

Hon Secretary's and Hon Membership Secretary's Report October 2020-November 2021

Secretary's Report

The Society's last AGM was held as a virtual meeting on Zoom in October 2020, and our Council and wider membership have necessarily become much accustomed to this technology during the past year. The simple benefit of reliably holding meetings as planned (otherwise impossible due to government restrictions) has unexpectedly brought in its train fuller attendance and greater flexibility. Those whose work commitments precluded travelling to London have been able to join virtual Council meetings, and both small group discussions and a special finance meeting were readily arranged. The result has been an increase in activity and contact time, and a simultaneous reduction in expenses.

The Council met in March and October 2021. As well as its main business of producing volumes, the Council considered two major issues: the implications of dwindling membership (a problem experienced equally by other record societies) and the availability of a range of alternative publishing formats and platforms. These new publishing options were the subject of a series of small group meetings organised by the Hon Membership Secretary over the summer, with a full report due to be presented at the first Council of 2022 in February. At the Council's special finance meeting in September, the Hon Treasurer's forecast for income and expenditure 2022 -24 was examined in detail, and this will inform the discussion of the report on publishing options in the New Year.

Membership Secretary's Report

As of 20 Oct 2021, subscription payments have been received for 175 members, one of whom I have yet to identify, viz. (end-of-year figures for 2020 added alongside for comparison):

	<u>Oct 2021</u>	<u>EoY2020</u>
Institutional Members	79	107
Personal Members	96	97
<i>Total</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>204</i>

24 of the 28 late-payers are represented by an agent which has a policy of not paying a subscription if the volume for the previous year has yet to be received. There is therefore still some hope of getting payment from at least some of these members once the *Jubilee Book*, the volume for 2020, has been despatched.

Like many other charities, we were adversely affected by a combination of the pandemic and the delay in the publication of our 2019 and 2020 volumes. That has had the effect of exacerbating the downwards trend in membership numbers. Although the relatively sharp drop in 2020, and perhaps also in 2021, may well be temporary, it is almost certain that in future our existing sources of income will not be enough to meet the full cost of producing our volumes. It is also clear that the way that people 'consume' books has changed and will continue to do so. As a result, we have, as the Secretary says, begun a wide-ranging examination of our publishing options for the future.