



The Institute of Professional Investigators

5, Westcott, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL7 2PP.

Minutes of the meeting of the AGM held on Thursday 1st December @ 11.04hrs (via Zoom).

Invited; Richard Cumming, John Bateman, Brian Collins, Richard Lee, Michael Pettitt, Glyn Evans, Nicole Reid, Guy Cooper and all Members.

Present; Richard Cumming (RC) (Principal), Brian Collins (Deputy Principal), John Bateman, Michael Pettitt, Richard Lee & Glyn Evans (GE) (Secretary General), Guy Cooper (GC), Mark Eve, Michael Whittington, Caleb Dredge, David Palmer (DP), Mark McEwan, Michael Bishop Saunders, Jack Roberts, Paul London, George Roberts, Debbie Craven, Paul Hoare, Ian Bignall (IB).

Meeting commenced at 11.05hrs.

1. **Apologies** – Nicole Reid, Paul Reid, Lord Davies, Justin Inson, John Warrink, Richard Newman, Alan Roberts, Susan Ward, Malcolm McNeil, John. Ingram, Tristan Coull, Max Hoskinson, Si Smith, John McNally.
2. **Principals Address RC** – Hello and welcome to our 2022 AGM and I hope that your businesses are recovering after the restrictions of the pandemic. We're obviously now facing a further period of austerity and strikes but can hopefully support each other and make any necessary adjustments to meet the market demands as we have done in the past.

We hope that our WhatsApp group will also go from strength to strength and continue to be a facility to match jobs with operatives over this challenging period.

You will be hearing that our streamlined governance structure has continued to make savings and the Institute continues to be financially sound.

We have responded to members' suggestions for training courses to provide Continued Professional Development and ran an Internet Investigations Course, subsidised for IPI members, in the summer which was very well received.

We also continue to deliver our regular training packages being:

The Professional Investigators Course for those new to the profession, leading to a Skills for Justice Level 3 award;

The Covert Surveillance Course, leading to a Skills for Justice Level 4 award; and

The Person Tracing Course which as we all know is an ever-evolving field.

I mentioned the ELCAS programme last year, which stands for Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Services which promotes learning amongst members of the



armed forces. On leaving the services, our servicemen and women are entitled to a £2,000 grant to help with their transition into civilian life. After overcoming more hurdles than expected, the IPI are finally able to offer such leavers the Professional Investigators and Covert Surveillance courses at no personal cost if they are seeking to start or continue a career in investigation. This is a win/win situation for service personnel and the IPI and our thanks go in particular to our Secretary General Glyn Evans for his efforts in finally achieving this goal.

We have also updated the IPI manual to comply with the new syllabus and Board Member John Bateman should also be mentioned in dispatches for this review and the updating of 320 pages.

We are also considering a short course on process serving, which is again a 'bread and butter' task with ever evolving nuances. However, this is your Institute so any suggestions for further courses would be gratefully received.

We have also been reviewing our online presence and our proposed additional Board Member Nicole Reid has, in particular, been devoting some very productive time to enhancing our LinkedIn profile. We think that we've got something to shout about, so will be spreading the word on all channels! Of course, we also need to review how this is translated into visits to our website and we have been analysing this data to make sure that the relevant key words are present for optimum search results.

Also in progress, is a new IPI wallet to house your membership cards. We are in the process of designing a navy-blue leather, hand stitched wallet with the new IPI logo embossed on it in gold, at very reasonable cost. These will be issued as a thankyou gift for members renewing within a month of renewal date next year, and be available for sale thereafter.

I would also like to update you on the ABI Draft Code of Conduct for Investigation and Litigation Support Services. This would basically be a voluntary regime whereby investigators meeting a set of criteria would become a 'Code Member' and, it is argued, more likely to be selected by law firms and blue-chip corporations as having demonstrated a knowledge of data protection rules.

This sounds good in theory, and as you will be aware the IPI has been pressing for the mandatory regulation of investigators by the government for many years.



However, two Board members attended the ABI consultation meeting in London on 7 September and discovered that it is heavily weighted in the ABI's favour. For example, ABI members are excused from 7 of the membership criteria and first year fees are £185 for ABI members and £770 for everyone else. Also, to qualify for a Code of Conduct, the relevant organisation has to be able to assert that they are speaking on behalf of a group of organisations in their sector. We submitted a response to the draft code that the proposal was not inclusive or equal in respect of our profession and questioned that the ICO should be associating themselves with such a biased proposition. We are in discussion with the ICO Code of Conduct department, as the ABI have been non responsive. Given that our application for a Royal Charter, which I mentioned last year, also has to be supported by the whole sector, the above-mentioned conflict with the ABI, has made us pause this for the time being (by the way WAPI did support our proposal for a Royal Charter).

We will also be discussing current issues with one of our longstanding members who currently sits in the House of Lords, having started his career in the Metropolitan Police. (Lord Davies of Gower)

The IPI's continued success has been achieved by our Board of Governors who have devoted significant amounts of their time and energy to progressing all of the above and what you are about to hear, and I would like to personally thank all of them for their hard work and dedication.

Our constitution stipulates that we need a minimum of 5 Board members to conduct business. During the year two Board members departed and we replaced them with co-optees Richard Lee and Michael Pettitt. We will be seeking their ratification later in the meeting. We will also be proposing two additional Board appointments to give us the necessary flexibility: Guy Cooper and Nicole Reid.

Moving on to expenditure, it should be noted that Board members do not get paid for their time, there are no heavy duty £80,000 salaries extracted from your subscriptions as is the case with some other associations and our Admin/Office expenditure is significantly less than 50% under our streamlined model.

For the sake of transparency, our Secretary General has been paid £400 per month for extensive duties including managing the ELCAS portfolio, dealing with new applicants, acting as de facto Company Secretary with Companies House, dealing



with other training issues, paying bills, preparing accounts and the panoply of other issues which arise in the running of an organisation such as ours.

I have assessed his workload and his average rate of pay is actually less than the minimum wage! We have therefore increased his monthly payment to £600, which still equates to less than £15 per hour. The Board agree that Glyn is deserving of more than this but in his usual self-effacing manner, wants to contribute the balance as goodwill.

Additionally, John Bateman provides high quality office facilities that were previously done through Regus, with whom we had numerous problems of missing mail and phone calls not being dealt with. Last year we paid John an honorarium of £1,000 and propose to do the same this year. I would therefore like to propose that the Board is authorised to pay an honorarium for these services appropriate to the responsibilities undertaken on an ongoing basis. The position after these changes still leaves our Admin/Office expenses less than 50% of the pre-streamlined levels. Seconder GC. Unanimous carried in favour.

Finally, I'd like to remind members that anyone who processes personal data should be registered with the ICO and it is hard to envisage anyone in our field who does not do this. Therefore we will be asking members to ensure that they are registered – for most organisations of our sizes it's £40 pa £35 if paid by DDR. It's a straightforward application and if unsure we will be happy to support you.

Secondly, we also strongly recommend that members have Professional Indemnity insurance and we are seeking to obtain discounts for members in this regard.

I will hand over to my colleagues to give you a more detailed report on the matters that I have touched on but would finally like to thank all our members for your continued support. GE thanked RC for his report and also for his continued excellent stewardship of the Board throughout the year.

3. **Minutes of last years AGM.** GE stated that the minutes had been circulated to all members (apologising as the first set sent had a couple of small inaccuracies which were corrected for the second version). GE asked for formal approval of the minutes being a true and accurate reflection – there were 11 proxy votes with the chair and 1 abstaining due to bot being present last year. IB proposed and GC seconded - show of hands saw a unanimous carrying of the proposal.
4. **Adoption of accounts/Treasurers report/Membership & Training – GE.**



I seek to gain approval for the accounts 01-04-2021 through to 31-03-2022. These have been circulated previously to all members (and obviously the full set of accounts are available at Companies House, but I am just reporting the top line here for the sake of brevity).

On the income side, the Board continue to actively seek ways to increase membership; be it corporate, company or individual – this seeks to preserve the longevity and stability of the IPI. We continue to ask members for ideas on how to develop and increase membership. We have decided that Investigators that have been members for a number of years, but then retire from the profession, that we will make them life members. This we feel keeps those who have retired involved to a degree and we have the ability to use their experience and knowledge for the benefit of members. We also are keen to give more to the members in the way of help, guidance (useful template page on the website), and other value for money options (ie CPD opportunities). It was agreed by the Board that the reduced membership fee would remain. We have also developed the WhatsApp members group, which has been a great success in offering members work, the sharing of information and guidance as well as the fast delivery of useful information.

The Board are confident that the IPI will flourish further with these changes and the positive signs are already there, showing a funds increase in the IPI account from the end of March 2021 right through to this current time and monies received are projected to increase further, which will again benefit members. You will note that funds available have risen from £37836 as at 31/03/2021 to £52504 as at 31-03-2022. This is mainly from income from subscriptions and the courses that we continue to run. Just for comparison purposes (and obviously there are always different factors affecting each years accounts), as at 31/03/2019 we had £21, 596 in our account and our funds were diminishing a fair amount each year – and as stated there were a myriad of reasons for this. However, we now have regularly seen an increase year on year to our overall income and we strive to continue in this way. We are committed to using this money wisely for the benefit of members and to that end, please do not forget that we are always open to suggestions as to how to improve your Institute.

We continue to strive also to reduce costs where we can and always look for value for money – for example, our new accountants continue to provide excellent value for money and ensure that accounts are submitted both in correct fashion and on time. We also have made significant savings on the reduction of the need for a virtual office-space, utilising John Batemans home office for mail and phonecalls and our accountants office address for other business purposes (the cost of which is included in our accountancy bill). The Board have utilised the ability to meet virtually via zoom (as per this meeting), originally dictated by COVID along with the desire to reduce traveling costs and to make attendance easier to make. This has saved on large costs associated with room hire/coffee etc. We have increased our outgoings in relation to insurance as we felt this was required in order to be fully covered whilst conducting the surveillance course, which is now up and running as a stand-alone IPI course.



GE asked for an adoption of the accounts as stated – Proposed by RL and seconded by DP. 12 x proxy votes were with the chair and a unanimous show of hands from those present. Accounts agreed and adopted.

Membership; With regard to membership, we have seen several members retire and move over to Life Member status. Additionally, we have managed to recruit new members meaning that at this time we have the following in terms of members;

MIPI – 85 paid up fully.

CIPI/Life - 29.

AIPi – Averaging 6 per month. Those that undertake our Foundation Course become AIPi's until they have completed the course. The idea is to convert these people into members; some have gone on to become members, but obviously with these types of numbers undertaking the course, it is imperative that we find a way to keep these people within the IPI. The face-to-face exam is a good opportunity to seek such membership.

Once again, please can I ask that subscriptions are paid up as close to the start of the new financial year (01/04) as possible and that should you wish for a change of photograph on your membership card to let me have an updated photo as soon as possible following re-joining as this allows for ease of production, less costs to the IPI and generally easier processing.

Training and Development; of new and existing members continue to be key factors in ensuring the credibility and professionalism of the IPI and its membership. Our online IPI Foundation Course is continuing to prove popular and plans are afoot to hold the associated Skills for Justice (SfJ) Level 3 Award for Professional Investigators examinations in London and the Midlands in January/February 2023 and to have three exams across 2023 (one Derby and two London). More details will be circulated in due course. Whilst we continue to provide this on-line course (and SfJ exam to level 3) and also a tracing course run by David Palmer, we have developed a good relationship with Titan with whom we partner with in relation to the level 4 surveillance course. (This has also provided new members). We have at long last, been given ELCAS accreditation for both the level 3 and level 4 courses, which allows us to obtain students who have retired from Forces professions. We hope that this will see more take up of the courses and also help in generating new members. This has been a long process, but we are confident that members will benefit from this as more funding becomes available to the IPI to use on member benefits. We remain interested in any ideas from members in relation to such things as potential CPD courses etc that we could help to subsidise etc for members. I would like to record a vote of thanks to Steve Smith who has worked long and hard to get us to a place where our Training Centre is well regarded by the SfJ and also he has guided us towards a position where our work/courses are accepted in general as being at the required standard, with only a little bit of external verification rather than as has been the case before, where we have had to have every course externally verified.

With regard to the courses, much hard work is done to ensure that standards are kept high, courses are provided and run on time and marking etc is completed in a timely manner. To this end, I must thank Steve in general for managing the Skills for



Justice process, Brian Collins and Guy Cooper in relation to the Surveillance course, with admin support, and Duncan Place for his work with the Foundation Course marking and guidance. Thanks too to David Palmer for continuing the tracing course provision and marking. A mention too for the hard work put in by John Bateman who has updated the IPI manual to ensure it is up to date and providing correct information and guidance to Foundation Course students.

I think we are continuing to grow in many ways and hope that our members are happy with the direction in which we are going and that they get as much benefit from the IPI as possible.

GE asked if there were any questions about the report as given – none.

5. **Election of Directors** – GE stated that there were four people that had been put forward for election (there were 11 proxy votes voting with the Chair for each of those proposed – firstly Richard Lee to Board – unanimously voted on; Michael Pettit – unanimously voted on; Guy Cooper to Board – unanimously voted on; Nicole Reid to Board – unanimously voted on. GE welcomed all new Board Members.
6. **Any other Business;** IB – asked for clarification around ABI proposals regarding GDPR. RC clarified the position and outlined that the IPI have voiced their concerns in various quarters and that the results will be announced in due course of any meetings etc. RC agreed improvement to the profession as a whole was both supported by the IPI and is needed. IB (as an ABI member stated that he would seek clarification from them at future meetings and the ABI AGM, albeit not from an IPI angle. It was agreed that the IPI did not wish to antagonise, and whilst supporting any furtherance of accreditation/professionalism, would seek to ensure that any code would be fair, equitable and available to all PI professionals without any favour being apportioned to any one organisation.

DP asked about Life Members/Retired members fees. Clarification provided by RC.

Debbie Craven (DC) asked if all members would get an invoice for new membership from 01-04-23 - this was confirmed by GE.

JB wished to thank RC for his hard work which was supported by all present.

7. **Date of next AGM meeting; Proposed 7th December 2023 @ 11.00 (Zoom plus attendee if possible). Date to be confirmed nearer the time.**
Meeting ended at 11.52hrs

G Evans (Sec Gen).