

Grand Treasurer's Report May 2018

The report presented reflects the position set out by my predecessor David Starritt as at 1 Jan 2018 and audited by Rhoda Ross at the end of January 2018. It reflects the accurate position as at the time. As the incoming Treasurer, however, I have to advise you on how I perceive the accounts in regard to our future as they show a continued deficit in 2017, following a similar loss in 2016.

As you will note the position at the end of 2016 showed a deficit of £524.66 and this was followed by a further deficit in 2017 of £760.53. The latter reflecting two aspects. Firstly, the transfer of £960 to the conclaves. Secondly, new costs of £558 for the website and newsletter.

Whichever way these figures are addressed, one obvious message remains, we are living beyond our means. For example, our income from subscriptions is £1,000 and yet we transfer £980 of this to the Conclaves at the same time as our assets are reducing. I understand the explanation given but it seems to be a strange way of transferring funds. Moreover, it raises the question as to why the Conclaves are not recovering subscriptions and raising their own funds. Clearly there is a need to offset some of the administrative costs arising from the Grand Council of the Order, but the individual membership aspect and fund-raising activities should be controlled by the individual Conclave.

If we continue with this trend of expenditure, in 4 years' time we will run out of funds. I would advise that this aspect needs to be urgently addressed by the Grand Council. I'm also of the view that it would be prudent to increase subs by £5 and to review this on an annual basis. This would result in a modest increase of about £265 on our current membership, which would go some way to covering the central administrative costs. Whatever decision is taken, we must either find ways of increasing our income or cutting back on expenditure. We are existing on the earlier contributions made by those who are now life members - 14 in total, whilst the remaining 53 must fund the organisation through their subscriptions, aided by other donations.

I would suggest that the costs of running the Order must be separated from the support costs of the Conclaves or reliance on charitable donations. Membership subscriptions should rest with the Conclaves and part of this, an amount to be agreed, should be passed on to support the central administration of the Order, not the reverse way around. There should also be greater encouragement to grow the membership if the organisation is to become financially viable;

I don't have all the answers, but I do know that the matter needs to be addressed as a matter of some urgency if the Order is to survive as a financial entity.

"Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen shillings and sixpence, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds and sixpence, result misery"

(Charles Dickens)