

November Secretary's Report

Greetings to you all.

I sit inside typing this report as outside, the rain lashes down. Another atmospheric river, this time from the tropics. Is it just me, or does this autumn seem unusually wet? I cannot remember so much rain over such a short period of time, although it could be my memory which is at fault.

On the VOCS front, your board is busy doing some much overdo housekeeping. One problem we face, and have faced for some time, is our status as an unincorporated association. Companies may own and operate bank accounts and sign contracts, as can individuals, but there are many hurdles placed in the way of an unincorporated association which tries to do the same.

It seems that in the past, the president simply did things in his own name. At least, that is my understanding. Venue bookings were made in his name, and when VOCSians paid for events, they simply made their cheques payable to the president.

As a system, it had the merit of simplicity. Unfortunately, when the president stood down, the in-coming president could not simply take over his predecessor's banking arrangements.

So slowly but surely, we have been ensuring that VOCS becomes more organised. We now have all our documents on Google Drive, with all board members being given the user name and passwords they need to gain access (some, I know, will be surprised to read this). This, of course, makes the transition process much easier when board members stand down and new board members join.

The last holdout is our banking arrangements. We still use the details of our last president. He, however, is in the process of changing his bank, so we need to change the VOCS banking arrangements. Added to this is the realisation that our business is not at all attractive for a bank. For most of the year, the account sleeps soundly, waking up each spring with a brief flurry of activity surrounding the boat race, before sinking down into slumber again. The possibility of a bank earning fees from us is pretty remote.

A very simple way of achieving this would be to incorporate VOCS. This, however, would cost money, both upfront and on an annual basis. We would also need to file annual returns, which would add a level of unwanted paperwork to your board. We could still do this, of course, but there seems to be no benefit to us other than ease of banking.

Although our banking needs are not onerous, we do have a couple of non-negotiable items, namely:

1. The banking must be free. We do not generate revenue; any monthly charge would very soon exhaust our modest resources.
2. Our account must be able to coordinate with PayPal and to accept e-transfers from members. The days of writing cheques are well and truly over!

Fortunately, one of your board members is also a member of another unincorporated association, who use Coast Capital for their banking arrangements. Coast have told us they would be willing to accept our modest business, provided that at least one of the signatories on the account is a member of Coast (ie, already has an account with them), and has had this account for a minimum of 6 months.

Astonishingly, not one member of your board holds an existing account with Coast Capital. So, here is my plea to you: Do any of you already have an account with Coast Capital, and have you had this account for at least the past 6 months? If so, are you willing to become a signatory on the VOCS Coast Capital account for the next 6 months, so we can overcome Coast Capital's requirements? After 6 months, both I and your treasurer (and probably other board members too) will have qualified to become signatories on the VOCS Coast Capital account. You may therefore step down, assuming you wish to do so.

If any of you are able to assist, please reply to me at vanoxbridge@gmail.com so we can move forward on this.

I should perhaps add that we have done a pretty extensive trawl through the major banks and credit unions and Coast seems to be a the best fit for us, provided we can overcome this 6 month existing account requirement of theirs.

I look forward to hearing from you.