

# **BRITISH INSTITUTE OF VERBATIM REPORTERS**

## **EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

via Zoom

on

Saturday, 19 February 2022

Present:

Leah Willersdorf (President)  
Georgina Ford (Vice President)  
Mary Sorene (Secretary)  
Mel Ball  
Alan Bell  
Miriam Boston (formerly Weisinger)  
Natalie Bracken  
Nicole Harrison  
Sheryll Holley  
Susan Humphries  
Mary Krelle  
Christine Lawton  
Ann Lloyd  
Rachel Lloyd  
Wendy Osmond  
Ian Roberts

PRESIDENT: Good morning, everybody. It's lovely to see you all here today and thank you for taking time out of your Saturday. If you see me looking down or around, it's just because I've got documents and cheat sheets all around me.

The first thing that we did at the last meeting was just basically ask if everyone could go on mute if you are not speaking. Then when someone is speaking – and I have a very bad habit of it myself – try not to interrupt and just jot down a point that you want to raise from what somebody says. Inevitably, though, it might happen, as you know, because we all know what our AGMs are like.

Apologies: I have had one apology from Victoria [Davies]. Has anybody else had any?

SECRETARY: Patricia Atherton, Nicola Dutton, John Larking, Robyn Nott, Pauline Miller, Julie Smith, Jennifer Sinnamon, and Orla Pearson.

PRESIDENT: Morning, Miriam. We have just begun.

We have had advanced notice from one or two of you that you can attend this part of the meeting but possibly not the afternoon. I will address it a little bit more later, but you'll still be able to have your vote because you've come to the morning, and just because you can't come to the afternoon, we're not going to discount your vote.

What we started out at the last meeting with as well was, I am going to run through the three main topics that are up for discussion. Then I am going to just give a quick timeline, which I didn't do at the last one, but I've been reading through the AGM transcript.

The three overarching topics: The first one is from the first two meetings, to reinstitute the Associateship for the AATs (the Transcribers) and the Scopists. That was raised between members and Council. The second one is a lower fee for the AATs and the Scopists, lower than a full member because we propose no voting rights – I say “we”, that’s the outcome from the meetings that we’ve had; so, no voting rights, not being on Council, or President, but can sit on the working groups that we have. That was a question raised by the Council at the AGM last year which then led us into the third topic which is allowing the Transcribers to use respeaking or voice writing in their day-to-day work and also the exam. That came about, as I say, as a result of the AGM and members were basically saying is it the method of input that matters if the output is to the same exacting standards that we as the Institute expect of our members.

The timeline events of all of this – it has been going on for quite a while, I have to say – it first started in 2014 at the AGM and it was raised by a member. I am just going to read you one sentence from that where the member said: “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.” That was 2014.

Then at the AGM 2015 this was raised at length, and it also included the possibility of limiting the numbers of Transcribers and Scopists on Council and that they weren’t to outnumber shorthand writers. Then there was the proposal twice, for the topic to be discussed in earnest.

Then we had the AGM in 2016 and again it was discussed at length. I am just going to say for the record that it was pages 26 through to more or less the end, which was 44 pages.

Then we had the AGM in 2017 where there were a number of Special Resolutions done to Memorandum & Articles of Association where we made it more gender-neutral, so we changed “him” to – I can’t remember what we put, to be honest, but we also changed things like “pen writer” and “machine writer” to “stenography”. Then, also, it was adding in the AATs and the Scopists. Those were technically voted on through the Mem & Arts.

That brings us up to date to last year’s AGM where we now have all those topics to discuss.

Does anybody want to go first on their opinions? We could hear from, perhaps, Natalie and Wendy because you haven’t attended one of the consultations, if you fancy going first? You don’t have to. Just asking. Silence. Anybody?

Shall I pick a topic? Shall we go through the topics first? I think the big issue people have is, is it about the method of the input in order to get the exact output that stenographers do.

Miriam.

MIRIAM BOSTON: The input method does not matter. What is output does. That is what our standards should be concerned with. It’s the final product. How you get there – there’s lots of roads that lead to London, if you wish to go to London. How you get there doesn’t really matter. It’s the end product that’s got to be the high quality. Get someone to type it for you.

PRESIDENT: Also, I think, from the last meeting as well, the big topic was ensuring that we keep the human element. It can’t be --

MIRIAM BOSTON: Okay. It's not AI. You've got to have a human input element somewhere.

PRESIDENT: Yes, so we had to keep making the distinction between speech recognition, which is human, for example Dragon, and then the ASR, the automatic speech recognition, which is the computer doing the work.

MIRIAM BOSTON: Yes.

PRESIDENT: That was the big thing. It is the human element; either it is the machine, your pen, or your voice.

MIRIAM BOSTON: Yes. Exactly.

PRESIDENT: Natalie and then Wendy.

NATALIE BRACKEN: That's really good that you cleared that up. That was my main issue that I had and commented on, was that we are finding that, especially through Zoom, the client is ticking the live transcription which produces the transcript of everything that's said. Are people then going to be using that as a substitute transcript? I don't want to encourage clients to be using the transcript that's from Zoom. This is more in the Speech-to-Text world anyway, but that was my concern.

Of those three things that Miriam just said, I'm happy with those. I don't have an issue with those. Mine was about if we're allowing – because it did come up – somebody was talking about transcription that they used that was taken from the live transcript from Zoom that

the computer produced, not us, not a human. That was my issue and that was why I wanted to attend today, just to say that I don't agree with that, the artificial intelligence, but voice writers, I don't have a problem with any of those things. I'm sorry that had come across before from me, but that's my main issue with that.

PRESIDENT: It's definitely keeping the human element. There's nothing automatic. We don't want anything automatic about anything. I think, Rachel, you gave the example last time, and perhaps in the first one, where if someone was having problems with their wrist, they could type for a certain amount of time but they needed to supplement that by using a bit of the Dragon in there. Is that the right example, Rachel?

RACHEL LLOYD: I think Miriam said that last week.

PRESIDENT: Oh, sorry.

RACHEL LLOYD: I did a bit of that, but Miriam then pointed out if you couldn't use your hands to type, then you might use your voice. Inclusivity.

PRESIDENT: Yes. It was Miriam. Sorry I mis-remembered that. Wendy, did you want to add anything?

WENDY OSMOND: I was just really going to ask a question and clarify because I am not quite sure. I agree with Miriam and I agree totally about the input doesn't matter. Yes, anything could happen to any of us, and we've got a great skill set, whatever the method is, really, there's still a lot of skills beyond that. I do agree with all that. I was just really

checking, are you only talking – I keep seeing that it's audio transcribers. Are we only talking about non-live work here, or are you talking about live work as well?

PRESIDENT: I think we're talking about non-live.

WENDY OSMOND: That's what I took it as from all the documents, but I just thought...

MELANIE BALL: I don't see how somebody who is audio typing could possibly do it live, really, not if they're to take every word down.

ALAN BELL: We do have to remember we don't have them yet but we could have respeakers appearing. That would be live.

WENDY OSMOND: That's what I'm asking, really. Is this going to cover all aspects? I can see a situation in the future, say, or arbitrations where you have interpreters in a booth, you could have a respeaker in a booth. Is that going to be a separate thing again? What are we talking about now? Are we purely talking about from audio is my question really, because that makes a difference on how you might put it on things, whether you're talking about live work as well?

PRESIDENT: I don't think we're talking about the respeakers. That's been my perception from the get-go. Say, for Miriam and her company, they do the regulatory health, for example. You would get the audio. I personally would see...

[Zoom connection issue.]

WENDY OSMOND: You've lost your link.

PRESIDENT: ...does that make sense?

ALAN BELL: We lost you for a moment there, Leah.

PRESIDENT: Where did you lose me at? Basically, I've been going along as though it's audio transcribing, not live.

WENDY OSMOND: Great. I think as long as that's clear. I just want – if I'm debating on something like this, I think it should be – and we could always talk about the others at another time, but I just wanted to make it that it will be really explicit that that is what we are talking about at the moment.

PRESIDENT: Do other Council members agree that that is the theme you've been going along as well?

ALAN BELL: Yes. That's what we've been discussing, isn't it? I just threw in the mention of respeakers because although we don't have them yet, people may start to do that.

GEORGINA FORD: I think we haven't even considered anything other than the method being used for doing the tape transcripts. We haven't even considered the live thing. I certainly wouldn't want to encourage that method in a live scenario at all. We were just thinking along the audio transcription because we can't actually see how somebody is producing a transcript from audio. We're not sitting over their shoulder so, for all we know, they could be using their voice to do it, whereas it's a bit more obvious if you're doing it live



because you can hear someone doing respeaking. We have only really ever considered it from the point of view of audio. It's really good that you raised that, Wendy, because we can make sure that is explicit going forward. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wendy. Thanks for coming. Ann, did you want to add anything on that one?

ANN LLOYD: No, I didn't really want to add anything on it. If it's audio transcribers that we're solely talking about, then what part of the membership would they come under? Would they still be called BIVR?

PRESIDENT: Yes. I think that's the plan, to reinstitute the Associateship, but Georgina's got her hand up.

GEORGINA FORD: When we're talking about membership, we want to reinstate the Associateship, but the Associateship is as an associated profession. Rather than being "I am a BIVR member", it's "I am in an associated profession with BIVR." Do you see what I mean?

ANN LLOYD: I do because I think you need to lose the "verbatim" bit if they're not actually doing it as you do it live, if it's all from audio.

GEORGINA FORD: I think what we need to look at is --

MELANIE BALL: Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt there. I don't agree with that because verbatim means taking it down word for word.

ANN LLOYD: That is exactly what I'm saying. That's exactly my point.

MELANIE BALL: Even if they're typing it up, they'll still be doing it word for word, in a different environment.

ANN LLOYD: They're not doing it live, are they?

MELANIE BALL: Verbatim has nothing to do with live. The actual word means taking it down word for word.

ANN LLOYD: All right.

PRESIDENT: I made the mistake last time of harping back to the definition of the old associates that we had and Georgina was quick to remind me that we are not doing it that way. It's a whole new definition of "associate". Maybe that needs to be made clearer.

ANN LLOYD: Yes.

MIRIAM BOSTON: Can I just say that I think the confusion is using the word "live" to mean live as in if you're doing it as a human, you are live, you're alive. You're doing it live. I think the difference is between producing an instantaneous transcript instantly. That's the difference from what I can see. Whether you're taking notes down at a hearing and typing them the next day, or typing them there and then, you're still doing it. It's live. You're taking down live, and you're listening to live words when you're transcribing an audio recording. It's still live. It's live words. You're not editing a previously – you're not editing

like a Teams live transcript. You're not editing. I'm sure that's where some of the confusion is. You're doing it live but – it's live or producing the transcript at the same time.

ANN LLOYD: I don't think it is live, Miriam, because it's not appearing on screen live, is it, around all the clients' screens?

MIRIAM BOSTON: But if you're doing a write-out and you're doing it with pen shorthand writers, you're producing a transcript at the end of the day. That is considered live, but it's not coming up on the screen, it's coming down as squiggles on a piece of paper.

ANN LLOYD: So it's not live, is it?

MIRIAM BOSTON: But you're a verbatim reporter.

ANN LLOYD: I know, I know. But there's a difference, you see. That's just my point. It's what's coming up live, what clients are seeing instantaneously is what's live. What they're seeing at the end of day has happened hours earlier. It's not live.

MELANIE BALL: It's live in the sense that the reporters are input – if it's a three-man team like we used to have in the old days, the three split it and they do their turn back in the office. That is live because they are in court live and they come back and do the transcripts as the others are doing their turns, so it is live to that extent.

ANN LLOYD: They're taking it down as it happens. That's live, I agree, yes.

GEORGINA FORD: I think we need to distinguish here between realtime, which is what we do with screen and use another word for “live”. You’re present at the proceeding as it’s happening.

MELANIE BALL: “In person” maybe.

ANN LLOYD: Good one.

IAN ROBERTS: And “word for word”.

GEORGINA FORD: And word for word. We need to make sure that we have the definitions absolutely right, in that case. We’ve got “realtime”, which we will use for work when it comes up on the screen. Then we need the word for you’re there in person doing it at the time as opposed to what an audio transcriber does --

IAN ROBERTS: Which is still verbatim.

GEORGINA FORD: -- which is still verbatim. I’m trying to think of a word to describe it that we can easily slot in.

NICOLE HARRISON: Natalie had her hand up for quite a while. Did you want to say something?

PRESIDENT: Yes. I was just going to say to that --

NATALIE BRACKEN: Don’t worry, because it’s not about this discussion.

PRESIDENT: Personally, I've lost track. Sorry. Realtime, as you say, is on screen. What are we referring to the "in person" as? Is that in the example of what we used to call a write-out? It's not on a screen but it's not realtime.

MIRIAM BOSTON: Yes. It's any in-person hearing. It doesn't have to be a write-out. It can be you attend an AGM and take a verbatim shorthand note.

PRESIDENT: Then the delayed transcript is the typing up from audio? Because that's technically delayed, isn't it?

MELANIE BALL: It doesn't have to be typing up from audio because if you go to a hearing and they don't want the transcript for five days, say, you take it down now and then you go and you translate your notes in Eclipse and you do it like that. You maybe check things from audio, but you're not doing it from an audio feed, really.

PRESIDENT: But an audio transcriber would be. Or am I lost?

WENDY OSMOND: May I jump in? This comes back to what I was raising the first time I raised it, really. I think so much of this comes down to are we live and "in person" is slightly – I mean, I use "live" as a shorthand for not necessarily meaning realtime, meaning more like a write-out. I think what it comes down to, all of this, is how quickly the transcript is turned around. So maybe we should talk about – in terms of live in this case, and it doesn't have to be in person because you could be remote, you're still doing a realtime job, so perhaps we should talk about daily as in – that's different to me – a daily job to an audio transcription. I don't know if that would still be enough of a distinction.

PRESIDENT: You could do daily or delayed.

WENDY OSMOND: Because it would be very difficult to do audio transcription, unless you've got a massive team, to turn around a full day job in a day, wouldn't it?

MIRIAM BOSTON: We do from audio.

WENDY OSMOND: But do you have teams of people?

MIRIAM BOSTON: We have three, sometimes four. We get the audio feed every half an hour and we produce the transcript by the end of the working day, or 8 o'clock in the morning normally, but we've been doing that recently. That is how we do it. We're not there. We're getting an audio feed over internet. We're transcribing, producing a daily transcript.

WENDY OSMOND: That's great. What I'm saying is that's the same as a daily, a three-man teamwork, say, but a three-man team write-out wouldn't be considered the same as a writer who can work with an editor and got the transcript out all day.

MIRIAM BOSTON: What's the editor doing? The person?

WENDY OSMOND: No, I agree.

MIRIAM BOSTON: No, what's the editor doing? The editor is normally listening to the audio feed and correcting the infelicities that have been taken down by the stenographer.

WENDY OSMOND: I agree.

MIRIAM BOSTON: What I am saying is the editor is working from audio.

WENDY OSMOND: I agree with you, Miriam. I totally agree. I'm saying that's two people --

MIRIAM BOSTON: We've got over-inflated egos of ourselves as stenographers and verbatim reporters. We are not -- that is our biggest problem, I think.

WENDY OSMOND: Can I just finish what I'm saying? What I'm saying is that if two people can turn around a transcript in day, that's a different skill to three people turning round a transcript in a day. I'm not saying this should even come into it, I'm just trying to clarify things, really. I'm just saying there are different levels of how fast a transcript can be turned around by how many people, and surely that means that you've got different classes of certification.

I totally agree that three people typing on a QWERTY keyboard, if you can turn around a transcript in a day, that's exactly the same as a three-man team doing it by steno or any other means. I'm not disputing that. I'm just saying the fewer people there are producing a daily transcript -- you're taking about a different skill, aren't you? So, I just want to be clear here that --

MIRIAM BOSTON: Sorry but some of the rubbish I see produced by machine writers is unbelievable. I want the end product -- I do not care, as long as there's human involvement

in producing the transcript, that is all that matters. That is what matters. A three-man team of audio transcribers costs the client a lot less than a two-man team of stenographers.

WENDY OSMOND: I keep on saying you need three people to do that.

MELANIE BALL: It doesn't really matter what class of writer you are, what way you produce it, as long as you're in person. You can all do different exams through the Institute. It doesn't say you're a LiveNote writer, or to say you're this, you're that. But the fundamental difference is people who are audio typists, doing it from something that's recorded on day 1, they may be getting the transcript sent to them on day 2 and then starting to type. That is a different skill because it's nothing to do with producing it live. It's a delayed process. That's fundamentally, I think, the difference.

PRESIDENT: Natalie, do you want to say what you were going to say? Then I'm going to read out, for Mary's benefit, some of the comments on the Chat.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I'm just getting a bit confused about this whole conversation. So there's going to be a vote this afternoon and it's on possibly three new categories; is that correct? For however many – possibly an Associateship membership? No? Am I wrong?

PRESIDENT: Yes. For an Associate membership, which is only audio transcribers and scopists.

I'm not quite sure about all this live thing because, surely, we're talking about either it's contemporaneous, that you were there at the time, or it's post-production. Because we often get an email after the client has seen our text – I'm talking about Speech-to-Text here



– so the client has seen our text and then we get an email saying, “Please can you send me a transcript of the thing?” That’s a totally different thing because it’s either you can send an unedited or an edited one.

I thought this discussion was about the final product. It’s not actually when or where or who did it, but the quality that they’re going to be assessed. There’s going to be some criteria from BIVR that whoever then audio transcribes – I’ve forgotten the categories – that they are going to be having to adhere to that quality standard. Is that not what this is about? I’m just getting a bit confused what this is about.

PRESIDENT: We have got a little muddled. It is three things: It is the reinstating of the Associateship for those --

NATALIE BRACKEN: That was my initial question, sorry. Why did we do away with that in the first place?

PRESIDENT: We did away with that because we had members – and this was, I read it recently, I think it was the 2016 AGM, where the Associate members were just plodding along as Associates. They weren’t full members, so they had no voting rights.

NATALIE BRACKEN: So they hadn’t taken the test?

PRESIDENT: No. They were able to associate themselves with BIVR. In our Mem & Arts it actually said that an Associate is an Associate for three years, then they must take the exam.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I remember it now.

PRESIDENT: We hadn't followed our own rules, so then we got rid of that. Now it will be a whole new definition of what an Associate is. It's not an Associate for a stenographer; it's for the other two categories. That's one topic. Then the other one is a lower fee/no voting rights. Then the third was the method, the input; does the input matter.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Fine. That's clearer. I just wasn't sure that I was understanding this conversation.

PRESIDENT: In the Chat – actually, let me just go back. I want to add this in. Mary, I think Orla's on a plane, so she can't come. Maybe if we can put Orla as an apology.

I'm just going to read this from the screen. Orla says: "My feelings have always been around this: that it doesn't matter what method you use to produce the bulk text, it's the finished product and its quality that is the main function of a transcriber." Just to put that on the record.

Then we have, Alan mentioned in the chat that: "We are in danger of excluding the pen writers from the profession."

Alan again: "I remember working at the IDRC and seeing John Larking's team typing from audio in another hearing."

Then Georgina says: "For today's purposes we do have to define "live" or "realtime" to decide whether an audio transcriber can be an Associate."

Yes, then we are being side-tracked.

I think, from the way I've been thinking, it's just like Natalie said, the comment, I think you said, was post-production. To me, it's after it's happened. That's my thinking. That's how I've always thought of it, of this category.

Anyone else differ?

GEORGINA FORD: I really like Natalie's contemporaneous and post-production. I think that's what I was struggling for. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Has that helped, Wendy, or no? Or has it still muddied the waters? I know that you're struggling and I'm struggling to understand what you're actually meaning. Everyone's struggling.

WENDY OSMOND: No, sorry, I don't want to confuse the issue. I'm just trying to - I think Miriam was saying - that's what I'm saying, really. I feel there is confusion over it. I'm not sure it matters. I agree, I'm not sure it matters for this discussion as long as - if it's described as Audio Transcribers, then fine. I think audio - I don't know. I don't know if it does matter, but I think it may cause problems in future if it's not very clear. I hate to think that I've upset Miriam. I was actually agreeing with what she was saying, really. I'm just saying there are different levels, aren't there, of how quickly - I don't know. I've said it, I guess.

PRESIDENT: You may be thinking of eventually if and when we ever have respeakers and voice writers, then that would be a totally different thing.

WENDY OSMOND: Yes. I think it's a bit short-sighted not to – if you're having this discussion, everyone keeps saying "in the future, in the future". Well, this is happening. This is massively happening now. I feel like I'm just muddying it and I don't need to, if everyone else is clear and it's fine and everyone's happy at this level.

PRESIDENT: We need you to be clear as well because you're as important as anybody else.

WENDY OSMOND: To be honest, I think Orla said this at the previous thing and everyone seems to be disagreeing with this and saying it has to be person, not machine. I think Orla's email just alluded to it then. Up to a point, I agree, it would be very nice if we said it should be people only and not machine, but as you said, who is going to know. I suppose you're going to be certified one way or the other, but actually, if you're saying what matters is the final product and if there's a piece of software that you can run three hours of audio through and it will give you a first run at it and so you've only got to edit it and you can edit it to a really high standard, you're doing the job, aren't you?

GEORGINA FORD: The point is that we can't examine a computer; we can only examine the people.

WENDY OSMOND: But you wouldn't be examining the computer. You'd be examining the result that that person has edited. You're basically scoping. It's a scopists job, isn't it?

GEORGINA FORD: Yes, that would be scoping. That's in a different category altogether. The point is that the majority of the work is being done by, let's say for now, the stenographer. The scopist that works alongside/with you to produce your daily transcript is the associated profession enabling you to do more work. A scopist, in your scenario, if

they're editing the ASR, they're not assisting a stenographer who has produced that initial draft; therefore, they don't have a place with us because they're working through a machine, not a human being. Do you see what I mean?

WENDY OSMOND: I do, but I still say – everyone says it's about the end product and the end product is going to be the same whether you scope for a stenographer or whether you scope for a machine.

GEORGINA FORD: But that end product then has nothing to do with us. It's not our purview. Not our interest in what the ASR is. We want to keep the standards high of our members who are mainly going to be the stenographers producing final product.

WENDY OSMOND: I'd like it to be that way, but I just think it is slightly unrealistic, really, but I think – I'm thinking further down the line, and I don't think I need to, that's all. I'm just thinking of the people who will come later and say, "Well, I can do a perfectly good scopist job."

GEORGINA FORD: No, it's very good to raise that issue now because we've had a brief discussion about it. It's marked down now. We've recorded that you've raised this issue and it may well be something that we'll have to look at in the future. For the moment, we're still taking baby steps towards the other associated profession, as it were, and we are not that far down the line yet.

WENDY OSMOND: Yes.

GEORGINA FORD: Who knows how technology is going to be changed, but it's important that you've raised it.

PRESIDENT: It's very valuable. Wendy, don't go away from here thinking you've muddied the waters, because you haven't. Not at all. Far from it.

WENDY OSMOND: All right. I'll shut up. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Melanie, did that cat want to say something?

MELANIE BALL: I've forgotten now what I wanted to say, so just carry on.

ALAN BELL: If I can just say it's very valuable to have the discussion. We welcome all of the views because otherwise we're just coming up with things as Council, and presenting them to you, and you're thinking what on earth have they been talking about? That's why we want to hear what you're saying, so this is very valuable.

PRESIDENT: We don't always think of every eventuality.

Natalie?

NATALIE BRACKEN: I'm just wondering who this is aimed at, then. Is it that we want new people to come into the profession to be audio typists that would solely be audio typist people, or you're saying it's stenographers? I'm just a bit unsure. I'm assuming there's exams to do to become a member.

PRESIDENT: It's a bit of both. For example, I think he was going to come today but he's a principal, John Larking, and he has a lot of audio transcribers who he would like to be BIVR members. Now, we are unsure if they've ever been BIVR members before or not, so that's a whole other different kettle of fish, but also – where are we? 2022. I think in 2020 we had two people who were going to sit the AAT, but we weren't quite ready for that because we didn't have the exam set up and everything, and then we didn't have any category for them. That is also what prompted all of this, but they've gone away now.

I don't think it's going to thousands of people wanting to come and be members of BIVR as an AAT, but surely that's something we could eventually go around and approach companies and perhaps say: "Have your people come and do our exams and be accredited and get the BIVR seal of approval, for audio transcribers." We need to keep that – we're all about standards as well, so we want that standard to be high and maintained. Do you see what I mean? Does that make sense? It's all about wanting to make sure that transcription is being properly conducted. Yes. That's right.

The overarching position of the Institute is that we produce verbatim transcripts. I mean, how many times have people been asked to go along – it comes through the Reporter Search sometimes, can you come along and do a précis transcript? No because that's a separate skill in itself and we're verbatim. I wouldn't know how to do a précis transcript. I wouldn't want to because how do I know what I'm leaving out isn't important for them?

ALAN BELL: Absolutely. I did a couple of jobs in France several years ago and it was a big corporation's Works Council Meeting, and they came back to me from the French agency, after the third time I'd been there, and said: Oh, they really don't want all of these words. Well, why did you book me? I'm not a minute-taker.

PRESIDENT: They can make their own précis from the verbatim.

I am wondering if that whole discussion was the third topic, which is the method.

We are not voting at the moment, but at the end, that's when you have – me personally, I'm Switzerland. I can see both sides. I'll have to make my mind up when it comes to the vote, basically. That's just me.

What do people think about having them in as Associates, as an associate of the profession of stenography and also having a lower fee than the full members, and no voting rights? We do want contributions, though, so they could sit on sub-committees and working groups and things. How do people feel about that?

ALAN BELL: Attend AGMS and make contributions.

PRESIDENT: Yes. Associates always, notoriously, can't vote at the AGMs as well. The same.

Anybody? Nobody?

MELANIE BALL: This is just audio typists and scopists that we're talking about at the minute, isn't it?

PRESIDENT: Yes.



MELANIE BALL: I think they shouldn't have voting rights; they should be associates. And they can sit on sub-committees and things, that's fine.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I don't know. To me, maybe this will be a bit controversial, I don't see – either you're in or you're not, and thinking of it from their point of view, I don't see why they wouldn't have voting rights if they're an accredited associate member and, also, I don't see why they shouldn't pay the same fee. If they're going to be earning money producing transcripts, I don't understand why they would pay a lesser fee, unless, if they weren't having the voting rights, then I think there probably should be a lesser fee. I just would go with the majority, but those are just my thoughts.

MELANIE BALL: Mary, in the olden days, when we had them come in as Associates, did we have voting rights then? In the old category of Associateship where you had to do your first exam?

SECRETARY: The original Associates did not have voting rights because it was a temporary measure. It was just a three-year associateship to allow them to work and learn more of their trade, to hone their skills, and take the membership. But as Leah said earlier, we rather slipped up on that. Presidents past, for 20 years, didn't make them/force them to take the membership until it was discussed in, I think you said, 2016. Then they were given three years from that date to take their membership exam. Some did, some didn't, so we lost a few, but we gained some members and they have voting rights as full members. Associates never could vote.

PRESIDENT: So then if these were Associates, there's no step up whereas with before they basically come in – could equate it to an internship. Do you know what I mean? They had

a step up. There was a step after, but now there won't be a step because they can't really go any further. Unless they want to become stenographers.

GEORGINA FORD: I think, actually, the reason for suggesting a lower fee was because generally a scopist would be earning less money than a stenographer. Would it be fair to charge them the same amount if they're not making the same amount of money? That's just really a consideration. Also, if you're not being given voting rights as a full member, should you still pay the same amount? That's up to – if people think they should pay the same amount, that's voting, but that is the reasoning behind it.

PRESIDENT: I think somebody else, when this consultation first started – I can't remember who it was, so I can't even name them – but I think they sent Mary an email saying they felt that if someone was in BIVR, then they pay the full whack and have the voting rights. Let me get the actual wording of the EGM Special Resolution.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: Just a thought but could you have two categories: if you want voting rights, you pay the full whack; if you don't want voting rights, you pay a reduced fee.

PRESIDENT: Hmm? Yes. I'm just thinking. We don't then need to distinguish their acronym because they're still an AAT. Just thinking out loud. And an AS. It makes perfect sense to me, but then, I'm just putting myself in that position, what you're basically saying is if they wanted voting rights, you pay for it. Okay. Yes, Rachel?

RACHEL LLOYD: But then all members of BIVR might also request the same thing. I don't want my voting rights, so can I pay the lower fee?

PRESIDENT: Oh, yes.

MELANIE BALL: This might be controversial. What if we bring them in as Associates and then after two years or something, they can opt to be members in which case they have to pay the full fee and become a voting rights member and they have to show us a level of expertise in the field?

PRESIDENT: That goes to the next point of them, if they're full members, they're actually then eligible to be on Council/President. That was something that I think the general consensus was to either limit the numbers or just not allow it. I think that's part of the vote.

I'm just going to – Ian, do you want to read out what you said [in the chat] and I can just quickly read this EGM Notice?

IAN ROBERTS: All I was saying was I've got no strong feelings either way about whether you have full voting rights or it's a lower fee. But I think a lot of people do have very strong feelings about it and the only way it's going to vote through is if the new associates have no voting rights and it would be only fair to charge them a lower fee in that circumstance. People just won't go for it, voting rights and the full membership.

That was everything.

RACHEL LLOYD: Why don't you put it in as something that would be reviewed internally on Council after a few years?

MELANIE BALL: Or bring them in as Associates and then see if they make representations after a while to say, "Why can't we be members? Why can't we be on Council?" and take it from there. Then have a discussion at that time.

PRESIDENT: You're saying deal with it as and when?

GEORGINA FORD: We might not get anybody who wants to come in anyway. I think we've got one scopist who wasn't a stenographer to start with, that's it. I've had a couple of my scopists who are interested in being members because they want to broaden the pool of people they work for. It may well be we just don't get the numbers where we have to worry about is the profession being taken over by people who aren't actually stenographers.

PRESIDENT: That will probably happen but when we're all gone, I think; let them deal with it.

Looking at the Special Resolution as it is and, also, before I go on to it, we have put a caveat in this Notice that we can amend the Special Resolutions today without having to give further written notice to the members, just so everybody's aware of that. It's just a tweaking of things. Not big changes, I don't think, but Mary can correct me on that.

It does say, as it currently reads, that they'll be eligible to volunteer to work on Institute working groups and/or sub-committees, not eligible to serve on the Council nor to vote. That's its current reading. That's what we'll be voting on, I think.

Natalie?

NATALIE BRACKEN: I don't know. It's just about the fee thing more than anything because, whoever these people are going to be, they're going to be able to use the fact that they are an ABIVR, or whatever. They're going to have the title and exams of BIVR, and just because they don't have voting rights, like you say, they can still have an input, they can give their views on things. They just wouldn't be able to vote. I just don't see why they don't pay the same as everybody else. But that's just my view. I just think it gives a bit more credence to the whole thing, rather than you are less, you pay half because you're not going to vote on anything, so you're almost – you don't have a say in anything we actually do, but we want half your money whereas – I don't know about the voting rights thing. I think there possibly – I think Rachel said there that maybe it should be reviewed so that they know they could have voting rights at some point, but let them see the workings of BIVR first, for maybe a year even. Maybe not have it two years or three years; have it just after a year. Let them come to the AGM. Offer them to come and let them see the workings of BIVR. Then, after that year then they possibly have the voting rights if BIVR members agree.

GEORGINA FORD: How much is membership at the moment? Is it £120?

NATALIE BRACKEN: Hmm.

GEORGINA FORD: I'm just actually messaging one of my scopists who was interested. I'm just going to ask her the question, see if she gets back to me, if she'd pay the full amount and what she'd want for it.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Hmm. Would they have access to the jobs list? You know what I mean? If they're actually gaining work through being an Associate.

PRESIDENT: I think they'd have to have their own dedicated bit like there is with the pen writers' bit on there now.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Fine.

PRESIDENT: Currently on the website there's a dropdown that says: Why be a BIVR Member? That includes being on the Find a Professional. I would have thought that should be allowed. Also, for Scopists. Because, and I've said this at one of the other AGMs, my current scopist, if she's on holiday and I need a scopist, I could go to BIVR knowing that that Scopist has passed at the BIVR standards and be comfortable in the fact they know what they're doing. Do you know what I mean? Rather than just getting some – not someone off the street, but someone who might be on Case CATalyst but I don't know what they're work is like; so it helps members as well as members of the public, so to speak. If that makes sense.

RACHEL LLOYD: If you don't give them voting rights and you make them an Associate and then something crops up, like this, where you need to change something, then they can't vote on something that's pertaining to their skill. That would be a problem.

MELANIE BALL: But they could put forward their views and we could take their views into account and that might sway us in our vote.

RACHEL LLOYD: What would be their incentive? Similarly, with the voting. If you're in an Institute and you can't vote for whom you want to be the President, what's the incentive? I'm just trying to think of things affecting the voting rights definitely.

MELANIE BALL: I think if we bring them in for a certain amount of time as Associates, and we can debate one year, two years, whatever, and then allow them to become members with voting rights if they meet the standard. If it turns out their work is really bad or something, then maybe don't offer them that.

RACHEL LLOYD: Probation or something?

MELANIE BALL: Yes.

RACHEL LLOYD: As a new area?

MELANIE BALL: That's what the Associateship basically was to start with, when we first started years and years ago.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I think that's a really good point, Rachel, that if I was joining an organisation and I couldn't have a say in my bit of that organisation, I'd think why, what's the point if I have no say?

RACHEL LLOYD: You wouldn't want to think of that.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Say I'm even already working myself anyway and working for an agency, the couple around that use transcribers and stuff, then why, what's the benefit of joining BIVR if I'm just going to pay a half a fee and I've got no say in anything that's to do with my profession.

RACHEL LLOYD: You'd also have to make sure in the Reporter Search that you've got – that you'd let other companies know, "Oh, hey, we've got audio transcribers now." It needs to be from both ends, doesn't it?

PRESIDENT: Rachel, for my benefit, could you just say again, what you started out that comment with? I only wrote down, "Don't give voting rights, but..." Sorry.

RACHEL LLOYD: If you don't give somebody voting rights and then something crops up pertaining to their skill, or group, and they can't vote, that may cause an issue. It isn't fair.

PRESIDENT: So you're saying, basically, give them voting rights.

RACHEL LLOYD: Not saying either way but that would be a reason to give them voting rights at some point, like now, I agree with Melanie, after a certain period.

IAN ROBERTS: How about voting rights for when the subject comes up that specifically pertains to that branch of the profession?

MELANIE BALL: That's just what I was going to say, Ian. Maybe we can have an Extraordinary Resolution, or whatever you have to have, to say, on this one occasion, for this one topic, we will accept votes from Associates because it affects them more than it does writers, or whatever.

PRESIDENT: I think that would have to be written into the Mem & Arts. I could be wrong but Mary will know. Everything seems to be in the Mem & Arts, it's just the rules of how meetings are run. I think that would require specific wording, but that makes sense.



Natalie. And then I want to read out something Chris Lawton said.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I just don't understand it. When I joined BIVR, I think I sat an English test and then I had to do a realtime – like a test, and then transcribe it. Then I became a member, I passed that. If they're going to be doing a similar kind of thing, why then would they not pay the correct fee and have full voting rights?

PRESIDENT: I think the whole thing about the voting rights – and Council will correct me if I'm wrong – is that there was a fear – since going back in the AGM transcripts, there's a feeling that one day Council could potentially be overrun by non-stenographers, basically, not shorthand writers of any sort and that the Institute – and I think Betty was the one who initially raised it. I think at one point we even, a number of years ago, referred to percentages, that there couldn't be more than 10% of Council made up of AATs, as an example. You don't set a number but you set a percentage because you never know how many people are going to be on Council in any one given year. I think that's why the no voting rights came in. The suggestion of that has been around so that Council isn't outnumbered by non-stenographers.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Either you say, okay, only one member of Council can be an Associate, or you just say only members of BIVR can be on Council. Wouldn't that solve that?

PRESIDENT: Could do, actually.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Especially if you're going to review it in maybe a year's time, or whenever you choose to, but then, if they want to try and become a full member, to get

those voting rights, but – well, not to get voting rights, to be able to go on Council. Probably most of them don't even want to be on Council. They probably just want to work and have the BIVR thing.

PRESIDENT: Did it seem like we're making a little bit too much out of nothing with the voting rights and the fees and stuff? Let them have it – I don't mean that horribly, do you know what I mean? Let them have it all. Give them the world, so to speak, but limit, like you said, Natalie, the actual number, like one or two – one or whatever, or the percentage? If that's what people here today are going to agree, then we have to amend this Special Resolution 1, which we can do because it's just deleting words, which is a minor tweak which is what we've said we can do.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Actually, thinking a bit more about it, it might be an idea to actually have one on Council so that you have their views. We have on AVSTTR, we have an unregistered person on or we've had a student on. We've limited it to one. That might be an idea because to get their views on things, like the exams and that kind of thing, rather than just having them on working groups, I don't know, because it's just either you're in or you're not.

PRESIDENT: Yes. Like a representative from that category of the membership is then on the Council is what you're saying?

NATALIE BRACKEN: Yes.

MELANIE BALL: Do we need to have one from Scopists and one Audio Typists? Because their things may be different.

PRESIDENT: I think that's a good idea, to allow one of each.

Just before I go back to the Special Resolution, Christine Lawton says: "Would they have to pass a theory exam before they could be admitted to full membership and consequently have full voting rights?"

Chris, all the membership exams now have a theory component. I think I'm right, Georgina?

GEORGINA FORD: (Nods).

PRESIDENT: We have a bank of multiple-choice questions that they'll have to do. I think we have to have a day of training and give a booklet, and that sort of thing. It's a big thing still to do for us.

GEORGINA FORD: I just wanted to say, I've had a response from my scopist, and she says: "I suppose it depends how much the fee is and what the voting rights I wouldn't have would be for."

PRESIDENT: We didn't think of that, did we?

RACHEL LLOYD: Just a separate thought, but as you've got student steno members, would you have Student Associate members who are perhaps training to become an audio transcriber, so to transition them into the field? That's just another point. Don't have to discuss it now.

PRESIDENT: Yes. Maybe not --

RACHEL LLOYD: Because they also don't have voting rights, obviously, the student members.

PRESIDENT: We could, maybe to not make too much more work for us, say we have an umbrella student category and that can be students – if someone is shadowing a scopist or even if an actual member who wants to be a scopist is shadowing a scopist – no, forget that. Scratch that one.

RACHEL LLOYD: You'd have to set some sort of time limit or have a set time how long.

PRESIDENT: We could have an umbrella term that is for students, of whatever category they're in.

RACHEL LLOYD: You'd have to continually ask them, "Are you working yet?" which is trickier with an audio transcriber compared to a steno student where there's an obvious point you get to when you go out and work. Just another point to raise.

PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Ian, do you want to just say that? "Tiny Jurassic minority"?

IAN ROBERTS: I'll just read it out. Looking to the future, decades away obviously, there may be a situation when the stenographers are in a tiny Jurassic minority and the only way BIVR could continue to exist would be with the people we're talking about now, as Associates. That will be the only way BIVR can continue.

PRESIDENT: Yes. When we're all gone.

IAN ROBERTS: Yes. I just gave the example of the Carphone Warehouse. Nobody has car phones these days. Back in the '70s, you had to have an aerial on the roof, and it was a massive thing.

PRESIDENT: Yes. And as well as the large thing, you see someone speaking to themselves when they're actually not. "It's my phone, mate!"

Betty mentioned that as well, years ago, that eventually it won't be us, it will be the transcribers when we are all gone. Because we are aging, let's face it.

MELANIE BALL: Are we not getting ahead of ourselves? We don't need to actually decide this now because we're not getting them as members anyway.

WENDY OSMOND: I was going to say, I don't know, maybe this has already been talked about but can we not, in a way, wait, as someone said, until this issue comes up. Start off with no voting rights, or maybe someone on Council from each category. But in terms of voting rights, can you not wait until someone – make it known that people can apply to become members, and then, at the time, take a vote on it, much the way you vote people onto Council anyway, at meetings, just – so we've got this particular AAT who is keen to become a full member with voting rights; are people happy for that? Then you're just taking it, well, individuals as they come, but it's just a way of being sure, if you think there's too many, then everyone's got the chance to rein it back, or whatever.

PRESIDENT: I see what you mean, yes.

ANN LLOYD: I agree with Wendy and what she said. It's up to Council when someone applies to be a member. Maybe Associates should have the opportunity after a year, as we all did – or was it three years, whatever it was – to then apply for membership. The whole Council then takes a decision.

GEORGINA FORD: I think that's very sensible as well.

MELANIE BALL: I agree with that as well.

PRESIDENT: Nicole agrees. She has her thumb up. Everyone agrees. I agree as well, just so you know.

Mary, maybe we need your guidance here. The Special Resolution 1 is basically defining the Associate. If you don't have it in front of you, the original email was 28 January. Do we need to read that out?

MELANIE BALL: Would you mind reading it out because I can't find it just now.

SECRETARY: Do you want me to read it out? I've got the document in front of me.

PRESIDENT: You can read it out.

SECRETARY: Okay.

Special Resolution 1:

“In the Articles of Association, to re-number paragraphs 1 - 3 as follows by adding a sub-paragraph 1 (c) to include a new level of membership, namely, that of Associate, to cover Accredited Audio Transcribers and/or Accredited Scopists as follows:

(c) An ‘Associate’ is either an Accredited Audio Transcriber and/or an Accredited Scopist who has satisfied the examination requirements as laid down from time to time by the Council. Such Associates shall be eligible to volunteer to work on Institute working groups and/or sub-committees; however, such Associates shall not be eligible to serve on the Council of the Institute, nor to vote at annual general/extraordinary meetings (although they may attend annual general/extraordinary meetings and participate).”

PRESIDENT: Thanks, Mary. So the (c) is purely for Council’s purposes when it comes to people applying. That’s not in the Special Resolution. It’s just that little definition. We really need to just take out “eligible to volunteer to work on Institute working groups and/or sub-committees” because what we are saying, as far as I understood everything correctly, is they pay the full fee? No, they don’t pay the full fee and they have no voting rights until after a few years. No. Wendy’s shaking her head.

SECRETARY: There’s nothing in the Special Resolution there about not paying the full fee.

PRESIDENT: No. That’s just a Council thing, I think.

GEORGINA FORD: I just had a further message from my scopist that I've been asking and she said: "I don't think I'd need to vote on steno matters, but, similarly, I wouldn't want steno voting on editor-exclusive matters. As editors generally don't earn as much, maybe a small discount to help get people on board as well."

That's just her comment.

MELANIE BALL: That kind of backs up where if there was a particular issue that they want them to vote on, they come to us, they say, "Can we have a vote on this?" We would say, yes, you can...

PRESIDENT: Everyone's kind of "Mmm." The fee we could do, I think I saw a number in the chat. Was it Ian, you said – someone said – 75%?

IAN ROBERTS: Yes. That was me. I mentioned 75%.

PRESIDENT: That's right. Something for Council. That's with no voting rights to start with, am I right?

IAN ROBERTS: It's also a good point that Georgina's scopist there raised about they don't earn as much, so it would be fairer if they don't pay as much.

MELANIE BALL: Also, audio typists, audio transcriptionists don't earn even as much as scopists.



PRESIDENT: Yes. Unless they're tapping away for hours 24/7, which they can't do because it's impossible.

Okay, so I think we need to amend the Special Resolution 1. We're going to tweak it. We're going to take out Associate, or we change – actually, do we need to put in the Mem & Arts “one AAT and one AS”? Or we can just go along with that at Council's will? I think it might need to be written, myself, just for whoever next comes onto Council so they know what we were working with. Do you know what I mean?

MELANIE BALL: Yes. I think it needs to be incorporated and put two Associate members, one of which is audio and one of which is scopist.

PRESIDENT: Okay. What I'm going to suggest is perhaps we have a break and I very quickly go through and write something then send it to Mary, and Mary can put it on the screen. I don't need to write a whole new thing, just tweak this one here. Rather than me sitting here and it being like when you're trying to find your notes when you're reading back and everyone's just watching while you look for it, no? What do you think about that? Is that okay?

SECRETARY: If I could just say, that sounds fine, but we haven't actually, if I can put in, addressed a couple of points, one that Christine emailed to me, and she said I could read out and one that Robyn mentioned in her email. That has to do with whether we have audio transcribers in membership at all. That was effectively the opposing view that Susan Humphries was talking about when we had our --

MELANIE BALL: We're not actually – sorry, we're not actually having them in the membership. We're having them as associates.

SECRETARY: Associate membership I thought, yes. Okay, but we still haven't mentioned their views and I thought it should come in before we actually start tweaking it.

PRESIDENT: What are you wanting to read out? Robyn's email?

SECRETARY: Maybe not the whole thing, but Christine, who's actually on the meeting – I'm just trying to find it, sorry, because I've got them here. Responses --

PRESIDENT: Before you go on to say – okay, Mary, read it first, then I'll say what I want to say.

SECRETARY: I think you should just read it because I did send it through to you. It's called "Responses 4 EGM".

PRESIDENT: I had that. I'm not entirely sure that...

SECRETARY: You don't think that should be read?

PRESIDENT: Did Robyn give permission for us to read what she said?

SECRETARY: No, Robyn hasn't, but Christine did. I don't see why – I didn't mean to name them, but people were not in favour and – let me read out Christine's because she did give

me permission and you'll see if I'm barking up a wrong tree, then. Let me just see what the chat says. "You can read mine out" [from Christine.]

I'll just read this out: "If I've understood the situation correctly, I think we need to be very careful here. I think the danger is that if someone is 'qualified' in audio, having passed the Institute's exams, and they work for an ordinary secretarial agency or something, then that agency can advertise to get work which our firms would normally be given. Perhaps the answer would be yes, the individual would be suitably qualified to be a member of the Institute but can work only for firms who are affiliated to the Institute, i.e., owned and run by qualified members. I think you need not only to have the individual reporter properly qualified but also their managers similarly qualified, to keep up the high standard. I don't know whether I'm making sense but that's as I see it. Otherwise, the playing field is opened up to all and sundry and will they monitor their employees like our present firms do? I can't help doubting this."

That was what Christine wrote to me.

The other one I got that was against: "I totally disagree with the fact that 'the method of input does not matter' as BIVR was set up as a professional body looking after the interests of shorthand writers."

She was thinking we were moving away from shorthand writers. As I say, she hasn't come in, after all, to the meeting, so... But I thought we should actually give those contrary views.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I'm going to have to shoot off. I will leave everything on and come back as soon as I can. If you need me to vote on anything, just let me...

SECRETARY: We're still having the vote at 2 o'clock.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Okay. I'll be there for that. I'll be back before. I should be back by quarter-past, half-past 12. [Natalie leaves.]

SECRETARY: Back to the Chair. I'll be quiet.

PRESIDENT: Georgina's got her hand up.

GEORGINA FORD: Yes, I just wanted to say Christine makes a really good point, but unfortunately, this is already happening. We've already seen that we've been getting requests to cover realtime court jobs from typing agencies and also a sign language interpreting agency to cover realtime stenography. They're not going to the court reporting agencies. This is already happening. I'm not sure what we can do about this because someone out there is giving solicitors, or lawyers, or whoever, details of these firms to provide stenographers. It is already happening, and it's been happening for quite a while now.

PRESIDENT: It only happened just not last week, the week before.

GEORGINA FORD: Yes.

PRESIDENT: The agency that got that job, I didn't do it, they were looking for a US certified reporter. The guy who did it, the agency, emailed me to ask me if I could recommend a printer to do the production to deliver to America. I basically said to ask the reporter you

used. No, sorry, I said, court reporting firms do their own production. So, it is happening and it's beginning to become a thorn in the side, actually.

RACHEL LLOYD: Could you explain that again? I didn't quite follow.

PRESIDENT: There's translation agencies and interpreting agencies, they are somehow getting enquiries to look for a stenographer to do either depositions and/or arbitrations. This particular one I'm talking about, he's taken it on, he's sent the reporter for two days, and he hasn't yet got his production in place to know how to do it. Of course, I didn't even say to him you need to realise that the US paper size is very different to our paper size.

It's happening a lot. That particular one went round to three other agencies and one court reporting agency.

MELANIE BALL: I got an email from some company, and I didn't know who they were and it seems to be an events conference organiser in Northern Ireland. I have no idea how they got my email. Basically, saying they're trying to get stenographers onboard – I can't remember the exact wording – and could they have a Zoom meeting with me. No, you can phone call me if you want to expand on what you're talking about, and they didn't bother.

PRESIDENT: Yes. To go to Christine's point, it is, as Georgina said, already happening. It's been happening for a good number of years and it's getting more and more each year.

Does anyone else have anything to say on that?

IAN ROBERTS: Interpreting agencies have been getting court jobs as well. We've had a couple of requests from interpreters asking for jobs in the RCJ, the Rolls Building. Why are the law firms contacting them?

GEORGINA FORD: Some of them are sign language interpreting agencies which is even – I mean, completely...

PRESIDENT: The thing is, what we need to know with that, is it the law firm? Say, for this deposition, was it one of the US law firms approaching? There must be a list. With arbitrations, we're on a list at the ICC and wherever and then the ICC gives out names, a bit like the IDRC as well. There must be a list somewhere that these translation agencies are on because the emails are always within minutes of each other. One was half an hour, but they were all very close together.

ALAN BELL: It could be lists, yes, but it could also be people paying to get their Google searches boosted, so if any certain term is used in a search, they will come to the top of the list.

PRESIDENT: Yes. Some of them have even got court reporting services on their website. It's unfathomable as why you would put that if you don't know how to do production for it. I suppose it's just for the money. Obviously, it comes down to money.

GEORGINA FORD: This would be one of the reasons why we probably want to look at having all these people accredited under BIVR so they know the standards they should be setting and if they can't reach the standard that we require they should not be allowed to do those jobs. It's a case of once again getting us recognised by the, for example, the MoJ.

If you want a proper job done, come to the professionals who are accredited. They have let the standard slip when they decided they didn't want us licensed anymore. This is the result. You've got any Tom, Dick and Harry going out there getting on the Tape Transcription Panel, or whatever it's called now, and then we're getting these ridiculous requests from agencies who have no idea what the job entails.

PRESIDENT: The MoJ must know we exist because they've got contracts for Speech-to-Text, so they know there's still those girls who walk around with those funny looking machines. They know that we're not out of business just because the tapes went in in 2012.

We need to maybe do some different kind of promotion with the 75% we get from the AATs. I'm only joking. Anything is better than no money.

Okay, shall we take a break and I'm quickly going to go through this.

IAN ROBERTS: NRCPD want to make it a legal requirement that you have to be qualified as a Speech-to-Text Reporter before you can do that job. Could we look into doing the same thing for verbatim reporting in courts and arbitrations? But that's a different subject, so I'll shut up and we can go to the break.

PRESIDENT: That's also going to add to the things we have to do. Even if we did that, that's not something that could happen overnight to get in place. NRPCD have been trying to make it mandatory for years.

Okay. Is 20 minutes okay? We don't know how long we'll be here, but we will be having a break for lunch.

SECRETARY: Okay. What I'll do is, I'll pause the recording in case people just want to chat about anything else, or want to go away, but the time now is 11:34, so 20 minutes is 11:54. So 11.55?

PRESIDENT: Yes.

SECRETARY: I'm switching off.

(Break - 11:34 to 11:55)

PRESIDENT: Before I share my screen with the proposed wording, which I'm pretty sure needs some help, Wendy is one example, she can't come back at 2 o'clock, so because she has engaged and contributed in everything and this is technically the EGM now anyway, Wendy would still be able to lodge her vote and anybody else who can't come back at 2.00, but if you send to the host, if you send in the chat to the host your vote.

Wendy, what time did you say you have to go? 12:30? Yes. Okay, I will read Susan's email and then we'll have to get this Special Resolution agreed so you know what you're voting on.

Susan Humphries has sent an email – I sent an email to those who were, vocal is the only word I can think of, and I don't mean that in a bad way, but got this whole conversation going at the AGM. So that was Orla, Victoria, Rachel, Wendy, Natalie and Susan Humphries.



Susan has come back with: "This is mainly for Leah, but may help others too. Is there a way we can vote at 2 p.m. without actually being at the meeting? I know which way I want to vote and given that we often do this by text message and email anyway, can that apply today?"

I'm not sure how to answer that. I told her I would raise it when we go back on. If we're going to change this, they're not going to have seen this Special Resolution. Shall we come back to that after we've done this new wording because Wendy's got to leave at 12:30. Is that agreeable? Yes? Okay.

SECRETARY: I think that's okay. I've just unmuted myself because you could email, as Susan has emailed you, her the changed wording.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Just her or all of them on that email?

SECRETARY: Only who's asked you.

PRESIDENT: She has copied in everybody on the email.

SECRETARY: Oh, well, if she's copied them, I guess you have to include everybody.

Read it out?

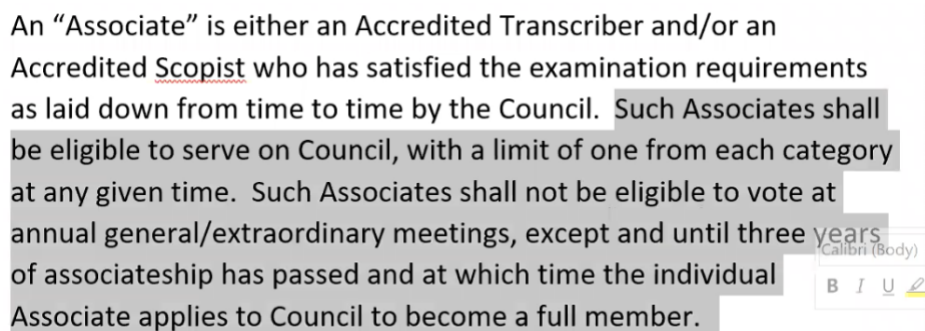
PRESIDENT: I'm just going to share the screen with this wording. Oh, Mary, you have to enable me to share my screen, please.

SECRETARY: I have just made you co-host. Does that allow you to do it?

PRESIDENT: Let me try again. Yes, it does.

It is from this sentence here, which is different, if you could please read.

[Screenshot:]



An "Associate" is either an Accredited Transcriber and/or an Accredited Scopist who has satisfied the examination requirements as laid down from time to time by the Council. Such Associates shall be eligible to serve on Council, with a limit of one from each category at any given time. Such Associates shall not be eligible to vote at annual general/extraordinary meetings, except and until three years of associateship has passed and at which time the individual Associate applies to Council to become a full member.

The screenshot shows a text selection in a document. A floating toolbar is visible over the text, containing icons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), and a pencil icon. The text "years" is highlighted in the selection.

Do you want me to read it out, Mary?

MELANIE BALL: I think you should take out the "and" in the first sentence, because if it's an "either" it will be an "or".

PRESIDENT: They could be both, though, couldn't they?

ALAN BELL: They could be both. They could have already passed as an Accredited Transcriber but then decided to shift their work to scoping.

PRESIDENT: Because they love transcripts so much!

ALAN BELL: Or maybe there's a reason why they're no longer able to write.

PRESIDENT: Yes. It's really the limit of one from each category at any given time. Then from accepted "until three years have passed."

GEORGINA FORD: I think you should put a caveat in there; if it's going to be a period of two years, they still need to be able to vote on matters solely to do with their section.

PRESIDENT: So that should say, "shall not be eligible to vote at...except..." Okay.

WENDY OSMOND: I was wondering if something might make it simpler is just by adding something like "and shall have limited voting rights."

PRESIDENT: Okay. Then we just tell them.

WENDY OSMOND: Then it can just be decided as and when. I don't know if you can do that. Then you might not even need the year, the three years. I just wonder if putting the word "limited" in there somewhere might just give more flexibility at the time for decision.

PRESIDENT: Yes. And it means that we don't have to literally state everything for every eventuality that could happen.

ALAN BELL: To put one caveat on that: Anybody who hasn't listened to what we've discussed so far will not be aware of what we're bringing in by "limited".

PRESIDENT: Yes, but we've covered ourselves with this, at the end of the Notice, "amendments can be tweaked without further written notice."

GEORGINA FORD: Leah, how about saying “but Associates shall have voting rights limited to their sphere of expertise” or something?

MELANIE BALL: I was just about to say, but you said it better, George.

PRESIDENT: What did you say?

GEORGINA FORD: I said “sphere of expertise”, but I don’t mean that. You know what I mean.

PRESIDENT: Category of membership? “...shall have voting rights limited to their category of membership” and take out this about the meetings.

IAN ROBERTS: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Okay?

MELANIE BALL: Could you not add in something after “category of membership”: “...with leave to apply to Council in exceptional circumstances”, or something like that, if there was something specific that they needed to have a vote on.

PRESIDENT: Then they would just go to Council and say, wouldn’t they? I don’t want to make it too wordy with lots of different, oh, this could happen, that could happen. We had that with something else recently.

“A limit of one from each category”, “Such Associates shall have voting rights limited to their category of membership”.

That’s basically still saying they can’t vote at AGMs and EGMs. But we don’t spell that out, or we do?

ANN LLOYD: They can’t have them until such time that they become a full member.

NICOLE HARRISON: Couldn’t you put the word “only”? “Have only voting rights...”

IAN ROBERTS: Limited to.

PRESIDENT: “Only to”.

GEORGINA FORD: “...category of membership until three years of Associateship...”

MELANIE BALL: I don’t think you need the “and” there. You could put a comma. “[comma] at which time...”

IAN ROBERTS: Yes.

GEORGINA FORD: Yes.

WENDY OSMOND: Do you want “individual Associate applies to Council”, or “can apply to Council”?

MELANIE BALL: Yes, “may apply to Council”.

ANN LLOYD: But what happens after three years if they don’t? Do they just carry on as an Associate?

PRESIDENT: Yes. Associate paying 75% with no voting rights.

ANN LLOYD: Okay.

PRESIDENT: But they still get everything else.

ALAN BELL: Just to make it obvious, highlight the “may”?

PRESIDENT: The “may”? In the actual document in the Articles?

ALAN BELL: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Oh, no, I don’t think we’re allowed. Mary doesn’t like that! Carets, underlining, or anything.

MELANIE BALL: I don’t like that either, really.

PRESIDENT: Okay. I’m just going to read it one more time. One second.

[Screenshot:]

An “Associate” is either an Accredited Transcriber and/or an Accredited Scopist who has satisfied the examination requirements as laid down from time to time by the Council. Such Associates shall be eligible to serve on Council, with a limit of one from each category at any given time. Such Associates shall have voting rights limited only to their category of membership until three years of associateship has passed, at which time the individual Associate may apply to Council to become a full member.

That seems okay to me.

SECRETARY: May I just pop in here? Were we going to say something about them being associated professionals? Shouldn't that come in here? That they're not just an Associate but they're an associated professional.

PRESIDENT: Shall we put that up here somewhere? “An ‘Associate’ is an associated professional...”

SECRETARY: I have forgotten how it was worded but it was associated to...

PRESIDENT: That was Georgina's wording. Georgina, we're looking for somewhere to put “associated professional”.

GEORGINA FORD: Can't it have a list of definitions at the front of the Articles, or whatever?

PRESIDENT: This paragraph is the definition because before this is the definition of a Fellow and a Member.

MELANIE BALL: What if you change “Accredited Transcriber” and “Accredited Scopist” to “Associated Professional” and then “who has been accredited by satisfying the examination requirement”?

WENDY OSMOND: Or could you just insert the words: “An Associate is an associated professional who is either an...”

IAN ROBERTS: Take out the “who is” and put the “either”.

ALAN BELL: Then you can lose the “who is”.

PRESIDENT: Say again? “An ‘Associate’ is an associated professional” and take out “who is”?

IAN ROBERTS: Yes.

MELANIE BALL: “...is an associated Accredited Transcriber” --

ALAN BELL: But then “and/or” – I think Melanie’s right – “associated Accredited Scopist”.

GEORGINA FORD: Hang on. How about: “An ‘Associate’ is an associated professional (an Accredited Transcriber and/or Accredited Scopist) who has satisfied the examination requirements...”

PRESIDENT: Yes. “Such Associates shall be eligible to serve on Council” – maybe just take out the President stuff because it’s just too much. We don’t need it.



GEORGINA FORD: Yes.

PRESIDENT: "...with a limit of one from each category at any given time. Such Associates shall have voting rights limited only to their category of membership until three years of associateship has passed."

RACHEL LLOYD: May I just say, I was going to ask about that sentence.

PRESIDENT: It's not right?

RACHEL LLOYD: If you're saying people can be on Council from the moment they're Associates but they still wouldn't have voting rights, is that a bit weird?

PRESIDENT: Oh, Rachel!

RACHEL LLOYD: Or is a bit like what Natalie said before about AVSTTR where they did have somebody sit on Committee but a student member who couldn't vote?

WENDY OSMOND: Are we saying they will have voting rights on their area, from immediately, anyway?

MELANIE BALL: Limited to their category.

RACHEL LLOYD: Okay. What about if it's not about their category? What about if it's about general BIVR business?

MELANIE BALL: That's what I said; you add in something about a Special Resolution upon application to Council, they can have a special vote, or something.

GEORGINA FORD: How about instead of saying "serve on Council", say "assist Council"?

ALAN BELL: Maybe "ask to assist Council"?

MELANIE BALL: Yes, that might be better. I would put that bit in brackets, with "a limit of one from each category at any given time".

GEORGINA FORD: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Yes, I'm thinking that's good.

GEORGINA FORD: I'm all for brackets.

PRESIDENT: I'm just going to do one more read, okay. (Pause)

ALAN BELL: We're all professional parenthesists! (Laughter)

PRESIDENT: Mary, what do you think? You've been very quietly typing.

SECRETARY: Yes, it seems fine. You seem to be covering it there.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Are people happy with that?

MELANIE BALL: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Nicole thumbs up; Alan thumbs up.

GEORGINA FORD: Yes, that's fine.

SECRETARY: Leah, can you copy that and put it in the chat, then I can pick it up and put it in the transcript, but I can't pick it up on the screen.

WENDY OSMOND: Can I just check on one thing? I'm not sure it's necessary to say "with a limit of one from each category" if you're saying they may be asked to assist.

MELANIE BALL: Yes. You could put "from time to time". "Such Associates may be asked to assist Council from time to time".

WENDY OSMOND: Then it's up to the Council to decide how many people they want?

PRESIDENT: Yes. The only reason I was thinking to put that in there was if, say, none of us were here on a Council in however many years' time, then that Council would know how we did it, but I totally see what you mean.

Melanie, that should say "Such Associates may be asked to assist Council from time to time", and then take the brackets out.

WENDY OSMOND: Yes.

ANN LLOYD: You've got "from time to time" in the sentence just previously as well. It's a bit wordy.

MELANIE BALL: You could put: "Such Associates on occasion may be asked to assist Council."

ANN LLOYD: That's better.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Teamwork makes the dream work, people! "Such Associates may be asked to assist Council on occasion." Then starting another sentence which says: "Such Associates..."

GEORGINA FORD: Yes. Take the "such" out.

ANN LLOYD: Take the "such" out, yes.

PRESIDENT: The first one?

MELANIE BALL: No, the second one.

PRESIDENT: By George, I think it's okay now! (Laughter). What do you reckon?

GEORGINA FORD: Yes, that looks good to me. Wendy?

WENDY OSMOND: My only thing is what's to stop – why does that need to go in there, "Such Associates may be asked to..."? If it's not what it was before, does it even need to be said? What's to stop Council asking anyone to assist them on occasion, or is it a thing that Council can't do that normally?

PRESIDENT: We can do it, but I think it's to cover the fact whereas before it said they were eligible to volunteer to work on the groups but not eligible to serve on Council, so it's covering that little bit.

WENDY OSMOND: Yes, it's just that without that – yes. I'm happy with it. I can see where it's coming from, but it almost doesn't need saying, really, but I can see why you want to say it, if you see what I mean.

PRESIDENT: I suppose, even if it was out, then anyone who comes behind us could say, well, look, that Council didn't even think of allowing them on Council, or not.

WENDY OSMOND: Yes. The only other thing is, could that put people off becoming an Associate because they think: "Oh, God, Council might insist that I help them with something"? I don't know.

PRESIDENT: Or should it be reworded in a way, "Such Associates may be asked to assist Council on occasion."

RACHEL LLOYD: Do you want it to be written in about the numbers? That was where it came from, the number of people who could sit on Council. That's where it came from.

PRESIDENT: Yes, I see what you mean.

RACHEL LLOYD: That's why it was included. Now it looks like, oh, it's just assisting so it's not sitting on Council. We've got away from that. You want to specify that they can sit on Council and if they do, they're limited to X.

ALAN BELL: The existing Article 2 doesn't mention anything about sitting on Council. It just talks about voting rights.

PRESIDENT: I don't know what you're referring to, sorry.

ALAN BELL: In the Mem & Arts where we're planning to insert this as a sub-paragraph, paragraph 2 under Articles doesn't mention anything about sitting on Council.

PRESIDENT: For an Associate or for a Member?

ALAN BELL: I'll read it out, if that's quicker. Articles of Association:

"2. A 'Member' is a person who has satisfied the examination requirements at Membership standards, as laid down from time to time by the Council. Such Members shall be entitled to vote at all general and extraordinary general meetings and shall be entitled to use the initials MBIVR after their name."

It doesn't mention anything about sitting [on Council].

PRESIDENT: Okay. So why don't we copy them?

ALAN BELL: Yes, I think so. Otherwise, why is this one looking so different from the other one?

PRESIDENT: And we haven't actually put in the acronym business either.

Wendy has to go soon. Has she gone? I can't see because I'm sharing the screen.

ALAN BELL: No, she's still here.

PRESIDENT: Okay, so we don't put anything about that. Take this rubbish out then?

ALAN BELL: Yes, I think so.

PRESIDENT: Then just leave that and then put in the acronym bit.

ALAN BELL: Yes.

PRESIDENT: It is in there. It's only the wording for the new one: "Associates shall be entitled to use the initials ABIVR after their name."

MELANIE BALL: It's plural Associates, so it would be "names" as well.

PRESIDENT: We'd have to change all of them because they all say singular.

ALAN BELL: That's an unnecessary edit.

PRESIDENT: (Pause) Okay. How's that one feeling for people?

I see what you mean, because that was just sitting there – Rachel, I think you said it as well, it was just sitting there. Basically, it was a beacon, like: Look at me! I don't need to be here but look at me!

Okay, so I will have to send that to Susan and those folks in the email, so, Rachel and Wendy, you'll receive it again, but, Mary, is this right, I'll have to add it? Let me pop it in the chat.

“An 'Associate' is an associated professional (an Accredited Transcriber and/or an Accredited Scopist) who has satisfied the examination requirements as laid down from time to time by the Council. Associates shall have voting rights limited only to their category of membership until three years of associateship has passed, at which time the individual Associate may apply to Council to become a full member.

Associates shall be entitled to use the initials ABIVR after their name.”

I should send it to you all.

Let me start again. This EGM document that has the Special Resolutions on it, we'll just tweak that and send it to the email group that Susan Humphries has sent. Is that right?

I'm going to stop sharing.



One other thing I did want to raise, what are people's thoughts – we've had two people who emailed. We have their apologies. They emailed at not liking the idea to change "audio transcriber" to "audio transcriptionist"; they'd rather "transcriber". I mean, it's not a deal breaker, as such. I'm not fussed either way. I just thought maybe transcriptionist was more up to date but seemingly not. I guess we can just leave that in there and people vote, but it would be nice just if we get an idea of what people like or don't like.

GEORGINA FORD: I'm not actually bothered. I just get bothered when I'm called a transcriber instead of a court reporter or a stenographer. I don't really have any strong opinion between transcriber and transcriptionist.

PRESIDENT: How do you feel about called a tape recorder then! I'm joking! (Laughter). It's just one of the things to vote and it's like the AVR to ACR. That's just us going back. I don't know why we changed AVR, though I did read it.

Just before you go, Wendy: Point 1 was to reinstitute Associateship, which we've discussed; number 2 was the lower fee and the proposed no voting rights; number 3 was the method. I think we have actually done it all.

RACHEL LLOYD: I was just going to say about the "transcriptionist". In the dictionary it defines it as "a typist who transcribes letters or other documents", so that's very specific.

PRESIDENT: Isn't it just.

RACHEL LLOYD: Whereas "transcriber" is about the record, so I think "transcriber" is probably more appropriate.

ALAN BELL: On point, having worked on this wording, we need to then change Special Resolution 1.

PRESIDENT: That's what I was reading. I was working on it.

ALAN BELL: All right. Okay.

PRESIDENT: Because if there's an Article you have – that's why I couldn't see what you were looking at.

ALAN BELL: I was in the Mem & Arts.

PRESIDENT: The Special Resolution 1 has to be amended with that wording I've just put in the chat. Then when we say in the EGM Notice "And so that the new paragraph will read...", that has to be changed as well.

[Natalie Bracken returns]

PRESIDENT: Anybody else with anything else to say?

WENDY OSMOND: Sorry. Just to check so the EGM, is there something that's going to be emailed that is what we're voting on, that we haven't got yet?

PRESIDENT: It's going to be that paragraph we've just done because Susan Humphries has asked in that email thread about – because she wanted to vote – so it will go to them.

WENDY OSMOND: Is there one question in the EGM vote?

PRESIDENT: No.

WENDY OSMOND: There's the other stuff then?

PRESIDENT: There's five.

That's the first one. Special Resolution 2 is simply to renumber the paragraphs because we are adding in a paragraph (c) which is "Associate".

WENDY OSMOND: Sorry, was this sent out? I'm just trying to find it, that was all. The original.

PRESIDENT: The one I remember is 28 January.

WENDY OSMOND: EGM Notice. I've got it, yes.

PRESIDENT: No worries. All the others are just little things. Does anyone want me to put it on the screen? Okay, good.

Oh, hello, Natalie. Can you see in the chat, Natalie?

NATALIE BRACKEN: I'll just start reading the chat now.

PRESIDENT: Okay. When you see a big, long message from me, that's an amendment.

MELANIE BALL: It's just above the last one from Rachel.

PRESIDENT: Apparently, it's American.

MELANIE BALL: If it's an American word, do we really want to go there? Why don't we just stay with "transcriber"?

PRESIDENT: Someone else did say they thought it was American.

SECRETARY: If I could just come in. If people really think that we should just stick with "transcriber", we could just remove it and say we effectively withdraw that. That doesn't affect...

PRESIDENT: After discussion, that we take it out.

SECRETARY: That's – obviously if you have maybe an impromptu vote, hands up now, do people want to keep "transcriber"? If that's so, then you could say, well, we'll just withdraw that particular one.

PRESIDENT: Okay, let's go. "Transcriber"? [Majority hands up]. Or "Transcriptionist"? [No hands up].

MELANIE BALL: "Transcriber" had it.

PRESIDENT: We will put "After discussion, Special Resolution 5 has been withdrawn."

SECRETARY: Special Resolution 4 was we just had to formalise the fact that we are now calling ourselves Accredited Court Reporter as opposed to Verbatim Reporter.

PRESIDENT: Which we started on anyway, and then we went to AVR. Now we're back.

SECRETARY: So we do still want members to please vote on that. I don't think that's particularly controversial but you never know.

PRESIDENT: The main one was that Special Resolution 1 we just did. The others tend to be rejigging the paragraphs, then AVR.

ALAN BELL: The ACR/AVR distinction may be controversial to anybody who doesn't do court work, so...

PRESIDENT: I think that's all in the discussion that I've read. That was also pointed out. There was a reason, but I can't remember because I have read a lot of stuff the last few days. There was a reason we went back to "Court Reporter" as opposed to "Verbatim". I have a feeling it's to do with recognition of it, of what it means. It's easier to see that we are aa court reporter. That's my feeling.

ALAN BELL: As always, of course, the proviso is that when you say that to a taxi driver, they always think you're a journalist.

PRESIDENT: You can be anything you want to be in a taxi!

Shall we stop there? If anybody can't come back at 2.00, you can do your vote in the chat to Mary.

SECRETARY: The chat or the email. I'll obviously only count the vote once.

PRESIDENT: I'll email Susan Humphries with this amendment. Or should you do it, Mary?

SECRETARY: You'd better do it as you've got the email thread.

WENDY OSMOND: Can I ask a question? This is totally my ignorance, and I should know this, but the Accredited Speech-to-Text Reporter and Accredited Court Reporter, what if people are both?

PRESIDENT: You can use both.

SECRETARY: Some people are both.

PRESIDENT: Always use both. Definitely use both. The more the merrier behind your name, I say. We don't have to be stuck in one or the other.

WENDY OSMOND: I'll email you. I'll drop off now. Thanks, everyone.

PRESIDENT: Thanks, Wendy, for your contribution. Lovely to see you.

[Wendy Osmond leaves]

PRESIDENT: Does anybody have anything else because when we come back at 2.00 – we could do it now, but some people might only be able to come for the vote, so we can't really do it now. At 2.00, we should be very swift. We shouldn't be anywhere near 2:30.

Council will have to stay on after because we need to do some dates, please. That still shouldn't take long.

(Adjourned until 2 p.m.)

PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody. We had a very good discussion this morning, and thank you to everybody who attended and contributed.

All this session is for is purely the vote. If you vote by sending to Mary Sorene (Host) in the chat so it only goes to Mary, please.

I'll share the new amended EGM Notice. I don't need to read it out, do I?

NICOLE HARRISON: Can you just make it larger on the screen?

PRESIDENT: Sure. Can I go into the chat if I share my screen?

MELANIE BALL: You can because I have it with your screenshare on.

NICOLE HARRISON: You should be able to.

MELANIE BALL: It jumped on top of the screenshare and then I moved it over to the side.

NICOLE HARRISON: I think you can, if you're sharing a screen.

PRESIDENT: I've got it.

If you want to put your votes for this Special Resolution 1 into your chat.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Sorry. Can I ask what the wording is we put? Do we put "Yes", "I agree" or "I don't"?

PRESIDENT: You can vote For, or Against, or Abstain.

PRESIDENT: Special Resolution 2 is just simply the renumbering of the paragraphs which you'll see later on in the Notice, renumber the current paragraph 3 to 2.

SECRETARY: Could you just give a moment to go through this first one before they vote for the second one?

PRESIDENT: Sure.

SECRETARY: Thanks.

PRESIDENT: Let me know when you're ready, Mary. (Pause)

SECRETARY: Okay, I have those, thank you. I can tell you it's passed unanimously.



PRESIDENT: Thank you.

Then the second one, to renumber the current paragraph 3 to number 2. Do you need to see the Mems & Arts for that, or not particularly? It's purely the numbering.

The paragraph above that we've just passed is now being added, so these two words get their own little – they come out because they now have their own section. Do you see what I mean? (Pause)

Will it help, Mary, maybe if we put SR2 and then put Yes – or For or Against?

SECRETARY: That is what people are putting, thanks. (Pause)

Thank you, I have all of those. Again, unanimous.

PRESIDENT: Special Resolution 3, this paragraph is to be identical to the one that pertains to Members, granting their STT and the Verbatim Court Reporter.

NICOLE HARRISON: Christine's asked a question in the chat.

PRESIDENT: I can't see it. Okay. Chat from Christine Lawton: "What I see on the screen now goes only as far as SR3. Is that right?" That's because we're only on that one at the minute. There's four altogether. This is the third one. (Pause)

SECRETARY: I'm just having a recount because I think one person hasn't voted, but it may be they're abstaining, I don't know. Or I haven't read it properly. I think I've got it now.

That's all passed, all For.

PRESIDENT: Okay. That says it will now read with the new numbering paragraph.

Then there's just number 4.

MARY KRELLE: Can I just ask a question? What was the argument for and against that because that didn't come up in our meeting at No. 2.

PRESIDENT: We didn't really discuss it because it was just to change it back to what it was originally.

MARY KRELLE: Oh, right, because I don't think captures us so well, "Court Reporter", really, for many, many years.

SECRETARY: If I can just say, I call it a generic term. Like we call a vacuum cleaner a Hoover because that was the first one, and the first refrigerator was Frigidaire so we call it a fridge. When people look for a verbatim reporter, they often look for court reporters. I thought we didn't like AVR so much as, dare I say it, it was very similar to the other organisation, and it did make us completely separate. I think that's all it was.

MARY KRELLE: All right. Thank you.

MIRIAM BOSTON: I agree with Mary Krelle.

MARY KRELLE: I'm strongly of the view that it should be "Verbatim Reporter".

MIRIAM BOSTON: So you don't have to explain that you're not writing for a newspaper.

MARY KRELLE: Yes. (Pause)

SECRETARY: I'm just checking if I've got all the votes for everybody, who's either voted For, Again, or Abstained. I'm just checking through. One more message.

SUSAN HUMHPRIES: Is that for Resolution 4?

SECRETARY: Yes, the last one.

PRESIDENT: Do you need it back up? (Pause)

SECRETARY: I think we have a problem here. We have more abstentions than we have For. I'm not sure if abstentions count?

PRESIDENT: I don't know.

ALAN BELL: Isn't an abstention a No vote?

MELANIE BALL: If we get abstentions to revote definitely one way or the other?

SECRETARY: That might be better. I'm sorry... (Pause)

GEORGINA FORD: I think an abstention means people don't have enough information or haven't considered it long enough to make an informed choice.

SECRETARY: I do have one that says "ambivalent, so abstain".

At the moment it's four For it, four Against it, and I haven't voted and I am supposed to give notice if I vote against Council, so I would prefer to abstain on that basis. Not to make it more awkward as I think you should vote For or Against.

PRESIDENT: If there's more abstentions, doesn't that mean it just remains the status quo for now?

SECRETARY: It could mean they're not For or Against. It's just not passed.

MELANIE BALL: If it's not passed, it stays the same.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

SUSAN HUMHPRIES: I've just seen here, "Abstention is not a Yes or a No vote. It's not right to include it. It has to be Yes or No."

ALAN BELL: An abstention is just not voting.

SUSAN HUMHPRIES: Yes.

PRESIDENT: It stays as is.

SUSAN HUMHPRIES: I'm happy to leave it. If people aren't happy with the term, perhaps we could defer it or bring it up again at the AGM because it's not that far away, is it?

PRESIDENT: No, it's not that far away. Nothing's that far away; everything's quite close.

SECRETARY: I'm just going to go through the numbers again.

NICOLE HARRISON: Natalie has a question.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I'm wondering if it's the word "reporter" more than that's the problem than the actual "verbatim" or "court". I don't know.

PRESIDENT: I think it's "verbatim" or "court" more than "reporter".

MELANIE BALL: More "court".

PRESIDENT: What we'll do, while Mary's counting, I can go back through – I'm not sure if it was Council meetings or AGMs, it was one of the two, so we'll have to go back and find the discussion of what led – because it did used to be ACR and then we changed it to AVR and now we're proposing to go back to ACR, so we'll have to find that timeline ready for the AGM. Also, put it out so people know. In a summary document, perhaps.

Christine says: "It stays the same. It's not a vote."

SECRETARY: If I have this right, I have four voting For it, three voting Against it and everybody else is abstaining.

PRESIDENT: So then it stays as it is.

SECRETARY: If you'd rather take that – leave it for now and we'll take it another time.

PRESIDENT: Yes. I think that's what we should do.

MIRIAM BOSTON: I just thought, if it's a Special Resolution, it needs more than a certain percentage. Not a straight majority, is it?

SECRETARY: I'd have to look up the Mem & Arts again for that one.

PRESIDENT: I'll do that. Talk amongst yourselves.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Could it be "Qualified" instead of "Accredited"? I know that some people think it looks too much like another organisation. Could it not be QVR?

PRESIDENT: The thing with "Qualified", we even came up against this when it comes to the QRR. We don't even like the Q. The Q isn't really relevant. We've had a handful of people in the past who have actually asked what QRR is. We can't have the C for "certified" because that's the American acronym, so the Q was the one that we had for the QRR. And then Accredited is the only other real thing we came up with.

Let me just check the Mem & Arts. I've got them here. Miriam, what was your point?

SECRETARY: Sorry, just to recap. I have now double-checked. It's four people For it, four people Against it, so it's a stalemate. Okay? Does that help?

MELANIE BALL: I can change my abstention vote and vote one way or the other. (Laughter)

PRESIDENT: I think it's probably best to stick to what you had originally because then it's obvious that – with the abstentions, it's obvious that it needs to be discussed, I think, with the Membership. Do people agree?

MELANIE BALL: Even if casting another vote makes it a majority one way or the other?

SECRETARY: Yes, I think that's what Leah is saying. Regardless. Even if somebody does change their vote to make it one way or the other, that it should still stay the same and we bring it up at the AGM.

MARY KRELLE: Because it's not a big enough majority, is it, really?

SECRETARY: There's no majority. We've got even-stevens here.

MARY KRELLE: But if someone changes their vote, it's only one.

SECRETARY: Yes, it's only one either way.

MIRIAM BOSTON: If someone changes their vote, it looks like it's very, very naughty.

PRESIDENT: That's why I said to just leave it as it is.

Miriam, going back to your other point, did you say that it could be possible that it needs to be a percentage for Special Resolutions?

MIRIAM BOSTON: Yes. I thought normally Special Resolutions should carry the higher majority.

PRESIDENT: I'll look that up in the Mem & Arts. I can't see it straight off.

MIRIAM BOSTON: Normally it's 75% of most organisations.

SECRETARY: I don't think ours has that, actually, but I'm not sure.

ALAN BELL: I've just been trolling through. It just says "a show of hands".

SECRETARY: Oh!

ALAN BELL: That is just a numerical...

SECRETARY: Yes. Sometimes we just have a secret ballot on the paper but other times, yes, a show of hands. This, effectively, is a secret ballot by sending it just to me.

Anyway, the position is it's not passed.



PRESIDENT: Okay. Like I say, I'll get on and find out the timeline and then have that ready to send out with the AGM Notice, I think.

Is that everything, Mary?

SECRETARY: Yes, if that's all that's on the Notice.

PRESIDENT: Look! We did that in 23 minutes.

SECRETARY: Wow!

PRESIDENT: It's a record!

Before everyone goes, don't feel obliged to do this, but I'd be interested to get some feedback on how you thought the consultation process between meetings went because originally we started it by asking members to set up a working group, which people seemed quite keen at the AGM but then when push came to shove, there wasn't much response. Therefore, instead of having a working group, we did this consultation process.

If you feel like it, could you just send Mary a quick email with some plusses and minuses. It doesn't have to be glowing, obviously, but also if you think it was a good idea to have the morning discussion today and then the vote in the afternoon, or if we should have the vote on another day, just in case this ever pops up again.

With that, I will thank you all for all your help and contributions to this consultation process. It's been really helpful and it's good to have the Membership involved because it's basically your Institute.

SECRETARY: I'm just copying the chat section to make sure I get it. It should come through, but I just want to make sure I've got these votes.

Oh, "I think it was well organised". Well, there you go, you've got one already. (Pause)

Okay. Thanks very much, I've got that.

MIRIAM BOSTON: I think you need to go back to when we became BIVR, from whatever we were before. "Court reporter" is an American term. There are no real "court reporters" in Britain anymore because all the courts, even if they bring stenographers in for particular cases, all the courts in Britain are tape recorded, so there are no court reporters that sit in court day after day taking a note anymore. So we are not court reporters, we are verbatim reporters. And I explain "verbatim" to people and the number of times that I was in court, they'd say: "Oh, which newspaper do you work for?" because that's what it was associated with in this country. If we're going down the American route, fine, forget it. Take the word "British" out of it.

PRESIDENT: That's why I always say I'm a stenographer, not a court reporter.

MIRIAM BOSTON: Okay. I'm a verbatim reporter.

PRESIDENT: I stopped saying court reporter after I was two years in the job. Even in Australia I said stenographer.

SECRETARY: I should just say, Miriam, you're right except we do have one member who is still is a CAT reporter (as I still call them, I'm afraid) to the Lord Chief. I had no idea there was still somebody doing that. Amazingly, she's still there working as a CAT reporter to the Lord Chief.

MIRIAM BOSTON: I don't wish to ruffle feathers. I've come off Council. I'll keep my oar out of things.

PRESIDENT: No, we like your oar. Christine agrees with you, too.

(The EGM closed at 2:26 p.m.)