BPTA Life Membership Policy

Introduction

1. With the merger of the National Association of Seed Potato Merchants (NASPM) and the Scottish Potato Trade Association (SPTA) in July 2006 the British Potato Trade Association (BPTA) inherited four life memberships that were granted by NASPM. No such inheritance was received from SPTA. The four NASPM Life members were: Chris Baker, Kevin Burke, Pat Smith and Eric Sherriff. All four were Past Presidents of NASPM. Eric Sherriff subsequently passed away and therefore the BPTA has three current life memberships. The award of life memberships carries no financial cost to the Association.

2. The Association Secretary can find no written explanation of the policy adopted by NASPM in the award of life memberships. However in a conversation with his predecessor he has established that NASPM operated an unwritten policy of limiting the number of current life memberships to a maximum of four and that no particular criteria was employed in Council reaching a decision.

Discussion

3. As there exists no recorded policy and also no restriction on the actions of Council prescribed in the BPTA Constitution or any other documentation, it is entirely a matter for Council (subject only to challenge by the membership at a general meeting) to decide whether to continue to follow NASPM practice and award life memberships. Therefore the first question to be decided is whether Council wishes to award life memberships or alternatively not to do so and let those life memberships inherited from NASPM continue until they too expire.

4. If Council are minded to award life memberships then it may be appropriate to set out clear qualifying criteria for such an award. For example, Council could follow the NASPM protocol and limit the award to Past Presidents of the Association or its predecessor organisations. However given that a President's term of office is limited to 2 years it is clear that to make this the only criteria would be insufficient and lead to a large number of potential life memberships which would have the effect of devaluing the award. As such there is also merit in maintaining an upper limit on the number of current life memberships awarded and, recognising that BPTA is an amalgam of two organisations that the number should increase to five.

5. Further criteria will need to be employed to bring the candidature to a workable level. Such criteria could include the following:

i. Past President of one of BPTA/NASPM/SPTA.
ii. Outstanding meritorious service to the Association beyond the expectation of a President.
iii. Retired from active service in potato industry.
iv. Vacancy in the maximum (five) number of current life memberships.
v. Candidature proposed by current President and seconded by current Vice President and enjoys at least 75% support amongst Council at the time of the nomination.

6. The above criteria should reduce the candidature to a workable level and ensure that the promotion of a candidate would be highly disciplined.

Conclusion

4. Council is invited to consider this paper and decide whether it wishes to continue the practice adopted by NASPM of awarding life memberships and, if so, instruct the Association Secretary on what criteria it wishes to apply with regard to the award of life memberships of the BPTA.

BPTA Secretariat
February 2012