley, the technical adviser.

Is Natalie there on Skype?

NATALIE BRACKEN: Yes, I am here. I didn't catch all the names. I didn't catch who was between Michele and Leah.

JULIA JACOBIE: Jean and Miriam.

THE PRESIDENT: Louise, are you there?

LOUISE PEPPER: Yes.

Nicole Harrison.

Georgina Ford.

Ian Roberts.

Norma White.

THE PRESIDENT: Is Sharon there?

SHARON GOLDER: Yes, I am here.

THE PRESIDENT: That's great. Thank you very much. Can we have apologies for absence, please?

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can I give apologies for Joanne Naughton, please?

THE SECRETARY: The list of apologies I have is: Ann Lloyd, Helen Edwards, Robyn Nott, Claire Hill, Linda Reynolds, Amanda Bavin, Julie McAuley, Sarah Edwards, Stephanie Stamp, Wendy Osmond, Julia Jenkins, Karen Young, Angela Chew, Cheryl Slater, Melanie Ball, Hilary McLean, Pauline Miller, Susan McIntyre, Alan Bell, Laura Harrison, Mirella Fox, Nicola Dutton, Chris Armstrong, Jane Norman, Joe Plaiche, Joan Web, Margaret Beaumont, Jennifer Chandler, Diana Burden, Jackie Roper, Julie Whitaker, Audrey Shirley, Liz Waters, Sandra Khan and Lindsay Bickers. That's all that I have.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone online have any apologies that they know of?

SHARON GOLDER: Yes, I do. Georgia Gould.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Any more?

NICOLE HARRISON: No, none from me.

NATALIE BRACKEN: No.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Natalie. The minutes of the last meeting have already been circulated. There are a few spare copies, if anybody requires them. Does anybody require them?

VICTORIA DAVIES: Yes, please.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Yes, please. *(Copies circulated)*

THE PRESIDENT: We will just have a short pause for you to have a quick scan through, for those on Skype.

NICOLE HARRISON: I don't have any papers with me due to me not being at home, but I can follow along just fine.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. *(Pause)*

Can we just take one more minute and then we'll see if they are agreed?
(Pause)

Okay. Can we move on to ask, are they all agreed?

THE SECRETARY: First of all, are there any corrections?

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry. Are there any corrections? No? On Skype, are there any corrections to the minutes? *(None)*

JULIA JACOBIE: We have now got your IMs projected on the screen in the room, so we can all see them.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. It seems to be no. Can we take those as read? Can we have a show of hands? Can we see you online? Yes. Nicole, yes.

NICOLE HARRISON: Yes.

NORMA WHITE: Yes. I approve the minutes.

SHARON GOLDBER: Agreed.

IAN ROBERTS: Agreed.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. I am signing the minutes.
(The minutes were duly signed)

I now call on the Treasurer to present her report, please.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Do we have matters arising from the minutes or do we have a general discussion later?

PAUL BRINCAU: Any other business, I expect.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Okay.

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't actually got it on this agenda. Has anybody got anything arising?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: No. I think they can be agreed and then update on the audio bit in the minutes, because I think there have been developments during the year.

THE PRESIDENT: For those on Skype, that was Miriam speaking. Natalie can't hear. Miriam, you have the floor.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Can you hear me? Shall I shout? Is it any better? I wasn't at the meeting last year, but as you know the MPTS is using digital recording and there were an awful lot of issues at the start. However, some of the people who do transcribe the MPTS hearings are here today, and I think we can say that it has

improved tremendously over the last year.

JULIA JACOBIE: What is MPTS?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: It is what now does the old GMC hearings. It's the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service. At the end of 2012 they installed digital recording. I work for TA Reed and Company Limited and we have part of the contract for covering the digitals recordings. We have had an awful lot of issues over the last 18 months - I am almost eating the microphone!

So there have been improvements, and I think that a lot of other Regulators are likely to go the same route eventually and have digital recording of their hearings, and it's something the Institute should take into account, going forward. Thank you. I don't know whether there's any other comments from people that do transcribe the MPTS hearings now?

SANDRA EVANS: They have improved certainly from the last update.

MICHELE SOWERBY: I would agree with that.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: If I could also say, this is Miriam again, some of the transcripts are every bit as good as those produced live with actual reporters in the hearing room. I am not ashamed to have our name on the front of them, and not ashamed to have my name as the transcriber doing them either. So the audio is good enough to do a very good transcript now.

BETTY WILLETT: Could I just ask, what would they be like if they were done by people who were not verbatim reporters? That is the question, because you are still putting your expertise and skill into the transcripts. If you had Joe Bloggs off the street who happened to have a university degree in English literature, they may not produce such a good transcript.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I fully agree with you, Betty, and this is something that I want to bring up when we come to talk about some of the special resolutions. We have to consider the future of the verbatim reporting profession and we have to incorporate training people who have never been in a live hearing, but are going to have to be trained audio verbatim reporters.

THE PRESIDENT: There is a message from Ian: "What sort of information are you provided with?"

MIRIAM WEISINGER: We are provided normally with the bundles of documents, the hearing bundles, and we have basically what we would have got in the old days from the hearings.

THE PRESIDENT: Would anybody else like to comment? Frances, then

Victoria.

FRANCES DOBSON: I work in the courts a lot and I have seen a lot of transcripts that have been transcribed by the police. They are unqualified people. There are lots of gaps in the transcripts. It's making it impossible for lipreaders to follow what has gone on in interviews.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Victoria?

VICTORIA DAVIES: I think we get more now than we did when we were at the GMC, and they are more helpful with the documents.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think it might be because I am very insistent that we need them, but we have to look to the future, as this is the way the profession is going, I think, I am afraid. We also need more transcribers!

THE PRESIDENT: Can I just point out, Louise has just said: "Oh, my God, the police transcripts are awful". Thank you, Louise. Any more comments on that topic? No? Are there any more matters arising from the minutes? No. Okay. So, I will now call on the Treasurer to report, please.

THE TREASURER: I have just handed round the accounts, and I apologise they weren't ready sooner, but they were e-mailed or posted out with the latest newsletter. The accounts were sent out. The bottom line is, over the last 12 months, which is from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013, we actually made an operating loss of £2 of income over expenditure. We are solvent. We have plenty of money in the bank in our bond, but that is a fact, that we are not covering our costs, and they are very basic. All the figures are in here.

I am afraid I had a lot of problems inserting them into HMRC's website, which we now have to do, and it took me three days of trying before I finally got them, and got some help from the HMRC, who told me, yes, there is a known glitch in their software. Because we are a company limited by guarantee, and we do not have a share capital, it will not accept the figure zero in the column of "your share capital", and I was told: "That's okay, just put 1 in these boxes" and they gave me the box numbers.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you speak a bit louder because they are having problems hearing on Skype?

NEIL HOLLEY: It's an Internet issue.

THE TREASURER: I was just explaining why they were a little later than they should have been. Is this working?

NEIL HOLLEY: It's a bandwidth issue.

THE TREASURER: But anyway, there are the figures. You can see our expenses, and we do keep them down to the minimum, especially by not posting out all the bumph, but just your fresh certificates for the year. Does anybody have any questions on the accounts?

THE PRESIDENT: Are there any questions on Skype for the accounts, please?

(Silence from Skype attendees)

SHERYLL HOLLEY: It's an Internet issue.

JULIA JACOBIE: We think it's the Internet playing up, not the actual microphone itself. We've got several microphones set up round the room. I think it's because I am near the other one.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you ask her to type a question in, if she has one.

JULIA JACOBIE: Does anyone online have any questions about the accounts? You will have been sent them in advance.

THE TREASURER: No questions from Natalie. No questions from Nicole. No from Louise Pepper. No questions from Ian and from Norma on the accounts. If we can approve them.

THE PRESIDENT: Are the report and accounts adopted? Is it agreed? Can we have a show of hands? *(Show of hands)* It's passed. On Skype, are the accounts accepted?

JULIA JACOBIE: Can everyone on Skype indicate whether they accept the accounts?

SHERYLL HOLLEY: Next time stream the transcript. That's a good idea!

JEAN GOUGH: No!

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, dear, Louise, just a lot of muffled noise.

THE TREASURER: Can you hear me any better now there is a new microphone in front of me?

NORMA WHITE: I can hear you all very clearly.

JULIA JACOBIE: The wonders of an iPad microphone!

THE PRESIDENT: Neil is blaming his children for the faulty equipment! Only one.

JULIA JACOBIE: Can everyone on Skype hear Susan okay?

THE PRESIDENT: Testing, testing. Can you hear me on Skype?

JULIA JACOBIE: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: So I will begin. Welcome everyone to the 132nd Annual General Meeting of the British Institute of Verbatim Reporters. It's great to see so many of you here today in this historic city of York. The Council tried very hard to find a venue which is attractive in terms of location to members and not just stay in London all the time. We believe that we have achieved this today with the good transport links that York provides.

Where has the past 12 months taken us? Council members have met on several occasions over the past year in person, using Adobe Connect via the Internet and we have discussed matters via e-mail.

The most pressing matter came from the suggestion or invitation that BIVR and AVSTTR should merge and become one body, albeit with different divisions to cater for the different ways in which members work, be it via pen or CAT.

Basically, we do the same job. We take the spoken word and put it in a text format to read. The users may be different and have different needs, but we're all verbatim - absolute or intelligent - and we should be proud of our skills; the hard work it has taken to get here and the standards by which we produce our work. Although we undertake our jobs in different ways, the one thing that ties us all together is that we are verbatim, and that's what sets us apart from some of the titles we have been called in the recent past, such as typists, secretaries, transcriptionists, loggers, and many more.

I am sure that these people are good at their jobs, but we are specialists, and we have different standards and adhere to an ethical code; hence we are a profession. The past year has been one of change for a lot of us, but thankfully the economy is moving out of recession and once the recession ends the litigation begins, I believe. We have been through turbulent times before and we have survived; we adapt and we change.

Looking at what the Council has done in the past year, we have continued to represent the BIVR membership on two organisations, ACE, Access to Communication in English, and UKCoD, UK Council on Deafness. We have also responded on our website to recent criticisms from the press, thanks to Jean Gough here today, about the quality of STTRs providing subtitles for TV programmes. We have also received a response from our Freedom of Information Act request regarding court transcription and the checks and measures taken regarding the operation of the equipment in court, and the resulting costs thereof. You will be able to see the response on the website in the very near future.

On the subject of the website, another task we have undertaken is to revamp the site using another platform called WordPress. We hope you like the improved features and find it easier to navigate our site. The Council would welcome comments or suggestions for ways to improve this.

The Council continue to market the organisation of BIVR. To this end, we are look at providing lanyards with our logo on and also computer skins to put on the lids of our laptops when we are working at a venue. We have had to put this in abeyance for the moment because of the possibility of merging AVSTTR and BIVR, but we will get on to this as soon as we can once we know what the new name is going to be, if indeed it changes at all.

Another area the Council deal with is answering queries from the press and public alike. We have had a recent enquiry about stenographers being classified as high earners and formulated a response to this. We handle complaints, organise speed and realtime examinations, and to this end we are asking members to apply for Fellowship examinations, higher realtime speed tests and regular speed exams.

All Council members want to hear from you, what do you want them to do for you? Would you like to become a Council member? It may be that you have a particular skill or you can contribute an opinion on something. If you can, please contact Mary, our Secretary, via e-mail, our website or Facebook.

As a Council, we have a wealth of experience, and we understand what goes on. However, I would like to remind you that we are mere mortals and use our best endeavours to keep the profession live, protected and promoted. Again, I would encourage you to put forward your comments.

Moving on to a current topic of discussion, continuing professional development, that our STTR colleagues are required to complete, I believe that this is good for all of us to undertake, and would encourage everyone to think of ways to achieve this. I have an example I can share with you. I was lucky enough to attend a presentation by STAGETEXT, and very interesting it was too, and afterwards the group met up to discuss the information provided and also CPD topics, and where and how it could be provided.

As a result of this, a group in the North are going to meet on the train and stop off at every station between Manchester and York where there is a local hostelry, and not only enjoy the social occasion but use it to discuss profession-related topics.

Another suggestion is have you thought of writing a reflective piece on a situation that you have been involved in, and which can be shared, or not, as the case may be, so that we can continually strive to learn from each other?

The BIVR Council is continually discussing CPD and we realise that there are

some grey areas, but we hope to iron out some of the issues that have arisen and produce some sort of guidance or recording mechanism to assist everyone. And don't forget your points for today.

Before I finish, I have a final experience that I would like to share with you, and that is a comment that one of our overseas members made to me this year, to the effect that it was great to see that such an organisation exists here, because where she originates from, because of the geographic size, it wasn't possible to keep an organisation such as ours going. It's very encouraging to receive such positive feedback, and I would ask you to please keep it coming.

Before I finish, I would like to thank, once again, Mr John Gibson, who has already left, for his presentation on a topic which I hope has cleared up some areas of confusion, and will give us all food for thought regarding the way in which we structure ourselves from an entity point of view.

Also, I must say a big thank you to you, Mary, for all your hard work, both today and over the last year.

PAUL BRINCAU: Hear, hear.

THE PRESIDENT: You have been an invaluable support to both the Council and me during the past year as President and you continue to work tirelessly on behalf of both BIVR and AVSTTR.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who has attended, either in person or remotely via the Internet. I hope you manage to take away something from today, and perhaps a renewed confidence in the value of belonging to a professional organisation such as BIVR, or whatever the new name is to be.

Today is a great opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and ideas amongst colleagues, especially as we can be so isolated in our day-to-day working life, and I would suggest that we all take full advantage of what other people know to make ourselves better professionally, and take a pride in the quality of the work that we continue to undertake. I hope you continue to enjoy the day. Thank you.

JULIA JACOBIE: There is a question from Louise. She said she would like to hear the response about the stenographers being high earners? You said you had formulated a response to it. Is it available on the website?

THE PRESIDENT: It's not available yet. As you will be aware, personally, I think it's impossible to calculate because, before anyone undertakes an assignment, however much that assignment is given in remuneration, there could be one, two, three, four, five, however many days' preparation work. So, personally, I think the calculation is a bit of an impossibility to calculate, but we will put that up on the website as soon as we can.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says thank you for a clear presentation, Susan.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, thank you!

NATALIE BRACKEN: You should be on the radio!

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, thank you very much!

JULIA JACOBIE: *(To Skype attendees)* We are doing a quick PowerPoint presentation, which means we won't be able to see your IMs on the screen for the time being. If you want to ask a question, can you vocally indicate or IM Neil. No, he can't. If you just speak if you want to say something during this presentation.

NEIL HOLLEY: I can send it to them.

NICOLE HARRISON: Can you just tell us what the presentation is about.

JULIA JACOBIE: Mary Sorene is giving the presentation.

THE SECRETARY: It's just a very small PowerPoint presentation on the name, and rather than wait until we actually get to that point, which is resolution whatever, it was thought maybe just give it now and it gives some food for thought, and it is just my thoughts and ideas. I don't have any hand-outs for anybody here, but I believe you are getting it through the Skype.

FRANCES DOBSON: Will it be available after the meeting by e-mail?

THE SECRETARY: I can make it available.

BETTY WILLETT: If it's relevant. It may not be.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes. I would still like it.

THE SECRETARY: Okay.

SHARON GOLDER: There is a message that says Neil posted files but I can't see them.

JULIA JACOBIE: Click on the message. Download the file.

THE SECRETARY: I am going to talk about it anyway, but it's just going to be up there for everybody.

JULIA JACOBIE: We can send it out afterwards by e-mail.

JULIA JACOBIE: Actually, your messages are coming up on the screen, so if you do want to say anything via IM, just go ahead.

THE SECRETARY: If I just say, I am doing this as me, rather than as Secretary or anything else. It was just my thoughts, and I thought it would be simpler to just put it on a PowerPoint.

I have headed it “Decisions, decisions”, because if we cannot agree now, we must hold a referendum of our membership within six months to come up with a suitable name that reflects the embodiment of all diverse fields that our members work in. “Whatever we will be” was my holding name, so let us try and decide today a sensible and appropriate name for ourselves, which encompasses everything that we do and is clear and concise.

These are the latest crop of suggested names received along with members’ proxy votes, so I include them all. BRAVR, British Association of Verbatim Reporters, which is interesting. IPVR, Institute of Professional Verbatim Reporters. Well, we are professionals, so we don’t need to have it in our name and that is a view that several people have said.

JULIA JACOBIE: Question from Natalie. She wants to know why we are discussing this now because she thinks it’s pre-empting the vote.

THE SECRETARY: No.

JULIA JACOBIE: I think the reason we are discussing it is because a lot of people - it could sway which way they vote, depending on what possible name comes up.

PAUL BRINCAU: If we haven’t decided a name, nobody is going to be swayed because there’s no name that we have decided on.

FRANCES DOBSON: But there is the other option that it stays the same.

JULIA JACOBIE: No, it’s not going to stay the same. It has to change.

PAUL BRINCAU: I agree, actually, we shouldn’t be discussing this.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Why does it have to change?

PAUL BRINCAU: I adopt that point.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: We are jumping the gun, I think, here.

PAUL BRINCAU: We are. Natalie could be right, actually, in what she says.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think she definitely is right.

JEAN LUKINS: Can we decide whether to continue with this or we are going to leave it until we have got through the nine questions. I think we are jumping the gun a bit.

BETTY WILLETT: I think, from talking to a lot of my colleagues... (Can you all hear me? Shout if you can't, but if you can you needn't bother to shout! As no-one is shouting I assume you can hear me.)

Talking to some of my verbatim colleagues in BIVR, one of the stumbling blocks for them voting for the motion might be the fact that they don't want a name change. It is very difficult, if you don't know what's going to happen about a name, to vote for it, or even against it, or perhaps not to vote at all, but that is the reason why, I think, that the name change is a very important matter to decide, and it is a nettle that has to be grasped.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can we just make it clear that, if the name doesn't change, AVSTTR will not merge with BIVR? That's the AVSTTR resolution.

BETTY WILLETT: I don't know whether you heard that. As I have the microphone that seems to be working, I just repeat what Victoria said. Could she make it clear that, if the name is not changed, the merge will not take place, because that is the resolution that AVSTTR passed. Some of us in this room, of course, are in joint membership of AVSTTR and BIVR.

PAUL BRINCAU: Can I raise a point of order, Madam? I think that there are members in this room of both BIVR and AVSTTR, and I think they should declare a conflict of interest and withdraw from voting, because it could influence all of the votes that we are going to have today. You can't be sitting on one side of the House as a member of Conservatives, and on the other side as a member of Labour, and then vote.

BETTY WILLETT: I see no conflict. I am a member of both and I shall vote the same way in both meetings.

PAUL BRINCAU: There is a conflict.

JULIA JACOBIE: I don't know if everybody on Skype picked up what Paul was saying.

NORMA WHITE: I heard it. I don't know about other people, but I would agree with Betty, I am a member of both organisations and voted for AVSTTR and I would vote the same way for BIVR.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: One person, one vote.

PAUL BRINCAU: One person, one vote. I don't expect people who are members of both to agree with me, and in fact the people who have spoken up and don't agree who are members of both organisations. It's a conflict of interest, a clear conflict of interest.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Paul. Right. We will cut this here. It was just to try and help people, should it occur, should it need to happen, to be discussed, so we will cut it short here. We have a fall-back position in place if we do agree to merge and the name change becomes a problem.

JULIA JACOBIE: Louise says, "Two membership fees equals two votes. LOL", a joke.

THE PRESIDENT: At the moment, they are both separate entities, so members of each group have a vote in their own entity.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: We are joining one entity. It's becoming one entity.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it is.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can we decide that point now, because there is no point in us having a discussion – I don't want to join in a discussion if I am not going to have a vote.

PAUL BRINCAU: Yes, we should. In fact, I was going to bring it up just before we started voting for the special resolutions, but since the subject was brought up now, I think I might as well mention it now.

JULIA JACOBIE: People on Skype can't hear you, Paul. Could you just say that again into that microphone there?

PAUL BRINCAU: Can you hear me? What I have just said is I was going to bring this topic up just before the special resolutions 1 to 9 were voted on. I simply brought it up now because it was mentioned and I thought it was appropriate to raise it.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Paul. Could I say --

NICOLE HARRISON: Paul, we didn't hear any of what you said before. Can you just précis what you said so the people on Skype can hear you, because I am now confused?

PAUL BRINCAU: How far back do you want me to go?

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Jean can read it!

JEAN GOUGH: No!

BETTY WILLETT: Can you hear me? People can usually hear me. I am sitting next to Paul. What he said was that he didn't think that people who were in joint membership should have a vote here if they had already voted in the AVSTTR meeting. That is the crux of what he said, I think. I will just look at Paul to see if it's right. Is it?

PAUL BRINCAU: Yes.

BETTY WILLETT: He thinks there is a conflict of interest.

PAUL BRINCAU: There is.

BETTY WILLETT: I don't agree because they are two separate bodies who pay two separate membership fees. If we are going to be denied a vote here, I am leaving the meeting as of now because there is no point staying.

NICOLE HARRISON: Hi. I am a member of both, so what Paul is saying is, because I voted in AVSTTR, I am unable to vote in BIVR, even though I pay both memberships?

PAUL BRINCAU: That is not the point. The point is that you are now going to vote on a BIVR resolution, and you could influence the vote here to match that of AVSTTR. You are a member of both organisations and three people voting the same way they voted on AVSTTR can influence the resolutions that we are voting on today.

NICOLE HARRISON: So, what you are telling me is that I am unable to vote? I understand you are saying I can influence the vote?

PAUL BRINCAU: Yes. That's the problem.

NICOLE HARRISON: But I am a member of both, so I still should therefore be able to have a vote both ways.

BETTY WILLETT: I agree with you absolutely. Is that Natalie speaking? No, sorry, Nicole. I would suggest that we go ahead and discuss this, and when it gets to the voting point, we can decide then. But until we have had a good discussion about it, there is not much point in arguing now.

SANDRA EVANS: I am a member of BIVR but not of AVSTTR. I haven't had a chance to vote in AVSTTR. My only chance to vote is BIVR.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Is it possible to sort the audio out, please? Thank you.

THE SECRETARY: I think it was Sandra they couldn't hear. You have a quiet voice.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Much better now. Much better.

PAUL BRINCAU: If I can expand slightly, the reason you cannot vote – I understand what you are saying, you pay both memberships, you want to have a say on both, that's great. But actually, on this particular issue, which involves the merging of two bodies, I mean, you are not voting whether we are drinking coffee on one and tea on the other. This is actually going to merge two bodies, which is going to affect resolutions, and also even the name of the organisation.

NICOLE HARRISON: Okay. Can someone find out how many members will be ineligible to vote if what Paul is saying goes through, because there's quite a lot of crossover of membership? So, can it be found out how many people would be ineligible to vote if they are an AVSTTR member, and pay both memberships?

THE PRESIDENT: Can I just pause everybody there? Victoria, you are next. If you are a member under the rules you have a vote, and that is the end of it.

FRANCES DOBSON: Unless --

THE PRESIDENT: No, there is no "unless".

FRANCES DOBSON: Code of ethics. "You have to avoid any action that will adversely affect the good standing of the profession. Always declare a personal or prejudicial interest which could affect any party to the proceedings."

PAUL BRINCAU: I didn't know about that.

FRANCES DOBSON: This is BIVR's code of practice, code of ethics.

PAUL BRINCAU: I didn't actually know about that, and I asked if there was anything in the rules.

JULIA JACOBIE: Isn't that referring to jobs you undertake?

PAUL BRINCAU: No, no, no, no, conflict of interest.

FRANCES DOBSON: Conflict of interest.

PAUL BRINCAU: So, it is in the rules as well --

BETTY WILLETT: No, it is not.

(Several people speaking at once)

THE PRESIDENT: Just one at a time.

JULIA JACOBIE: It refers to the code of ethics on a job, surely?

THE PRESIDENT: Victoria, you were going to saying something?

VICTORIA DAVIES: No, I was just putting up my hand as a member of both.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Natalie here. Can't hear again, please.

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry.

FRANCES DOBSON: Can I also mention that most AVSTTR members in this room, and probably online as well, are also registrants of NRCPD, and it would also be a conflict of interest for them under the Code of Practice.

BETTY WILLETT: Can I ask, we have somebody in the meeting room who has legal experience, can we ask if a code of ethics is in fact a regulation under our Mems and Arts?

JEAN LUKINS: I am not legally qualified. I would need to have a look. Could somebody lend me a copy of the document? I can't really speak --

THE PRESIDENT: Jean, whilst you take a moment to have a look at that, Frances, I want it clear what you are saying the conflict is, in ten words. Tell me what the conflict is.

FRANCES DOBSON: The conflict --

THE PRESIDENT: That's two words already.

PAUL BRINCAU: I said what the conflict was already.

FRANCES DOBSON: Integrity potentially challenged. Professional integrity.

THE PRESIDENT: Why?

FRANCES DOBSON: Now you are asking me to expand.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sorry. Go on, then.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Could Frances have the microphone in front of her, so we can hear you on line? Thank you.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie, she's got my microphone

FRANCES DOBSON: There are two issues. Impartiality and integrity. Integrity.

AVSTTR is seeking to influence the outcome and take away rights that BIVR members have.

JULIA JACOBIE: Such as?

FRANCES DOBSON: Such as the right to be treated as equal under EU law, which I have a copy of.

JULIA JACOBIE: Why, though?

FRANCES DOBSON: Because you cannot discriminate and say “We’re not like them, we’re like this”.

JULIA JACOBIE: But how would you be unequal?

FRANCES DOBSON: Because you are saying, “We are a different company and we want our identity within your company”.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: No-one can hear.

NICOLE HARRISON: How does that happen when I am a member of both?

FRANCES DOBSON: Well, you are entitled to exercise your right to be a member of both, but what you are not entitled to do is to influence the outcome for your own personal gain.

NICOLE HARRISON: How am I influencing it when I am voting for both? There are a few that have abstained to wait to see for this one as well.

PAUL BRINCAU: May I say something? Can you hear me? Well, the problem is that I couldn’t vote at the AVSTTR general meeting, and you’re going to vote on my meeting.

NICOLE HARRISON: But you weren’t a member. I am a member of AVSTTR.

PAUL BRINCAU: Precisely. You’ve got the privilege of being a member of both, but a lot of members of BIVR don’t have the privilege of being a member of both bodies.

NICOLE HARRISON: You can be a member of AVSTTR. You just follow the rules and regulations to get in.

PAUL BRINCAU: But I don’t want to, and I don’t want AVSTTR voting on my meetings.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Can I just say, I think the conflict is that you are voting to become one body. If you have five AVSTTR members who vote for merging with BIVR,

you have five votes. If you then vote as a BIVR member, those votes immediately become ten votes.

BETTY WILLETT: How do you know that the people are going to vote for it?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: You don't know.

PAUL BRINCAU: We don't.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: We cannot know until the vote happens, but those people have voted, so there would be ten votes - either way, either for or against - as against five BIVR member votes, which will still be five votes. I cannot see how you can vote twice to become either one body or to stay as two bodies and I don't think you should have two votes on one matter.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can I agree with the way Miriam has put it. I actually agree with what she is saying now. I think maybe an overall, one person overall --

MIRIAM WEISINGER: One-person-one-vote.

BETTY WILLETT: That's all it is.

JEAN LUKINS: May I mention something, that I can't find anything in this code of ethics that would affect this, except we shouldn't be doing anything that affects the good standing of the profession generally.

FRANCES DOBSON: Correct.

JEAN LUKINS: In fact there is one matter here, which is the fifth in an unnumbered list, which says, "Always declare a personal or prejudicial interest which could affect any party to proceedings", which I take it to mean proceedings where you are working.

However, if this is a general code of professional ethics - which we might need to debate at some point in the future, because it seems a little unclear - I think that we do need to be careful about declaring. Obviously we know who people are who are members of AVSTTR and BIVR, but I can see that anybody looking in on this would say that people who are members of both groups have a biased chance of voting, effectively, to vote in this issue.

My personal view - which is separate from what I have just said, if you like - is that we should have a referendum of one-person-one-vote across the two groups as to whether we even get to this point. And I am sorry, I probably should have raised this before, but I have been off sick for quite a while. My proposal is that we go about it in that route, but obviously the floor is open for a debate.

THE PRESIDENT: Natalie wants to make a point.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I am just wondering why it was, after our AVSTTR EGM, that then three members of the AVSTTR committee were co-opted, or whatever happened, and that they are now on the BIVR Council, so isn't that then a conflict with what Paul is saying?

FRANCES DOBSON: It is.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I would like to have some clarity on that then, why that happened. Anyway, that's mainly my point.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie, that was only done on a temporary basis in the run-up to today, more or less really to just help with the organising, so that we were informed with what was going on. That's all it was.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Paul is raising the conflict of interest point, and others there in the room. Is there then a conflict of interest with those members of AVSTTR that are on the Council?

BETTY WILLETT: Could I ask Frances to be absolutely explicit what she meant by her comment about "personal gain"? I take strong exception to words being used like that. There is absolutely no personal gain. All members on the Council of BIVR or AVSTTR do masses and masses of work for absolutely no personal gain at all.

PAUL BRINCAU: I don't think Frances probably meant monetary gain anyway.

BETTY WILLETT: Frances knew exactly what she was saying. Frances always knows what she is saying.

FRANCES DOBSON: The gain is that BIVR has been in existence for 132 years, is an established company. It is known; it has an identity. Members of BIVR are entitled to use the logo and to market themselves as BIVR members, so to rob them of their "street cred", if you like, is a gain for AVSTTR, and being positioned on the Council means they have inside information which would be against the NRCPD code. Their positions are untenable.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Can I make one more comment, please? I have only heard about this when I actually read the documentation for the meeting, and realised what was involved. The question I would like to ask is, did BIVR ask AVSTTR to join BIVR, or did AVSTTR ask if they could join BIVR, because I think, if AVSTTR asked to join BIVR, then they cannot have two votes on a fair basis.

JEAN LUKINS: No.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I don't know where - whose idea was it? If BIVR said to AVSTTR, "Come and join us, we would like you to join", then I still think you are wrong to have two votes on this particular matter. On this particular matter, I think you cannot have two votes.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Mary is going to respond.

THE SECRETARY: It was mooted at our AGM last year that we should enter talks with AVSTTR, for AVSTTR to come back in, effectively, because --

FRANCES DOBSON: They never were in, Mary.

BETTY WILLETT: Yes, they were --

THE SECRETARY: Yes, they were.

(Several people speaking at once)

THE PRESIDENT: One at a time.

MARY SORENE: They were and are members --

FRANCES DOBSON: It wasn't a separate company within BIVR.

THE SECRETARY: May I please finish? People of AVSTTR were effectively a breakaway group from BIVR, and we did suggest at the AGM last year that we enter talks for us to come back together. So, effectively, the answer to your question, Miriam, is that we asked AVSTTR to come back in.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Can you point me to the minutes where that is, please?

NATALIE BRACKEN: Can I say something as well, please? One of my major issues - and I have thought about it more since I attended the EGM of AVSTTR - is the total lack of consultation that I feel that there has been amongst members. Okay, we all voted on a resolution at the AGM that we would vote to have a discussion about it, but it seems to me that the Committee, behind everybody's back, they are the ones that have had all the talks.

I have not had any e-mails, apart from then, when I turned up at the EGM and went to vote. I feel there has been a total lack of consultation, and it seems that that's what's happened with BIVR members as well, because I am also a BIVR member, and I have not heard anything through BIVR either about the merger.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Thank you. Victoria next.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Just to agree totally with Natalie's point there.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Julia?

JULIA JACOBIE: I just wanted to say, as I said at the EGM, that you gave us the mandate to have the talks. We didn't do anything behind your back. You gave us permission to have the talks.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Why is it that only the Committee decided?

JULIA JACOBIE: We didn't decide anything. We just had talks.

NICOLE HARRISON: But why did you vote for it to go ahead and not get on the Council, Natalie? This is my thing. I've gone on the Council then so that I can then be part of the talks that we voted for and have the talks which the Council do. If you wanted to be part of it and get on it and understand what was going on - you voted for the people on the Committee the right to take this forward and do.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I wasn't aware that that's what I voted for then.

JULIA JACOBIE: It was made clear at the EGM that that's what you were voting for. I'm sorry.

PAUL BRINCAU: I think we are veering away from the conflict of interest point. May I make just make one point clear because I raised this? Actually there is nothing wrong with somebody having a conflict of interest. I mean, a lot of huge bodies, some of which I work on, have people who have their finger in other pies, and all they do is they declare a conflict of interest and withdraw from voting on a particular subject which affects both what they are doing now and the other company that they work for. So, there is absolutely nothing wrong with there being a conflict of interest.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Frances?

FRANCES DOBSON: I wish to disclose a conflict of interest.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

FRANCES DOBSON: I am a registrant of NRCPD. I also have a financial interest in the outcome of BIVR today, which will affect in a loss.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can you just explain that?

THE PRESIDENT: Are you able to specify, without being too personal, what that means?

PAUL BRINCAU: I don't think she has to actually. She just declared her conflict.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Are you an STTR on the NRCPD register?

FRANCES DOBSON: I am a Lipspeaker.

BETTY WILLETT: Well, that's not a conflict with us.

NICOLE HARRISON: Shouldn't you leave the room for the discussions if you have a conflict?

PAUL BRINCAU: No, no.

FRANCES DOBSON: No. I am entitled to be here. I will just withdraw from the voting because of my conflict of interest.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I just clarify, you personally, Frances, have a conflict of interest?

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes, in the outcome of today.

THE PRESIDENT: And you are saying that everybody else has that conflict of interest as well, or is that Paul, sorry?

PAUL BRINCAU: Hers is different.

FRANCES DOBSON: The same and different, because of being an NRCPD registrant and --

NICOLE HARRISON: Can I clarify something? What you are saying is, if I am registered with NRCPD, I am a member of AVSTTR and I am a member of BIVR, I should declare a conflict of interest and therefore I am unable to vote?

PAUL BRINCAU: We are BIVR not NRCPD.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we just pause a moment? I am going to call for lunch in two minutes, because our reporters here need a break. So, if we can just wrap up in the next two minutes and take a lunch break. Jean first?

JEAN LUKINS: Let me know if you can't hear. I just wanted to say that would it have been useful for the Committees in both organisations to produce reports back to the membership for debate prior to getting to this point today?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jean. Julia?

JULIA JACOBIE: I would just like some clarification on what being a member of NRCPD has to do with it? What is the conflict of interest there that Frances has stated

there is?

FRANCES DOBSON: It goes to preserving your professional integrity and showing you are impartial in terms of your respect for members in the same profession who fund the company.

PAUL BRINCAU: I agree with you that you had a conflict of interest here because you said that the vote that you are going to take today affected you personally because you are a member of NRCPD, and that is a clear conflict, but it's not a conflict *per se* just because you are a member of both organisations.

FRANCES DOBSON: It affects me personally and it affects the membership of BIVR.

PAUL BRINCAU: That is a conflict then, because it affects --

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes.

JULIA JACOBIE: I am sorry, maybe I am just not understanding, but I still don't see. The NRCPD code of conduct relates to our jobs, in how we act in carrying out of our jobs, not in relation to our professional organisation.

FRANCES DOBSON: No. It is at all times whether you perform your --

JULIA JACOBIE: NRCPD have nothing to do with BIVR or AVSTTR.

FRANCES DOBSON: They do, I am afraid. They do.

VICTORIA DAVIES: But you are a Lipspeaker, though.

THE PRESIDENT: Can Mary clarify from the Mem & Arts or constitution as to conflicts of interest?

THE SECRETARY: There's nothing in our Memorandum and Articles of Association about conflict of interest.

PAUL BRINCAU: Conflicts of interest occur naturally.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes. It will be under the Companies Act.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I just wrap up and you can think about this over lunch. Did you hear the speech I gave this morning?

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes, I did.

THE PRESIDENT: And did you hear that I said we are all verbatim?

FRANCES DOBSON: I did, and I have put a little asterisk by that.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. We all produce a shorthand form. We do it in a shorthand form, either machine or pen. We then transfer that into text.

FRANCES DOBSON: Correct.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. So where is the conflict?

FRANCES DOBSON: Erm ...

THE PRESIDENT: I would say that was an inclusion rather than exclusion.

NICOLE HARRISON: I agree with you, Susan.

FRANCES DOBSON: Some people would disagree with you.

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

BETTY WILLETT: Frances.

FRANCES DOBSON: No, I can think of a lot of people who would disagree.

PAUL BRINCAU: I don't understand the point that you made, Madam President.

THE PRESIDENT: What I am saying, when you strip everything down, we do the same job. It's for different people and for different purposes.

FRANCES DOBSON: No, it isn't. It's the same people, the public generally. The job is for the public.

THE PRESIDENT: The job is for anybody who hires us.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes. Our users, stakeholders, all the same.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

FRANCES DOBSON: However, the difference between an STTR and a verbatim shorthand writer is that they do augmented language. They are putting in "Doorbell rings", "Dog barks".

THE PRESIDENT: But that is something the client requires.

FRANCES DOBSON: Correct, and that's why they are separate.

THE PRESIDENT: On some transcripts you have to do the same thing.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes, but that would be post-event, to make the transcript more readable.

THE PRESIDENT: No, it's not post-event. There are some extremely good realtime writers who don't do Speech-to-Text, and put all of that in. If they are doing a video deposition, they put everything in.

BETTY WILLETT: Can we see what Natalie says there?

JULIA JACOBIE: "All votes from AVSTTR and BIVR, are they going to be added together? In that case, there should be one vote." They are not, are they?

THE PRESIDENT: No, they are completely separate. Mary, then Julia, then lunch, please.

THE SECRETARY: Page 17 of last year's minutes. Georgina said, "Do we need a joint BIVR/AVSTTR meeting to get together and send a response?" (This was to Paul Parsons.) The President, who was, I believe, Sheryll, said: "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...", and then Georgina said, "This issue is a good starting point for that, but because it's a joint letter, I think we need to come together jointly and discuss the response". The President then said, "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 bit, shall I say. They are not so terse; there is a bit more bend in them".

BETTY WILLETT: Yes, it is, Natalie. Last year's AGM.

THE SECRETARY: Then Betty said: "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 with representatives on the main Council". Then I said, "Perhaps as a branch rather than a sub-committee". The President said, "Yes". Betty said, "Yes". The President said: "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". Then Leah asked: "How many members are there within AVSTTR?" Georgina said, "40". The President said, "Yes". The Secretary said, "Not huge. Anything else on this?" Then Jean Gough said, "I had better be quiet", and we all laughed. And then we just went on to accept the report. So, that it is where I say it was definitely mentioned last year.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Can I just say that I have seen nothing since those

minutes, in newsletters to the general BIVR membership, to say that this was going to be on the agenda. There has been no consultation with BIVR members about merging, at all, and the first I knew about it was when I saw the documentation with special resolutions in it, and one member of BIVR did e-mail me to say that this was coming up.

I don't think there has been enough consultation for us to take it any further today. We will have to have an EGM, I think. I think that's the only fair way to do it, because the members individually have not been consulted. Whatever the Council have done is one thing. The membership generally has not been consulted, I don't feel.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

PAUL BRINCAU: I adopt every word of what Miriam said.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I would second that.

JULIA JACOBIE: I am still seeking clarification from Frances as to what being a member of NRCPD has got to do with this vote?

FRANCES DOBSON: First paragraph of the code.

BETTY WILLETT: Particularly if it's a Lipspeaker not in the same profession.

FRANCES DOBSON: But we are all bound by the same contractual obligation to the NRCPD.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. You have said that before, thank you. Julia?

JULIA JACOBIE: I am just going to read this out: This is the NRCPD Code of Conduct for those of you on Skype. "The Code of Conduct sets out the professional and ethical principles that must underpin the work of all NRCPD registrants when working with consumers or managing, training, supervising or mentoring other communication professionals. It prescribes standards of conduct that must be adhered to in order to provide assurance of professional standards to users of the services of communication professionals and to the public at large and maintain the integrity of the professions." So, which bit of it are you referring to?

FRANCES DOBSON: Working with other types of communication professionals.

JULIA JACOBIE: But this is about us.

FRANCES DOBSON: No. It's about all the public. You are --

JULIA JACOBIE: That means co-working on a job with other communication professionals.

FRANCES DOBSON: No, it doesn't. It involves, it includes managing, training, supervising, mentoring.

JULIA JACOBIE: None of which we are doing here.

FRANCES DOBSON: But you have members who are managing, as directors, and who have a conflict of interest.

BETTY WILLETT: Frances, you seem to be talking against the motion, rather than trying to clarify the point that we are presently bogged down on, and I think we all need to have a break because we are all getting a bit --

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Betty. We will take lunch now. Can we be ready to sit down at quarter-to two, please?

(Adjourned for lunch)

Afternoon session

THE PRESIDENT: Can we call the meeting back to order, please? Is everybody okay online on Skype? (Yes) You all look so glum! Okay.

PAUL BRINCAU: It's the weather.

THE PRESIDENT: I've got my stopwatch. Can you raise your hand?

VICTORIA DAVIES: Now?!

THE PRESIDENT: Just one. Frances put two up there. That's cheating! When you want to speak, can you raise your hand? (Sorry, people on Skype. We've got our techies in fiddling!) Can you try and avoid repeating the points, and I am sure we'll get on fine, hopefully.

Miriam's point was that there was no mention in the BIVR newsletters about merger. We have just had a look and apparently there has been a mention in each newsletter that has gone out. However brief it is, it has been mentioned. Mary, do you want to make a comment about that?

THE SECRETARY: Sheryll kindly found some newsletters. On 9th December, which was the renewal notice, there was quite a long blurb in there about it. Then again, on 11th February, then 31st March, and again on 6th May. I haven't obviously got the newsletters from May last year. I can't see them here.

THE PRESIDENT: Paul first.

PAUL BRINCAU: There might have been newsletters, but there was no consultation. Sending a newsletter out doesn't mean a thing. You are just telling somebody.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I take back what I said that it wasn't in the newsletter, but I agree with Paul; no consultation. It should be a specific issue that there's consultation on.

THE SECRETARY: The newsletter certainly of 31st March mentions the merger, "To merge or not to merge; that is the question. Please, therefore, get your thinking caps on now and send us your suggestions for a name and/or logo" and --

MIRIAM WEISINGER: It's taken that it's going to happen; it's not a consultation.

FRANCES DOBSON. Yes.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: That is, it's going to happen.

THE SECRETARY: I think you have to read the bit beforehand, but I certainly spotted that. We have certainly asked for members' views and some members have sent in their views.

THE PRESIDENT: Betty was going to say something?

BETTY WILLETT: I think it doesn't matter.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anybody else want to say anything on that point that's not been said before?

JEAN LUKINS: Do we have any of these views available, Mary?

THE SECRETARY: I haven't got them with me because the point wasn't mentioned beforehand to alert me to bring it. I brought a case full of papers. I can't bring everything and I just had no foresight of that.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Paul?

PAUL BRINCAU: Well, I am amazed that we have come to a meeting to vote on an issue on something as important as what you are referring to as "consultations", and those views haven't been brought in, because, as we know, people might send views in, but are these people here? There's only about 8% of the whole Institute membership here today, despite the importance that was attached and emphasised by our Secretary to attend this meeting to vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Mary?

THE SECRETARY: I have received 27 proxy votes. They have given their views.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I ask any of the Skypers if they have any comments, please?

JULIA JACOBIE: They are having problems hearing Paul, again. Sharon said: "AVSTTR did a Survey Monkey. Maybe BIVR should have as well".

THE PRESIDENT: Victoria first, then Frances.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I think it's all very well saying Survey Monkey and email, but it's just a "Do you agree, not agree, or other". I think maybe an e-mail conversation between - a debate, so you can see other people's views, is more helpful.

THE PRESIDENT: So, you are suggesting a specified consultation period? Not just you, Victoria, but some of the others as well. You are suggesting a specified consultation period?

VICTORIA DAVIES: Natalie has just said on there that there has been no debate. Sorry, just that you can't see it.

THE PRESIDENT: Frances, your point?

FRANCES DOBSON: I think my point is, it's one thing having an idea about a merger; it's another thing, the actions or the behaviours that happen or don't happen as a result.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anybody else want to add anything? Any Skypers?

BETTY WILLETT: I would just like to say, in reply to Frances - and I am not knocking what you are saying; I accept that - but if Mary writes out and says, "Please let us have your views", and no-one replies, what are you supposed to do? We live in a world of apathy. Sometimes somebody has to take a lead and do something.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Mary has not got the replies. Maybe if they were sent out to everybody that would spark a debate.

BETTY WILLETT: If she didn't have any replies, then she couldn't have them with her.

VICTORIA DAVIES: No, she said she did have replies.

JULIA JACOBIE: There is a question from Ian, "Are there any genuine reasons why we shouldn't be one organisation? It reminds me of the People's Front of Judea

versus the Judean People's Front! Are there any genuine reasons why we shouldn't be one organisation?"

FRANCES DOBSON: I think we are all one organisation if we are all BIVR members.

THE PRESIDENT: Paul, just make your point and then we will come on to that. That's a very valid point.

PAUL BRINCAU: There is absolutely no reason at all why we shouldn't be one organisation, but can I remind you that this debate started with me raising the conflict of interest point, and we have just drifted all the way here.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, so that's noted, I think. Mary, how many members of AVSTTR are not members of BIVR presently?

THE SECRETARY: Two.

THE PRESIDENT: So, we are talking about two members.

PAUL BRINCAU: Sorry?

THE PRESIDENT: Two members of AVSTTR, as at this date, are not members of BIVR.

PAUL BRINCAU: It makes it worse as far as conflict is concerned. That makes it worse as far as conflict is concerned, because AVSTTR have voted at their meeting. Now they have come here.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: It's a takeover, not a merger.

JULIA JACOBIE: We are not coming here. We are members of BIVR. We are entitled to a vote as BIVR members.

PAUL BRINCAU: No, you are not entitled to a vote that affects and conflicts both bodies. You can vote on other things on the agenda.

GEORGINA FORD: Hello. Can I just say that I am perfectly happy as a member of both just to have had the one vote. I don't particularly care about this pathetic going on about conflict of interest. I have a point of view. It won't change whether I am a member of BIVR or AVSTTR. Just give me one vote. That's fine. There's a lot of people on AVSTTR who probably don't want to join with BIVR. Fine. Let's just have the one vote and just get on with the rest of the meeting. I have transcripts to do!

PAUL BRINCAU: So you've got a conflict then, yes? You want us to hurry up.

GEORGINA FORD: I don't have a conflict. Can we just get on with the point of the meeting, please?

BETTY WILLETT: Could I perhaps suggest, if we are not going to get any further on this today, that we perhaps have a joint meeting of AVSTTR and BIVR, which probably will mean we will have exactly the same people here, and we will start back at square one again, and all have a vote from square one and we have one vote. But it will be the same people here voting.

THE PRESIDENT: Frances?

FRANCES DOBSON: I go back to my original point, that you can't have two companies voting about the outcome of one company.

BETTY WILLETT: Can you explain what you mean by that, because I don't understand it.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes. Well, acquisition or merger, depending on your point of view. Conflicts of interest, in terms of who is a director of the company and whether there are conflicts in them being a director of the company.

THE PRESIDENT: Mary, you had a point?

THE SECRETARY: As far as I know, it is one "company", as you call it, here today, which is the BIVR. There aren't two. It is one company, and each member has one vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Paul?

PAUL BRINCAU: Yes, but there are people here who are going to vote who could be voting with their AVSTTR hat on.

THE SECRETARY: "So what?" I say?

JULIA JACOBIE: We have already done that. Now we are voting with our BIVR hats on.

GEORGINA FORD: I do not have an AVSTTR or a BIVR hat. I am a verbatim reporter and I take exception to being told that I am going to behave differently depending whether I am providing a service for a deaf person or a transcript in a legal setting.

PAUL BRINCAU: You can take exception as much as you like, but that's a point of order I raised and a point of principle. Now, if we're going to shove things on to the side because certain members don't agree with them or because they're quite happy to do something else, we might as well pack up now and go home.

BETTY WILLETT: I am quite willing not to vote with my BIVR hat on today as I have already voted with my AVSTTR hat, and I think other people have also indicated that they will do the same. That may not meet with general consensus and it may not get over all the points, but at least it would get us moving forward.

Other than that, I see no alternative but to adjourn the meeting now and have another meeting, with all of the expenditure that that involves. Do you realise how much it costs to have a meeting?

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes.

BETTY WILLETT: And perhaps have a joint meeting, when we all start again and have just one meeting whatever we are, as verbatim reporters.

PAUL BRINCAU: And you will have the same issue unless it's resolved today.

FRANCES DOBSON: I agree.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I welcome Kath Sykes here today. She has arrived for the afternoon session. Kath, do you have any points to make?

KATH SYKES: My point is that, I feel as a member of BIVR and AVSTTR, I have already voted with my AVSTTR hat on, and I feel I should be entitled to vote with my BIVR hat on. I am a member of both.

VICTORIA DAVIES: You are getting messages on the screen saying that they agree with Betty.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I saw that.

JULIA JACOBIE: Ian and Natalie agree with Betty. Sharon agrees with Kath. Louise just says: Agree. Nicole says she can't hear.

NORMA WHITE: I agree with Kath. I am a member of both and I feel strongly on behalf of both, and I should have a vote on behalf of both.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: Can I propose that we go for a vote on whether we agree with Paul's suggestion that it is a conflict? I am not sure how to word it, but we need to vote on whether BIVR and AVSTTR members have a vote here today, or whether it's just BIVR members who are not members of AVSTTR who have a vote? Does that make any sense?

FRANCES DOBSON: No. That doesn't work.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I would rather have more consultation.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: Otherwise we are not going to move forward because we are going round in circles.

THE PRESIDENT: We will have a final round on this and then we will make a decision how to go forward. Paul first.

PAUL BRINCAU: It's not voting on what I said. It's voting on whether to allow AVSTTR members to vote or not.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: That's what I mean.

PAUL BRINCAU: That's the question. But, again, there is a matter of principle, and if you are quite happy to go on with that, I will be quite happy to withdraw my objection. But that's not just me, and the principle is still there. I still think there is a conflict.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Jean?

JEAN LUKINS: It's just a question really. I haven't got a copy of the resolutions 1 to 9.

THE SECRETARY: They are here for handing out when we got to that stage.

JEAN LUKINS: Could I withdraw and review them?

THE SECRETARY: Yes. Of course, they have all been sent out to everybody, but they are here.

THE PRESIDENT: Whilst you are doing that, could I ask people to address their minds to this point or analogy? Neil is a member of some union, a small union ... (Neil laughs)

BETTY WILLETT: Which union are you a member of?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't ask him that! If that union then subscribes to, say, at the moment, the Labour Party, is that a conflict, because you are all --

MIRIAM WEISINGER: They now have to ask their members.

THE PRESIDENT: They do, yes, but previously?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Yes. We have moved on.

THE PRESIDENT: I think this is what we are trying to do here.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says she can't hear. She also said, "Can AVSTTR members vote on whether we have a vote?" Ian says, "To save conflict, I think we should have exclusive BIVR not AVSTTR-member vote". Nicole did ask a question, "How on earth is that going to work, so AVSTTR cannot vote?"

THE PRESIDENT: AVSTTR doesn't have a vote here.

JULIA JACOBIE: No, they don't. BIVR members do.

THE PRESIDENT: This is all we are dealing with; BIVR members.

JULIA JACOBIE: We are all BIVR members.

THE PRESIDENT: However you view it, they are all BIVR members.

PAUL BRINCAU: But they can vote because it affects them.

THE PRESIDENT: Who here has the double hat, the AVSTTR/BIVR?

JULIA JACOBIE: Norma and Nicole, who are not here, they are both members of both.

THE SECRETARY: But they are on line.

THE PRESIDENT: There are two members of AVSTTR who are not members of BIVR?

THE SECRETARY: Karen Schober and Anna Bailey are not members of BIVR. Karen could be because she could be transferred in.

JULIA JACOBIE: *(Reading from the Skype screen)*: "BIVR members do have a vote and I am both. I think, in any other situation or setting, if you are a member of two separate entities, both entitled to vote on one issue, you would get two votes".

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think we need legal advice.

FRANCES DOBSON: I agree.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Whatever it costs. Maybe you have to ask members to make an additional contribution to pay for legal advice, but I cannot see how you can vote. It's a takeover, not a merger. It will be a takeover, not a merger, and I do not think there has been enough consultation, and I do not think you can vote on two organisations becoming one and having the two votes. I just can't see, legally, the concept working.

BETTY WILLETT: Can I ask, if the people with joint membership were to

withdraw from the vote today, how many people here would be voting?

JEAN LUKINS: There's not enough.

JULIA JACOBIE: Seven people in the room.

BETTY WILLETT: It's a very expensive meeting for seven people.

NORMA WHITE: How many proxy votes are BIVR only?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I don't know, but it's not disclosed. My proxy vote, I don't know what organisation they are a member of. I have a BIVR vote, as far as I know.

THE PRESIDENT: Because obviously, that would affect how you --

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I am told the way my proxy wishes to vote.

NORMA WHITE: At the moment, you need a two-thirds majority, don't you? You would have to find out how many people were just BIVR only, and find a two-thirds majority of that, if you were going to exclude everybody who's dual.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I've got one BIVR proxy.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I've got five.

BETTY WILLETT: I have one.

JULIA JACOBIE: But are they also members of AVSTTR?

BETTY WILLETT: No.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Two are.

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, Skype please?

THE SECRETARY: I am just trying to find, Miriam, who it was.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie is saying votes need to be anonymous. Sharon says I don't want to withdraw as I abstained awaiting this debate. Nicole says Sharon has a great point. Louise said Sharon needs someone to address issue. Nicole says: Speak up Sharon and Natalie can't hear any more. Cannot hear me either. Can you hear me now, Natalie? I was just reading out all your comments off the screen actually, for the last few minutes, so you haven't really missed anything because you will have seen them on screen.

JEAN GOUGH: Can you just scroll back up, please?

JULIA JACOBIE: Sharon said: I don't want to withdraw from the vote as I abstained awaiting this debate.

BETTY WILLETT: She abstained last time.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: She didn't go either way.

FRANCES DOBSON: I just need to remind you that I am being prevented from voting because of my conflict of interest because of the idea that it should be two companies merged.

THE SECRETARY: Your perceived conflict of interest.

FRANCES DOBSON: There is a conflict of interest.

THE SECRETARY: So you say.

JULIA JACOBIE: Not all of us agree that there is, but never mind.

FRANCES DOBSON: I can't vote under those circumstances.

THE PRESIDENT: That's why we are having difficulty understanding your point of view. If it's personal, we can't go into that, but that is our difficulty.

JULIA JACOBIE: Ian has made his point again that AVSTTR is not a company. Twice he has wanted to make that point now.

PAUL BRINCAU: I cannot understand what that comment meant there about abstaining awaiting this vote?

BETTY WILLETT: She abstained at the AVSTTR meeting.

PAUL BRINCAU: I know what abstain means, but why did she abstain?

BETTY WILLETT: Because she knew that BIVR was going to be having a vote and wanted to express her views when she had heard all the arguments.

PAUL BRINCAU: So, really AVSTTR haven't finished voting yet. You can't do that. You can't say I will do that and await the outcome of this.

THE PRESIDENT: That's one member of AVSTTR, not the AVSTTR's decision.

PAUL BRINCAU: Does she realise that she cannot vote?

JULIA JACOBIE: She can't vote in the AVSTTR vote, no, because that's already been done.

PAUL BRINCAU: So, she is going to vote here.

JULIA JACOBIE: As a BIVR member, yes.

PAUL BRINCAU: So, she is going to await for what we say?

VICTORIA DAVIES: She is saying there were more abstentions than just her.

JULIA JACOBIE: I didn't think there were.

PAUL BRINCAU: I am lost now.

THE SECRETARY: I believe, having counted, there are five proxy votes who are AVSTTR members as well as BIVR members. All the rest are purely... So, we have 27 proxy votes, five of which --

NATALIE BRACKEN: Can't hear you. Can you speak up, Mary, please?

THE SECRETARY: I believe there are five proxy votes from AVSTTR members, also BIVR members but who are AVSTTR members. Twenty-seven altogether, so 22 are not AVSTTR members.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I pause there? I just want to ask Jean if she wants to make a comment, and as she is taking the record, she can't do both at the same time.

JEAN GOUGH: As I was saying to Paul in the lunch hour, I wear two hats. When I'm at an AVSTTR meeting, I'm speaking as an AVSTTR member, a speech-to-text reporter. When I'm a member BIVR I am a verbatim reporter, but I also happen to be a speech-to-text report as well. I am quite capable – I don't see conflict. I think the difficulty has arisen because the AVSTTR EGM took place first, and it looks rather as a *fait accompli*, but overall I think we are losing sight of the idea why the idea is to come together in the first place. We maybe need to gain a little bit of perspective. We are a small body. Yes, I understand that some people believe that there are conflicts of interest. Personally, I haven't quite got to grips with conflicts. Some people may see it as a very clear conflict. I don't feel a conflict at all. I can vote as a verbatim reporter, as a member of BIVR. It is not a foregone conclusion, but I think maybe the perception was that it was. I don't know if that was on the point we are on, but –

THE PRESIDENT: Let's have Mary first, please.

THE SECRETARY: I have just found the one letter I brought with me, which I do believe is the only response to the newsletter, and it's from a pen writer: "I would like to register my very strong feelings with regard to any logo" - (so it is more to do with the

logo) - “that does not incorporate a pen and I am afraid I do not subscribe to the so be it route simply in the name of moving into the 21st century”, and she goes on for another page-and-a-half on that subject. So, I certainly did bring this, and I was going to refer to it later. As far as I know, any other matters that have been raised were incorporated in the newsletters for members to see what had been said. That is all, thank you.

JULIA JACOBIE: Just a point of clarification, Mary. You said that there are 22 proxy votes who are BIVR only.

THE SECRETARY: I have 27 --

JULIA JACOBIE: No, 22 proxy votes that are BIVR only?

THE SECRETARY: I believe so.

JULIA JACOBIE: And there were seven in the room, is that right, that are BIVR only? There were 29 BIVR-only votes, yes?

FRANCES DOBSON: And one abstention.

JULIA JACOBIE: Yes, for it to be carried two-thirds majority, there would need to be 20 votes in favour. That’s all. I just wanted to get those figures out there.

NORMA WHITE: Thank you, Julia.

THE PRESIDENT: Frances, you had your hand up, to rapidly wrap up, please?

FRANCES DOBSON: I just need to point out that Jean also has a third hat. I think it’s right to point out that Jean has a third or fourth hat. She also has a hat in NRCPD, and she is working here today.

THE PRESIDENT: Right, thank you. Anybody else want to say anything?

JEAN GOUGH: Can I say something? Can I say I am invited by NRCPD to act as one of their professional standards advisers when I am invited to do so? I am not paid for that, but I think I am on a website as one of their professional standards advisers.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes. I don’t disagree with that.

JEAN GOUGH: I don’t see any conflict as far as I am an NRCPD registered speech-to-text reporter. I am acting, as far as I can see - unless people can point out anything specific - with integrity and for the good of the profession, whether it’s as a speech-to-text reporter, or as a verbatim reporter. Whether I’m working with Lipspeakers, with Note takers, other ACE professionals. I don’t see any conflict. I may be in error. If you can point me in another direction, but I don’t see a conflict personally.

FRANCES DOBSON: If I could just respond to that? I think the main danger would be if a complaint was made about an NRCPD registrant about these activities today.

JULIA JACOBIE: How could there possibly be a complaint registered?

FRANCES DOBSON: I have one.

THE PRESIDENT: I would just like to say, just to follow up, I was going to say a very similar thing about not only Jean, but every member of BIVR and AVSTTR. Never mind the code of ethics and their professionalism, but they all have integrity, and I would believe them, and I would believe they don't have a conflict within their own hats, the hatted positions, if you like. I think they are proud to be a member of a professional organisation, and they want to give - they have that integrity. They have that drive to give a good day's work for a good day's pay, hopefully.

I think there is a bit of defensiveness going on in the room, from whichever point of view you are coming from, and I think the whole idea of the merger is there aren't many people coming into the profession, in whichever guise, any more, and it's going to be shrinking and shrinking, and to keep people professional, if they are not verbatim reporters as in transcripts, well let's get them trained up to do that. Let's get them trained up to do that, and the same in reverse. Let's get them trained up to be Speech-to-Text Reporters.

So I think we need to sort of try and strip away the animosity. Yes, we take the point about the consultation period. I think that's a valid point, but let's find a way of moving on.

JULIA JACOBIE: I can see online, they all think it's getting too personal.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think it is getting personal. I can understand that, to a certain extent, but I think we need to take a step back and look at the industry, whichever side of it you are in, from an outsider's point of view. Victoria had her hand up?

VICTORIA DAVIES: I was going to agree with Sharon's point on Skype that that was a bit too personal, and if I was Jean - I am offended on Jean's behalf, actually.

FRANCES DOBSON: Well, I need to come back on that because it was not intended to be personal. I pointed out that there is a potential danger.

THE PRESIDENT: But then you have to rely on that person's integrity.

VICTORIA DAVIES: It was the point on Jean's stenographic notetaking that I got the impression that you thought - you weren't saying this, but there was the potential for

Jean to doctor that transcript in some way.

BETTY WILLETT: What you may not have heard is Frances said very *sotto voce*, "I would have a complaint", because Jean said something about: This would only happen if there was a complaint and Frances said, very *sotto voce*: "Well, I would have a complaint". So I think she needs to say what her complaint is today about today's meeting. I think our Chairman has conducted it with extreme courtesy and patience.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes, the Chairman has acted with courtesy and patience.

THE PRESIDENT: So, could we have an apology for that actually, for I thought that it implied a perceived perception?

FRANCES DOBSON: It is my understanding that certain events should have happened, and that it is to the detriment of the members. I see that there is conflict of interest.

THE PRESIDENT: Right, thank you. We've got your point.

JULIA JACOBIE: Can I just make a point? You could not make a complaint to NRCPD about Jean because there are no deaf people in the room. She is not here as a Speech-to-Text Reporter today, and that is purely what the registration with NRCPD is in relation to.

FRANCES DOBSON: It isn't.

THE PRESIDENT: May I just say, this must be extremely difficult for Jean to take this down when we are talking about her, and it must be a horrendous position to be in. I apologise on Frances's behalf because I can imagine everybody in this room doesn't have the same opinion. I am sorry. I just --

FRANCES DOBSON: There was no slander against Jean.

THE PRESIDENT: Right, well, I was asking for an apology before, but you wouldn't give one, so I will give one instead.

PAUL BRINCAU: I can't understand how NRCPD crept into this because NRCPD has not got a vote on what we are discussing now, so let's keep it out of it.

THE PRESIDENT: Quite. Does anybody on Skype have anything else to say because we need to move forward?

JULIA JACOBIE: Georgina says, "I am pretty disgusted, to be honest". Natalie says: "I have no issues with Jean. She has utmost integrity". Nicole says, "Just apologise". And Natalie wanted to know what events Frances is talking about that should have happened beforehand or something. And then it's going totally off-point. Nicole is

saying: "I have the utmost respect for Jean", and Natalie agrees.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I agree, Jean.

PAUL BRINCAU: I think we all agree.

FRANCES DOBSON: But I need to clarify --

THE PRESIDENT: No, you don't. We know what your point is.

FRANCES DOBSON: You are preventing me from speaking.

THE PRESIDENT: I am preventing you from speaking because you have taken the floor all day. Now, let's have Sandra who is next to you.

SANDRA EVANS: I think we've gone on and on for quite a while and I think we want a point of order. I think, if we got a legal answer to it, and then if we have to have a consultation. If we have a legal answer ...

FRANCES DOBSON: That's what we need.

SANDRA EVANS: ... then we can put a line under it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We do need to put a line under it now.

BETTY WILLETT: Can we think about the cost of the legal point, and then having another meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: Can I suggest - I heard further whispers around - that we defer this? Let's get the AGM done, let's get that finished with, and then, if people can still hang around afterwards, we can try and clarify some of the other issues. How does that sound?

BETTY WILLETT: Are you suggesting that we go to item 8 on the agenda, in other words?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: Can I make a suggestion? Can we have a show of hands as to whether we are happy for joint BIVR/AVSTTR members to vote, or that we go for legal advice?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, as Miriam said before, legal advice is going to be on that point.

BETTY WILLETT: I don't think it's necessary.

FRANCES DOBSON: That's your opinion.

BETTY WILLETT: It's an unnecessary expense.

THE PRESIDENT: Paul, then Jean.

PAUL BRINCAU: I don't know if we can do this.

SANDRA EVANS: We work with lawyers, so we should be able to do that!

PAUL BRINCAU: I don't know whether actually we shouldn't actually just go ahead with the vote and see what the outcome is, and at the end of the day it might not have made any difference, and, you know, we're all quite happy. And whether there is a conflict of interest or not, the outcome might be the same.

However, I made a point of order that there was a conflict of interest. Whatever we do today, we cannot just have another meeting without resolving the issue here, because otherwise the next meeting is going to start exactly as we are now.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, good point.

PAUL BRINCAU: So, we have to decide what's going to happen, and then, if there are going to be further consultations, they can be based on something more concrete.

BETTY WILLETT: There are some good points behind you on the screen, Susan.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says: "I think a joint meeting is a better idea". Ian says: "Legal advice is unnecessary". Nicole says: "Agree with Ian". Natalie thinks: "Defer merger talks and have consultation period, please". Louse says: "I don't see how. I am not quite sure what she is referring to". Natalie says: "I think a joint meeting is a better idea". Ian says: "Legal advice unnecessary". Nicole says: "Agree with Ian".

NORMA WHITE: I think it's completely unnecessary as well. Can I just make this point as well? As far as I understand it, what we voted on at AVSTTR was to merge at this date, if it were to go ahead. If it doesn't happen today, that resolution would end, basically.

THE PRESIDENT: Finally, Jean, because we need to get further with this.

JEAN LUKINS: I don't know where this leaves us.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie is asking for Norma's point to be repeated.

NORMA WHITE: I was just saying that when we voted at AVSTTR to take this forward to this meeting and we agreed we would merge if BIVR members wanted it today, I believe the resolution said if it didn't happen today, it wouldn't happen. Is that correct? I might be wrong but that's certainly how I read it. It had to be today.

THE SECRETARY: I don't think so.

JEAN LUKINS: If the feeling of the meeting is that we might want to revert to plan B and to reconsider what we are doing here, with more membership involvement, there are really only two ways to do it. You either, as people have suggested, particularly on Skype, that we should have a joint meeting and really work through these issues, or, alternatively that we, as BIVR - and I don't know whether it's possible to propose this - that the meeting authorises BIVR Council to investigate a merger and to report fully to the membership of BIVR within six months, or by 31st October, and then we can take it more slowly. I think that gunshot sort of weddings aren't going to work here for today.

THE PRESIDENT: Paul, just quickly.

PAUL BRINCAU: I think, actually, I agree with the joint meeting that came up on Skype, because that's what we are having now as BIVR members wanting to vote.

BETTY WILLETT: My point was going to be that, if we had an adjourned meeting, it would be exactly the same as it is here. The same people would be here and we would have the people on Skype.

THE PRESIDENT: But would those people then be happier because they felt that they had had the consultation period?

PAUL BRINCAU: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you feel better for that?

BETTY WILLETT: If people are going to have a consultation period, are they going to reply to Mary's letters or your letters?

THE PRESIDENT: If you say, "We will give you six months tops and, come December, that's it, then we decide next year".

PAUL BRINCAU: The consultation will happen at the joint meeting. You don't consult before you go on the meeting.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

PAUL BRINCAU: You have the debate at the meeting and vote.

THE PRESIDENT: The debate can start here. Most people have got Facebook. It can continue on there, and then have a meeting or a joint meeting and thrash it out. If it doesn't happen, it doesn't happen. The problem about the rules is we can only go on what our rules are at this point. You are talking about the conflict. That needs to be sorted out. We can't change the rule just now so we would possibly have to have a plenary or something to sort out the rules.

PAUL BRINCAU: The conflict disappears if there is an agreement for a joint meeting, because then you will have all members present. We have now a meeting, a BIVR meeting with AVSTTR being on it, whereas if we have a joint meeting then the conflict goes, because you have both institutes meeting and discussing the issue and voting on it. It's so simple.

THE PRESIDENT: But there are only two people on AVSTTR who are not here. This is effectively a joint meeting.

PAUL BRINCAU: I am talking about the people who raised the issue of consultation, not the conflict of interest.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm sorry. Okay.

JULIA JACOBIE: There is a lot on screen to be read out. Nicole says: "No-one replied earlier. This is now the eleventh hour and the debate is here". Ian said: "There is a huge amount of apathy in both memberships". Natalie said: "I didn't think that others would be in agreement with the merger so I guess I am guilty of sitting back and hoping it wouldn't happen". Nicole said: "It was put in BIVR and AVSTTR newsletters, et cetera, and now it is here on the day and you want to change". Sharon says: "But we are BIVR members". Natalie said: "No, the EGM. That's why I attended. I said comments earlier".

NORMA WHITE: Can I say, a lot of people have responded. There's a lot of poxy (*sic*) votes.

JEAN GOUGH: Was that "poxy" or "proxy"?!

NORMA WHITE: "Proxy"!

JULIA JACOBIE: Nicole said: "But you voted for this to go ahead". Natalie said: "No". Nicole: "That is what the AVSTTR members voted for". Natalie says: "I didn't. I voted against".

THE PRESIDENT: That the result of AVSTTR's --

JULIA JACOBIE: That was the result of the AVSTTR. Some individual members

did vote “no”, but --

THE SECRETARY: As they will here.

FRANCES DOBSON: There is still a conflict of interest for those who have been co-opted on to the Council ...

THE PRESIDENT: Right. You said that this morning, so that’s been dealt with.

FRANCES DOBSON: ... and the directors, who are in a position of trust.

BETTY WILLETT: We don’t have directors.

THE SECRETARY: We do, Betty.

BETTY WILLETT: Do we?

VICTORIA DAVIES: I know you told Frances that she has taken the floor, but you are saying a lot of things and I don’t know what you are saying. There is an undercurrent that I missed, that I am not getting. I don’t know whether it’s just me, but maybe it would help if you could clearly say what you thought, and why you thought. You seem to be implying a lot of things, but why can’t you just say it clearly?

THE PRESIDENT: There is no meat.

FRANCES DOBSON: It’s quite broad.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you face this way so that we can all see you.

FRANCES DOBSON: There are quite a lot of members on the Council, and who have been co-opted, who are members of AVSTTR.

VICTORIA DAVIES: No, I don’t mean that. I mean everything - you seem to be implying that there is a financial gain.

FRANCES DOBSON: There is.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Then you are saying that the directors have some kind of gain, but you are not saying exactly what that is.

FRANCES DOBSON: The financial gain is that I can see, from AVSTTR’s point of view, they are saving money, because BIVR is funding CPD. It’s funding ---

JULIA JACOBIE: What CPD?

VICTORIA DAVIES: No. You are wrong there.

THE PRESIDENT: No. I mentioned this morning that we talk about it. We are not funding it. We are trying to find a way to help everybody - and we want everybody to do CPD, not just AVSTTR or Speech-to-Text people - we want everyone to do it, and share it.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes, but I noticed this morning, you said there will be CPD points for those who are AVSTTR members, for NRCPD.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, because they are subject to that at the minute, whereas BIVR aren't. Now, if BIVR do it voluntarily, I think that can only be a good thing. It's continuous learning; it's continuous development.

FRANCES DOBSON: I benefit from it as well because it's CPD for me as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course. Thank you.

THE SECRETARY: I have brought CPD forms for everybody here, not just AVSTTR, Speech-to-Text Reporters.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I pick them up every time we have something like this. I think it's good practice.

JULIA JACOBIE: Someone on the screen. Natalie says: "Don't understand all Frances' points, I'm afraid". Louise says: "BIVR isn't funding CPD". Ian says: "Everyone pays for their own CPD". Sharon says: "We pay membership to the new joint organisation so we are entitled to training CPD points". Louise says: "Exactly, Ian". Natalie says: "We fund our own CPD". Nicole says: "Exactly, Ian and Sharon" – go up – "you've some points". (*Laughter*)

There's more of a discussion between Natalie and Nicole about the fact that Natalie voted against the merger but AVSTTR went with it because it was a majority. Natalie says: "I was the minority". Nicole says: "But we are a committee", and she says: "Exactly". And then: "What is the financial gain? I am paying for both". That's where I started with Natalie's points.

FRANCES DOBSON: It's not just a financial gain.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the financial gain? Explain that to us first.

FRANCES DOBSON: Well, BIVR has substantial financial resources.

THE PRESIDENT: I think, if you look at the accounts, they were £2 under this last year, and they're not that substantial really.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes, but compared to AVSTTR's. I don't know what their

funding is. They are not paying anything towards this meeting, are they?

VICTORIA DAVIES: Because this is BIVR's AGM.

THE PRESIDENT: We have to have this, come what may.

FRANCES DOBSON: It's a benefit.

JULIA JACOBIE: It's not a benefit to AVSTTR members, it's for BIVR members because we are all BIVR members and we pay our fee just like you do.

FRANCES DOBSON: But you are here today to vote on a merger.

JULIA JACOBIE: As a BIVR member.

FRANCES DOBSON: But you have an interest in AVSTTR merging with BIVR.

JULIA JACOBIE: What kind of interest? Not a financial one. I just think it's a good idea. It would help the profession, as a whole.

FRANCES DOBSON: It's an interest because BIVR has been in existence for 137 years, or something.

THE SECRETARY: One hundred and thirty-two.

FRANCES DOBSON: One hundred and thirty-two. So there is an identity, a company identity that is recognised globally. It's a global brand.

JULIA JACOBIE: Can I just come back on that point then, because I actually agree with some of the points that were raised at our EGM, mainly by Natalie and one or two other people, that in the deaf field, AVSTTR is well recognised. So, it's not a benefit to us to join BIVR because you are more well-known than us, because in the Speech-to-Text world you're not; AVSTTR is.

FRANCES DOBSON: Well, that is a little bit of a discrimination on members of BIVR, because BIVR are also providing services for the deaf community, who are not members of AVSTTR, and who are not, who choose not to be NRCPD registered.

THE SECRETARY: Perhaps they should not be if they are not registered.

FRANCES DOBSON: That's an opinion, Mary. They have freedom of choice.

THE SECRETARY: We are expressing our opinions here.

JULIA JACOBIE: They can choose not to be registered. It's up to them.

VICTORIA DAVIES: But if you are an STTR and giving STTR services, you should be registered with NRCPD.

NORMA WHITE: Hear-hear.

PAUL BRINCAU: Julia is doing well reading those words.

JULIA JACOBIE: Something from Skype. Nicole said: "And I am paying membership to BIVR". Natalie says: "I agree, Nicole. We pay two fees". Nicole said: "Exactly". Georgina said: "AVSTTR is a very much smaller organisation". Natalie said: "Why are we talking about financial gain? Agree with Ian". She meant Georgina. Ian says: "LOL". Sharon said: "It was about saving time and avoiding the same people being on the committee rather than financial saving". Natalie said: "Speak up". Louise said: "Surely the only financial gain would be a slight reduction in membership fees because you are only paying one instead of two, unless I am missing the point". Nicole said: "Who is going to police that?" I am not quite sure what she's talking about. Natalie said: "This is all off-point". Sharon said she agrees with Julia, me. Georgina said: "Who is going to 'out' me as someone who refuses to be registered?" Nicole said: "About unregistered people, about the policing". Okay, she just clarified that point. Carry on, Frances.

THE PRESIDENT: Frances, you were giving us examples. Conflict of interest, impartiality, integrity. I think everybody in the business has integrity.

FRANCES DOBSON: Yes, they do, but if they are a director of the company, the members of the company put their trust in the director.

THE PRESIDENT: So being specific, are you accusing the directors or the Council members, whichever party you are talking about, of some sort of misdemeanour?

FRANCES DOBSON: They have to promote the success of the company, which is BIVR.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you not think we do that?

JULIA JACOBIE: I have to say I don't agree with referring to BIVR as a "company".

FRANCES DOBSON: It is a company.

JULIA JACOBIE: I don't agree with referring to BIVR as a company. It might technically be a limited company, but it's a professional organisation. It's not a profit-making company.

FRANCES DOBSON: It doesn't have to make a profit.

JULIA JACOBIE: But you are talking about financial gain and increasing the revenue, or whatever it was you just said. Sorry, I didn't quite get it, but stop referring to it as a company and directors.

FRANCES DOBSON: Would you like to confirm, Mary, that BIVR is a company ...

JULIA JACOBIE: It is a limited company.

FRANCES DOBSON: ... registered at Companies House?

JULIA JACOBIE: I know all that.

FRANCES DOBSON: And there are responsibilities and duties on the directors of the company.

THE SECRETARY: I can confirm that, and we do carry them out, such as the report and accounts.

JULIA JACOBIE: But it's a professional organisation. It's not a company in the business sense.

FRANCES DOBSON: Well, it is.

THE PRESIDENT: Leah, let's hear from you.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Louise has put: "What about the fact you can't get on the NRCPD register at the moment anyway, even if you want to?" and I agree with that. I do STT, I am not registered, and it's impossible to get registered. I just wanted to make that point.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

NORMA WHITE: I think the ideal would be to be registered, though. It is something AVSTTR is doing. I went to the BIVR meeting. That is something AVSTTR is doing and trying to get everybody registered.

KATH SYKES: Can I say something?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you want to say something?

KATH SYKES: This is Kath. Did you not have the opportunity to do the interim test that was set up with the NRCPD?

LEAH WILLERSDORF: No.

KATH SYKES: After we did the QRR?

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I wasn't doing STT then. I had stopped doing STT around then. But thank you for asking anyway.

BETTY WILLETT: What are we going to do? Are we going to sit here for the rest of the afternoon arguing without making a decision?

THE PRESIDENT: Our court reporters require a break. Can we just wrap up things now and then come back to it fresh. I think everybody will benefit from a short break. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Can we try and keep it to ten minutes, please?

JULIA JACOBIE: Did everyone on Skype get that? We are having a quick ten-minute break.

(Short break)

(CPD forms handed out)

THE SECRETARY: Dare I mention that I actually have a "How did we do form"?
(Laughter)

BETTY WILLETT: Put that away.

PAUL BRINCAU: We did well, actually.

THE PRESIDENT: Mary, do we need two signatures on this form?

THE SECRETARY: Yes. A Council member and the President. We can do that later, but I just wanted to get them out while we had the break.

THE PRESIDENT: Is everybody ready? Is everybody ready online?

THE SECRETARY: They are saying yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Great. We've got our court reporters back online and working hard. As we have had a break, we will have one final round, and then we will have to get on. So, anybody on Skype want to say anything? No?

JULIA JACOBIE: Nicole says: "It's all been said". Sharon says just: "What happens next?"

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That's what we need to decide now. Anybody else?

JULIA JACOBIE: Myself and Susan had a quick discussion outside. There are two things. The first thing was that it was suggested that we have a vote as to whether or not AVSTTR members can vote at this meeting on a merger. But then it was also pointed out to me that it's kind of a chicken and egg situation, because that would involve people who are also AVSTTR members voting on whether or not they can vote, so I am not sure how that would work.

But then we also had a discussion, myself and Susan, about putting this off for six months. Susan suggested earlier instigating a deadline, and during the six months having this consultation that you all want, and having a joint meeting somewhere within the next six months to iron out all the issues and get it done. But there would be a deadline, probably the beginning of January, to allow for Christmas, and then, at that point, the decision would be made one way or the other. Do you agree, Susan?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

JEAN LUKINS: This relates to BIVR, is that right?

JULIA JACOBIE: To both groups separately. That as from now we both stay as separate groups. You guys then have your votes for your council. I am also suggesting that myself, Norma and Nicole, who were co-opted on to the Council, withdraw from the Council in this six-month interim period, and we just remain as AVSTTR committee members, and that in six months, or January, whenever, that if the merger is voted on, then the whole thing is open again as to who can be on the Council, or whatever it's called.

THE PRESIDENT: Victoria?

VICTORIA DAVIES: I like the six months' consultation, but then you said that we each go off and do our consultations, then we're back to the point that I am AVSTTR and BIVR.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Am I going to be allowed to consult with both?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

JULIA JACOBIE: Yes, of course, obviously. We are members of both organisations.

THE PRESIDENT: May I just say, how I envisage it, just off the top of my head now, is that there is a question out there, and we will do one every month, and you have a month to respond, and we want everybody's views in. That will be circulated to everybody. We won't necessarily say who has said what, but at the end of that month the results, or the comments, will go out. The next month, a new question, or whatever

topic is raised, will go out and we will have the same thing. Hopefully, we can iron out these issues and then have a true vote in January. So, six months from now will be the beginning of December. You've got a few weeks just to recover, and then January, or February, or even next year, and then that will be the consultation.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Will it be decided then who votes where and how many votes each person has?

JULIA JACOBIE: What I was actually suggesting is something slightly different to what Susan just suggested.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, right.

JULIA JACOBIE: When I said we stay separately, I just meant for the purposes of today because this is BIVR's AGM, so they have to elect a new Council, one way or the other. I am suggesting because, obviously, the merger is not going to be voted on today, that we stay separately, but the consultations should be joint. We should have joint meetings with everybody, if possible, because I think that's the fairest way of doing it.

THE PRESIDENT: By meetings I mean online.

JULIA JACOBIE: I don't; I mean in person.

THE PRESIDENT: I know it's difficult with people's work.

JULIA JACOBIE: I would say just one meeting half-way between now and six months, and obviously there will be online discussion in the meantime, but I do think we need to get together face to face and talk about these things. There will also be investigation into the legal side of the whole conflict of interest thing in the meantime.

BETTY WILLETT: Could I ask, when we have this meeting in January, whether it will be a joint meeting of both bodies, in which case it would be the easiest thing in the world for everybody there to have one vote, so there won't be any question.

JULIA JACOBIE: Yes, exactly.

THE PRESIDENT: That needs to be ironed out, so everybody knows how they're voting.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie just asked a question: Sorry, meetings of who? The Committee and Council? No, we are talking about a meeting of all members.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can I say I like Betty's idea of everybody meeting and everybody having one vote, because you are talking about we'll go off and we will consult, and they can make their views known, but I am here and I am there.

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that.

BETTY WILLETT: And also, just as a second point, I would like to please try and insist, because time does run away with us, that we do have a definite, definite timescale, because we have already wasted a year really. By today's proceedings, we have wasted a year from last year, when this first started.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't see it's a waste. If people aren't happy that they haven't been consulted, then they should be consulted.

BETTY WILLETT: I think erroneously they think they haven't been consulted. They may not have replied to the consultation but they have been consulted, or they have been informed.

THE PRESIDENT: The problem is not everybody can read the newsletters in minute detail. They just have a look through, and sometimes things don't impact, they don't stand out until, like this week, when the resolutions come out and you think: "Hang on a minute, oh, it's real". I think that's part of the problem.

JULIA JACOBIE: There's a few things on Skype. Natalie said: "Meetings of who, the Committee and Council?" and I said everybody. She said: "Joint meeting. Then to do in person would be difficult, better via Skype or e-mail". Nicole agreed with Betty, then she said "they were consulted within the newsletters". Natalie said: "We were told, not consulted, effectively". Nicole: "Wrong, yes, get involved". Louise said: "I am easy to go along with the majority".

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Louise.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says: "I am happy to get involved". Sharon: "Yes, that's okay with me as well."

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can I just mention this, because the Chair of AVSTTR is here. It might not come to this, but if we are going to have one big meeting and one-person-one-vote, if we're going to do what BIVR, the President, has just said, a question, a question, a question every month, can we have the same questions in AVSTTR, so we're not all meeting up in six months and then we have all discussed separate things?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, absolutely.

JULIA JACOBIE: It will go to everybody. It will go twice, obviously.

VICTORIA DAVIES: To both associations?

JULIA JACOBIE: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Hopefully, all the objections or queries, whatever, can be aired before the meeting, and then we could have everybody on Skype, if necessary. Well, not everybody. Do you see what I mean? So that you can air your views and feel you have had a proper say, you have been consulted properly, and you feel confident that, yes, this is the place for me, or this is the thing for me. Miriam?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think we need to be very clear what we are consulting on.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Is it the merger as special resolution 1, which I don't quite understand anyway, which when we got to them I was going to say - because it says "to merge the Association of Verbatim Speech-to-Text Reporters into BIVR utilising the new Mem & Arts" - which I had some issues with anyway - "with the proviso that a new name is agreed, to be agreed either at this AGM or within..." I am not sure what "with the proviso that a new name is agreed" means.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Because AVSTTR agreed, their agreement of the merger was that there would be a new name.

FRANCES DOBSON: It's conditional.

VICTORIA DAVIES: It's conditional on BIVR --

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think that has to be really clear in the consultation.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Because otherwise --

FRANCES DOBSON: It's two ideas. One is merger. The second idea is the name.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Right. I think we need to be clear what we are consulting on.

THE PRESIDENT: But the change of the name at the moment is conditional --

JEAN LUKINS: Well, then that needs to be --

MIRIAM WEISINGER: That needs to be very clear.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it does.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: If the merger doesn't happen, there will be no change of name, but if the merger happens ...

THE PRESIDENT: It's forcing a change of name.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: ... it's got to have a change of name?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: So it will no longer be BIVR? Well, I think that needs to be very clear.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think that needs to be very clear in the consultation because that might be --

NORMA WHITE: Can I just say it wouldn't be AVSTTR either. We are not suggesting that. We are suggesting that both names go and a new combined organisation.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: That's fine. But I think what I am trying to say is that we need to make it clear to members of both organisations that the merger is conditional.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's right.

VICTORIA DAVIES: It was at that point. Things are changing now, aren't they?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I don't know.

FRANCES DOBSON: They are conditional on the name and they are conditional on us scrapping our current Mems and Arts.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Yes, although I went through the Mem and Arts and I couldn't see a lot of changes other than in the first page.

FRANCES DOBSON: But there could be legal issues there.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Yes. It's number 3, the objects for which the Institute are established. That was my sticking point.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie just said: "That's a problem I have. BIVR and AVSTTR are brand names and both brands would be lost". Nicole says: "Yes, and then we rebrand ourselves. Other companies do it and it usually works".

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think this needs to be part of the consultation but it

needs to be clear what we are consulting on.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says: "Yes, Miriam".

THE PRESIDENT: Paul wants to make a point as well.

PAUL BRINCAU: Why don't we just remove this condition and actually consult on both merger and then name? I mean, we all have our views, because I was talking during the break - I may as well put it on record now - that actually B-I-V-R, BIVR, describes what we all do, members of AVSTTR and members of BIVR. If we change it, it's going to cost money. There is a website. All references to BIVR will have to be changed, which costs money. Stationery and printing and anything else we do, it will all have to change. It's actually a big thing, so leaving it as it is describes us all. What's the point of putting another name which nobody will ever know us by? Probably some of our members who don't attend meetings will start looking for BIVR still if they want anything.

THE PRESIDENT: I think on the website it would have to include "incorporating BIVR, incorporating AVSTTR", or *vice versa*.

JULIA JACOBIE: Ian's just said: "I agree with Paul. We could add 'Incorporating AVSTTR'".

THE PRESIDENT: Which we have with other previous mergers.

PAUL BRINCAU: So the pre-condition goes, then, but let's discuss whether we --

THE PRESIDENT: It hasn't gone yet because it's still on the --

VICTORIA DAVIES: No, it's gone, because it's not been agreed at this date, so as far as I am concerned that resolution is gone.

NORMA WHITE: Absolutely.

PAUL BRINCAU: Okay, so that's easy. So, there we are. Do we have to wait six months?

JEAN LUKINS: It will take at least six months.

JULIA JACOBIE: Did you get that, Jean? Norma said, "Absolutely", to what Victoria says.

VICTORIA DAVIES: So the resolution has gone.

THE PRESIDENT: All right. Okay. So, the resolution has gone. That's good.

Mary's going to say --

THE SECRETARY: About Paul's suggestion of the cost of stationery, et cetera, there's very little cost these days because we don't have it pre-printed anymore; it's all done on computer.

FRANCES DOBSON: Could I just point out that some members do use the BIVR logo on their stationery and cards, and it's one of the benefits of membership.

THE PRESIDENT: It is, but we send out nameplates every year, you get a fresh one of those. You get a fresh membership card. You can download the logo, so you can still replace it, whatever replaces it.

FRANCES DOBSON: But they might have it printed. They might have it published on a website.

THE PRESIDENT: They might have, but it is possible to amend these things.

FRANCES DOBSON: At a cost.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie said: "So it will be like AVSTTR never existed in its own right".

THE PRESIDENT: No, it will exist.

JULIA JACOBIE: Neil, can you just scroll back a bit? Natalie said: "So it will be like AVSTTR never existed in its own right". Nicole said: "Can you change it?" She is referring to something before that, I think, the website. "Exactly." Ian says: "No, the name would stay. It would be BIVR incorporating AVSTTR". Nicole said: "These are minor points". Natalie said: "Then it will end up BIVR, but the name matters to me".

NORMA WHITE: In fact, the name means everything to me. It would change everything if that wasn't a condition.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that the BIVR, or the AVSTTR, or both?

FRANCES DOBSON: Both.

THE PRESIDENT: The point I would make is it's good that everybody is loyal to their sides, but actually all of you are members of both. If one name comes out of it, we will still have the AVSTTR and we will still have the BIVR. That's my opinion. It's got to be on the website, it's got to be on everything. I don't care how unwieldy it is. You can't lose the history of it.

BETTY WILLETT: Could I ask a question of my AVSTTR colleagues? Was the condition about the change of name included in the discussions you had at your EGM,

or did this come about only when you had the meeting?

JULIA JACOBIE: We amended the resolution at the EGM to include the change of name. It was discussed.

BETTY WILLETT: Was that the EGM you had?

JULIA JACOBIE: The EGM that you were present at in May.

BETTY WILLETT: But it wasn't discussed at your previous general meeting you had, was it?

JULIA JACOBIE: At the AGM, no. It was just discussion and agreement, a proposal for us to have talks about a possible merger. I don't think we mentioned the name again. Ian said: "The name AVSTTR is very important and could stay rather than being changed into a name no one has heard of and lives in both names". Natalie says: "The resolution at the EGM was amended". Sharon says: "I can't see anyone agreeing with a name change".

PAUL BRINCAU: We will discuss it at the same time as we discuss the other issues. I was just making a proposal, full stop.

BETTY WILLETT: I think it's a very big point and it might be another day like we have had today, but I think we've got to try and get together; that's the important thing. The name we can talk about.

THE PRESIDENT: I do think we need to do the prep, definitely. Paul?

PAUL BRINCAU: I am going to make a proposal, Madam Chair, that we have a joint meeting of both bodies, to discuss and debate the issue of both merger and change of name, preceded by, as you suggested, communication, by e-mail et cetera, between members, and after that consultation, that joint EGM, we vote on both subjects, and come out of there with a result. I need somebody to second that.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I second that.

THE PRESIDENT: Paul proposes, Victoria seconds.

PAUL BRINCAU: So we need a vote now.

THE PRESIDENT: Just before we do the vote, are we happy with the chicken and egg situation, that we can all agree on this vote? Does everybody have a vote as a member of BIVR, whether they are a member of someone else or not?

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says: "Can you say that again, Paul?"

PAUL BRINCAU: What, the proposal? The proposal is that we have a joint meeting between the two bodies, preceded by the consultation by e-mail, and at the joint meeting we discuss and debate both the merger and the change of name, and then we can vote on it, because everybody will have one vote because everybody is there. It doesn't matter which organisation you belong to, there's no conflict because it's a joint meeting.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, good.

JULIA JACOBIE: Yes.

PAUL BRINCAU: And we decide then, by vote, how to come to a conclusion on both topics, both merger and the change of name, and it will be over with. I need a seconder.

NORMA WHITE: Can I just say, I do understand what you are saying, and it seems like a very fair resolution, but whether we're going to change the name or not would have affected in the first vote whether to have a merger, and I don't think I am the only person, on either side, who thinks that.

PAUL BRINCAU: That is fine. That can be debated at the time and everybody can have a say, because what you think and what I think doesn't matter. What matters is the final vote. So if everybody votes for a change of name, we'll change it. If it's the other way, we don't. What you think and what I think, that's fine, we can talk about it.

NORMA WHITE: But if we all voted for a merger and it went through. If there was a vote to change the name and it was decided not to, then I have cast my vote already and wouldn't have voted in the same way.

VICTORIA DAVIES: You mean, get the name first?

NORMA WHITE: Yes.

PAUL BRINCAU: Okay. We'll vote on the change of name first. Yes? And then, if that goes through, or whichever way it goes through, then we can vote on the merger.

NORMA WHITE: Yes. To me that is a fairer way of doing it.

JULIA JACOBIE: Can I say...

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can I add something to your proposal, Paul. Can we have a shortlist of potential names, sorted out by e-mail consultation beforehand, so we're not turning up with 50 versions of BIVR, AVSTTR, and so on?

NORMA WHITE: Yes, that's a really good idea.

THE PRESIDENT: Personally, I would rather get it down to two.

PAUL BRINCAU: I agree.

VICTORIA DAVIES: BIVR or AVSTTR! *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you! *(More laughter)*

JULIA JACOBIE: I will read out the comments on the screen.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, we are just going to read out the screen and then we are going to vote on this, assuming everybody's got one vote.

JULIA JACOBIE: Sheryll?

SHERYLL HOLLEY: It was just about semantics. At the meeting that you are suggesting, are we going to have to attain a two-thirds majority of the people that are voting, rather than the amount of BIVR members and the amount of AVSTTR members? So, they are collective, it's going to be two-thirds of the collective?

PAUL BRINCAU: I think that would be fair, because however many members attend from each side, the vote is going to be final.

THE PRESIDENT: Mary?

THE SECRETARY: That is both in AVSTTR's constitution and in BIVR's constitution that it has to be two-thirds of those present and voting. And present can be in person, remote or proxy.

JULIA JACOBIE: Sharon says: "Yes, what Paul said seems sensible". Louise said: "We have discussed this so much already, though". Natalie said she agrees with Norma about the name, not wanting to vote for BIVR if the name didn't change. Nicole agrees with Norma. Sharon said: "Yes, agree with Norma". Nicole said: "Agree". Louise said: "Yes, Norma has a good point". Nicole said: "That is what Mary was trying to do earlier, and Paul you said it wasn't relevant now. What about everyone who isn't here?" Ian said: "That's the apathy I was talking about earlier". Nicole said: "Exactly". Natalie said: "But there isn't apathy any more". Ian said: "Not among the usual people".

BETTY WILLETT: The usual suspects!

PAUL BRINCAU: The comment about apathy is something that I was going to raise later on in the meeting.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you do that every year, to be fair, Paul.

PAUL BRINCAU: I do every year.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you like to get it in the minutes!

JEAN LUKINS: I am just raising a point really with Mary about procedure. If we are going to take a vote about having a meeting, is this something we can do at an AGM formally? If so, that's fine. I am looking through the Mems & Arts about it. I am sorry to be pedantic, but I don't want us to get six months down the line and have to rework it. Or is this a vote to give guidance to the President and Council? Do you follow what I am saying? If we're going to delay this and have a meeting, is it just a vote for guidance, or is it formal?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we need to have a set of rules for that meeting, how everyone is going to vote.

JEAN LUKINS: Sure.

THE PRESIDENT: We will do it as fairly as we can, obviously. One-person-one-vote, as Paul said. There's got to be a procedure. It might just be an Extraordinary General Meeting.

BETTY WILLETT: I agree with Jean's point, that we are having an adjournment now so that we can give guidance and advice to the respective committees and presidents.

JEAN LUKINS: It is unusual to produce this sort of vote in an AGM. What I am referring to is right now, whether this is just a guidance vote?

BETTY WILLETT: I think it is.

JEAN LUKINS: Or a formal vote.

THE SECRETARY: What number are you looking at in that book because it has probably changed? That is the old version.

JEAN LUKINS: The old one is 36, if you want to check.

PAUL BRINCAU: Madam Chair, there is a proposal on the table and it is seconded, so we need to vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we need to vote.

JULIA JACOBIE: Sharon said she has to leave in a moment. "I vote for one-person-one-vote after the consultation". Sharon has got to go now.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we have a show of hands in the room - sorry. So what about the proxies? Are we including those in this tabled motion?

BETTY WILLETT: No, they were for special.

JEAN LUKINS: They don't know anything about it.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Is it not "as you see fit" as well?

JULIA JACOBIE: That's only on that resolution, isn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, people on Skype. We are just checking about the proxy vote for this tabled motion now.

JULIA JACOBIE: We don't have any, because they need to know them in advance, don't they?

VICTORIA DAVIES: It is just for the special resolutions, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: It is just for the special resolutions.

JULIA JACOBIE: This is going to be the people present in the room or online only. I think, judging by the discussion we have had in the room today, I think that most of the other members would agree with going along with the consultation.

THE PRESIDENT: Do we need a two-thirds vote? We do. Let's take a vote on this motion now. So can I have all those on in favour?

JULIA JACOBIE: Everyone on Skype, can you hear me?

NORMA WHITE: Yes.

JULIA JACOBIE: We are now voting as to whether we should delay this and have a consultation and a meeting in six months, a joint meeting, as we have been talking about for the last half an hour or so?

BETTY WILLETT: No later than six months.

JULIA JACOBIE: No later than six months.

THE PRESIDENT: And preceded by a consultation.

JULIA JACOBIE: And preceded by a consultation via e-mail or joint meeting, or whatever, as we have been discussing for the last half an hour. Paul's proposal. We will do the Skype votes first. In fact, they are there already.

THE PRESIDENT: We will take the Skype votes for.

JULIA JACOBIE: We have five in favour and two against.

BETTY WILLETT: Nicole asks to repeat the motion.

PAUL BRINCAU: We haven't had the vote.

JULIA JACOBIE: Do you still need to have it repeated, Nicole, or are you okay now? Please repeat, Paul.

THE PRESIDENT: Third time lucky.

PAUL BRINCAU: The proposal is to have a joint meeting at a set date from today preceded by the consultation we talked about via e-mail and other ways of communication, and then we have a joint meeting of both bodies where both merger and change of name will be discussed and voted on. I think me and Nicole agreed that we will vote on the change of name first, because that's going to be the material point -- oh, Norma, sorry, I apologise.

NORMA WHITE: That's okay.

PAUL BRINCAU: And then, depending - well, not depending on the outcome of the change of name - we will vote on both of them, but the vote on the name should go first, and that will give us an indication of how the merger is going to go. But at least it will be discussed and debated, which is what we were talking about all afternoon and some of this morning.

VICTORIA DAVIES: From a shortlist of names.

PAUL BRINCAU: Oh, yes. Well, a shortlist of names. That will be debated in communications preceding the meeting.

JULIA JACOBIE: Is that better, Nicole? Do you have it now?

NICOLE HARRISON: Yes.

JULIA JACOBIE: One abstention, five in favour and one against.

THE PRESIDENT: Just before we go round the room to vote, can I just say, I have just asked Neil to take the votes, as teller. I hope you don't mind if we just have one, and he is going to count the hand-raising when I go round now. Can I have all those in favour first?

NEIL HOLLEY: Thirteen.

PAUL BRINCAU: That is 13 plus the Skype voters.

JULIA JACOBIE: That is 18 altogether, I make it.

NEIL HOLLEY: Thirteen in the room. Five on Skype. Two against and one abstention.

BETTY WILLETT: Against in the room?

JULIA JACOBIE: Against in the room? (None)

BETTY WILLETT: Abstentions in the room?

JULIA JACOBIE: Abstentions in the room?

FRANCES DOBSON: I abstain.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't vote. I don't want to be an abstention though. I am for.

THE SECRETARY: You are entitled to vote.

THE PRESIDENT: I am for. I just thought I should stay out of it, but I have voted.

JULIA JACOBIE: Louise made a comment. Can you just scroll up, Neil. First of all, Nicole just said, "I want to be on the Committee". Louise said: "It's already been discussed at the EGM and discussed at length today, which is effectively a joint meeting. I don't see how delaying it and further discussion will make much difference". Nicole said: "I agree with you, Lou, that's why I didn't vote".

JEAN LUKINS: Fair enough.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you for your comments. Has Sharon gone now?

JULIA JACOBIE: Yes, Sharon has gone, but she did vote. Oh, she is saying goodbye now.

THE PRESIDENT: Bye. Thank you.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says: "It's because of lack of consultation which is being raised by BIVR members as well as some AVSTTR". Ian says: "Fair point, Louise. I would rather do it today, but don't want anyone to feel railroaded, hence my vote in favour". Natalie said: "I have always felt it's a done deal", and Nicole said: "That's why I abstained".

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for your comments. We're just going to take a five-minute break so we can regroup with the agenda, just to give the court reporters a break and then we'll do the rest.

THE SECRETARY: I do just want to read out paragraph 42 of our current Mem and Arts about adjourned meetings, AGMs.

THE PRESIDENT: Now?

THE SECRETARY: We can do it when we come back.

(A short break)

THE PRESIDENT: Are we ready to carry on? People have got trains to catch.

BETTY WILLETT: Could I raise one matter, before we go on to the next point on the agenda?

JULIA JACOBIE: Can everybody on Skype hear? Yes. Sharon is no longer there.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I just say, before we carry on, as we have not voted on the special resolutions because we have decided to have a consultation period to consider, essentially, those special resolutions, that they now fall and so we carry on to the rest of the meeting. Betty?

BETTY WILLETT: Yes. Had we proceeded with the resolutions, we would have had one resolution, that our President remain as President for the next year. That would automatically fall, but I would like to propose, if it's at all possible - and I am sure someone is going to say it's illegal - that we still vote for Susan, if she is willing, to carry on for the next year, because she has spearheaded this discussion and this process for the last year, and she knows more about it than anybody, and it seems very bad that she should not be allowed to continue.

JULIA JACOBIE: You can tell by the faces she is making right now that she doesn't!

BETTY WILLETT: I don't know what the rest of people think.

JULIA JACOBIE: Are you willing to stand again, Susan?

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Unless somebody else really, really wants to do it, I am quite happy to stay on. I am quite happy to stand down, but if somebody else would like to take it on, I am equally happy.

JEAN LUKINS: Do you have to stand down and then be re-proposed for election. I am just worried about the form, that's all. I just wanted to say that, if Susan is prepared to continue, effectively, for another year, I suppose what would happen is we would need a vote for that separately, but I am just looking through the Mem & Arts again as to whether there's provision for two continuous years of Chairmanship.

BETTY WILLETT: It has happened, because I have done it for two years.

THE SECRETARY: And it's by special resolution, because of the three-year rule. That is why the special resolutions were in there for Susan to be – we called it "joint President", but if I can make, on a point of order, if AVSTTR can change their special resolutions on the morning of the EGM, why can't we change our special resolution now to say which was – whatever number it was – instead of being "joint" – it was early on --

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says, "Susan has done a great job today. Makes sense to keep her". Nicole says: "Would love Susan to stay".

LEAH WILLERSDORF: To keep Susan is number 3.

THE SECRETARY: It is number 3a. Thank you, Leah. As it read that "Susan Humphries" – you were going to be reading it out, so that's "me" Susan "goes forward to serve a further year as joint President", so we change it to "President" – "of the newly-formed group", or just cut out all the rest. That is if Betty's suggestion finds favour. We vote, first of all, is that allowed? Are we going to change that resolution? Is that allowed?

FRANCES DOBSON: You need to check procedures.

JEAN LUKINS: We either decide that all the special resolutions fall bar 3(a), or any special resolution relating to the Vice-President or President Elect, or we abandon all the special resolutions and we have a proposal from Betty that Susan --

THE SECRETARY: A new special resolution.

JULIA JACOBIE: That is probably the tidiest way of doing it, isn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, because I have already said that all previous resolutions fall. Louise says: "I am happy". Natalie says: "Proposal from Betty".

THE SECRETARY: Therefore, I believe, on a point of order, the vote is, first of all, to accept that special resolution. Do we accept it?

THE PRESIDENT: Can we put up hands in the room?

JULIA JACOBIE: Does everybody on-line accept that resolution: Nicole says:

“Yes”, Natalie says: “Yes”, Ian and Georgina say: “Yes”. Louise says: “Yes”.

THE SECRETARY: Do we need a seconder?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we didn't second it.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I will second it.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Leah.

THE SECRETARY: So, that's the proposal to go forward.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we actually say what the proposal is?

BETTY WILLETT: Now I will put it.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: Paul has gone now. Do we count his vote on this?

THE SECRETARY: I do have a proxy vote for him, to vote as I please, so I vote in favour for Paul.

BETTY WILLETT: My proposal is that, as Susan has spearheaded the discussion on this for the last year and knows more about it than anybody else, apart from our Secretary, that she be elected to continue as President for another year, so that she can take forward what she has started, and I will require a seconder for that motion, which I believe is coming from my learned friend on my right, Miss Leah!

JULIA JACOBIE: Nicole says she seconds it. “Yeah Leah!”

BETTY WILLETT: I will put it to the vote because Susan can't put it to the vote herself, can she? May I ask you to show your hands if you are in favour. We already have people showing on the screen whether they are in favour.

JULIA JACOBIE: All those online in favour. Nicole, Natalie, Georgina, Ian. Yes, all in favour.

BETTY WILLETT: (*Show of hands*) Is there anybody against? So, that is carried *nem con*.

THE PRESIDENT: Nicole seconded it on screen and Leah in the room. What shall we do next?

THE SECRETARY: Number 9 was the increase in fees. Do we go ahead with that?

JEAN LUKINS: What about the Vice-President and President-Elect?

BETTY WILLETT: We don't have one, do we? Whoever is Vice-President, well, you stay for another year as well, Sheryll. Is that all right with you?

SHERYLL HOLLEY: That's fine.

THE PRESIDENT: I will propose it.

JULIA JACOBIE: Can you say what you are proposing, for everyone online?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. It's the shell-shock! For the Skypers, I am proposing that Sheryll be re-elected under a special resolution as Vice-President for the following year.

BETTY WILLETT: And I will second that.

JULIA JACOBIE: Are you in favour of that online? Ian and Georgina say: "Yes". Natalie says: "Yes". Nicole is in favour – spelled the American way. Louise says: "Yes".

THE PRESIDENT: And the votes in the room. (*Show of hands*) Votes against? One against.

BETTY WILLETT: Natalie has lost sound.

JULIA JACOBIE: We are just voting at the moment. We are just sticking our hands in the air. We are not actually saying anything.

JEAN LUKINS: Do we need to deal with an Elect?

THE SECRETARY: No, we don't need to do that.

THE PRESIDENT: That was just in case. So, we go to special resolution 9. Although can we call it special resolution 9?

THE SECRETARY: Yes, it's still special resolution 9.

JEAN LUKINS: You can call it resolution 3 (Special Resolution 9) and the previous two can be resolution 1 (3(a) and resolution 2 is 3(d).

THE SECRETARY: Mary gets the gist.

JEAN LUKINS: It is 3(a), 3(d) and 9 which – they were those and they become 1, 2 and 3.

JULIA JACOBIE: Louise says: "What?????" We can have that read out clearly

for you online and those in the room.

THE PRESIDENT: In any event, regardless of whether or not the proposed merger is adopted, to pass a special resolution to increase the annual subscription for Fellows, Members and Associates from January 2015 from £45 to £60 or £65, or to any other figure agreed at this meeting.

JULIA JACOBIE: Does that mean, even if BIVR stays as it is, the membership fee will still go up?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

THE SECRETARY: Or we can vote to scrub it.

JULIA JACOBIE: Did you get that, online people? This is the next thing we are voting on.

BETTY WILLETT: I would like to think that we would postpone that until we have made a decision on more important subjects.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Why?

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says: "Not understanding it". Louise: "That's what it sounds like". Nicole says: "What?" Natalie says: "Why are we voting on this?" and Nicole says she agrees with Betty.

THE SECRETARY: May I answer? The reason we are voting on it because it is in --

JULIA JACOBIE: The sound has gone. Can you still hear? We seem to have lost them all.

THE SECRETARY: We will just pause.

(Pause whilst Skype connection regained)

The question was, "Why are we voting on this?" It is because it is a special resolution on the agenda, number 9.

JULIA JACOBIE: Oh, it is part of the original AGM business.

THE SECRETARY: Yes, which was to pass a special resolution to increase the annual subs.

JULIA JACOBIE: I understand. I agree with Betty.

THE SECRETARY: Betty thought we shouldn't.

JEAN LUKINS: It says from January 2015, and if it's thought there is a need to increase the subs to even, say, £50, perhaps we should vote on that, because we don't know how long the discussions and merger will take. If Mary, for example, advises that it would be prudent to increase the subs by a small amount, then we can do that from next January, and this is the opportunity to do that.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I think in view of our Treasurer's report, I think we need to have an increase in fees.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I would say that. Just a small increase.

JULIA JACOBIE: Did you hear what Victoria said, guys online? She said in view of the Treasurer's report presented earlier today, that we should have an increase in fees, what, to £50?

VICTORIA DAVIES: What is it now, please?

THE SECRETARY: It's 45 now.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Sixty.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Sixty. It's about a fiver a month.

JULIA JACOBIE: It's a £15 increase.

VICTORIA DAVIES: It's £1 a month then.

JULIA JACOBIE: A lot of people are not going to want to go for that.

VICTORIA JACOBS. It's not a lot. It's £15 and it's 12 months a year.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: You are paying £5 a month professional membership.

THE SECRETARY: At £60 a year.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Are you proposing that, Miriam?

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I will propose it.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I will second it.

JULIA JACOBIE: Did you hear that, it's been proposed at £60 a year from January.

JEAN LUKINS: We can amend this at the next AGM, if necessary, but I think, for now, we need to do it.

JULIA JACOBIE: I just think that a lot of the problems that members have, those who are members of both organisations have to pay two fees at the same time of the year, closely followed by the NRCPD fee.

LOUISE PEPPER: What was in the Treasurer's report that was mentioned? I don't think I've seen that.

JULIA JACOBIE: Mary read it out this morning.

THE SECRETARY: It was e-mailed through in the latest newsletter. Yes, it was late. The bottom line is we have actually made, albeit only £2, a £2 loss of income over expenses in the last year, and we have cut expenses to the bone.

LOUISE PEPPER: Right. I just don't recall seeing that e-mail. Do you think you could resend it to me? Would that be okay?

THE SECRETARY: I will do, but I can't do it until I get home.

LOUISE PEPPER: No, obviously. Okay, thanks.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says she is against that.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Shall we vote then?

THE PRESIDENT: We are going to take a vote online first, please.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie is against it unless we merged.

BETTY WILLETT: That is the point I made, that it should wait until we merged.

THE PRESIDENT: Natalie is against. Ian and Georgina are for it. Nicole says: "As it is provisional", she is for it.

THE SECRETARY: It's not really provisional.

BETTY WILLETT: What figure are you voting for?

THE SECRETARY: £60.

JULIA JACOBIE: Louise abstains. Nicole says: "But we will decide the merger before".

JEAN LUKINS: No, we won't. It's January 2015.

JULIA JACOBIE: Which is when we are having the meeting.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Are we having the vote in the room now?

THE SECRETARY: In a minute.

JULIA JACOBIE: Nicole: "But we will decide a merger before". We probably won't have Nicole.

THE SECRETARY: Just to point out that we will not have had our adjourned (or whatever we call it) meeting before the January subs are due.

JULIA JACOBIE: This increase will take place before the meeting in January to decide the merger, or whatever.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I think the minutes will actually show that Paul's proposal that we voted on was "within six months". So, when we have had the consultation, if the consultation showed views more quickly one way or the other, we could have a meeting in September. We don't have to wait till January to discuss the merger, do we? If everybody agreed, "Yes, we'll go for it", or, "No, we're definitely against it", I don't see the point in having a meeting to discuss it if everyone was against it. We could do it in September, and then we have our AGM and re-set the fees in January.

This AGM we can say the fees will be £60 from January, assuming the consultation goes ahead before then. Then, we still have these fees of £60 from January, but we will know by then maybe if there is going to be a merger or not, and then at the next AGM we re-set the fees from January 2016. It may be it will, effectively, be an EGM to decide the merger or not. That might already have taken place before January. I don't see that the fees are conditional on whether there is a merger.

JULIA JACOBIE: Natalie says: "So will fees be set with or without merger? I am confused".

VICTORIA DAVIES: Yes, because we are still BIVR, aren't we?

JULIA JACOBIE: Until the merger is decided, this is still BIVR, so this is the BIVR fee we are talking about, as of January, when it becomes due in January 2015.

THE SECRETARY: 1st January 2015.

JULIA JACOBIE: The 1st January 2015 the new fee will be £60, if it gets voted in. Is that clearer, Natalie?

VICTORIA DAVIES: Nicole is now voting in favour.

JULIA JACOBIE: If we agree now that the fee should increase, it will take effect from 1st January 2015, unless the merger is agreed beforehand - is that how I understand it? - And then obviously a new fee would have to be agreed for the new organisation for the following year apparently, 2016. Does that make any more sense?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Let's take a vote in the room.

FRANCES DOBSON: Can I just ask for clarification on something?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have started the vote because the people online have voted. I don't think we can clarify it now. People in the room can we vote in favour? (*Show of hands*) Those against, please. Any abstentions? Two abstentions.

BETTY WILLETT: I am abstaining because I am a life member anyway, so it doesn't affect me.

JULIA JACOBIE: Nicole voted yes, in favour. Natalie voted against. Ian and George, do your earlier votes of in favour still stand? Yes, they do. So that's Georgina and Ian in favour.

THE SECRETARY: There are proxy votes that are valid for this point, and although people have the proxy votes, I've got the numbers here.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I vote mine in favour.

THE SECRETARY: I count nine in favour. Do you want me to count the votes against? I have nine for and eight against, on the proxy votes, because I ticked them off before I gave you the votes.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: I've got one against.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I've got three against.

VICTORIA DAVIES: I've got one for.

THE SECRETARY: There are eight against. I have given them out. There are nine for and eight against because I ticked off before I gave you the votes. It is counted here. I counted it. I put a tick and everybody who is ticked is nine.

JULIA JACOBIE: All the proxy votes have been counted.

THE SECRETARY: They are counted. I have just given them out. Nine for and eight against.

JULIA JACOBIE: So is it carried?

THE PRESIDENT: It is carried.

THE SECRETARY: I don't know the figures. You haven't given us the figures.

NEIL HOLLEY: The total figures are 24 are for, nine against, with three abstentions.

THE SECRETARY: Sorry, I forgot Paul's vote. Ten for. I beg your pardon. I didn't tick him because I thought he would be here.

NEIL HOLLEY: There's one extra, so that's 25.

JULIA JACOBIE: So that also included an extra proxy vote in favour, so 25 in favour, nine against, three abstentions.

THE SECRETARY: Is that a two-thirds majority of the number voting? It sounds like it to me. *(Pause)* Thirty-seven total, divide by three, multiply by two. Twenty-five in favour, so it's carried.

Now, the last item, it's the election to Council, which we now have to deal with. It was slightly pre-empted by your proposal to withdraw your nomination.

JULIA JACOBIE: Norma and Nicole's.

THE SECRETARY: You put them forward, but they must do their own.

JULIA JACOBIE: Nicole, I don't know if you heard what I said earlier, about myself, Norma and yourself, withdrawing from standing for nomination for the BIVR Council as it stands at the moment. Did you get that? And if so, do you agree? Nicole, do you agree to stand down? Nicole says: "Am I able to...? Are you able to get what?" Nicole says: "I am confused".

Hang on, you, me and Norma were put forward to be on the new merged Council, if the merger had gone ahead.

THE SECRETARY: Not actually, no. The nominations went out under BIVR's Mem and Arts to come on to the Council at this AGM.

JULIA JACOBIE: I understood it was only if the merger went ahead.

THE SECRETARY: If you felt it was only conditional on that, it wasn't strictly, but you have taken it as that and if you wish to withdraw, you may, but if Norma and/or Nicole do not wish to withdraw, they may still stand because their nominations have been accepted.

JULIA JACOBIE: Did you get that, Nicole?

THE SECRETARY: Nicole does not want to withdraw. Thank you, Nicole. What about Norma?

JULIA JACOBIE: She does want to withdraw.

THE SECRETARY: She does. Okay. In that case, we have one new member to Council.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: Nicole says she is happy either way.

THE PRESIDENT: So, may we have the votes online for?

NICOLE HARRISON: As long as there are no daggers at me.

THE SECRETARY: No, we don't need any vote. We haven't got enough. You only vote if there are more nominations than spaces, and we have plenty of spaces.

JULIA JACOBIE: So, Nicole, you are on the Council.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Welcome!

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Welcome to the Council.

THE SECRETARY: On the back page, the date of the next AGM.

THE PRESIDENT: Could we have a date?

THE SECRETARY: We haven't fixed one. The date of the next AGM has to be within 18 months of today's date, so May or June 2015. We have previously clashed with Deaf Awareness Week, which next year is Wednesday 6th to Tuesday 12th May, the FA Cup final, Saturday 30th May, and to also avoid Bank Holiday weekends. The early Bank Holiday weekend is May 4th and the Spring Bank Holiday is 25th May. We do not actually have to fix the date today. We can say "to be advised".

THE PRESIDENT: I think we should do that. Everybody is getting tired.

JEAN LUKINS: But we don't know what form it might take, so I think, if possible --

THE SECRETARY: "To be advised."

THE PRESIDENT: Is everyone in favour of that? Yes? Yes. Okay. Any other business?

JEAN LUKINS: I would like to propose a vote of thanks to Jean Gough and Louise for their sterling work. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: And also to Neil for his technical expertise.

LEAH WILLERSORF: Can I just say something, as the transcript goes out to all members, doesn't it? On the BIVR website, people are able to put profiles on in the Reporter Search, and that can be quite good when it comes to getting work. Thank you.

THE SECRETARY: So you want more people to put their profiles on?

LEAH WILLERSDORF: There's only about five.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you hear that on Skype?

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Oh, sorry.

THE PRESIDENT: Just a reminder to update your profiles on the BIVR website, so that you can be more prominent to get more work.

JULIA JACOBIE: I will have to go because I've got a train to catch. I will say goodbye to everybody on-line and I will see you soon, I am sure.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Julia, for all your help with the Skype.

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Can I say, a lot of today's discussion has been about the future of BIVR, in whatever guise. I think it is very important for us to realise that, in ten to 15 years' time, there may well be no pen writers as members of BIVR, or whatever a new organisation might be called, and BIVR, as the British Institute of Verbatim Reporters, must look to the way things are changing and bring audio verbatim reporters in?

As far as I know, there is no organisation of audio verbatim reporters, but I think it is something that BIVR, as our professional body, needs to bear in mind, that people will still want written transcripts in ten, 20, 30 years' time, and we need to be able to train people to do verbatim transcripts coming up in the future. And please edit what I have said so that it reads properly! *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: Perfectly! Thank you. I would endorse that as well, and I think it is something that we can take forward into the future.

NICOLE HARRISON: Nicole said, "That isn't verbatim".

MIRIAM WEISINGER: Intelligent verbatim, please!

BETTY WILLETT: I would like to propose a vote of thanks to our Chair, who has actually been marvellous today in the face of a very difficult meeting. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks for that. With that, we will close the meeting. Thanks all of you for coming and for all of your contributions. Thank you very much and goodbye. Safe journeys.

THE SECRETARY: Can I add, we have done CPD forms for the remote people. I would ask the people in the room to hand theirs in so that our President can countersign them, and then I can scan them in and send them through to you so that you have them.

LOUISE PEPPER: Thanks, Mary.

(The meeting concluded at 4.25pm)