

## Chair's Report for Institute of Videography AGM 2021

Attendance (total registered):  
Apologies were received from:

### **1. Overview**

The IOV Executive has operated as a group of four people since the last AGM: Tony Manning (Chair and Arbitration Officer, location Loughton, Essex), Zulqar Cheema (Treasurer and Webmaster, location Harlow, Essex), Ian Sandall (not seeking re-election), and Peter Hinkson (stepped down on 28th January 2021).

Two suitably qualified members have presented themselves for election to the Executive: David Hunter and Alvin Burrell.

### Membership Trends

As an Executive we have been concerned about the downward trend in membership numbers and the consequent reduction in our income. This in turn limits our ability to invest to improve member benefits since every expenditure has to be very carefully examined.

This past year has been an exceptionally brutal one for our members, with so many businesses closed, weddings not happening and a general sense of uncertainty about the future which leads to decision makers showing extreme caution about any future commitments.

So as well as the usual issues of an organisation with a predominantly older age profile, often moving towards retirement there are those who may have decided that their production business, with all its overheads, and little or no government support, can no longer survive. Once such businesses close and production equipment is sold, they are basically not coming back.

Our member survey also showed that for many of our members video production is by no means a full-time occupation at the best of times. This leaves our membership numbers more vulnerable than in an organisation such as the GTC where all or most would identify as professional producers or specialists in some aspect of the video production industry.

The decline in membership numbers is concerning and is not all down to the pandemic. It was probably never easy to recruit new members but it is even harder now. The digital environment gives broad access to information, equipment reviews and instructional videos (either free of charge or for a small fee) and sometimes just for registering your email address). So any organisation looking to charge a membership fee has to have an attractive offer. What ought to set us apart is a professional supportive community where people can help each other, learn from each other, sometimes work together and improve their skills and gain a qualification. My own view is that we need to get a great deal better at online marketing if things are ever to improve. The days when we could attend a show and sign up members by the dozen are gone. This is also a very expensive undertaking for us.

### The IOV Accounts

In recent years we have managed to maintain a positive balance to pay our way through cautious spending and by limiting outgoings on Executive officer expenses. As has been previously reported this has included the Chair and Treasurer making zero claims in the past nearly two years. There is therefore the potential of a problem in the accounts given that a substantial debt has accrued from earlier years.

In terms of future actions I propose that a number of things will need to happen.

- i) The system of allowances for particular roles has led to this build-up and is simply unaffordable for the IOV in present circumstances. The treasurer and myself will detail precisely what we believe is due to us and present this to the new Executive to determine how and to what extent this might be settled. This process will be fully transparent to the membership.
- ii) The system itself will need to be reviewed given that our financial position is not like it was in our glory days, when apart from anything else we could rely on sponsorship from some of the big players. This will need some consideration since a flat expenses-only regime would discriminate against those whose role requires for work and time commitment.

## **2. Financial Report**

See report by Zulqar Cheema.

The full statement of accounts is available here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IYqeGtH2ujexZAT\\_S3V8gF2Swnkn12L7/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IYqeGtH2ujexZAT_S3V8gF2Swnkn12L7/view?usp=sharing)

## **3. Membership Report**

See report by Zulqar Cheema.

### ***The IOV Website***

The “new” website has been problematic in a number of respects. Day-to-day maintenance by Cheema keeps it functional. The history of having to transfer large amounts of data in a short timescale and with no real budget to fund a website capable of coping with the level of complexity a members’ organisation like ours has to face is certainly part of the story. Member Chris North has been active in pointing out many issues but notably problems with functionality from the visitor perspective (ease and logic of finding information, etc.) A good deal of troubleshooting has happened to correct issues, dead ends, 404s, etc.

Sometimes when the information is found it is not well written and/or out of date. The latter applies also to some of the site images. Once again we appeal to members to supply relevant video-related images that can be used on the site as feature images or in a particular section e.g. VideoSkills. All images will be dutifully acknowledged as that member’s copyright work.

As well as making the website more useful to members and visitors we also need to get it to a point where it at least earns its keep through sponsorship and advertising. This function tends to be a highly paid specialism. Nevertheless we will need to prioritise this as needed work for the IOV to be financially viable.

I have at this point completed a redraft of almost the entire site’s written content in an attempt to make it more accessible and useful as well as up-to-the moment. Some think there may be a need for a rethink at a more basic level, e.g. that the site cannot properly face both towards the public and towards its members. At some point a dedicated working party might usefully consider such issues.

## **Social Media**

Currently activity on our Facebook page is arguably more important as a way of reaching out to members, other producers, and the public. Visit

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1662532383997618/>

The initiative of member Alvin Burrell to create a weekly 30-minute Focus TV programme has been welcomed by the Executive and is evidently appreciated by the Membership. Congratulations are due also to the other panel members at this point, David Hunter, Gavin Gratton and Cheema.

Regular Members' Zoom meetings have also become established and have proved informative and supportive in these extremely difficult times. At present David Hunter chairs these meetings and things seem to work best when there is a main topic to shape things up.

## ***Video of the Month***

Restoring this once popular feature of the IOV was to have been led by an Executive member who subsequently resigned. If there is demand for this or a similar competition/showcase we will need to call on someone to help take the work forward.

## ***Focus Magazine***

A new (online) edition is virtually complete but a dispute has arisen as to whether we may continue to use the submitted material of a particular writer. This comes at a point when others have contributed articles, and a great deal of work has been done to put the magazine together.

## ***Accreditation***

The Executive supports the idea that the IOV should move towards being an association of qualified professional video producers. This would no longer be optional but would be a requirement of membership, as it is in prestige photography societies where standards are high, and on that basis accreditation lets potential users know that the person they are proposing to deal with has established a high level of competence. In brief, standards in the IOV going forward should be high, and qualification should mean something worthwhile.

Feedback from the IOV Survey suggests that a majority of respondents would support such a move and indeed the idea of a further check a few years down the line. Such processes are common practice in many professions where well-qualified people still need to re-establish their professional credentials and that they have everything in place that is needed (such as professional support and appropriate insurance). While we would not need to go the whole hog, we would need to move from the current extremely permissive approach to one in which standards of professional practice are at the centre of all that we do.

We don't doubt that we may lose some members from adopting this approach. We hope that the majority will support the policy which we believe is for the good of our profession and of value to those who use the services of our members.

There is no intention of making things difficult. Accreditation may be achieved by two routes:

a) Step one is as now to complete and pass the online multiple choice exam. Within the agreed period those who have passed then complete their form of application and submit a sample of their own work (these days by providing a link) that meets the set criteria. This will be assessed using the skills outlined in our VideoSkills curriculum;

b) for those members who have long been established in the trade they may apply for accreditation by pointing to materials (e.g. on their website, or a platform such as YouTube or Vimeo) that establish that the level of their work meets or exceeds the standards required for accreditation.

In all cases we will need confirmation of current public liability insurance, and a reaffirmation of standards in relation to customer care of the kind signed at the point of joining the IOV.

The proposal is that there would be a defined period (to be confirmed) by which date all members would need to comply with this procedure in order to attain fully qualified status. Feedback and advice would be given to unsuccessful candidates, who would be encouraged to resubmit within the following 12 months. This outline policy is of course there for the membership to respond to, and the incoming Executive will take on board any comments and concerns.

### ***VideoSkills***

This heading comprises the curriculum – online given that the printed book (Volume 3) is now outdated in many sections; and our training and development functions.

Once it is possible I believe that skills-related events in person should be a regular part of what we do. We also look to have more video material produced by members to address particular skillsets, and in this respect welcome Chris North's recent short videos "Lav Mics Part 1 and Part 2" which have now been peer reviewed and soon will start a series of similar output – we hope. Please consider getting on board!

When we last asked the question, "What workshops would you like the IOV to organise in the future?" these were some of the responses:

*Lighting*

*Skills needed to pass Accreditation*

*Cinematography*

*Editing (including what can and can't be fixed in post)*

*Camera techniques*

*Would like to demo Avid*

*Additionally people like to meet up, discuss business, and find out about the latest kit, preferably demonstrated. In an ideal world perhaps have a beer (insert your personal choice) afterwards!*

It is likely that within the membership we will have people who are capable of running workshops themselves. The Exec would do all possible to support individuals who might want to do this, including arranging a pricing structure such that their work is rewarded.

### ***The Forums***

By and large this activity happens on our private Facebook page where members try to help other members resolve issues in their work.

### ***Arbitration.***

This service still exists but is called upon infrequently, understandably so in these times. The service is written into our Constitution as an important element of what we offer within the broad scope of promoting Professionalism in Video Production. The service is happy to receive calls for informal advice about any aspect of your business relationships, ideally before matters get sticky.

***Other Membership Benefits***

We have recently considered whether to sign up for a programme called Healthy Extras, provided by Westfield Health, a not-for-profit organisation. The package would provide a range of member benefits at a relatively low cost. See

<https://www.westfieldhealth.com/business/our-solutions/healthy-extras>

We have decided to discuss this further (including the affordability element of course) once a new Executive is in place.

Tony Manning  
IOV Chair