

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

OVERVIEW

2022 was both a challenging and successful year in laying the foundations for the future of BELMAS. While there were difficult conversations and much needed change, we were able to position the organisation with a clear strategic direction.

LOWLIGHTS

Annual Conference

The Annual Conference held in Liverpool in July 2022 was a fantastic event, in a wonderful location. This was my first real BELMAS experience, and I was pleased to see why BELMAS members love attending our events. However, this conference incurred a loss of £104,000 (£49,153 income to £153,219 expenditure).

Including the losses from 2021, BELMAS has made a net deficit on Conferences of over £130,000 in just two years.

BELMAS, or any charitable organisation, will never be in a position to incur such losses, and this means that a re-think was required for the Conference and how it would be managed moving forwards. The changes are listed below:

1. Reduced the financial risk and burden of paying for accommodation in line with other Learned Societies, but also in line with the scope of the VAT Registration.
2. Removed the Conference Event Management Support from Principle Global Events and managed the conference entirely from the BELMAS Office reducing the cost by £9,000 plus VAT.
3. Recognising only 6 people attended online last year, removed the Virtual Platform fees including Live Streaming and Hop-In technology, reducing the cost by £16,500 plus VAT.
4. Cut back on "Production Costs" which include high quality signage, staging and AV team projected at £24,500 plus VAT.

These actions have reduced the total expenditure by around 67% from £153,219 (2022) to roughly £50,000 (2023), and therefore significantly reducing risk of future deficits.

Membership Numbers and Engagement

In 2022, we recorded 339 renewed and new memberships, with nearly 36% (122) of those from overseas. This shows a 14% decrease in memberships in comparison to 2021. However, we are now seeing membership figures back to pre-pandemic levels for 2023.

We aim to continue to increase these numbers through the organisation's brand new Strategic Plan.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategy Development

We introduced our very first Strategic Plan (2023-2026) in 2023, although the foundations and discussions came from almost 12 months of work prior to the Board of Trustees (Council) Strategic Away Day which was held in Coventry in December 2022.

Here, we have three clear themes to continue to develop BELMAS and they are:

1. Increase both UK and International membership.
2. Ensure the organisation is financially sustainable.
3. Assure BELMAS' good governance as a charity and membership organisation.

Virtual Office and Employee Support

With lessons learnt from the Pandemic, we will save over £15,000 per year on office costs as our employees moved to permanent remote working in September. To ensure that employees are supported whilst working remotely, BELMAS has committed some of these savings to a variety of supporting employee benefits totaling around £6,000.

We also reviewed our pay scale against the Harris Hill Charity Pay Research 2022, moving away from the National Education Union (NEU) pay scale and creating our own that is fair for the size of the firm and the sector.

Governance and Financial Reporting and Transparency

With a Strategy almost in place, we used the back end of 2022 to improve our reporting across the organisation; alongside the KPI Dashboard, the Trustees now receive fully forecasted management accounts and profit & loss updates from the Conference Committee with regards to its largest event.

The Board of Trustees also receive formal requests from Trustees to attend International Conferences, highlighting a maximum spend across expenses and how the BELMAS resources spent in these visits will directly support its charitable objects. All members attending conferences on behalf of BELMAS are now required to write a report for the Trustee Board.

Policies and Procedures

BELMAS have also introduced 26 new policies and procedures including:

1. GDPR (Inc. Inventory of Data Sets, Retention of Records, Encrypting Data and Privacy Notice)
2. Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures
3. Annual Leave, Toil, Sickness Absence, and other Leave Policies
4. Menopause Policy
5. Adoption and Surrogacy, Pregnant Parent, Pregnancy Loss, and Neonatal Policies
6. Disposal of Assets, Expense Claim and Reserves Policies
7. Anti-Harassment & Bullying and Equal Opportunities Policies

We invested £1,600 in HR support to ensure that all of these policies are both inclusive and in line with current legislation.