



Annual General Meeting July 2008

Report of the Secretary/Treasurer

1. Overview

The Society's income and expenditure account and balance sheet for the year ending 31 March 2008 are attached.

The balance sheet for the year ending 31 March 2008 shows a surplus of £15,705.21 compared with £7,118.81 in the previous year. The current account balance stands at £58,715.93. This includes transfers totalling £22,000 from the reserve fund earlier in the year. As a consequence, the reserve fund stands at £16,877.33 compared with £38,383.24 at the end of the previous year.

Reports to the Society's AGM by the previous Treasurer had highlighted issues the Society faced as a result of a generally static membership, the (then) subscription levels and the limitations in running a voluntary organisation. These issues had resulted in a deficit during the 2005 financial year. The move to a generally corporate membership class and associated changes to subscription levels have stabilised the Society's financial position and this is reflected in the accounts.

The purchase of secretarial and administrative services (including website and communications) from POS Enterprises Ltd has proved to be affordable and has greatly reduced the workload of the Secretary/Treasurer. I record my thanks to Linda Durtnal.

The loan to POS Enterprises Ltd remained outstanding during 2007/08 but I have reason to anticipate that it will be repaid in the first half of the 2008/09 financial year.

The conclusion at last year's AGM that the demands on the Society's finances would be contained has proved to be correct and although it was necessary to transfer funds from the reserve account to cover cash flow in the early part of the year. I am now confident that this can be restored.

2. Accounts for 2007/2008

The Society's current account balance was £58,715.93 at 31 March 2008 compared to £24,964.81 in the previous year.

The Society's deposit account now stands at £16,877.33 - down from £38,383.24 in the previous year. As noted above, it is now possible to increase the Society's deposit account and I propose to transfer £30,000 from the current account.

The loan of £10,000 to POS Enterprises continues to be treated as an asset (see comments in paragraph 1.5 above).

The income and expenditure account shows major variations in some areas of spending but consistency with the previous year in others. A concern for both the Society and POS Enterprises Ltd is the significant number of payments wrongly made to POS which have had to be reimbursed to POS(E).

The move to corporate membership combined with improved secretarial support has resulted in a welcome 19% increase in subscription income from £51,823 in 2007/08 to £61,897.15.

Bank interest of £494.09 was received and would have been more had the transfer of funds to the current account not been necessary.

POS Enterprises Ltd has been paid £26,960.93 for secretarial support services plus £25,850.00 for website content and communications. In addition £1,010.51 was paid direct to eshopworks for updates and amendments to the website.

Expenditure on committee work has been minimal. The President's Event and the Annual Seminar and Lunch both covered their costs but neither made a significant contribution to the Society's funds.

The accounts provide for payments to sundry creditors where invoices for 2007/08 remained to be paid at 31 March or in advance for known expenditure early in 2008/09.

3. Subscriptions

As intended, the change to a predominantly corporate class of membership and associated subscription rates has had the effect of increasing membership and (generally) also the number of organisations in membership, as demonstrated by the following table:

Type of organisation	Total no of organisations	POS members in 2006/07	POS members in 2007/08	No of members in 2006/07	No of members in 2007/08	Individual payments
Counties	34	29 (85%)	28 (82%)	44	61	0
Shire Districts	239	163 (68%)	183 (77%)	198	239	9
London(inc GLA & ODA)	35	21 (60%)	24 (69%)	33	45	1 with 2 individual member
Mets	36	26 (72%)	29 (81%)	38	44	1
Unitaries	46	28 (61%)	32 (70%)	33	41	0
Nat Pks	8	7 (87%)	7 (87%)	7	7	0
Others	n/a	13	4	13	9	0
TOTAL	398	287	307	366	445	11

Overall, the number of organisations in membership increased by 7% from 287 to 307 and members increased by 22% from 366 to 445. It is however of concern that the number of county councils and other organisations in membership fell (by 1 and 9 respectively) and the proportion of London and unitary authorities in membership remains comparatively low.

Subscription income was £61,897, a £10,074 (19%) increase on 2006/07, again reflecting the intention behind the change to corporate membership.

4. Preview of 2008/09

Repayment of the £10,000 loan to POS Enterprises Ltd is not essential for the Society's own financial stability in 2008/09 but if as I anticipate, repayment occurs early in the financial year it will assist with cash flow – particularly with payments to POS(E) for secretarial services.

The Society's current three-year arrangement for support of the RTP1 Planning Awards ends in 2008/09. Cabinet should consider whether to negotiate a renewal of the arrangement.

The Annual Seminar and Lunch and the President's Event are expected to continue to be broadly self-supporting but they are not likely to be major contributors to the Society's funds if the current formats are retained. Cabinet should consider whether a change in format is desirable.

A decline in committee activity has been a source of concern for the Cabinet but it is unclear whether additional funding would improve the situation.

General recurring expenditure is not expected to exceed last year's levels significantly and I anticipate that income will be broadly similar to last year.

5. Recommendations

That the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2008 be adopted.

David Hackforth
Secretary/Treasurer