



141st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at

The Blackstaff Room
Grand Central Hotel
9-15 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7FF

and virtually via Zoom

On

Saturday 12 August 2023

PRESENT:

COUNCIL

Ian Roberts (President)
Georgina Ford (Vice-President)
Alan Bell
Sarah Hogan
Melanie Ball
Nicole Harrison (Remote)
Mary Sorene (Secretary/Treasurer)

MEMBERS

On site:

Claire Apperley
Niamh Kelly-Leahy
Marea O'Brien
Deirdre O'Malley
Ellen-Marie Ward
Leah Willersdorf

Remote:

Miriam Boston
Natalie Bracken
Heather Casali
Victoria Davies
Nicola Dutton
Susan Humphries
Ann Lloyd
Rachel Lloyd
Louise Pepper
Joanne Petre
Kathryn Sykes
Trish Atherton

THE PRESIDENT: [Welcomed all present to the 141st AGM of the Institute.]

Notice of Meeting

The Secretary duly read the Notice of Meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were received from or on behalf of Julie Whittaker, Amanda Bavin, Richard Ward, Sheryll Holley, Sandra Khan, Pauline Miller (who requested the following comment be read to the meeting: "Thank Council for the sterling work they do supporting the profession in everyone's interest"), Lisa Cordaro, Mirella Fox, Audrey Shirley, Sarah Edwards, Cindy Wu, Julie Whittaker, Pat Bloore, Wendy Osmond, Paula Foley, Laura Harrison, Hilary MacLean, Andrew Howell, Claire Hill, Sharon Golder, Richard Ward, Rebekah Lamplugh, Katie Ryder.

Minutes of 2022 Annual General Meeting

THE PRESIDENT: The minutes of the last meeting have been circulated via the website. Does anybody have any comments? Are they accepted? No comments. I need to sign them. (*The minutes were duly signed*)

Then it's the boring bit, it's me going on for a bit. I want to thank everybody for coming, everybody who is in person and everybody on Zoom. I will be as quick as I can. We are in Belfast this year because last year there was a huge Irish contingent who came to Bristol and it was thought only fair and a good way of saying thank you to come over here. That's why we're here.

Since last year we've had Intersteno in Maastricht, which was very good. I did mention we were going to be putting in a bid to hold Intersteno in Liverpool in 2024, it looks like I was given a bit of dodgy info and the Katowice bid was a firm one and they had basically already decided – or half of the board had decided, it was the other half of the board wanted to mix it up a bit. It looks like Liverpool will be 2026.

We all went to Maastricht; had a great time. There were competitions, and the results in the speed capture corded keyboard (basically what we do) the first three places were: number one, Juli LaBadia (USA), then another two American reporters some of you will know, fourth place Georgina Ford (UK). An Italian entrant was fifth and Sheryll Holley (UK) was sixth. In the Realtime it was number one Juli LaBadia again; nine was Georgina Ford (UK) and fifteen Sheryl Holley, who were recently in Houston at the NCRA at the competitions there – they are pretty tough – in the Realtime there was one category where only one person qualified (you have to get a certain mark to qualify to have your results read) and that was Mark Kislingbury, and he struggled. He was the only person who managed it.

In the speed competition, in the literary section, the person qualifying in 18th place was Georgina Ford (UK).

Talking about the USA brings me to Niamh, sat at the back there. Congratulations for getting her RPR last year and RMR this year.

I will move on – it's a small AGM this year with a couple of seminars, but next year is the big one again, it's the BAW, so we are going to start planning that at the next Council meeting – choosing venues, deciding on speakers, that sort of thing. I do

have a note – I’m going to ask again for any new volunteers to become Council members. I will point out that you can actually attend all meetings by Zoom if you want. We have Mel here in Ireland who attends by zoom most of the time and we have Nicole in Texas, so she’s not doing many in person appearances at Council. You can do it over zoom, if anybody was worrying about travelling. Any volunteers just let me know. That’s it, that’s me done.

Are there any questions or comments on my bit of a speech there? We have a “Well done” from Kath Sykes (online) to Georgina and Sheryll.

I call on Mary to do the Treasurer’s report. I missed a very important bit, it’s a senior moment.

Betty Willett Award

We’ve had a nomination, from two different people, for the Betty Willett Award for this year, I should have mentioned that earlier. I have somewhere what the nomination said, and I will have to rephrase it so I don’t give it away straightaway. *(Pause)* This nomination comes from Andrew Howell and I will censor it as I go along:

“This person should have the Betty Willett Award because, over the years, they have given the profession so much. After their excellent and praised work at the BBC they went into the freelance captioning field and have since continued to be a strong advocate and practitioner for accurate, human-generated Realtime captioning. They are not just about their own success though, they are all about lifting up their colleagues and the industry as a whole. They are also like a walking info hub, always keeping their peers in the loop about what’s new in the field, from tech updates to extensive vocab tips for different jobs and even fun stuff for professional growth. They’ve got it all covered, they’ve created a space where captioners can share their skills and learn from each other. They’re a true professional who I would think would be a worthy recipient of the award. They certainly embody the way Betty worked in her time, sharing and encouraging everyone whilst being honest and true to the profession.”

This person was one of the apologies we received earlier so they are not here to receive the award, but it’s Amanda Bavin.

That is me finished this time.

THE SECRETARY: If I can just say, we didn’t ask Leah to bring the award back here but I do have a certificate to give you to put in its place. *(Leah Willersdorf was duly presented with her certificate)*. I hope it’s not too big for your shelf, it’s bigger than the Betty Willett Award of course but well done.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: That definitely is everything for me.

THE SECRETARY: I don't know if you want to say that people may want to tweet it to Amanda Bavin, but we haven't told her yet.

THE PRESIDENT: Did everybody hear that? If anybody wanted to tweet Amanda to congratulate her, we haven't actually told her yet.

Now the interesting bit, the accounts.

Accounts and Treasurer's Report

THE TREASURER: Again, they have been sent out in this format showing what has come in and what has gone out this year and last year. We are supposed to agree them so does anybody have any comments to make, or can we agree them?

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Can I make a comment?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Why is there a loss shown? What was the reason for that?

THE TREASURER: Last year's BAW cost us a little more than was received but in a way I think it was money well-spent. It's a loss of income over expenses. We obviously have a lot of money still, thank goodness, in our bank account. We have, as of Friday, about £17,400 in our current account and there's a little bit more to come in from a few people who have been paying for these workshops, but we have some money to go out for the hotel and the speaker we had this morning.

We also have our 5-year £15,000 bond, and we receive the full amount of interest at the end of the five-year term. That is the reason there is a small loss – I say "SMALL", it was £1,278 which, unfortunately, we just spent a little bit more. The venue was lovely, but we didn't have quite enough in from people.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: That is fine. That's what I was wondering, because it's difficult sometimes to separate it all out, which was the thing that tipped it over, that's all. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Are the accounts accepted?

VICTORIA DAVIES: Can I say something, please?

THE PRESIDENT: Go on.

VICTORIA DAVIES: It's not about accepting them or not accepting them; it's just following on a bit from Susan's point. Is the BAW actually worth that amount of outgoings in this current climate? What is the actual tangible benefit that we get from it as an association?

THE TREASURER: From my point of view it is about “getting us out there”, constantly keeping our profile in the public forum because so many people are sidelined, as we keep hearing, in their jobs, so we should not be “baby in the corner” but front and centre, and they should all be bowing and kowtowing to us for the great work – not me, I’m retired – you all do. So it is awareness, and I did have a thought that we should involve more judges and barristers and let them know where we are and, especially if we have Intersteno, that we are an international group. The first Intersteno was held in Great Britain all those years ago and we have resisted up to now holding it because it does cost money, but they are helping with the cost, it’s not all on us, but it’s the awareness. I think one of the things is the brochure; it is expensive. We are looking at perhaps not having a brochure again, or not having so many hard copies. We can have it online, but if you want to hand a copy out to prospective people who might use our services – and we have got to fight this ubiquitous AI who think they can do a wonderful job, when we all know they cannot – not for serious stuff. It’s all right for – I was going to say mothers’ meetings, but football clubs, whoever, but for serious stuff they need us and we need to tell them and keep reminding them. That is just my view. Does anybody else have anything to say?

GEORGINA FORD: It is about awareness-raising but if anybody else has any other ideas as to what we should do as part of BAW – we’ve already reduced it to once every two years because it is generally too big to run every year. Any ideas or suggestions for future BAWs would be well-received but it is generally about awareness-raising.

NATALIE BRACKEN: It is Natalie here. Can I say something? I just think I am similar to Victoria. I think that £15,000 is quite a lot of money.

THE TREASURER: It is not thousands, Natalie, it was £1250 was all we overspent last year for everything.

NATALIE BRACKEN: What was the £15,000 figure then?

THE TREASURER: That is what our Bond is, we have a Bond in savings.

THE PRESIDENT: That’s in the bank earning interest.

NATALIE BRACKEN: But that at the bottom of the accounts, the Bond. It said AGM and BAW £15,000 and an odd amount – on your accounts.

THE TREASURER: Yes, the combined expenses and then if you look at the combined total receipts ---

NATALIE BRACKEN: Sorry, the way it looked to me it looked like the AGM and BAW cost £15,000-odd.

VICTORIA DAVIES: That’s what I thought as well.

NATALIE BRACKEN: It just looks like that, the way that it's laid out, because it's at the side of AGM and BAW.

THE TREASURER: It was difficult for me without making this sheet about three pages long.

NATALIE BRACKEN: I can imagine, I just wanted it clarified, because all I was going to say is that's a heck of a lot of money and the amount of jobs that have come through in the past year are quite negligible, so how much awareness is out there?

I know what Georgina just said, we do need to think of other ways of doing BAW rather than hiring venues. I know there was one year where only one person turned up and I'm not quite sure that the BIVR Awareness Week, the way it's being run – maybe we need a different way. More people have gone online since Covid and everything so to try and keep the expenses down, I would prefer subs money to be spent on things like training or something like that. I don't know, that's just my opinion. If it wasn't £15,000 then that's very good to hear, thank you.

SARAH HOGAN: It is the difference between what we took in. We obviously charged things out - companies like Opus pay us to be a sponsor, so that was literally just the difference between what we charged everyone and what it cost. Ideally it would balance out, but it didn't. I don't think that is an enormous amount of money. Ideally, we would balance, but in the scheme of things ...

THE TREASURER: We would have liked to have been balanced or been slightly up on profit, but we are supposed to be, effectively, a non-profit organisation – but we're not meant to be a loss-making one either. We do have money in the bank. The total receipts for 2022 is shown there: £21,232.94 and the total we paid out was £22,511.00 making that very, I think, small loss of £1,278.86 over the whole year, over everything, but there was a slight loss on BAW right enough.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Can I make a suggestion, just one, for Council to consider going forward. I'm not saying scrap BAW altogether but how about using something like a YouTube channel to put people's awareness – maybe alongside BAW or something like that, just use the media.

THE TREASURER: That's a lovely idea but somebody – one of you – has to do it, get all the information and do the YouTube and sell us – without prostituting ourselves but literally sell the product. We can't do it all. I can't do it at all because I can't use a steno machine anymore. So fine, somebody come forward and (a) do the presentation and (b) put it up on YouTube.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I'm just saying as a suggestion to discuss. I'm not saying absolutely do it but perhaps – Leah does a good job already promoting things, and other people do as well, Sarah puts stuff out on there. I think maybe if we could link it into a YouTube channel or something akin to that – I'm not saying exactly

that, just something along those lines to think about, not necessarily do. It's just a thought.

THE PRESIDENT: We will work on that and see what we can develop.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Thank you.

THE SECRETARY: The next item is the date of the next AGM as there is no special resolution.

THE PRESIDENT: The next thing is the date of the next AGM.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Have we voted on accepting the accounts?

THE SECRETARY: I thought we had, I thought we had accepted them.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Do you need a proposer and a seconder?

THE SECRETARY: We can do it that way.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I propose we accept them if we just have a seconder and then you can put it to the vote.

THE PRESIDENT: Leah has seconded. Show of hands.

THE SECRETARY: Anybody against?

THE PRESIDENT: Nobody against.

THE SECRETARY: So that is approved *nem con*.

Date of next AGM

THE PRESIDENT: The date of the next AGM has to be within 18 months and we have to decide where it is.

THE SECRETARY: Ideally within 12 months.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, ideally within 12 months and hopefully it will be around the time of Intersteno, so next July-ish. We need to fix a date and get back to you.

THE SECRETARY: It might help if people send their dates to avoid.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, if anybody has any dates to avoid for next year, if you let us know in advance we can always take them into account and try and make the AGM available for as many people as possible. If there's a week when there's loads of football on or something. There is a suggestion from the floor of Bath – we will consider that.

I think business is concluded, so thanks everyone.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Sorry, is there not any other business?

THE SECRETARY: Yes, did you have any?

Any Other Business

NATALIE BRACKEN: I just wanted to raise – I know I’m such a broken record – I just wondered if it had been followed-up about the QRR exams, my point about them suddenly being – not suddenly but becoming a 98% pass rate where it used to be 95% - do you remember I contacted Georgina, Ian and Mary about it last year. I just wondered if anything has been discussed or decided on that at all.

GEORGINA FORD: I’ve had a brief discussion with Mary about it. After the experience of NCRA – there was a bit of a kerfuffle there as well about the content – I’m going to be looking at the content as well because I think maybe the content is too difficult perhaps, and looking at the syllabic density, making sure that is all correct as well. I am going to go through it again, but we did as Council agree to increase the pass marks to make us look better, that we are having to achieve a very high level. If we get some feedback from the QRRs that were done today as well we can have a look and see whether we should maybe reduce it again, but it’s a case of do you want to have a high degree of accuracy to show off your skills or do you want to just get the letters after your name at a lower level? Which has more value?

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn’t there a point as well about the American marks have a slightly lower percentage pass rate but they pick up on a lot more errors than we do. I think 96% in an American exam has fewer errors than 98% in one of our exams.

GEORGINA FORD: Our marking criteria are more generous.

NATALIE BRACKEN: As I say, I keep banging on about it, obviously because I would struggle to get 98% to get a distinction but it feels like it is almost unachievable – I’m talking about QRR 3 and 4. It is very difficult to achieve that and actually how many people on this call have the QRR 4 at distinction. It’s not about getting letters after our name – and isn’t that a way of promoting the profession if we do pass the exam? I feel they are a bit prohibitive at the moment at those pass rates. Okay, make it maybe 97% and then 98% is a distinction, or 96 and then 98 as a distinction. Some people passed at 95% so it just seems that to change it – that 3% extra is a big jump to me. It’s just where somebody like myself would want to try and achieve a distinction, I just feel it is unachievable, and because the content is not anything to do with jobs that we do particularly. You don’t always get the words in advance which, for a job – using some of the language ... I can’t remember, there was a word that stuck in my mind and I’ve forgotten it from last year or whenever it was that I did them - “excellencies”, that was it, the word

“excellencies”. I do understand you’ve got to test us but why are we not allowed to do court language in exams anymore?

GEORGINA FORD: It’s not a case of being allowed, it’s a case of producing the material, finding material that you can actually use. As I’ve said, I’m going to be looking through the sort of material that I am looking at to try and create these exams and I can certainly include more Q and A or perhaps a summing-up piece or something like that, but then we also have to make sure we have a version that’s useful for people who only do captioning, so it’s broadening the horizon of the subjects that we are doing, but that can certainly be something we look at.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: I think it was a couple of years ago that on Council we were discussing – I don’t think it’s a secret because we’ve mentioned it – we were discussing about giving five choices of content, so there could be captioning, Q and A, literary, jury charge, for example, and I think we were going to give people the option of choosing three out of five different areas. You can probably go back in the minutes and look for that. I know this is QRRs but that was going to be something new that we were offering.

NATALIE BRACKEN: Also, I think it’s a revenue thing for BIVR. I didn’t sit them today because of the pass marks – I didn’t sit the QRR 3 or 4 because of the criteria for passing. If it was a bit lower, I would have had a go.

THE SECRETARY: Can I come in there before anybody else? Last year several people took the QRR and at least two were within a smidgen of getting 98% - it was 97.8%. We searched through to see if we could grab a point back, but we couldn’t, I’m afraid. That was it.

NATALIE BRACKEN: But also that’s only two people.

THE SECRETARY: It is doable within reason. People have tried it today, we don’t know how it was today but again it has been syllabically counted so that it’s not arduous from a content point of view and preview words are sent out – I sent them out on Wednesday. I would have hoped to have sent them out earlier, but I sent them out then and people have put them in. We have not been sending out too many ordinary words – frankly, excellence or excellency is not an unusual word particularly. You mentioned it, so I just mention that. If you have place names and real names, you try and leave those out, you try not to have those in tests, you don’t want them in, you don’t want quoted material in it, but if we have the selection of five, you still have to have somebody write the passage or source it from the internet, then have it syllabically counted. It’s a lot of work which we do voluntarily. I just mention that last year it was almost achieved, it wasn’t that it was way off and if the pass mark had been 95, yes, everybody would have got it.

A SPEAKER: I’ve only been with the Institute a year so I don’t know, but how often do the exams take place?

THE SECRETARY: We try to do it twice a year, in March and October, or at the AGM, but again you've got to organise it.

A SPEAKER: With the NCRA if you don't get your section or your exam you know you've only got four months, they're every four months, so it's easier to keep the momentum going. I was just wondering how often they were.

THE PRESIDENT: We can look at that.

THE SECRETARY: It's worth looking at that too, or maybe quarterly.

THE PRESIDENT: And maybe coming down 1%.

THE SECRETARY: We don't want to be just grabbing everybody's money, let's have your 50 quid, you will never pass it. That's not the idea; the idea is that the standard is high and then you can, frankly, gloat about it.

A SPEAKER: It is a bit less daunting to say I will get it the next time – I didn't pass the Q and A a few times but it didn't feel like it was so far ahead of me. I just kept the momentum going.

THE SECRETARY: It's a good suggestion.

THE PRESIDENT: Content-wise, if you're -- by definition -- captioning it could be absolutely anything and everything at all.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: That's what I'm saying about that thing we discussed.

THE SECRETARY: As Ian says, if it's a captioning one it could be any subject under the sun. Ideally, we need to hear from the captioners in our membership what sort of content they are taking notes on to help us get the passages they might be able to get because of familiarity with the content.

GEORGINA FORD: If anybody on the call would like to suggest places I could look on the internet, a good resource for me to plunder as it were, because it's sometimes hard to know what to look for content-wise. If anybody's got any ideas of any particular YouTube channels, websites or anything that they could suggest I look at, obviously I'd have to go through and anonymise anything and maybe tailor it slightly because you can't do an exact lift because of copyright. Please email if you have any suggestions of where I can look for decent content.

LOUISE PEPPER: Can I say something? As far as I know, nobody does have the QRR 4, do they? Does anyone have it?

THE SECRETARY: Not yet but three people took it today so we will see if anybody has got it.

LOUISE PEPPER: I will be interested to see if anyone passes because I do really appreciate all the time and effort that you guys put into doing the exams for us but I do also think, as somebody who has been chasing this elusive QRR 4 for the last three years, haven't been able to get it yet – today, to be honest, I just thought, you know what, I give up on it now, it's too difficult. I realise that having a higher pass mark makes us look better and it makes us look like we have higher standards, but it feels a bit counterproductive if it's an unattainable pass mark. If nobody has it at all I think that probably looks worse than a lower pass mark.

I'm also thinking that maybe it does need reviewing in some way but I find it easier personally if we are working from a pre-recorded passage rather than something that is read live. I know that I've had marks dropped before when it was purely something I've misheard. It's nothing to do with your reading, Mary, your reading voice is impeccable always, but I think for anybody at all there's always going to be the odd little word here and there that is a bit difficult to hear, and it might not be obvious when it's being marked that it is something that you've misheard. I know that I've lost points before and it's purely from a very, very slight stumbling of words maybe, so I think something pre-recorded is easier to work from.

In terms of ideas for content I think TED talks are really good, George, if you want to look into those, those are really good. I just wanted to put that in and say I have been trying to get QRR 4 for the last three years, haven't been able to get it and today I just felt disillusioned to the point of I thought "You know what, I can't be bothered to spend the money and cut my nails today because I'm not going to pass it anyway." I hate to say that but it's true, that is how I felt today. I just wanted to add that into the mix.

GEORGINA FORD: [said it was helpful to hear because to a certain extent she was working in the dark a lot of the time with content.]

THE SECRETARY: [commented that this year the pieces were pre-recorded but sent out live over the internet rather than sent to individual's computers for them to play at home.]

LOUISE PEPPER: I am pleased to hear that it is pre-recorded.

THE SECRETARY: Pre-recording means it's possible to check the recording to see that it's to time and any stumbles or stutters can be noted and, if they are too bad, the piece can be re-recorded.

LOUISE PEPPER: [commented that it was better as there was the opportunity to record the piece as many times as needed to make sure it was a spot-on reading.]

NATALIE BRACKEN: Is it possible to get resources from the NCRA, to have a link with them regards getting passages. Georgina and Sheryll have sat NCRA exams, so is it worth trying to get hold of some content.

GEORGINA FORD: I do have some of their content because I've bought it, but NCRA has a whole committee dedicated to creating these passages, so they make them themselves in the same way that I try to. But they have a whole committee to do it.

LEAH WILLERSDORF: Intersteno has a whole committee.

GEORGINA FORD: Intersteno also has a whole committee making their passages as well, but the trouble is that when there are so few of us, if there are too many on a committee trying to make the papers then nobody can do the exams, so it's difficult. After the competition this year I am going to make sure I stay on top of the NCRA and see how they are going to be treating it because just about every competitor complained about the difficulty of the passages, in exactly the same way as we are here. I am staying on top of that, and I will report back if they come up with anything we can use in terms of advice.

THE SECRETARY: I don't think we can lift their papers though.

GEORGINA FORD: No, we can't lift their papers.

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn't there a bit of a problem with their Q and A this year because it wasn't Q and A. They had the Q and A thing and it was basically two lawyers arguing, so it wasn't Q and A, so that was a bit of a scandal everyone complained about.

GEORGINA FORD: NCRA don't get it right every time either, but we can certainly look at trying to – I have some past papers I could look at. Leave that one with me, Natalie, and I will look at what I've got.

THE PRESIDENT: Rachel Lloyd says Stenographers World website has old NCRA dictation and papers.

GEORGINA FORD: Does it? That's great, thank you so much, I wasn't aware of that one. Thank you.

THE SECRETARY: We want people to pass but we can't make it so easy that people say, "Well, of course they all pass, you've given them too many easy words".

LEAH WILLERSDORF: In previous years the NCRA thought it was so easy that this year they went to the other end of the spectrum.

GEORGINA FORD: Finding the balance is very difficult.

THE SECRETARY: There is one other thing I should say and I think everybody here who has taken it this year heeded my advice: get in some practice. Don't think you can just come along and do a QRR on your daily work because it is so different. You can't edit, you can't change a word here or there to make it easier for the deaf person to understand, to make it read or whatever because it is a Hansard-type

transcript you've got – you have to have the actual words and there are a lot of little filler words. A lot of people I know just drop them, but training for an exam is different from work. I didn't hold any special classes this year because there was so much practice on our website, but I did say to everybody, "Please do some practice beforehand" because I know last year not everybody did some practice and it was notable that those who didn't practice didn't do as well as those who did practice – even though, granted, they were within two points of a point of not getting it – if that makes sense.

THE PRESIDENT: So 98.8% or 97.8%

THE SECRETARY: No, 97.8% because 98% was the pass mark.

THE PRESIDENT: Talking about the filler words, that's one of Mark Kislingbury's tricks: he never writes them and then he fills them in.

THE SECRETARY: How can he do that on Realtime?

THE PRESIDENT: Not on the Realtime, on the speed thing. He never writes the filler words, never writes Q and A and he puts them in afterwards – he guesses where they should be.

THE SECRETARY: Another thing somebody did privately with me, they had an untranslate and they put four words in for that untranslated, so they lost four marks for the wrong translation and another point for the word they should have had so lost five marks, whereas if they had just left it they would have only lost one and they would have passed. It was an IPS exam which I don't mark, the Secretary of the Board marks them. It was so distressing because I'm doing them again online and I'm watching the person editing. I have to mute myself and I've almost got to turn my camera off because I'm thinking "Don't change it" – but you have to sit there. If it's an edited exam you trust your note – which of course you all do because you're so good with the Realtime – but it just shows you, editing an untranslate by putting four words in ... There we go, rant over.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there any other business?

GEORGINA FORD: Anybody got anything?

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I have a couple of questions. What do you feel the Council has achieved this year? Next year you are going to do BAW but what do you feel, as a Council, that you have achieved?

GEORGINA FORD: In all honesty I can say absolutely nothing at all, because ---

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I wasn't expecting that, sorry.

GEORGINA FORD: It's very difficult to continually think of new things to do, and I think many of us who have been on Council now for very, very many years – we

have now got a new member which is great – it gets very difficult to anticipate and think of new things for us to do at AGMs, at BAWs because, quite frankly, most of us are very, very tired now, having been on Council for such a long time. From my personal point of view I don't really feel I've achieved anything.

THE SECRETARY: The Institute has got new members, we've got people taking the editing exam, one person was here this morning who is going to be taking it, she came to meet and greet, mingle and network, and we have got a few exams in the pipeline for new members so we are achieving things all the time. It is difficult to achieve stuff – we don't get a lot of input. When we send out a note saying "Could you tell us what you like? Would you do this? Would you do that?" Nothing comes back.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I think Louise has hit the nail on the head today so you've got something to work on there anyway, so you have actually and you've kept BIVR going. Maybe you should have said that: you've kept everything ticking over. It's not a criticism, it's just there wasn't a lot in Ian's opening.

The other thing is I keep seeing odd things about contracts and stuff like that being awarded, for the downloaded transcription side of things, not the Realtime. Would it be possible to put out an alert when these things have been awarded so that people know?

THE SECRETARY: If we're told.

THE PRESIDENT: We are not told.

THE SECRETARY: We have to wait for somebody to tell us, we're not in the know. I was asked the other day have the contracts come out because somebody told me – I can't remember who it was and if I did remember I maybe shouldn't say who told me – that the contracts were awarded and then oh no, they've not been awarded, they are holding back because they are trying to cut down the number of people on what used to be called the Tape Panel. So I don't know who is on it and who is doing anything, but we're not privy to anything. Years ago when we used to be on the various committees – the CRLC (Court Reporting and Liaison Committee) I can remember Betty Willett and I going there, you would be involved and then of course the APSW, Margaret Wort, and then they'd be fighting, arguing back and forth. The tape recording people were there and they weren't liked. I went over and said hello to the guy and he said: "I'm surprised you're speaking to me because the others wouldn't speak", so they had to agree beforehand because the Department said "If you're going to argue like this we're not having any of you here", so they had to try and agree beforehand. Now of course we are the only organisation, the old APSW has gone, but we're not exactly in the loop. When we tried to help them they said, "We know what we want"; they didn't want our assistance – and what they wanted was audio recordings, chirpy, chirpy, cheap. Cheap. It's the same as this AI business; they think it's cheaper but it's not. In the long run it would be more expensive. If court cases were brought because the transcription that deaf people were receiving was so poor that they were

disadvantaged and they sued, it would cost people a lot of money and then they'd realise that it's cheaper in the long run to have the proper thing, maybe outward looking expensive, but it's not when it's the better thing.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Just one more thing – sorry to quiz you like this – is there any liaison with the speech-to-text reporting AVSTTR?

THE SECRETARY: Yes.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: There was always supposed to be but I don't know if there still is, whether you invite people to meetings. You, Mary, are on both so I wondered if you are the liaison.

THE SECRETARY: I may be the liaison because I am the only one now who's on it, and of course I'm on as a trainer of speech-to-text reporters, not as a reporter, and I'm their treasurer. I won't say there's no animus between us, there is still that little niggle. They are effectively the breakaway group, and they don't want to come back into the fold, sadly, and I can quite see that their website and their thing is strictly speech-to-text whereas we cover absolutely everything, plus we're the old people. We're the old organisation and they're the new kids on the block, although gradually with age they will get older – but they can't obviously match us because we've been going since 1865.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Yes. I just wondered if it was worth – do they turn up at the BAW events that you have, or are they invited even?

THE SECRETARY: They are invited. A lot of AVSTRR members are also BIVR members, some AVSTRR members dropped their BIVR membership because it wasn't a requirement to continue it.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a requirement to get your qualification.

THE SECRETARY: It is. To get the basic qualification they had to because AVSTRR is not an accrediting body, but we are. The Institute was set up in 1865 literally to accredit people and we've continued. Hopefully we've improved and brought it into the modern age, but we're talking to each other.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: That's a start, that's good.

THE SECRETARY: Ian as President has emailed Julia who is Chair of AVSTRR. As far as I know they reply, but everybody is busy. People are on holiday, people have just come back from holidays, and everybody is busy, busy, busy and we are grateful that there are 14 people here today present and possibly another 14 online, something like that. It's about as good as it's going to get these days. When I joined in '71 we had 500 members. Sadly, we've had two youngish people pass away recently; neither were actually recent members, but members of the profession. So it's not even an aging profession dying out, people in their sixties are

dying. It's very sad. I'm pleased to say that we are getting a few people in and we have to get some more in. I'm doing my best to train them up.

SIUSAN HUMPHRIES: I'm sure you're doing a good job, Mary. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Any other business? Then I think we can close the meeting and of course we welcome new ideas and new Council members. So I think that is it, thank you everyone.

(The meeting closed at 3.33 pm)