



The Fibreoptic Industry Association

www.fia-online.co.uk

Secretary: Jane Morrison

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FIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019 - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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I am not the only one bowing out as Mike Gilmore, the el supremo of the standards world, will also be retiring at the end of March 2020. We owe a huge debt to Mike, who has been a key figure in elevating the FIAs standing in the fibre optic community. Big shoes to fill and succession planning has been slow over the last 18 months. I am pleased to report that following a Standards meeting last week with Mike and much of the Council we have, and here I steal another well-known phrase, "a cunning plan". We fully recognise that standards representation and dissemination of what is happening in those upper echelons, is a significant part of the 'raison d'être' of the FIA, and at that meeting we believe we have identified a way to ensure that these activities continue well into the future. I am sure you will all join me in acknowledging Mikes excellent work ethic and contribution to the FIA and wish well in his well-deserved retirement.

The Council and support staff continue to work tirelessly to maintain a positive financial position despite the fall in membership over the last few years. With 'B' word still hanging over everyone like a 'Sword of Damocles' it is not surprising that this has affected our market and made us tighten our belts. The FIA can still give our members a competitive edge through technical support, training guidance and standards bodies representation.

John Marson, as current vice-chair, has offered to take over the chair from me and my other secondary role as Director of Test & Measurement. Consequently, he will step down as Commercial Director and we will look for someone new to take on that role. John ensured that our 2019 Summer Seminar was another great success and our thanks must go him, to Exfo for sponsoring the free bar and all the other sponsors, tabletop exhibitors and speakers, including Luke Wigman for his in inspiring after dinner speech.

Membership numbers have dropped to 150 and as ever we still need to work hard to lift this to a more sustainable 200 members so please help raise our profile at every opportunity.

Our Communication Director, Jonathan Lewis, keeps a weather eye on the FIA website and is support by Ed Bullen in maintaining its integrity and functionality. Jonathan continues to produce the excellent quarterly Newsletter and, with the support of his employer, Huber & Suhner, represents the FIA on the BSI TCT/7 Standards subcommittees.

Our Treasurer, Alan Bullen, supported by our day-to-day account manager, Margaret McFarlane, have endeavoured to keep a tight rein on our finances. Despite recording a loss this year our reserves are still very healthy. Alan will table his Treasurers Report separately.

The AIS Scheme has undergone further changes by reducing the number of qualifying events to just one and pegged this to the Summer Seminar. The FIA is constantly promoting the AIS to industry to ensure our accredited members have a commercial advantage and Frank Kler has worked with the IET to ensure that this is encompassed in the new NHS Code of Practice scheduled for publication before the end of the year. Frank is keen to ensure that what the FIA continue to provide meets with your needs – so tell us what you want to know more about, whether it's FTTX, broadband roll-out, 5G back haul or IoT.

Our Training Director, Nigel Hedges, has worked with our new appointed Qualifications Director, Martin Smith, to try and pull together a training course matrix, supported in part through his oversight of the Training & Qualifications Committee (TQC) and feedback from its secretary, John Colton. Not an easy task, but it is hoped that a consensus can be reached early in the new year regarding the Approved Training Provider scheme underpinned by appropriate qualifications that are accredited by independent external bodies.

As MoD liaison Nigel has also completed MoD N-Cage approvals for several FIA members.

John Colton, Technical Director, has answered members queries as they arise and has also acted as secretary of the TQC, an advisory panel of four training providers who give their time voluntarily. The panel members are busy people and so meet infrequently. As a committee of equals they were convened to promote best practice in training and offer guidance on how the FIA might underpin its Approved Training Provider Scheme.

Keith Rowley, our Director of International Operations, left the employ of his sponsors, Liquid Telecom, earlier this year and subsequently resigned from this role. I would like to thank him for his insights and wish him well in his new endeavours.

Once again, I must reiterate that Council Members are all volunteers with a lot of their time being given freely. It is only with their commitment, and the goodwill of their employers, that the FIA can proactively represent our industry. The support that they, Jane Morrison in the Secretariat, and Margaret McFarlane in Accounts, have provided to the FIA and to me as Chair, over the years has been invaluable, so on behalf of the Members, and for myself, I would like to thank them wholeheartedly for all their outstanding support.



Paul Bateson – Outgoing Chair



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Paul Bateson – Outgoing Chair