

## **BLACK COUNTRY SOCIETY AGM 2021**

### **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Membership currently stands at 1,144. In calendar year 2019 we welcomed 56 new members to the Society ; in 2020 - 67 new members ; and after 4 months of 2021 we have 24 new joiners. All new members are sent a Welcoming Letter, Membership Card and the latest edition of "The Blackcountryman". Data Protection requirements are also covered. Each new member is added to our Microsoft Excel Membership Database. Where deaths, resignations and changes of address are notified the database is amended accordingly. The process of keeping the database up to date is vital, particularly as regards ensuring efficient and accurate distribution of the quarterly magazine, and control of subscription payments.

Our membership continues to be drawn largely from the Black Country and surrounds, but we have members all over the UK as well as a sizeable contingent of "exiles" in Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Bermuda, France, Switzerland, Germany and the Republic of Ireland.

I am responsible for ensuring that subscriptions are paid, banked and logged on the database. Members will be aware that we appointed new printers at the end of 2019. In a departure from the previous arrangements the printers carry out a comprehensive service of printing, packing, addressing and posting magazines. Because this is an automated system I am no longer able to insert letters to members whose subscriptions are due or overdue, and I am obliged to make such notifications myself by post or e-mail. Members are advised to check their Spam folders occasionally as this is where Society e-mails could land up.

Finally, I would like to thank all those members who have responded to my requests for an additional donation to help compensate for our inability to hold an AGM last year in which we were to have tabled an increase in subscriptions. The vast majority of members have generously supported the Society in this way. Members have now agreed to an across-the-board increase of £5.00 pa. Those who pay by Bank Standing Order or rolling PayPal payment are politely reminded that they will need to initiate contact with the relevant organisation to increase their annual payment. Thank you.

**Tony Ridge,**

**Membership Secretary.**