

BABC SECRETARY'S REPORT AGM 2023

Since our last meeting we learned the sad news of the death of Dorothy Steinart which came as a considerable shock after her short illness.

We were officially informed of three resignations, most recently Elizabeth Taylor, a very loyal and longstanding member who has now moved to Dorset to be near her family.

Following a number of unpaid subscriptions and despite an extended period of grace with no response received, together with considerable efforts to ascertain the status of their membership, a number of names were removed from the membership.

I am delighted to report that during the year we have welcomed many visitors, 31 of whom have successfully applied for membership while four previous members have rejoined. Our membership, as confirmed by the EBU, now stands at 197. We have 8 applicants for membership; there are 14 vacancies and no waiting list.

Our newest members are Anne Chamberlain, Diana Greenman and Denis Farrugia.

There have been very few occasions when we have been unable to provide a Spare Partner, thanks to the many members who have signed up for this duty, some on multiple occasions.

I would like to reiterate that although Spare Partner duty is not a condition of membership there is, I believe, a reasonable expectation that, where it is possible to do so, members will sign up at least once during the year.

As Neil and Sue have mentioned there has been a very encouraging increase in attendance. While the success of the club in this respect is to be greatly welcomed it does mean a considerable increase in the committee's workload. Who could imagine that an activity where the most strenuous effort involved is sorting one's hand, reaching for a bidding card and queueing for tea, could create so much heavy lifting behind the scenes?

But I assure you that this is the case! And for me personally the passing years mean that dealing with those heavy crates and bags can be quite a challenge. And there are occasions when, for family reasons or illness, extra cover is required. As I am responsible for managing the duty rota, I am only too aware

how challenged we are at times to cover all duties since some committee members are also on Marilyn's directors and scorers rota. However, we are now fortunate in having three club members who are prepared to add extra muscle and brain power to our committee which has felt somewhat overstretched at times.

So, while their nominations have been provisionally approved we are appealing to you all for your support in approving the resolution to increase our committee to twelve members, with the addition of Richard Arnatt, Yvonne McConnell and John Stewart.

I would like to thank the present committee for all the loyal help and support which they give me as well as those members who frequently lend a hand with setting up and clearing away. And I wish to pay a special tribute to Neil for his outstanding leadership as Chairman over the past five years.

Finally, I wish to emphasise the fact that, over recent years and the wise guidance of the three Chairmen with whom I have worked, our club has evolved into the friendly, welcoming association which we enjoy today. We are a very diverse collection of individuals but it is my hope that we can continue to maintain the standards of kindness and consideration which are our hallmark.

Thank you.

Kate Castree
16th October 2023