

The Bibliographical Society

The Annual General Meeting 2020

The one hundred and twenty-eighth Annual General Meeting was held online via Zoom on Tuesday, 20 October 2020. The President, Ms Margaret Lane Ford, was in the Chair. The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting (which had been printed in *The Library* for June 2020) were taken as read, seconded by Dr David Shaw and confirmed.

The President gave an overview of the Society's activities throughout the year. She first listed the events that had to be cancelled due to the pandemic: an event at Middle Temple in April; a training session at John Rylands Library in May; a talk on feminist bibliography in June; a reception at London Rare Book School; and all ordinary meetings of the Society after February. Despite the restrictions, the Society awarded the Gold Medal to Professor James Carley; held a very successful virtual summer visit to Thomas Plume's Library, Innerpefferay Library and Lincoln College Library in July; awarded bursaries, including for the Oxford Traherne Project; had monitored libraries at risk, most recently at the National Trust; initiated Council's Choice on the Society's website; contributed to the completion of David Pearson's Book Owners Online database, now online; and moved Richard Goulden's *Book Trade in Kent* online thanks to Mr Richard Goulden and Dr David Shaw. A rebranding exercise is ongoing and at least the first two meetings of the new season will be held online. All lectures going forward will be recorded and made available via the Society's website. There are plans for a winter visit, and regular communications will continue to be sent to members. The President closed her overview by reminding members to check the Society's website regularly for updates.

The President noted with regret the deaths of Dr M. A. E. Nickson and Dr Dennis E. Rhodes. She then proposed the adoption of the Annual Report for 2019-2020 as circulated in advance of the Annual General Meeting. It was seconded by Dr Kristian Jensen and carried.

The Hon. Treasurer presented the Accounts for 2019.

The Accounts were published with the Annual Report and follow the same pattern as they have done for several years. Following advice from the Charity Commission, the Society has once again had the accounts examined by an independent examiner and has not had them formally audited.

In general terms the accounts for 2019 show a healthy set of figures which allow the Society to maintain and continue its programme of publishing its quarterly journal and bibliographical monographs, funding electronic publications and giving annual research awards and support for special projects.

The figures show subscription income increased from the previous year: in 2018 it was about £22,000 and in 2019 it was £25,000. Investment income has also slightly increased from about £38,000 in 2018 to about £41,000 in 2019. Income from Oxford University Press for electronic sales of the journal was just over £72,000, nearly identical with the previous year. For many years this income has been of enormous benefit to the Society, but the Hon. Treasurer reminded members that it would be unwise to take this for granted. The Society's financial commitments are thus judged accordingly and conservatively.

The permanent endowment fund has continued to support bibliographical research giving away around £15,000 in the form of both major and minor awards as well as conference subventions. The costs for publishing *The Library* were higher than in previous years and expenditure on other publications was confined to support electronic resources. There is good progress on future

publications with the certainty of ample reserved funds to support them. Details are included in the 'Review of the Year' which precedes the annual accounts.

The Hon. Treasurer closed his report by referring to the unprecedented instability of the current year with no certainty of what lies ahead. In line with enormous volatility in the UK and the world equity markets the Society's investments and income have suffered. However, the Society continues to live within its means and as it reviews the situation over the coming year and discusses a likely rebalancing of the investment portfolio with the Society's fund managers, a potential need for additional discipline will not be a particular hardship.

The Hon. Treasurer proposed the adoption of the Annual Accounts for 2019. This was formally seconded by Miss Robin Myers. The Hon. Treasurer proposed the appointment of Thornton Springer as the Society's examiners for the year 2020. This was formally seconded by Dr Mark Byford.

The President explained that there are four vacancies on Council, owing to the usual rules of rotation. Due to slight changes in the appointment of new Council members, only two of four members due to step down in 2020 will step down. The retiring members are Mr Anthony Davis and Mr Julian Pooley, and the President thanked both of them for their work for the Society over the last four years. Two members due to step down in 2020 agreed to remain on Council for another year: Dr Mark Byford and Dr Julia Walworth. The four new candidates nominated for Council are: Mr Simon Beattie, Ms Yvonne Lewis, Ms Julianne Simpson and Dr Anke Timmermann. These nominations were formally seconded by Dr Elisabeth Leedham-Green and approved. The President also thanked Dr Maureen Bell who is stepping down as Chair of the Publications Sub-Committee.

The President confirmed that the Hon. Secretary was willing to serve another one-year term and announced that the Hon. Treasurer was stepping down to become Senior Vice-President. It was proposed that he will be replaced by Matthew Payne. This was seconded by Mr Nicolas Barker. The election of all Officers was proposed, seconded by Professor David McKitterick, and carried. The President thanked all Officers for their work, in particular the Hon. Secretary who had taken on extra work to maintain the Society's activities in the online environment. The President thanked the outgoing Hon. Treasurer for his sterling work over the last 25 years, the longest time anyone had served the Society as Hon. Treasurer. He had judiciously worked in the background and had steered the Society's finances very competently, leading to an increase in its fortunes. The President welcomed Mr Matthew Payne as the Society's new Hon. Treasurer and looked forward to continuing to work with the outgoing Hon. Treasurer in his new role as Senior Vice-President.

The President announced that one new Vice-President was to be elected and nominated Mr Edward Potten. The nomination was formally seconded by Dr Maureen Bell.

The President announced that her own term of office had come to an end and proposed Professor James Raven, Senior Vice-President, to succeed her. This was formally seconded by Mr Julian Pooley. The incoming President congratulated the outgoing President on her term in office and thanked her for all her work over the past two years in which the Society had grown and flourished.

The President asked for any other business. Mr Robert Laurie asked whether the Society had received any income from the Publishers' Licensing Services. The Hon. Treasurer responded that no such income had been received.

After the formal business of the Annual General Meeting, the Hon. Secretary divided the attendees into small break-out rooms for virtual socialising.

Karen Limper-Herz, Hon. Secretary, October 2020