142nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at

Room 8
Premier Inn
15 Bath Road
London
TW6 2AB

and virtually via Zoom

On

Sunday, 21 July 2024

PRESENT:

COUNCIL

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

MEMBERS

On site:

Patricia Atherton
Holly Balk
Amanda Bavin
Miriam Boston
Jenny Chandler
Louise Pepper
Cate Kollhof
Rachel Lloyd
Joanne Petre
Cecilia Sweetman
Richard Ward

Remote:

Heather Casali
Victoria Davies
Mirella Fox
Sharon Golder
Susan Humphries
Marea O'Brien
Wendy Osmond
Kathryn Sykes
Julie Whitaker

PRESIDENT: Welcome everybody to the BIVR 2024 AGM. This year Joanne Petre is taking the note for us. We asked for a volunteer for a second writer, but no-one has come forward so it's Joanne on her own. Remember, because Joanne is taking the note, when it comes to time for discussion, state your name, speak up and one at a time. The Secretary's going to read out the notice, Joanne all that needs to be noted is the notice was duly read.

(The notice was duly read)

SECRETARY: That is the end of the reading and so now, we do take notes.

PRESIDENT: Any apologies for absence?

SECRETARY: I'm going to read out the names I've got so far. Mary Krelle, Nicola Dutton, Amanda Bavin, Jennifer Sinnamon, Katy Ryder, Leah Willersdorf, Claire Apperley, Patricia Atherton, Ann Lloyd, Deirdre O'Malley, Jean Lukins, Sandra Glenny, Caroline Booth, Susan McIntyre, Niamh Kelly-Leahy, Laura Harrison, Alison Stockwell, Alice Stewart, Sarah Edwards, Pauline Miller, Chris Armstrong, Natalie Bracken. Did anybody else have any names?

NEIL HOLLEY: Here is the list of who is online.

SECRETARY: I'll get that later. Okay. That is it. Did anybody else have any?

PRESIDENT: Any other names to add?

SHERYLL HOLLEY: I don't know whether Hilary's put apologies in, I can't see her.

SECRETARY: She never sent them through. I'm afraid people don't always. But if you think they would have given them had they known about the AGM, read their newsletter...

PRESIDENT: On the minutes. The minutes of the last meeting have been circulated to members via the website, we have a copy here for signing. Any questions on the minutes?

SECRETARY: You signed it last time on the bottom of the page, that is fine. As far as we are concerned, they are agreed. And the President's signed them. There we go.

PRESIDENT: The next bit is, just really for me to say it's a pleasure to see everyone here today, those online and everyone in person. And do a bit of a short report.

Last week, together with Sheryll, Neil, and Georgina, I was in Katowice, the capital of Silesia in Poland for the 54th Intersteno Congress. In the competitions, good news, Georgina placed fifth in the speed competition, 14th in the real-time. This is world standings! Sheryll placed eighth in the speed competition, 28th in the real-time, so congratulations to both of them. Extra congratulations to Sheryll because she's the first and so far only person to pass the Intersteno ECQA, which is a new speech-to-text qualification introduced between the Intersteno Federation in conjunction with the European Union.

The bid for the UK to host the 55th Intersteno Congress is still alive and well. I have site visits lined up for this week when I'll visit prospective venues in Liverpool. A note of caution, the main decision-maker on the Intersteno board is very cost conscious and is currently in talks with Lisbon in Portugal, ostensibly for 2028, we were told the other day, where after the financial collapse of a few years ago, the venues are very reasonably priced and a lot cheaper than anywhere in the UK. That's in Lisbon. The Government of Portugal are also interested in offering their support to bring in a large number of visitors, so it may be a bit of an uphill for Liverpool for 2026, if I'm honest.

It's been an honour to be President of BIVR for the last two years. In a few minutes' time, we'll hand over to the next President. My usual request - I've been on Council for over ten years now, and it's been a constant theme over that time - we need new Council Members that will step in with new ideas, bring in a new energy with them, so I'll use this address to appeal again for volunteers to step forward to inject new vitality into Council. Being on Council doesn't take up huge amounts of time and it's possible to attend meetings via Zoom if you are worried about travelling and losing a whole day. It's not too onerous a burden. I'll finish off by saying, thanks for putting up with me. That is it.

Then we are on to the Betty Willett Award. Last year's recipient, Amanda Bavin, returned the actual award and received her certificate yesterday, as she's unable to be here today. This year, we received one nomination, which was by Mary Krelle, and it was seconded by Nia Davidson. This member joined the Institute in the 70s, first as an associate, then a fellow, which involved taking and passing exams in two different fields of reporting. They came on to Council in 1980 until 2002, so that's a longer than I've been on Council - I can't moan about my 12 years – and was President for numerous times, the first time in 1986.

The nominations read as follows, this is Mary Krelle, MBIVR: "I nominate Jenny Chandler for the Betty Willett Award. I've known Jenny professionally and personally since 2017 although, of course, I had heard her name as a bit of a legend in the world of verbatim reporting. So, I can only speak for what I've seen and how she's treated me. Her knowledge, professionalism, and care for the high standards of the profession, are second-to-none. I'm in awe of her stamina as she continues to oversee the Parliamentary contract for Marten Walsh Cherer, and I know that that is only a tiny part of her long, extraordinary career. She's still using her wealth of knowledge to train new stenographers, transcribers and editors. She shares Betty's passion, dedication and commitment to our profession, and I think she truly deserves the

honour. On a personal note, I will never forget her kindness to me when I unexpectedly became a freelance reporter in 2017, and in the years following, including through the pandemic. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working with her."

Nia Davidson MBIVR said: "I wholeheartedly second the nomination that Jenny Chandler should receive the Betty Willett Award. I've known Jenny since 1987 when I joined the MWC family as a very young admin assistant/trainee stenographer. Jenny immediately recognised my excitement for the magic of the Steno machine, having not long converted from pen herself. She readily shared her huge enthusiasm for and commitment to court reporting and made sure to follow my progress in the theory, and encouraging me to get to court as soon as possible and sit the exams.

Her love for her work and insistence on quality transcription were hugely influential on all new recruits. We had no doubt that our work and how we did it mattered. She tirelessly read our transcripts and found memorable ways to help us learn. She encouraged us to try all different types of work, and she listened to, and helped us when we had difficulties.

Jenny gave many years of her time to the Institute's committee from the 1980s to the early 2000s, and it's undergone huge change. Ever since I've known her, she's done brilliant networking and held important parties with clients, keeping judges, barristers, solicitors and civil servants firmly in the know about the difficulties the profession faces and how important we are.

Friends and family are constantly amazed that I have a job that I still absolutely love. This is a direct result of Jenny's nurturing and attitude to her work."

Council were very pleased to let Jenny know of the nomination and Council's acceptance, but she was sworn to secrecy until this moment. I'm pleased to say that Jenny is here in person to accept the award, so I'm delighted to hand it to you. You get to retain the actual award until the AGM next year, when you return to it us for the next recipient and receive in its stead a certificate to keep for ever.

JENNY CHANDLER: That guarantees my attendance next year, doesn't it!

PRESIDENT: We have got to keep the numbers up somehow. There you go.

JENNY CHANDLER: I have, because I did have notice, prepared just a very short acceptance, if I may say it? Can you hear me? I can give it to you as well. I'm extremely honoured to have been nominated for this year's Betty Willett Award, and I'm delighted to be here to receive it in person.

Most of you won't know this, but I personally owe Betty Willett a huge debt of gratitude. Once upon a time, I was a meek and mild young shorthand writer. I remember a particular Council meeting when Betty was seeking volunteers for various positions. A woman of impressive stature, Betty looked around the room after the meeting, for suitable candidates, her eyes failing to alight on little me.

Later that evening, after the meeting, I was so upset at being overlooked that I plucked up the courage and rang her to ask why she hadn't considered me for one of the positions. She said she thought I wouldn't be interested. She was probably just being polite when what she really meant was that she didn't think I would be suitable!

From that moment on, I was determined to speak up for myself and others, and subsequently became President of the Institute and Chief Examiner on a number of occasions.

Betty had vast experience in all aspects of verbatim reporting but specifically union conferences, which she attended for many years for MWC. Indeed, some years later I had the privilege to work with her in Brighton at the TUC Annual Congress, which MWC covers to this day.

Betty was an inspiration to us all and I feel immensely proud to be the recipient of this year's award in her name.

SECRETARY: Can I just get a photo of you, perhaps over here with the award, and then I won't have to that chase you up after? We don't want any lampposts and stuff sticking out. Excellent. Thank you very much.

JENNY CHANDLER: Thank you.

SECRETARY: The box and the bag to carry it home in. Obviously, if you want to stay for the rest of the meeting, you are welcome.

JENNY CHANDLER: Of course!

SECRETARY: Now you have got a heavy award to take home!

JENNY CHANDLER: Thank you. I'll give that to you. I was dying to know who nominated me.

SECRETARY: We hadn't told them either because we had to keep it secret.

JENNY CHANDLER: I'm very bad at secrets but I did manage to keep this one.

PRESIDENT: Nearly done. There we go.

JENNY CHANDLER: Lovely. Thank you very much indeed, thank you.

PRESIDENT: Now I think it's the Treasurer's Report?

SECRETARY: Okay. The accounts were circulated previously. The report was on the end of the notice which I don't read. A small Excel spreadsheet of the money in and the money out over the year, and so really, are there any questions? (Pause) No.

I can just tell you the bank balance on Friday, because, as I mentioned here, I'm afraid I hadn't managed to reinvest the £15,000 bond. They threw us out because one of our members moved back to America. They said that means you can't be bond holders with one person living in America. So, I'm still looking at that. The bank balance now is, including that £15,000, £32,565.92.

Of course, we are not earning any interest on it sitting in our bank account. That's why we try and get the bond.

If we can have somebody who is for and then a seconder, a proposer and a seconder? Miriam proposes acceptance. Who will second?

VICE PRESIDENT: I will.

SECRETARY: Georgina seconds that. Thank you. That's that done. It's back to the President.

PRESIDENT: Right.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Excuse me. Could I ask a quick question? The Opus II sponsorship, will that be continuing?

SECRETARY: It is actually.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Because that'll make a big difference to the accounts, won't it?

SECRETARY: Well, it is another sum of money, thank goodness, coming in, because this AGM is not cheap. As none of them are these days. But they just contacted me two weeks before the AGM, and so obviously Ian and I spoke to them, they went back and checked why they hadn't instantly renewed it on January 1, when I had emailed them endless times. And, they've come back and said yes, they are sponsoring us with the diamond sponsorship which is £1,000 and I'm just waiting for the dosh to come in the bank.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Good news. The other thing is, are there any students?

SECRETARY: Yes. We have one of my students here. Two members are here.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Okay, because I think on the accounts, it was showing as zero?

SECRETARY: Whereabouts on the accounts are you talking about students?

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: I have to find it now. Just a minute. Student donations.

SECRETARY: Nobody's made any donations for a student. We have actually had sponsorship

for one of our students here today. And that should be in next year's accounts. Okay. So sponsoring somebody for this weekend.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Okay, thank you.

SECRETARY: Thank you. Was that Susan Humphries?

PRESIDENT: Yes. Special Resolutions for this year. As stated in the notice, we had no nominations for Council. The Special Resolution this year is to waive the 21-days' notice to include Sheryll Holley's name to the candidates eligible to be President, 2024-2026.

We don't need ballot papers. A show of hands will do from those present in the room, and the online people putting the appropriate response in the chat box. So, those for?

RICHARD WARD: Are we allowed to vote, as students?

SECRETARY: Actually, no.

HOLLY BALK: That is a relief. All right.

SECRETARY: So, everybody here has approved it. Online? Have we got them?

NEIL HOLLEY: One against.

SECRETARY: That is fine. Any abstaining?

PRESIDENT: No abstentions.

SECRETARY: Looks like it's passed.

PRESIDENT: The Special Resolution is passed, and Sheryll is eligible to stand as President this time.

SECRETARY: Next page.

PRESIDENT: My role as President for the last two years now comes to an end, so you need to vote for a new President. As per the notice, the three candidates willing to stand are in alphabetical order: Alan Bell, Georgina Ford and Sheryll Holley. We need to appoint two Tellers. We usually ask our students. Holly and Richard, do you agree to be the Tellers?

HOLLY BALK: Yes.

RICHARD WARD: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Good. The voting slips should be passed around to those present and those online to put the name of their preferred candidate into the private chat box which Neil is monitoring. As referred to in the amended notice, I have now taken up the position of Vice-President for the next two years.

SECRETARY: Misplaced my voting slips. Were they on that table there?

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Can I raise another point whilst you are just doing that? Could each

party say what they would like to achieve with BIVR going forwards? Thank you.

SECRETARY: In alphabetical order?

ALAN BELL: Wow, okay.

SUSAN HUMPHRIES: Alan Georgina and Sheryll, yes.

ALAN BELL: Alphabetical order, I guess that begins with me. I would like to do my best to continue the work that Ian and previous Presidents have done. I will try and promote us as much as possible and ensure that we keep our standards as high as possible, if not making things better.

VICE PRESIDENT: I think we should try and get more members in, because there's still an awful lot of shorthand writers, stenographers out there who don't know of our existence, don't know of the work we do, and quite frankly, are working under some not very good conditions, so I want to try and get more of those reporters into the field of BIVR.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: I concur with everything that Georgina and Alan have said. And I'll try and do the same.

(Pause for ballot)

KATH SYKES: Kath here, I can’t see where the private Chat box is.

MELANIE BALL: A little blue box right at the bottom. Click on Neil Holley instead of Meet & Greet Chat it will go into the right box.

(General discussion to find the right box.)

KATH SYKES: Yes, got it! Thank you.

(Pause for ballot)

(The Tellers returned the voting slips and figures to the President.)

(Neil hands over private Chat votes figure to the President.)

PRESIDENT: Do I just announce the winner?

SECRETARY: Yes, just whoever had the most votes.

PRESIDENT: The most votes went to Alan. (Applause)

ALAN BELL: Wow.

SECRETARY: Welcome, Mr President.

ALAN BELL: Thank you!

PRESIDENT: Do we swap seats? (Laughter)

ALAN BELL: Technically we should, but we don't need to. Thank you very much, everybody who's voted for me, and I do agree with what Georgina said, we do need to do something

to - I'll speak to camera- we need to do something to try to get new members on board.

SECRETARY: And raise our profile generally.

ALAN BELL: Yes, raise the profile generally. It's woefully lacking, really. So, even to the point where – and I remember the event we did at the Law Society- and none of the Law Society people were even bothered. So, you know, if they are hosting us, they should know about us and they should be doing something to help.

SECRETARY: Okay. The next thing is the next AGM.

PRESIDENT: Date of the next AGM has the be within 18 months of today. Having said that, the accounts have to be lodged by 30th September each year, so it has to be about 14 months.

SECRETARY: At least a few weeks before that so that I can lodge the accounts.

ALAN BELL: So, we are looking at some time in August?

SECRETARY: Yes, it would be.

PRESIDENT: We have to think about the location as well. Whether it's back to London?

SECRETARY: Whether we want to have that discussion via email, people calling in, or if people want to state now?

ALAN BELL: Yes. Does anybody have any suggestions for where we might hold the next AGM?

JOANNE PETRE: Possibly Liverpool because we might miss out on the Intersteno.

PRESIDENT: Good idea.

ALAN BELL: Well done.

SECRETARY: Thank you. Multitasking, you see!

ALAN BELL: Doing very well.

NEIL HOLLEY: Newcastle and Liverpool coming in.

ALAN BELL: I would vote for Newcastle. I'll take you to the best pubs!

SECRETARY: And what date is best for people?

ALAN BELL: Should we head more into August? I mean I don't know how many people this applies to, but for me, whether it's in school holiday time or not does make a difference. So, yes, August. Texas, that is a good one! Sometime in August I think, maybe mid-August?

VICE PRESIDENT: Checking when the NCRA is on.

ALAN BELL: Yes, that is true, we have to take that into consideration.

VICE PRESIDENT: Can't find it now, of course.

ALAN BELL: We have done in the past. But nobody turned up this time.

VICE PRESIDENT: It's more important when it's an Intersteno year, actually. But I can't find it.

SECRETARY: It used to be after the Easter break and gradually it moved.

PRESIDENT: 24-26 July in Minneapolis.

SECRETARY: Is that the NCRA?

ALAN BELL: Yes, that is early.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

VICE PRESIDENT: We could do any time in August, perhaps?

ALAN BELL: Yes.

SECRETARY: There is a Bank Holiday at the beginning, isn't there?

CATE KOLLHOF: End.

SECRETARY: And one at the end.

NICOLE HARRISON: Think about when NCRA is because quite a few people go there too.

VICE PRESIDENT: That is 24-26 July next year, Nicole.

NICOLE HARRISON: Okay.

ALAN BELL: Okay, so...

SECRETARY: We don't have to be cast in stone but need to give an indication.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Sorry, are you meaning middle of August for the AGM?

ALAN BELL: Yes.

VICTORIA DAVIES: Are not a lot of people away then?

ALAN BELL: That is what we are throwing out, but it's whether it's easier for people for it to be the end of July, it would then clash with the NCRA if anybody was to be attending that.

RICHARD WARD: What about before the NCRA?

VICE PRESIDENT: What about this sort of weekend again, 20th to 21st, so what is that?

PRESIDENT: Next year it would be 19th and 20th.

ALAN BELL: I guess I would probably have to all to be looking to attend the NCRA, so that would be the same week, really. The following weekend. Okay.

SHERYLL HOLLEY: It's normally Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and there’s a big break in-between.

ALAN BELL: Yes, true.

JENNY CHANDLER: Alan, the only one I ever attended of the NCRA was Minneapolis. Isn't that strange?

VICE PRESIDENT: Wow.

JENNY CHANDLER: It was a fantastic experience. Absolutely fantastic. I can highly recommend it.

ALAN BELL: Obviously, I will have to be attending Intersteno next year.

VICE PRESIDENT: It's not on next year.

ALAN BELL: The year after.

SECRETARY: We have something else each year. Every two years is the regular Council meeting.

ALAN BELL: Okay.

SECRETARY: That we went to. Nicole and I went, Leah and I went.

NICOLE HARRISON: Those are great.

SECRETARY: Obviously, I don't go to the Congress because there is no way I'll be able to take the competitions.

PRESIDENT: Council next year is in Córdoba in Argentina.

ALAN BELL: Yes, of course. We were talking about that, weren't we? Cheap travel for everybody.

SECRETARY: Okay. So, it's up to you if you want to ponder those dates?

PRESIDENT: I suppose we don't have to fix the exact date.

ALAN BELL: We don’t have to, and if anybody has any thoughts or anything occurs to them that would be a reason for or against a particular weekend, just let us know, and we'll take it into account.

PRESIDENT: I think that's the business of the AGM concluded. So, no more notes.

MIRIAM BOSTON: Is there any other business?

ALAN BELL: We should have, yes.

MIRIAM BOSTON: All I would like to say is, my personal congratulations to Jenny on receiving the Betty Willett Award, it's well deserved. I remember Jenny when I was a young transcriber, shorthand writer. Also, I think as well as getting younger members to join the Institute, it's important to get younger people on the Council. It's the same with everything, whether it's the Women's Institute, the Scouting Association, or professional bodies, it's the same people that stand up and do everything. But it's the future, it's got to be younger people.

ALAN BELL: Yes.

MIRIAM BOSTON: So, I would encourage younger stenographers, members, please think about standing for Council, because it isn't a lot of work, but you've got to have younger people that will take the profession forward. People in our age, Jenny, I'm a little bit younger than Jenny, but we have got to keep going. We can't keep going for ever, and it's important for

the profession's future. Look at all the new young MPs, for instance, that have never had a proper job before- don't minute that, please! But, you know, we have got to bring younger people forward, they've got to step up and take our profession forward.

JENNY CHANDLER: Hear, hear.

ALAN BELL: I would also like to actually echo what you say about Jenny's winning of the Betty Willett Award. Very well deserved. The vast majority of what I know, I know because I worked for Jenny for a long time, and I know how to put a transcript together because of Jenny.

JENNY CHANDLER: Thank you.

SECRETARY: Okay, it is 2.39 and the meeting is closed.

ALAN BELL: We are concluded.