

Additional Note from John White, Hon Sec of ATM - Jan 2012

The New Look Journal 2012

Shortly after my selection as Honorary Secretary in April 2010 I met with the former post holder, George Knights, to discuss the priorities for the Association over the next three years. One issue was the appointment of Editors for the key posts of the Editor of Mathematics Teaching (MT) and the Website. It was also noted that the contract for the design and printing of the journal could be revisited at the same time.

I was very keen that these appointments were made in a transparent way, putting them out to competitive tender, to ensure that the Association continues to receive best value for money whilst retaining or improving the quality of what is produced.

The process of reviewing the web has been complicated by the degree of enmeshment of the work of the back office and the work of the web. We are carrying out a substantial review of both these key elements of the work of the Association, which we hope will be complete by the end of December 2011. Until the outcome of this review is known the work on the web is in abeyance.

By January of 2011 the process of the appointment of the Editor of MT was well underway. An advertisement was placed in a trade publication as well as MT to reach a wider audience. These did indeed stimulate a number of enquiries, expressions of interest and tenders. The tenders were examined by the executive committee, who recommended to the General Council that the current Editor be interviewed by a selection panel. Subsequent to that interview the contract was offered to, and accepted by the current Editor.

The process was a very useful one that raised a number of ideas to improve the Journal and our marketing strategies (which are being considered by our marketing business group). It also confirmed that the current contract was competitive and offered the Association good value for money.

Concurrently the contracts for the design, printing and despatch of the Journal were also being considered. At the time the three contracts were "bundled" together which offers several advantages but did not have to remain the case. The Journal and Web business group worked with the Senior Business Administrator to draw up a specification document. This was circulated and eight companies came forward with proposals for the design of the journal, some included printing and logistics. All the companies were asked to provide samples of their work demonstrating that they could produce a journal and typeset mathematics.

At the executive committee meeting on the 9th July 2011 the offered documents, samples and tender prices were considered. Four companies were offered the opportunity to attend a further meeting of a sub-group of the executive who would decide which of the companies should be recommended to the General Council. I had previously declared a conflict of interest as one of the designers was known to me and it was therefore not appropriate for me to sit on this sub-group.

The four short listed companies came to the Head Office in Derby on the 2nd of August where they each "pitched" to the sub-group who then selected one of the companies and made a recommendation to General Council who accepted their proposal.

Since then the Editors of MT have been working with the designers, consulting with the Journal and Web business group, to put together the first issue of MT under the new contract. I hope you like what we have arrived at and feel, as I do, that this may provoke more interest in the staff room and cause those teachers who don't know who the ATM are, to pick it up and read it.

John White

Honorary Secretary of ATM