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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JANUARY 11TH 2020**

**Quality and Audit Committee Report**

**Reminder of our duties**

It is worth recalling the stated duties of the Quality and Audit Committee.

“The Committee is concerned with ensuring that the Association is a quality organisation operating in the best interests of the members.

In line with the By-laws of the association, the duties shall include:

- discussion/agreement with the Chief Executive on the operation of management systems within the Association;

- ensuring that the activities of the Association are operating with appropriate resources;

- reviewing risk management procedures established within the Association;

- considering the findings of any reviews initiated by the committee and agreeing recommendations in the light of the findings;

-overseeing the Association’s policy on fraud and irregularity”.

**Governance**

The Quality and Audit Committee has been represented at all four Trustee Body meetings held during the year enabling it to monitor the discussion and decision taking. Detailed information has been provided in advance of the meetings and detailed discussion has taken place in advance of key decisions. The financial audit by external auditors was extremely thorough resulting in a favourable report.

The Association is now more financially stable than a few years ago, one consequence of which is that other organisations are again happy to form partnerships with us in developing projects.

Shaun Reason, former CEO, has reported at three of our Q & A meetings. Reports have been very full and Q & A members have had opportunity to explore issues with the CEO and test out key items. We wish to pay tribute to Shaun who, over the years, has given us very detailed reports on business that had been transacted since the previous meeting and proposals to be discussed at the next meeting of the Trustee Body.

We met Hannah Russell, our new CEO, for the first time at our meeting in November 2019 and we look forward to working with her.

The Trustee Body undertakes a regular programme of policy updates in order to keep them appropriate in a constantly changing external environment. The RAG (red, amber, green) report prepared by headquarters and considered by the Trustee Body enables the trustees to identify the progress towards achieving the stated targets in the strategic plan and the relative risk of not achieving them.

**Review of the Trustee Body**

Q & A responded to a request from the Chair of the Trustee Body to review the operation of the Trustee Body and it associated committees. To start this process Quality and Audit carried out, via email, a survey of trustees’ perceptions of how the Trustee Body was functioning. As a result Q & A made five recommendations which the Trustee Body is now addressing. We shall report on the outcomes next year.

**Trustee Body Representative on Quality and Audit.**

Problems arose when it was found not possible to appoint such a representative under the existing rules. Quality and Audit have worked with the Trustee Body to update the rules of the Association in order to give more flexibility in the appointment of the representative. The proposed changes will be presented to you by the Trustees in the next agenda item.

Membership numbers are still a concern. Q & A is also concerned about the relatively small number of members coming forward to serve on committees and the very small number of members who vote in the elections. We are hopeful that the appointment of a Head of Communications, Marketing and Member Engagement will lead to a growth in member numbers and of their involvement in Association activities. Q & A has met Alistair Strayton to explore the issues of communication with members and member engagement.

We have studied the RAG reports used by the trustees to monitor the Association’s implementation of the strategic plan in the four areas governance, membership, advocacy and professionalism. Whereas progress towards achieving the targets was being made in most areas it appeared that, during the year, activity in the Advocacy section was limited by shortage of staff to follow up some of the opportunities.

**Updating the operating procedures.**

The changes proposed by Quality and Audit were submitted to headquarters staff in February 2019. Some progress has been made but the process of producing the updated version has been delayed by the staff changes.

**Future**

As reported earlier member involvement in the activities of the Association is one of our concerns. Currently we are thinking about how, with our limited resources, we might address this issue. Given the relatively large investment in the IT system we would like to get some information about members’ experience of using it. Although we are constantly considering our role in relation to specific issues, we are required to periodically review and update our remit; with several changes in prospect, the coming year may be an appropriate one in which to carry out the periodic review.

We welcomed back Alan Rhodes who was re-elected for a second term. Under the Rules we need to confirm that election today.

There has been a vacancy for the whole year which, apart from increasing the work load on current members, does increase the danger of a meeting not being able to achieve a quorum.

Graham Kingsley will be retiring in August 2020 and I retire in August 2021 both of us having completed the maximum allowed of 9 years. There are two positions to fill in the current round of elections.

This is my opportunity to thank Graham Kingsley publicly for his contribution to the work of the committee. He has brought a wealth of experience of Association involvement to our deliberations. Graham “ Thank you” for your contribution over your 9 years of membership of Quality and Audit.

As in previous years Q & A wish to acknowledge all the staff at headquarters for their unstinting devotion to the work of the Association. We hope that the new appointments will take a little of the pressure off individuals.

Dennis Sutton (Chairman) Date: 15:12:2019

(Members: Maggie Hannon, Graham Kingsley, Alan Rhodes, Dennis Sutton).