IMS 61st AGM: 06.11.2026 – Chair report

Firstly, it's with great sadness that we must acknowledge the loss of our colleague and friend Richard Taylor this November. Richard was a stalwart supporter of the IMS and in recent years was involved as Education and Membership secretary, and he was also a Director of the Institute. He'd been suffering ill health for some while and lost his fight for life last week. As managing director of Scott-Grant for around 35 years and a consummate, productivity professional, we've truly lost a productivity champion and he'll be sorely missed.

General

- We started this year by holding a 'strategy' meeting 20th January at The Holiday Inn, Shrewsbury. In attendance were Kirstie York and Elle Bradley from Cygnul, along with me and Steve Percival representing the IMS. There followed a brainstorming session related to the challenges our Institute is facing, and a problem statement was then produced. We further discussed a range of topics and what success might look like along with next steps, that fundamentally required an influx of new council members which would then lead to the setting up of a sub-committee to consider and action the points raised.

- This year, as a result of the strategy meeting, 2 providers of a new CRM database have been spoken with and there's an absolute need that in conjunction with this, the IMS website must be replaced and updated. It was decided to hold back from any commitment until an appropriate sub-committee was appointed to share the work behind this initiative so that a plan and budget cost can be considered. Cygnul have kindly offered their support reflecting the fact that they've been actively involved the last 3 years in website maintenance and holding the current CRM (Access based) together with much sticking plaster.

- It was agreed earlier this year to change the AGM venue from Manchester to a more centralized location and thanks to the team at Cygnul for planning and arranging this at the NEC. We will discuss and consider an approach for 2027 and again, consider whether a bi-annual in-person AGM, along with bi-annual virtual event is more appropriate and cost effective.

- I work with Cygnul closely on various matters and have to place on record my thanks to Kirstie & her team for their support throughout the year. I'm certain that their ongoing support will be appreciated as we move towards new developments and making membership services a much slicker activity. As Kirstie also took on the role of company secretary, this has made life simpler and more efficient as she was already dealing with a number of statutory aspects for the IMS.

- As an employee of Scott-Grant Limited, although I seek to maintain objectivity, it is helpful due to them being our current, training provider and we plan to be liaising with them more frequently in 2027 as we seek to review and update IMS courses available to new students. I have, however, announced my retirement at the end of December and as such will no longer be employed by Scott-Grant.

- In January, I represented the Institute at the Scott-Grant, Student of the year award ceremony in Manchester. The awards made were as follows:
    - Winner: Hamza Aman of Elcometer in Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire
    - Jt. Runner up: Philip Marr of GXO. 3PL for Curry's.
    - Jt. Runner up: Oliver Davies of Bae systems – now at AALTO stratospace technology
    - Russell Currie Memorial Fund award for best, International Student: Ontoboge Archie of Botswanan Government.
- I liaise frequently with our President, Colin Coulson-Thomas who has kindly offered to remain as President through 2027.

Council officers

In response to the personalised letter sent to all members in December 2025, we received a great response from fellow professionals expressing an interest in becoming a member of council. Following much deliberation, Teams meetings and further discussions, additional members were then formally invited to join Council. This was driven by the fact that at the 2025 AGM, several past members had announced their retirement including Andrew Muir, Ken Gamble and Chris Elkington. It was also recognised that due to ill health, Richard Taylor may not be able to offer the same level of support that he had done previously. Co-opted appointments this year included Steven Moody, Andrew Harber, Steven Porter and Rachel Broughton; this to bring Council back to 8 members. Sadly, Rachel had some personal challenges this year which has limited her involvement however, she has recently been in touch to confirm her willingness to become actively involved again. And reflecting the sad loss of Richard Taylor, a previous applicant, Robert Roy FMS was invited to join Council, and he has accepted.

The core roles within Council that require an officer are as follows:

1. Chair – Currently Mark Cooper
2. Deputy Chair – Currently vacant
3. Company Secretary – Currently Kirstie York, MD of Cygnul
4. Treasurer – Currently Tracy Cuthbertson
5. Membership – Currently vacant
6. Education – Currently vacant
7. Marketing and publicity – Currently Steve Percival

8. Compliance and Risk – Currently vacant

Terms of office are typically 4 years and due to a historical lack of synergy, there's currently a variety of term ending dates although constitutionally, I'm confident that once the election process is confirmed to formally appoint the new officers, we can align term ending dates for consistency.

I continue to monitor LinkedIn, the productivity institute page (forums) and other sources for any opportunities to raise awareness of the IMS and what we can offer. And when appropriate, I'm sharing articles of interest with a view to attracting interest, enquiries and hopefully new members. Thanks also to Steve Percival for his input to the LinkedIn page in addition to the newsletter and journal.