

AGM 18.10.21

Chairman's Report

I now turn to the Chairman's Report for the year 2020/21. This is my seventh Chairman's Report.

Once again this year our activities have been affected by the health emergency, and all of our activities have taken place on line. Although this seemed strange at first, we have now got used to the new way of working, we have picked up amazing skills in the use of the Zoom platform and it has brought us considerable benefits, including the fact that we can arrange meetings with colleagues all over the UK at the drop of a hat. The move on line has extended our reach considerably; our CPD events are now regularly attended by colleagues from Spain, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Poland, Austria, Czech Republic, and other countries. We even had some visitors from USA in June this year. The change in our working practices has also brought us huge savings, which the Treasurer will be telling you about later. Looking forward to next year, there are no plans to hold any face-to-face meetings just yet, although we will keep the situation under review.

Looking even further forward, 20 September 2024, we celebrate 50 years of the existence of APCI, which is obviously a significant milestone in the life of any professional body. We imagine that members will want to mark the date in some way, and we have recently set up a 50th Anniversary Committee which will be considering how we might celebrate our half-century. The Committee will be reporting back to the Directors in September 2022. I understand that they may be contacting you shortly to ask for your ideas.

EULITA/FIT

Going back to this year, I would like to start by talking about our membership of two international organisations, EULITA and FIT.

Just like us, EULITA has moved all its activities on line this year, and as a result their spending on missions has fallen to zero, which means that they have a massive budget surplus which they don't know what to do with. They are planning to use the money to finance a free, online seminar for all EULITA members before the end of the year. As soon as I have any details of this event I will circulate them to you.

This was our first year of Associate Membership of EULITA following acceptance of our application on 16 November 2020. We have been able to take part in all EULITA activities, although we don't have a vote any more and of course we are no longer eligible to take part in EU-funded projects. The 11th General Assembly was held on line in March and I attended on behalf of APCI. Two new ideas were floated at the GA: one was that Associate Members, like us, might be able to take part in specialist committees on topics such as jurisprudence, ethics, research and training, which would provide an in-depth analysis or simply feed ideas to the Executive Committee. I said that we would be able to contribute to the committee on training. The second idea concerns the certification of CPD events; EULITA is considering awarding a label (we would probably call it a quality mark) to courses that meet certain criteria. Next year's General Assembly will take place in Paris in March 2022.

As regards FIT, the General Meeting of FIT Europe was held on line on 9 September; I attended on behalf of APCI. A new Board was elected for the period 2021 – 2024. This year was due to mark the FIT World Congress, an event which takes place every three years, which was scheduled to take place in Varadero (Cuba) in December 2021. Unfortunately it has now been postponed a second time until 30 and 31 May 2022, while the Open Congress will be held on the three following days, with the presentation of papers, lectures, panels, workshops and a business fair.

MoJ

We have also been representing your interests here at home. Since 8 June we have been attending the new Language Services External Stakeholders' Forum, which is a space where the Ministry of Justice meet representatives of membership organisations, the two regulatory bodies and two trade union branches, as well as the Association of Translation Companies (ATC). The aim of the Forum is to share information, views and feedback in respect of interpreting services required by MoJ/HMCTS to ensure that their short, medium and long-term service needs are met, bearing in mind, in particular, that the current contract expires in October 2023. Meetings are taking place monthly, and at each meeting one member of the group delivers a presentation on a topic of interest. So far we have had presentations on the tiering system, interpreting qualifications, and just this month the proposal to launch a new L7 qualification for legal BSL interpreters. There is also a plan to introduce a new working group to discuss the very specific topic of how to ensure the supply of suitably qualified interpreters for MoJ work in future years; this will be called the Language Services Future Pipeline Working Group. They will be looking at things like the career pathways of interpreters and how to encourage more skilled linguists into the profession, particularly in scarce and rare languages and those which are proving difficult to source at the moment.

PI4J

The work of PI4J (Professional Interpreters for Justice) has also continued throughout the year. We haven't held any further meetings with the police since the launch of the new Dynamic Purchasing System in September 2020 but we have had a limited amount of dialogue with them through NRPSI. We continue to have serious reservations about the PAIT scheme, which was launched on 1 April, including the lack of involvement of the regulators, the applicability of multiple codes of conduct and the fact that interpreters who choose not to register with LSPs and who are not registered with MPS will be unable to access the scheme. It is also not clear to us how the scheme will address supply issues. We have received a limited amount of information about the terms and conditions payable under the DPS. You will recall that one of the much-publicised features of the DPS is that it is 100% technical, meaning that price is not a factor in choosing suppliers. In other words, the police will determine the quality standard they require and also the terms and conditions available to interpreters. We were always aware that there would not be a uniform rate across the whole country; instead, regional rates would be determined, in accordance with local demand and supply conditions. During the course of the year we have been made aware of two sets of Ts and Cs, one relating to seven North-West police forces, a contract held by TBW, and the other relating to East and West Midlands forces, contracts held by Cintra. These appear to be based on a Monday to Friday daytime rate of £20.00 and £20.30 respectively. The Cintra rates provide for an enhancement of 25% for evening and weekend work, and for travel time at £3.00 per hour. Given the promises that were made of 'a sustainable value-system [...] ensuring fair remuneration for these public service interpreters', these rates do seem particularly disappointing, and it is not clear how they will ensure the supply of qualified interpreters for police jobs. During the

course of the year PI4J has also discussed other issues, including the Uber drivers' decision, the 'fake interpreter scandal', and the complaints procedure available to interpreters working on the MoJ contract.

Training for police officers

We have continued to provide training for police officers in how to work through an interpreter; we have delivered three training sessions to new recruits, two over Teams and one face-to-face; and in December we gave a presentation to a group of training officers from three forces. We have also submitted a proposal for a two-day joint training workshop for interpreters and police officers, delivered by interpreter trainers and academics.

Webinar CPDs

Another major part of our activity over the last year has been our CPD programme, which has been delivered entirely on line and free of charge to members. Since the last AGM we have hosted 11 webinars, and also a Polish Terminology Workshop, which as far as I know was our first language-specific event in our 50-year history. The response to our programme has been overwhelmingly positive, and we appear to have acquired a reputation for putting on top quality events. We have also made many of our events available to non-members at a modest charge, and this has given us a small income stream to set off against the cost of the Zoom licence.

Projects

I turn now to two of the projects we've been spending your money on, and I begin with the **APCI Response** project.

The big news about **APCI Response** is that although our office in Pepper Street reopened in September 2020, due to staffing issues the Serviced Office Company have not yet resumed the provision of our service. For the whole year the **APCI Response** number has been diverted to my landline number, which has saved us a considerable amount in costs, which Patrycja will be telling you about shortly.

In the 12 months from October 2020, we received 112 jobs through the call centre, of which 77% came from the police, 12% from solicitors and 8% from prosecuting authorities. The cost of running the call centre was £1,115, a reduction of 30% from last year. The cost per member was £7.69, down 30.5% from last year, and the cost per job was £9.96, a decrease of 35% from this time last year. The most requested language once again this year was Romanian.

If you would like to see the full report including the performance data, it is available now in the members' area of the website.

The other project we have been spending your money on is the IT project, involving the redesign of our website. The new website was launched on 30 September last year, and has been well received by members and others. There are still one or two snags left over from the launch, including the operation of the search engine, but these are being addressed by our developer. Over the next year we will be adding new functionality, including the facility for members to renew their membership via the website, and an online application form for Student Membership. We have also requested a few cosmetic improvements to the Home Page. We have set up a dedicated IT Support

inbox, so if you need to request new log-in credentials just drop a line to IT Support and it will be done.

I will repeat what I said one year ago, and that is that our brand new website has been a long time coming, but we are confident that it'll be a fitting shop window for APCI and an invaluable resource from which we can launch our future activities. And now a few words about the APCI Directors.

Directors

I think you are aware that Director Eloisa Galluzzi dos Santos stood down for personal reasons on 9 April this year, and for the remainder of the year we have had five Directors. We are grateful for Eloisa's contribution to the work of the Membership Department. I think you are also aware that this coming year is my last year as Chairman, as I will be standing down in October 2022 after eight years in post. My job over the next twelve months will be to hand over my responsibilities to other Directors, and that process has already begun in earnest. If you might be interested in standing for appointment as Chairman, a list of the Chairman's duties is available from the members' section of the website, and you can also obtain a nomination form from the same place. I would suggest that there is only one valid reason for standing for appointment as a Director, and that is that you want to give something back to the profession and improve the working lives of your colleagues. Nominations close on 19 September 2022 but if you are serious about standing for office you really need to get involved now, and I would encourage you to come along to our Directors' Meetings, to find out what is going on. These are held on line, usually on the first Wednesday of the month.