

In opening, I offer my thanks to all those who have served on Council during the past year. Some are standing down at this AGM. In particular, I would like to mention Sarah Shakespeare as Chair and Steve Brooker as Honorary Secretary. Would you join me in expressing your appreciation of everyone's efforts on our behalf.

Next year, the club will have been in existence for 130 years. I repeat, 130 years, one of the oldest in the country. On its own, longevity does not automatically guarantee the club a right to exist. Clubs do close. Who now remembers Sutton or Thornton Heath camera clubs? We have endured so long thanks to the input of countless people over the decades who have contributed to the running of this club.

For that reason, I would also like to thank those who have volunteered their services and just been elected to Council, either as new or continuing members. Let us congratulate them as well.

Some time ago, the club introduced a rule which limited the normal tenure of the main offices to three years. The reasons were to encourage participation in the club's affairs by all members, which avoids becoming too dependent on a limited number of people. The more who are involved, in whatever way, the better. With that in mind, having previously completed a three year stint as Chairman, I do not propose to do another. I have stepped forward on this occasion with the intention of standing down after a year. It will provide opportunity to find a successor.

Our club is not a faceless entity, it is the people in it. Nothing more, nothing less. A club can only accomplish as much as colleagues are prepared to do for each other. I understand that not everyone has the time to undertake one of the elected roles, but we can all contribute something. For example:

- helping to set up the hall for our meetings and clearing up afterwards
- serving teas and coffees at the break
- becoming a digital projectionist
- organising an outing

Regarding that last, it would be great if we could have a regular trip, say once a month. It is straightforward to do and does not require much time in preparation, especially if we are familiar with the location. Not only can we introduce others to our favourite places, they can be enjoyable social occasions as well.

Over the coming year, I plan on introducing some innovations which are intended to make our club even better than it is now. One such is a survey after each meeting in which everyone can express their views. Over time, we can establish what works for members. However, I and the other members of Council cannot achieve improvement on our own and we will need your assistance.

We are all fully paid up members and have an equal vested interest in making our club as good as it can be. If we all contribute something, large or small, we will all experience the benefits. With your help, I look forward to next year, our 130<sup>th</sup>, being one of the best in this club's long and illustrious history.