

## Honorary Secretary Report AGM 2015

Can I start my report by apologising for not being present in person. As reported at the last AGM, this year and next year we have a 13 month financial year so I had intended to arrange the AGM for the last week in October or the first week in November to give time for the Accounts to be audited. Unfortunately without any input from myself I found out by chance that the Dinner had been booked for the 16<sup>th</sup> October and as traditionally the AGM takes place prior to the Dinner I was forced to move it forward to the 14<sup>th</sup>. I have had a visit to my daughter who now lives in America planned for the first half of October since the new year and so when the AGM takes place I will be in Baltimore.

My actual report will be very short this year as I consider that most issues relating to my role are covered by the 4 year plan which is on the website. I would however like to comment on the new constitution. I consider that this has not been a success this year. My vision was of a small tight committee, meeting regularly often at short notice when issues arise so that 'committee decisions' would always be taken forward. In my view most officers are taking time to adjust to this philosophy which is not surprising given that most have been operating under a very different methodology for many years. The main problem has been the absence of the Chair for the 3 months of the year when most decisions need to be made. In hindsight the omission of a vice- chair was a mistake as it meant that no one was leading the committee, no meetings were called and therefore Officers were making decisions in isolation. This has led to the inevitable conflict when decisions made by one officer would impact negatively on another officer's area of responsibility. I still believe that the initial concept is valid but obviously the committee need to consider how to implement the changes in light of this years experience, especially if the Chair is absent for any lengthy period.

Finally many of you will be aware that I have decided to step down from my role as Secretary. This was always my likely intention after last years AGM given that I have been on the committee for 8 years with 5 years as Secretary. I believe that 5 years is the maximum to be effective for most positions.. After the appointments had been issued and an incident at the PDC, I knew it was time to go and at the end of April I informed the Chair of my decision not to stand at this years AGM giving him 6 months to consider my replacement.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members who have supported me over the 8 years I have been on the committee. I am aware that I have upset some members as I have tried to take the Association forward and modernise its procedures but please accept that my goal was always the benefit of the Association. Someone has to put their head over the wall to be shot at and mine was considered expendable. I see no point in being a committee member if you are not prepared to argue your view. I wish my successor all the best and suggest that he invests in a substantial hard hat.

Regards

Derek