

Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

I am pleased to present the Examined Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2019. This examination was carried out by Chartered Accountants, Rogers.

Rogers confirm the accounts to be accurate and raise no issues of concern.

Overall, the Society has a healthy balance to carry forward to 2020 of £155,916 which represents an increase of 8% over the year.

I hope it will be helpful to highlight a few points.

Membership

Referring to the Examined Accounts, it will be noted that the Membership Subscriptions are slightly down on the previous year. Individual Membership numbers have increased. Contractor Membership has fallen marginally, some having decided to renew as Individual Members and there has been a small drop in the number of Affiliated Members. This doesn't fully account for the differential. This appears to have arisen from confusion following the increased subscription rates which resulted in some over payments in 2018 and the memberships being carried forward into 2019. Owing to the work of our Membership Secretary these minor problems should resolve but **do please check that your standing orders are correct.**

You will be aware that the subscription rates are:

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Individual | £20 |
| Affiliated | £50 |
| Contractor | £75 |

Some members have asked about direct debit payments. This is something which has been investigated in the past and found at that time to be impractical for an organisation of this size. However, developments in the finance industry may mean this is now feasible and the situation is being reviewed.

Championship

Referring to note 2 on page 6 of the accounts, you will see that the Championship in 2019 shows a loss of £2914 which is generally in line with previous years, but you will observe an apparent surplus in 2018 of £3041. Please note that these accounts are produced on a Receipts and Payments basis and the figure of £3041 includes a payment of £5000 from 2017. Although the Championship shows a loss of £2914 this year, compared with an actual loss of almost £2,000 last year, as guests of the Countryside Restoration Trust in 2018, arrangements were different to normal with many materials being supplied without charge and the nett loss is more in line with that in previous years.

Skill Development

In 2018 the NHLs received a 'one-off' donation from the Prince's Countryside Trust of £8000. In 2019 the first £4000 tranche of the funding for the Accreditation and Training Project was received from the Prince's Countryside Fund. The balance of £3000 in each case is from the Wheler Foundation.

The difference in the payments is mainly due to temporarily reduced activity under the Train the Trainers programme whilst manpower resources were concentrated on the Accreditation and Training Project.

Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

Sundry

This item under receipts relates to the Patron's Event. The higher amount in 2018 includes almost £2000 received for the 2017 event. Furthermore, in 2018 a greater length of hedge was cut and the payment received was higher than in 2019. Likewise, in 2018 the payments, under 'Overheads' (see note 4) were greater for materials and cutting money.

Newsletter

The reduced cost of the newsletter is due to there having been two rather than the usual three publications between January and December, plus savings in distribution costs.

Secretarial Expenses

The development of the website to enable more efficient management of membership administration, the greater use of emails and the text messaging facility, plus the greater use of payments by electronic transfer, all contributed to significant cost savings.

Conclusion

The NHLS and Hedgelayers in general, rely heavily on the agricultural industry and on the policies of National Government, Local Governments and, until now, the European Union. Following 'Brexit', the Society will be watching and hopefully influencing the direction our National Government now takes, however we will undoubtedly all feel the impact of covid-19 in some way.

Whilst our current financial position is strong, we must expect and be prepared for significant changes in the way our activities are supported and financed.