

Black Country Society Annual General Meeting 2022

Membership Secretary's Report

Membership for the Black Country Society currently stands at 1,110 members – this comprises all singular members, joint memberships, and organisational memberships. I am pleased to report that, during my short tenure as Membership Secretary since the beginning of 2022, we have had a healthy, steady supply of new members apply to join the Society. Since our previous AGM was held in August last, we have had a total of 40 new members join the society.

Our members are still littered across the British Isles and beyond: while the majority of our membership is, naturally, located in the Black Country region and its immediate surrounds, including Birmingham, we have members as far away as France, Switzerland, the United States of America, and Australia. The Committee have recently carried out a survey to get a fuller picture of the Society's demographic, with the intention of using this to work out how we can attract new members but also to ensure we are continuing to provide a good service to our existing members in terms of where we hold our events and what topics they will focus on.

As has been mentioned numerous times before, the membership subscription rates increased just over a year ago, helping to lessen the financial burden on the Society when it comes to postage rates and other costs – I myself would be lying if I tried to claim I didn't nearly faint when recently buying stamps! I would like to thank the vast majority of the membership, however, for paying the new subscription rates and for adjusting their standing orders where necessary, or for sending out cheques to cover the membership costs. I will continue to send out subscription renewal and reminder notices quarterly.

As stated, our membership figures remain healthy, but I would implore all members to invite family, friends, partners, and the like to our events, which are finally picking up pace again after the reign of COVID-19. You can continue to pay your checks via standing/banking order, PayPal, or cheque, and I will endeavour to process all payments as soon as I can after they are received.

Lastly, I would like to thank our members for continuing to support the Society, and for making it such an enjoyable, welcome environment when activities are held in person. Additionally, an especial thanks is owed to my predecessor, Mr. Tony Ridge, for not only doing a fantastic job as Membership Secretary for the previous six years, but for having been an incredibly kind colleague (and friend, might I add) over the past year, and for doing the best job imaginable in preparing me to take over the membership secretaryship. If I manage to do a good job, it'll be thanks to him (and maybe if I do a bad one, too!).

Jack Price