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# *Strategy Review – discussions post 2004 Annual General Meeting and Members' Forum*

## *1. Membership*

**Current membership categories, personal and institutional, should be reviewed.**

Institutional membership has been reviewed in part by the Membership Services Committee (MSC). The July 2004 Council meeting decided that this should be referred back to MSC for a full review of the options – ie to draw up a document with all possibilities - abolition of institutional membership, sliding scales of fees, limits to the amount of people that are permissible under one membership, limited to sites rather than institutions, etc. The report should be made available to the Membership as a whole and responses evaluated. In addition, the Chair will individually survey all the Institutional Members. Council would then make the final decision on changes, using the AGM as necessary.

Institutional Membership has a large bearing on the services offered to members via the Website.

Potentially any member can join the email forum with their own personal email. This is done via the Member Only pages (MOPs), access to which is only possible through the use of a Personal or Institutional member log in (allocated by Susan Frost.)

In general – this whole area needs promotion to the membership as a whole.

Having one ID for members under an Institutional Membership is a problem.

- The ID doesn't necessarily get circulated amongst all members by the named representative.
- Any member using the ID is greeted as the named representative. (This can be changed easily so they are greeted under the name of the Institution.)
- There are security issues if a person leaves the institution while knowing the log in. Possible answers to this are to emphasise that passwords must be changed if a member leaves (in reality this is likely to have minimal effect) or to change the passwords automatically annually. This is something that is done as a matter of course in academic institutions for other databases because of the turnover of students.
- The emailed link for the electronic Newsletter is sent via the website database, not the email forum. Therefore only the named representative gets a copy. To solve this we could load the Newsletter into the MOPs and then email members the link via the distribution list. Members would then need to log on to see the text.

An answer to the whole issue would be to assign more than one ID under an Institutional Membership. A unique ID would be available to all members under that

Institutional membership. This is clearly an administrative issue, and a possible security one when people leave. Largely the issue is as to who would maintain the data? We could increase the institutional membership fee to take account of extra administrative costs. However, currently the membership data for the website is maintained by Brian Thomas, not Susan Frost - so technically there is no cost involved – only a vast amount of Brian's time.

Personal membership isn't such a live issue, but the benefits that are decided upon under the review of institutional membership may well have a bearing on what Personal Members are entitled to.

A new category for members who work part time has been suggested. The definition of part time would need to be looked at since the variations would be immense. It may be that if this is decided to be a good idea (and would bring in Members who otherwise would not be able to afford to join) the fee would need to be arbitrary. MSC would be asked to investigate this possibility further (see also the next heading below regarding associate membership and non-professional membership).

## **ACTION**

- **Susan Doe to advise MSC (Angela Donaldson) re report on Institutional Membership and additional categories, to include recommended solutions to allocation of IDs and subsequent administrative workload.**
- **Susan Doe (with input from MSC) to contact all current Institutional Members to survey their usage of the category.**

## **PROGRESS**

- **Susan Doe and Angela Donaldson devised questions for the survey of institutional members and individual emails were sent to all 191 institutional members in November. 34 replies were received. MSC held a special meeting on 14th December 2004 to discuss this issue and a report was written for the January 2005 Council meeting.**
- **Membership Services proposed that both Personal and Institutional Membership subscriptions would remain but that the cost of Institutional membership would be three times that of Personal membership. Council agreed to the changes with the rise in Institutional Membership fee.**

- **The Treasurer to propose the increase at the Annual General Meeting and prepare an explanatory paper for circulation with the AGM papers.**
- **It was also decided that Institutional Membership would be limited to one fixed address per membership. This did not require a change in the Constitution or Regulations since they already stated that Institutional membership was available to "any library or information unit engaged in the provision or exploitation of legal information" (Constitution, Article 1, membership). Council agreed that as much advance publicity should be given to this as possible.**

**BIALL should be actively recruiting new members in both existing and new markets. These markets and suggested ways of recruiting are provided in the report.**

**But BIALl should not devote scarce resources to actively recruiting international members.**

For both areas we need to be very clear on providing reasons why BIALl would be worth joining. Those of us in the legal field may well take what BIALl does as being a good thing per se, but that will not be enough in other sectors. This exercise may well result in deciding against aiming at particular markets. What is the competition? Why, for example, should someone join BIALl rather than, or in addition to, the City Information Group? Why are PSLs forming their own groups rather than joining BIALl?

We need to look at ways of advertising and promotion generally, and ways of targeting specific sectors.

This is essentially a market research exercise - why should those we consider potential members want to join BIALl? What are their present associations (if they have them) not offering? Where are the gaps that BIALl can fill? This is somewhere where we need to be proactive. They are not just going to come walking in.

Additional membership categories were suggested which link into extending to other sectors. A non professional category? An Associate member category? The latter was suggested to have no rights to be on Council. The underlying issue here is if BIALl opens up to other sectors there may be a time when non library professionals have a say in the running of the Association.

Actively recruiting overseas members is probably asking too much. However, the potential ability of bursary recipients and official delegates to foster relations and to have the information to pass on to potential members when they visit other conferences should not be overlooked. 'Link' members have also been suggested as a way to co-ordinate with other associations – ie each association appoints a person to be the contact point and to channel information between the associations. The External Affairs Committee will be asked to investigate this issue and report back.

The key again is to be clear on what BIALL has to offer overseas members.

## **ACTION**

- **MSC/External Affairs to draw up wording for suitable promotional material to aim at specific sectors and potential overseas members.**
- **External Affairs to recommend any closer and/or more formal ties with law library associations.**
- **Individual Council members to research potential sectors –PSLs - Jenny Barrow; IT (-) Local Government (-), financial institutions (-).**
- **Once this exercise is completed MSC will be in a position to advise on any new categories of membership. Council will need to take a decision on the underlying strategy – does BIALL want a potential non library takeover?**

## **PROGRESS**

- **October Council decided that the missing allocations above should be – IT (Heather Robinson); Local Government (Jean Lloyd); financial institutions (Victoria Jannetta). Membership Services to make arrangements for the reports to be made, and subsequent publicity material to be drawn up (meeting scheduled for 1st February 2005.)**
- **Jenny Barrow's report on PSLs was circulated with the January 2005 Council meeting papers. PSL's should be doing legal work in the main. Those that worked in an information role could be targeted.**
- **Victoria Jannetta reported that financial institutions did not have much contact with law and those that did would already be members of BIALL, those that didn't would likely be members of CIG. She recommended that there should be no active advertising, but we should look at linking up with CIG for more joint ventures.**
- **External Affairs have allocated responsibility for the publicity brochure for overseas conferences to Helen Young, and to**

**Jackie Fishleigh for the official links to overseas organisations. A draft document was produced for Council, Jackie Fishleigh would liaise with the Publications Committee for advice on printing/distribution.**

**BIALL should make electronic delivery of our current services (Salary Survey, Duplicates Exchange Scheme etc.) the default option for members.**

A matter of notification and advertising. As long as those members who want to continue receiving hard copy are catered for, this should be no problem and save the Association money.

## **2. *Education and Training***

**BIALL should prioritise courses that are unique and become a provider of niche specialised legal training and development opportunities.**

**The PSD Committee should continue in its present format but look to recruit members with specific responsibilities and compile an annual training programme.**

While BIALl remains largely a volunteer run association we need to target resources. We have courses that have become standards - the Law for Librarians course (now the Legal Foundations Course) and the Legal Research Materials seminar/workshop – and others that are on the way to becoming so, and they all concentrate on the law. While other commercial or professional organisations occasionally run courses on the legal side, our members should expect the specialism to come from BIALl. It is a very specialised field of librarianship and BIALl members are experts. We therefore have a unique position that we should exploit.

There is no reason why we should not use member's experience in related fields – eg knowledge management, compliance, corporate governance – if there is a need that our members want BIALl to fill. However, we may be in more of a position to promote BIALl while our resources remain limited by having a 'pool' of willing speakers to offer to other organisations, including overseas law library associations (This could also include Library schools? Could we provide guest lecturers? Could we get sponsorship? )

PSD are currently a very well run and effective Committee. They have a great deal of ongoing responsibility, and personnel changes potentially affect this Committee more than most. The PSD Chair - via SCOSAF – need to assess whether particular roles – eg the Legal Foundations Course – should be allocated to a particular person for an unlimited term.

## **ACTION**

- **PSD to report on any ‘wish list’ courses they would like to run given the resources.**
- **PSD to advise on whether it is a matter of merely ‘enough hands’ – ie if they had more members, could they run more courses?**
- **PSD to liaise with MSC regarding the potential ‘experts’ list.**
- **SCOSAF to discuss whether particular Committee member roles need to be taken outside the usual length of term limitations.**

## **PROGRESS**

- **SCOSAF discussed Committee member roles at the meeting on 29th October 2004 and agreed that the provision should exist when an individual was involved in a particular project that was ongoing.**
- **The Chairs of PSD and MSC have met to discuss the experts list. They will report back after their next meetings (21st January 2005 and 1st February 2005 respectively.)**
- **PSD will discuss all other issues at their meeting on 21st January 2005.**

**BIALL should provide a discussion forum for senior members of the profession and position itself as the facilitator of innovation and discussion in the legal information arena.**

At present BIALl is not utilising the skills of the more senior members of the profession in any systematic way. Especially in the law firm sector it seems as if BIALl is not seen as particularly relevant to these individuals. This is clearly a waste of talent, and must be addressed.

We need to ascertain what the senior members see BIALl as and what they would want it to be.

Suggestions have been made that BIALl form a discussion forum similar to TFPL’s Knowledge Leaders in Law group; master classes; regular panel discussions at the annual conference.

## **ACTION**

- **Susan Doe to convene a meeting of top law firm librarians for a general discussion of what they could do/what BIALl could do.**

- **The academic sector also needs to be surveyed as to whether the same holds true there.**

## **PROGRESS**

- **October 2004 Council agreed that law firm, academic and professional society senior members should be contacted with regards a discussion forum for each. Susan Frost would supply lists of the members of each sector to Susan Doe, Maria Mawson and Catherine McArdle. (NB TFPL have scheduled a 'information services' forum beginning in January. This is planning to meet every 2 months.) The consensus at the TFPL meeting was that BIALL was not an appropriate forum for senior managers. However, Conference Committee have since proposed an idea that there should be parallel sessions on an afternoon of the conference aimed at senior level people.**
- **Maria Mawson reported to April 2005 Council. She circulated a paper on Education and Training within the academic sector. Her results indicated that there was no desire for additional training and development but the idea of mentoring was mentioned and would fit in with the new CILIP framework of qualifications. It was proposed that mentoring could be an item for discussion at Members' Forum.**

**BIALL should look at ways to provide training and development to non-London information professionals.**

PSD have divided BIALL's 'jurisdiction' and have allocated particular areas to particular committee members to develop working relationships with local and regional committees/groups and to initiate discussions. To start with these connections would be informal, but PSD are aware that any joint arrangements should be put formally into place so that continuation was facilitated as and when personnel changes occurred on either side. Also, any arrangements re the sharing of profits would need to be carefully thought through and formally adopted.

## **ACTION**

- **PSD are in the process of reinforcing links with local and regional groups and investigating all technological formats with a view to offering some form of distance learning.**

**BIALL should continue its commitment to the Law for Librarians course but review the name of the course, explore ways to provide the course to non-London attendees, and look at the relationship between BIALl and the University of Westminster.**

This is now called The Legal Foundations Course. Hannah Fogg of PSD has been allocated the task of producing a report on the current status and where it should be heading.

## **ACTION**

- **PSD have produced a report. This is scheduled for further discussion within PSD.**

The PSD Committee should be given a designated annual budget to enable it to respond to the changing training requirements of the membership.

## **ACTION**

- **BIALL Treasurer to advise after consultation with PSD Chair as to exactly what is required.**

## **PROGRESS**

- **Meeting between the Treasurer and PSD Chair took place week beginning 3rd January 2005. The flexibility issue rests with the potential requirement of paying for a high profile speaker for particular courses. A process was agreed for one off requests of this nature.**

### **3. Administration**

*(Items purely relating to the Administrator have been removed from the Strategy Review. Any decisions regarding that role are largely dependent on the outcome of the rest of the Review and will be Council's decision alone. The role of administration was discussed at the meeting between SCOSAF and Council held on 28th February 2005. Following this meeting and April Council it was decided that Marianne Barber should head a review of Administration in the 2005-2006 year.)*

**BIALL should consider how widely the Association should promote itself and to whom. BIALl should ensure that there is someone in the Association responsible for promotion and PR.**

BIALL is a largely reactive organisation that provides a good service to its members, but has never had to look for those members. As such, it has never had to promote

itself to keep itself in existence. Those members are satisfied with the services they receive from a largely volunteer run association and have never expected BIALL to make a name for itself outside its own professional world.

So: a) do we want new members from other sectors (dealt with earlier in this report) b) are we doing enough in our 'own professional world' c) do we want the outside world to know about us and d) do we have anything to say/contribute?

We do not issue press releases or even for example give information to CILIP when the Chair/Council changes. This could be easily rectified, it is a matter of allocating responsibility. Need to target other likely publications – eg Information World Review.

We could extend our range of awards that are given to outside organisations/publications. Currently the Legal Journals Award is our sole award. Our members have great buying power and extensive knowledge of many other products and services, a recommendation would carry great weight. What about a database of the year; a website of the year?

Is it fair to say that LIM is an academic leaning journal? It has served us well and is well respected. Is there room for a more 'PLC' like journal? More practitioner than academic?

BIALL should create a panel of experts that can provide appropriate responses or approaches to journalists or – eg – government consultation papers. There would be a need to provide a swift turnaround on the former, the latter a more 'leisurely' considered response. All sectors of the profession need to be covered.

Overall the PR/promotion role realistically can only be covered by the President/Vice President and Chair at present, with additional help from other Council members as necessary.

Lobbying is a role that has been mentioned. AALL have two lobbyists in Washington DC, but lobbying is a much more structured process in the US and bears no resemblance to the ad hoc UK cousin. EC lobbying is more structured and needs to be investigated in advance of any possible issue. Susan Doe is in contact with Mary Alice Baish (one of AALL's lobbyists) who will keep me informed of any relevant issues.

## **ACTION**

- **Legal Information Group (LIG) to advise on potential new awards**
- **The Editorial Board of Legal Information Management to advise on any new direction for the journal**
- **Nominations Committee and MSC to draw up a list of experts**
- **Secretary to send personnel change details to CILIP and other relevant journals**

- **Chair/President/Vice President to contact Information World Review (and any other recommended journals) to investigate reciprocal arrangements**
- **Council to advise on the extent and nature of PR/promotion/lobbying**
- **Liaise with European Information Association (EIA) regarding EC lobbying**

## **PROGRESS**

- **James Mullan of LIG circulated a report on the Legal Journals Award to Council for the October meeting. It was agreed that this award would be broadened to include databases but this would not be possible to implement until 2006. Brian Thomas would report back to Council on the possibility of electronic voting.**
- **LIG have provided a list of external and internal awards that could be implemented:-**

### **Publishers and Suppliers:**

**Best online initiative of the year**

**Best Journal**

**Best Customer Relations Initiative**

**Best New Publication.**

**Library Management Supplier of the Year**

**Information/Knowledge Management Supplier of the Year**

### **Personal Development awards:**

**Law Firm Librarian of the year. (Large firm & Small/Medium)**

**Academic Librarian of the Year**

**Special Library Librarian of the year**

**Project Awards:**

**Best use of technology in a Library project**

**Best KM initiative**

**Best Training Initiative**

**- academic/specialist**

**- law firm**

**Best Website/Intranet development**

**Award for Contribution to the Legal Information Profession as a whole**

LIG have recommended that individuals should be able to nominate themselves, with each nomination required to be seconded.

- Council suggested that there should be an award to match each section of the strategy review. LIG would be asked to assess the feasibility of awarding a Customer Relations Initiative Award for this year in order to balance the Guidelines for Publishers document. This was subsequently agreed, and has been advertised. The award is scheduled for the conference in Harrogate.
- Both Butterworths and In Brief magazine have made enquiries as to devising awards for legal information professionals. Susan Doe and Roger Cook have met with both. Butterworths Lexis Nexis have suggested a series of awards, to be run separately in 2005 but henceforth at the Annual Conference. In Brief are revising their existing E-Lotie Awards, probably to take place at a new conference in September. Wildys have set up an annual award for Law Librarian of the Year to mark the bookshop's 175th birthday in 2005. This will begin at the Harrogate Conference.
- The Editorial Board have advised - subsequent to their meeting of 11th January 2005 – that due to the variety of styles of articles scheduled to be published in LIM, that they see no reason to alter the direction the journal is taking. The concern as to whether refereeing will make the journal head in a more academic direction can be answered by the fact that refereeing is being offered as an option due to the problem of persuading authors to contribute to the journal, and it is ultimately a way of promoting the journal. The Editorial Board will advertise this to the membership in their regular publicity, and also when the electronic version of the journal is available (scheduled for March 2005). The Board would also like to advise that they are planning a series of 'checklist' style practical articles which should go some way to alleviate the requests for a more 'PLC like' direction.
- October Council agreed that the Hon. Secretary would notify CILIP of BIALL personnel changes as they occur. Journals such as Legal Week, The Lawyer, the Law Society Gazette and the New Law Journal would also be notified.

- **Susan Frost would liaise with the EIA regarding their lobbying role and report back to the January Council meeting. This has overlapped with External Affairs request to the EIA. Jackie Fishleigh would clarify the issues with the EIA and report back.**

**BIALL should look at ways of increasing the use of the Web site to facilitate further communication between Council, Committees and the membership.**

The issue with institutional members and access to the members only pages/ mailing list of the website needs to be resolved before the website can be fully utilised (see Membership section earlier in this report.)

Committees have already been asked to produce short summaries of their meetings for inclusion on the mailing list – this should advertise their work more widely and also give them an opportunity to recruit volunteers.

Penny Bailey and Brian Thomas have made various suggestions as to improvements that can be made to the website to increase its usefulness to members.

- An ideas list
- A volunteers page
- A 'contact me' message page from the Chair
- Committee discussion group – to help foster communication between committees, who can tend to work without full awareness of the initiatives of other communities
- Statistics on web usage – these would have to be developed as this is a database driven website
- Archives – to give a sense of continuity and also to not lose electronic only information.
- Search facility for the Archives and web site generally
- History page of the founder Harrogate conference - for the up and coming Harrogate conference
- Credit card payments option

## **ACTION**

- **Penny Bailey and Brian Thomas to advise on technical issues and workload regarding the improvements listed above (including any additional input needed from other Committees and volunteers from Council.)**
- **Mary Blake to be consulted regarding Archives**

## **PROGRESS**

- **October 2004 Council suggested a Committee Discussion Group for the Chairs on the website and a page devoted to the original**

**Harrogate workshops which were the forerunners of the annual Conference. Barbara Tearle has now set up History pages on the website.**

- **Mary Blake will be responding to Council following discussions with the University of Birmingham.**

**BIALL should take the opportunity to re-examine the three elements of the Constitution (the Constitution, Regulations and Standing Orders) in order to simplify the structure and give greater flexibility to the officers where appropriate.**

## **ACTION**

- **Catherine McArdle will examine the current Constitution and make recommendations.**

## **PROGRESS**

- **Catherine considers that the Constitution and the Regulations do not need changing at the present time. The Standing Orders will be revamped in the light of the outcome of the Review as a whole. These can be changed by Council.**

### **4. *Review of BIALl finances***

**BIALL should investigate ways of reducing expenditure such as making more use of the website to deliver documents.**

This area is covered earlier in the report.

**BIALL should investigate new sources of income.**

BIALL's opportunities for raising income – excepting membership fees – rest on training courses (including the Annual Conference), publications and the website. At present we aim to break even and any profit is a bonus. The reasoning behind this is largely the benefit to the Membership. However, it could be argued that to make a small profit that could be ploughed back into providing other benefits to members, which we wouldn't be able to afford otherwise, is a legitimate issue.

Contacts amongst Professional Support Lawyers have mentioned the complete lack of training courses for PSLs – especially in research skills, basic knowledge management and training/presentation skills. This is a potential area where we can make a profit and advertise the role of BIALl and possibly gain more members through the process.

## **ACTION**

- **SCOSAF to advise on principle of aiming at profit; whether specific projects to be funded need to be identified in advance or whether a fund can be built up for suitable unidentified projects**
- **Chairs of Publications; Conference; PSD and Web Board to advise in particular on current income generating events/publications, etc.**
- **PSD to advise on potential training for PSLs. (NB TFPL have recently announced a series of seminars specifically for PSL training.)**

**BIALL should carry out a cost-benefit analysis of core activities.**

Each Committee should carry out an audit and assess each service they provide.

- Do not take anything for granted
- Is it still valid; does it still work; does it need fixing?
- Costings – is it cost effective?

New projects will need a business case in the sense that they need to be of clear benefit for members and to aim at breaking even on costings at the very least. We cannot demand a full blown business case because we are not a commercial organisation, but that does not mean this should be amateurish.

## **ACTION**

- **SCOSAF to discuss the practicalities of moving this forward.**
- **Draw up template/checklist business plan for general use.**

## **PROGRESS**

- **October Council agreed that new projects for income generation would need a business plan.**

**BIALL should investigate the legal status of the Association.**

Alden Bowers report 'Finance Review project' discussed at the April 2004 Council meeting effectively ruled out any changes to the legal status of the Association.

5. *Long term strategy*

**BIALL should use the findings of the Strategy Review and the subsequent feedback from membership to create a long term strategy for the Association.**

**ACTION**

- **Long term and dependent on outcome of each part of the review.**