

Auditors' report on the ABSW accounts, 18 March 2015.

As watchdogs elected to check that the expenditure of the ABSW is in line with its aims and with the expressed wishes of the membership, we are happy to approve the 2014 accounts.

On the positive side, we note in particular that after years too long to count, membership income is in line with the sum that would be expected from the number of members we have – in other words, that subscription collection and the lapsing of non-paying members is being done efficiently. We also applaud the low level of Board member expenses (£26). We should also report, though the figure is not shown in the accounts, that apart from expenses there were no payments made to Board members during the year.

On the negative side, we note that the expenditure of £7,616 on the Sexism in Science Journalism survey has yet to yield any tangible result. We recommend that in any future projects of a similar nature the Board consider some form of staged payment to encourage delivery, and perhaps look for matching funds. We note that without this expenditure the accounts would have been in surplus for the year.

To save members from having to add up the individual numbers, we note that the UK Science Journalism conference incurred a deficit of approximately £3,000 (though that figure does not take account of the long-term benefit of having more members, encouraged to join through lower fees); and that the ABSW Awards returned a modest and perfectly reasonable surplus (a little under £500).

We thank the Board, and especially retiring Treasurer Harriet Bailey and the by no means retiring Sallie Robins, for their patient answering of our requests for more information.

Lastly, we wholeheartedly welcome the proposed change to Standing Orders, on which members will vote at the AGM, which clarifies and explains our watchdog role as elected lay auditors.

Michael Kenward and Pete Wrobel

Auditors