



## **Overview of paid up membership**

At 30<sup>th</sup> June RAGAS has 340 paid up members. This compares to 341 last year. Membership comprises 100 Lifetime members, 233 Charter members with five or less years to run, and 7 annual members of which 1 is a Rotaractor / Alumni (UK).

Membership is drawn from 28 countries most having single number representation. The four largest member countries are USA (with 177 members), followed by the UK (71), Australia (40), and Canada (10). Some of the most affected countries have few active members: We have just 5 members in India, 2 in South Africa, 1 in the Philippines and just a couple in South America. Europe, except the UK, is noticeable not taking up membership.

Membership spans approximately 264 Clubs, 137 Districts and 28 countries.

## **Attracting new members**

During year 2019/20 we attracted 40 membership applications, despite good interest at the 2019 RI Convention in Hamburg. Non-payment reminders have been issued. 8 have yet to pay a subscription.

The bulk of the new subscribers came from our traditional heartlands, notably the USA. However, it is good to see new representation from Ecuador, Egypt, Holland, Kenya, Portugal, Sint Maarten, Thailand, Scotland, and Uruguay.

## **Membership take-up / renewal rate**

RAGAS, like other RAGS, see a high failure rate in converting initial interest to sustainable membership volumes. Whilst some 560 individuals have applied to join RACSRAG / RAGAS since 2012 many fail to follow through to full membership.

Since 2012/13 we have seen some 72 members fail to renew their membership, which at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 stands at 340. Most non-renewals are those with annual membership. This year we have seen 14 Charter members failing to renew, despite receiving two gentle and encouraging reminders.

## **Club membership**

This year the Board agreed to engage Clubs and Districts by allowing each to join at \$1 per member. So far, no marketing has been sanctioned to approach Clubs or broadcast this via our social media channels. Chairman McCleary advises that RC Birmingham (USA) is keen to engage on that basis but has yet to do so.

## **Summary**

Clearly membership is languishing. That is not surprising as we have not made a concerted effort to attract, mentor, or actively retain membership interests. That needs to be addressed if RAGAS is to flourish and achieve its objectives.



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## Suggestions for the Board's consideration

1. **Membership Action and Marketing Plan:** The Board recently agreed roles for Directors. This included James (Jim) Johnson, Secretary Simon John, and I to form a membership team. Simon is doing a great job in engaging members by sending out mailings to all regarding our public Zoom sessions. Going forward the team, with the support of others should look to produce a Membership Action plan for the Board, and, subject to its endorsement, take action to implement it. Funds are available to support that.
2. **Create a Membership Secretary:** A Director or knowledgeable member should be invited to take on the role of Membership Secretary. Logically s/he would report to Secretary Simon, or the Membership Chair. S/he would be the primary contact for new member interest via the website and other media outlets, seeking as part of that to identify their respective interest and skills. S/he might publicly thank them through our Facebook / Newsletter outlets to make them feel noticed, valued and inspired to engage in our work, and generally support them during their period of membership. On receipt of a membership application form s/he needs to request subscriptions and liaise with the Treasurer in that regard
3. **Club membership promotion:** The Board has agreed in principle to allow Clubs to join as a 'Club' member for a fee of \$US1 per member. This now needs to be worked up in a practical way to enable the fee to be easily calculated and translated into the applicant Club's local currency. A payment mechanism also needs to be set up and broadcast.

I am willing to create a new 'Club Membership' page on the current RAGAS website but will require agreed text to include on the page. I am also happy to arrange for subscriptions to be paid via PayPal (including the use of debit / credit cards) and /or bank transfer.

I am aware, however that the Board will be replacing the existing website soon. Additionally, the new Treasurer may wish to change banking arrangements to potentially relocate that to the USA. If these events are to occur in the near term, it may be best to effect the promotion and administration of the Club membership initiative at that time.

Whenever undertaken, the Board will no doubt wish to plan for that and agree a marketing strategy to ensure the message is compelling, easily understood and widely picked up.



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4. **Broadcast our membership application form when we communicate with potential members:** All Directors and officers are encouraged to include the current membership form (preferably as a URL link) when engaging with potential members whether by email, setting up promotions or broadcasting speaker engagements. The current link is <https://ragas.online/membership-application/> which for convenience I have shortened to [bit.ly/2ZEAjY](https://bit.ly/2ZEAjY)

Stephen Sypula  
Past Vice-Chair,  
Interim Treasurer and Webmaster  
10<sup>th</sup> July 2020