

## Weekly Update 1 On Your Marks!

It's Friday evening and I'm reflecting on a very special week. I will endeavour to send a note sharing what is going on as we begin to fly. These will be jottings and hope by sharing what I'm doing we will be able to keep in touch.

The AGM was a resounding success. I felt it and so did many of you who have left messages or have written to me. I particularly liked this comment from a long standing member of Council

*“Congratulations on taking up your presidency and thank you for a tremendous evening yesterday. You only need to go back a few years to AGMs and awards dinners that would have easily fitted around just a couple of yesterday's tables”*

The AGM and Prize Winners Meal represented another leap forward. We managed to turn a formal event into a social, networking event! The 'buzz' in the room throughout the meal interspersed with laughter was amazing. We must remember to bring the gavel next year to preserve the Birch's mantelpiece and cutlery! And what a great idea to have a simple menu enabling Council Members to circulate between tables. Diana suggested we do something similar at the end of the Annual Dinner – perhaps circulating with a bottle of port to share with our guests! Thank you Paula and Colin for all your preparatory work and behind the scenes on the evening.

The Meal encapsulated all that we are doing as we launch 'Sussex' - Diana reminded me that this was long overdue and had been discussed since Horsham rejoined Brighton in 2005. We tried new things. Susan and Diana rehearsed the Agenda with Graham and myself and managed to consolidate it so that it flowed seamlessly. Well almost. There was a little confusion (my fault) as to who should lead the meeting once Graham had passed the Presidential Badge to me. My motto is win or learn. It did not cause too much offence I hope but I will know what to do next year.

Zoe, Richard and Charlotte were busy engaging with our Prizewinners and indeed everyone made them feel welcome. 2020 has some new recruits. Paul Smith is very happy to organize Afternoon Tea visits for our senior members using his National Trust responsibilities. Paul Emery thoroughly enjoyed the professionalism and company and Graham's idea of inviting him can be replicated with other business leaders, in turn creating openings for Pauline's network of Company Champions to operate.

Isabelle has sent me proofs of the photos she took and early next week I will share a link so all can view and print.

You will have memories too and please share any snippets or sound-bites you have. We may use these as testimonials ahead of future events or on the website. With that link I must pass on my enormous thanks to Nigel. I was extremely proud to see the changes go live today (some minor links will be changed over the coming days) and the email letter to all members we can reach by this medium.

Finally, my neighbours at home watched this evening as my wife Kate took a set of photos of me in the garden wearing the Badge of Office.

### **I will jot down my plans for each week ahead and hope this will join us together.**

- Find a speaker for the Annual Dinner – before I am reminded again. I will be shortlisting with Paula, Charlotte and Richard and checking availability.

- Attend and officiate at my first event on Thursday evening at Clair Hall – “Thinking on your feet”.
- Meeting up with Zoe and Charlotte to help them plan next steps in forming their teams. Teams may meet in person, formally or socially or by conference calls. Let’s see what works best for them.
- Catch up with Richard who has offered to look at the Manual to ensure it is relevant for Sussex. Richard is also doing some preparatory work on the Constitution for the Strategy Group to consider. Not change for change sake but ensuring we keep our members interests at the forefront of everything we do. Susan used the phrase today ‘Customer Centric’ and that is so true – our members are our customers.
- Working with Susan to map the old and new roles together for CII HO.
- Some preparation for Network Conference 2015. Richard and I are attending to fly our flag and learn from other progressive Local Institutes. We will of course share what we learn. (Zoe – any chance of you joining the Conference as Branko’s guest? We are limited to two places but it was super seeing you there last year. Fingers crossed).
- Having spoken with Alan we will adopt the name ‘Archivist’ for his role. As Alan pointed out, a ‘Curator’ belongs in a building.
- I will be talking with our Area Marketing Manager, Victoria Rees-Price. We have many exciting ideas that will help her new role and ours launching Sussex. Victoria is particularly interested in our Engagement plans , Social Media and Diversity. I think we may be asked to work with her on an article for The Journal. I hope so!

I’ve probably missed some things off this list but it will help me get started. Please let me know if there are any show-stoppers I’ve omitted.

Above all my huge and humble thanks for entrusting me with leading the team. I regard my role as ‘first amongst equals’ and need your feedback to keep on track. Working with Graham has been a huge benefit and I hope I can prepare Richard for his Presidential Year – and before I am reminded- “subject to election”.

Best wishes and have a lovely holiday weekend. We have another election next week. Fortunately for me I did not have to face a ballot and can stay work immediately with a tremendous team around me.

Best wishes.



Mark Longford

1 May 2015