

Presidents Annual Report For 2025

This has been a steady and mainly calm year for our club. Membership has fallen by one as David Early has, sadly, decided not to renew his membership. David and Jean were good supporters of club events. They will be missed.

Unfortunately we have not enjoyed an influx of new members. This is a great shame as new members bring new vigour to clubs, so if any member knows of any potential new members then please do your best to recruit them. They will be made most welcome.

The past year has not been without its sadnesses. Sam Armstrong passed away in a nursing home in Broadstone and Janet Tanner, wife of Brian Tanner, passed away in November. I'm happy to report that Brian is now back to attending club lunches and we are delighted to see him again. As detailed in the Welfare Secretaries Report there have several members and wives who have suffered falls. Sadly these falls have resulted in hospital treatment. On behalf of the committee and the membership we wish them a quick and full recovery.

Events organised by the President have met with very mixed results. Things started well with both the Summer Buffet and the Christmas Lunch being well attended. However both the Holiday and the Presidents Black Tie Dinner were a very different story. The Holiday did not take place inspite of a choice of venues on offer. Only six couples wanted to go on holiday. The Black Tie Dinner fared a little better with 22 members, wives and widows attending. Thank you to those who attended and I am happy to report that it was a good evening with good food and what I hope was good entertainment.

I realise that the membership is increasing in age and that brings a general reluctance to go out. This is especially true of journeys and evening events but I do hope that, in the future, you will all make a greater effort to enjoy the company of your fellow members.

Thanks to the efforts of the Events Secretary the club has enjoyed visits to the RNLI headquarters in Poole and the to Southwick House. As the Escoffier Restaurant is not yet open again I know the the Events Secretary has made arrangements to return to the RNLI on the 11th June. Providing we get sufficient members to take part there will be plans for future outings.

The breadth and variety of the talks arranged by the Speakers Secretary have been excellent and as such I'm sorry to have to inform you that our Speakers Secretary is standing down after seven years in the job. Thank you John, you have done us proud and you will be missed at committee meetings.

On this note I am delighted to report that Peter Sheehan will be taking over the position in October. Until then John has agreed to keep a watchful eye over the speakers. John has already booked future speakers for the year ahead. Again thank you John.

Recently a questionnaire has been circulated to members. This questionnaire has been necessitated by members poor attendance at events organised for them by both the Events Secretary and the President. I do wonder if members realise how much work goes into organising events and how disheartening it is to have such a poor response. I urge members to try and give more support to forthcoming events. I'm sure that they have no wish to merely become a lunch club.

This years charity has been The Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance and a total of £380 has been raised through the generosity of members donating raffle prizes for the raffles that were held at the Christmas Lunch and the Presidents Black Tie Dinner. As someone who has a huge personal debt of gratitude to this wonderful service, all I say is thank you. It is hoped that a representative of this very worthwhile service will be able to attend a future club lunch to receive a cheque from the club.

I should like to thank all the members of the committee for their unstinting help over the past year. They have worked long and hard on all manner of tasks for the betterment of the club and its members. Among these tasks have been the fiasco over the club using a small copy of the Verwood Town logo on its website. Tony Bird, the secretary Peter Richardson and myself attended a meeting of the Verwood Town Council where we explained all the whys and wherefores of the use of this logo only to have its use rejected by the Verwood Town Council. We had used the aforementioned logo for years without any form of issue and frankly what I heard that evening appalled me. Enough said as I am still staggered at what I heard.

Additionally I would like to thank Tony Bird for all his work with the club's website.

Finally, I have enjoyed the privilege and honour of being our clubs President and I wish my successor Ed Murphy a happy and successful year.

Nick Gray

President Verwood Probus Club