

Report of Chair of ECF Finance Committee to 2024 AGM

First of all, we welcome the addition of Zoe Varney to our Committee – the first new recruit in too long. As an international player working in the actuarial profession, I have no doubt that she will add considerable value.

This has been quite an eventful year financially for the ECF, with radical changes made to the membership system and the receipt of DCMS funding. However, the effects of these are only now starting to be visible, so since April my Committee has not had a great deal by way of new numbers to scrutinise. I am happy to report that my access to the Xero accounting system is working smoothly.

We have held one meeting since Finance Council. This was delayed by my own health issues, but as noted above we would earlier have had little concrete to discuss. Our meeting two days ago was very valuable since, not entirely by coincidence, the FD had that morning completed the draft accounts for the year ending 31.8.2024. We commend Alex for completing this work in such good time and anticipate that there will now be no difficulty in presenting next April's Finance Council with signed accounts.

While we did not have long to look through the draft figures, they show few departures from the Budget of any significance and those that there are can be readily explained. Barring the unlikely event that the audit process turns up a major problem, we can regard

2023/4 as almost done. One outstanding issue is that we would like to see a schedule of claims and receipts relating to the DCMS funds, although we have no reason to think these are not on target.

2024/5 is likely to be more interesting. The Strategy Statement contains ideas which, while at an early stage and not costed, will presumably require money to implement. We are also expecting to see a paper addressing the need to upgrade the ECF's IT systems, about which the same may be said. At the same time we are waiting to see how (if at all) the new membership system will impinge on income. We are also waiting to see whether the DCMS will be maintained in its present or a modified form.

There are now five months to complete a comprehensive and costed plan which can be presented to Finance Council in April. This must include not only a Budget for 2025/6, but also realistic forecasts for the following two years. This is made particularly vital (though it would be anyway) by the fact that in twelve months' time we face the prospect of significant changes of personnel in critical positions on the Board. On that subject, I trust that efforts to find replacements will be put into top gear – these jobs are difficult, time consuming and sometimes thankless, so recruitment will not be easy.

At the time of writing, my quarterly meeting with the CEO and FD is arranged for next week. Following that, I may augment this report verbally at the AGM.

I thank my colleagues for their work over the past twelve months and look forward to coordinating the efforts of our enlarged group over the coming year.

Nick Faulks

8th October 2024