IT Administrator Report (James Milligan)

The year started off by moving Council away from our legacy email system to the more modern G Suite platform provided by Google (previously known as Google Apps for Work) for both email, groups, and file sharing. Although there continue to be some issues for certain users, broadly the migration has been successful. There are further improvements to be made regarding email delivery (tightening up our SPF records), but these rely on other projects being completed before they can progress.

Over the last year, I have continued to work on the new membership system, which is currently comprised of two components – the 'GTC API' and the 'GTC Office'. I haven't made as much progress as I'd have liked due to the time constraints of full-time work, but I'm happy to say that in the last 2–3 months the pace has picked back up to a more acceptable level. The plan is to release a read-only version of the system over the summer, which is initially used by Council for a variety of tasks to prove that the system will work as intended, and save time for Council as a whole. Once this has been proven, further functionality can be added, and wider access for members should follow later in the year. The final stepping stone will be to only use the online system, and move away from the current database – which will clearly involve some more thought and work.

If any members are familiar with software development, particularly with RESTful APIs, Java (Dropwizard), JavaScript (Backbone.js/Marionette.js), or NoSQL databases (MongoDB), please get in touch - james.milligan@gtc.org.uk – as it would be beneficial to have other developers on hand should I become unavailable.

As always, there have been other, smaller projects which take various priorities, but include things such as setting up a temporary streaming server for the 2017 GTC Awards, an awards management system for the 2017 Bill Vinten University Awards, and several other one-off tasks for specific projects throughout the year.

Day-to-day social media is now mainly handled by Exhibitions Officer Sally Garrett who has worked wonders with the new Instagram account, particularly around exhibitions. I continue to run social media for the AGM & Awards day alongside others such as Alison Chapman.

The Forum continues to be a pain point for all as we continue to use Yahoo. I'd ask members to remain patient and understand that we want to move to a different system as much as they do. Moving to another provider right now will land us with the same amount of administrative work, perhaps more. Once an initial online membership system is running, the intention is to attempt another trial run with a system that will be integrated from the start, so that a new member need not have to email anyone and wait for the manual process of invites etc to be completed, they will have access as soon as their membership is processed. This will work through technology similar to Single Sign On (SSO) whereby you have a single GTC login for all of our services.