

## Finance Report

A graph is presented of company accounts for the financial years up to 2020 and the current financial year to the end of October 2021.

Up to 2013, meetings were run with low level sponsorship, minimal accommodation costs and mostly voluntary labour. A major governance review led to a step up in activities: more executive work was required to procure a substantial increase in commercial sponsorship, since growing attendance figures needed larger, chargeable, more expensive venues.

The aim was to continue in a basic “not for profit” mode, but with a target of reserves that would cover at least two future meetings should income drop precipitately. As will be seen from the 2020 and 2021 data in the chart, this proved to be essential in allowing us to continue albeit by virtual meetings rather than physical.

Four further graphs are presented analysing the data by UKNOF meetings. These are recorded from UKNOF24 (2013) up to UKNOF48 (November 2021 – although this is incomplete pending final costs, mostly catering, which will not be known until after the Annual Meeting).

Looking first at the number of registrations shows that UKNOF remains a popular and useful forum for the industry.

On the per-meeting bar chart, the effect of COVID for 2020 and 2021 shows very clearly. Being unable to hold physical meetings for much of the time, virtual meetings proved to be successful, but lost the vital element of personal contact, informal discussions over coffee breaks and lunches, and deprived sponsors from presenting their products more directly from display stands at the meetings.

This caused a large drop in sponsorship income, but helpfully the virtual meetings were much cheaper to run in terms of venue costs. However, overhead costs are not saved in the same way: one key differentiator is that, in a physical event, some of the effort is outsourced to the venue and there is no need for a technical rehearsal, as people just need to be in the right position. Indeed, virtual meetings can place a greater burden on the organisers as they have to do everything themselves. In spite of continued negotiation, the pre-booking fees from Manchester Central could not be deferred beyond November 2021 (UKNOF48) even though sponsorship has not been secured for this event.

This shows up in the next meeting income less expenditure graph (which does not account for overheads: IT support, consultancy for meeting organisation, chairing, finance and publicity).

The last graph shows the impact of the meetings on the reserves. The board’s main concern is the current state of reserves: at the end of October standing at approximately £23k. This does not include pending costs for UKNOF48, consultants’ fees for the remaining part of 2021 and monthly IT payments to Mythic for web and other service hosting. Assuming that no further sponsors emerge for the remainder of 2021, the board is considering whether consultancy fees will have to be deferred to 2022 or substantially reduced by the providers.

We have continued to keep our overheads well under control and manpower paid still on the basis of £30/hour – much less than fully commercial businesses would pay.

Planning for 2022 continues. Although there is still continuing uncertainty about whether 3 physical (or even hybrid) meetings will be possible in 2022, negotiations with venues needs to happen well in advance as lead times for suitable venues can run into 1-2 years. Deposits for these bookings have to be paid. Note: some £6k is already paid for pre-booking and probably cannot be cancelled without penalty.

The Board has not yet committed to the first forum of 2022, usually held in January, pending the actual financial position upon completion of UKNOF48, and sponsor/patron commitments for 2022.