

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: AGM 27 APRIL 2016

A Year of Firsts

Our inaugural year as 'Sussex' has provided the backdrop to many firsts. This placed demands on the team and my first task is to thank all on council for their support as they accelerated our 2020 Vision programme, now less than 4 years away.

In particular I would like to thank Susan Stamp for her dedication to Sussex CII as Secretary and Programme Coordinator, Nigel Cheater for driving our website forward and uploading engaging content, Andrew Bishop for his sterling work as Treasurer and my Deputy President, Richard Cohen, for his sound advice and support. We have welcomed several new professionals to our council this year and I would like to thank them for their energy and fresh ideas. I would also like to thank those retiring from council at this AGM for their service: Ian Williams, Pauline Zahoui and Joe Perry. Thank you too to Victoria Rees-Price, CII Regional Membership Manager, whose help and encouragement I have greatly appreciated.

My report concentrates on some of the many highlights of our inaugural year as 'Sussex' and our archive of weekly 'Simply Sussex' editions will remain online to give a permanent flavour of all our activities.

Annual Dinner

A spectacular evening enjoyed by 212 guests, making a small profit and contributing £2,148.40 to the Insurance Charities. Particular thanks to Paula Cook and Colin McFarlin.

Company Champions

The Membership Engagement team led by Graham Johnson tackled the challenge of company outreach with great enthusiasm. Congratulations especially to Pauline Zahoui for signing up some 20 Company Champions and connecting with them regularly. Thank you to all the Company Champions who are giving feedback and ideas.

CSR/Community

The introduction of a Corporate Social Responsibility team pulled together our charity work and outreach into the community. In the coming months we will be embarking on a community project, perhaps clearing a local waterway and working as mentors with a school or college. Our Annual Quiz now supports local charities and in November raised funds for the community affected by the Shoreham Air Disaster. My thanks go to Charlotte Roch for creating and

leading the team until December and to Charlotte Penson for becoming our current leader.

Learning & Development Conference

We have continued to meet the needs of our members by presenting talks on a wide range of CPD topics including soft skills. A highlight was delivering our full day Conference shared with North Downs in October. It attracted 110 delegates, included presentations for General Insurance and Personal Finance members and boasted a superb keynote speaker, ex RAF pilot Mandy Hickson. Overall feedback for the day was 97%. Congratulations to the Sussex organising team: Phil Bristow, Susan Stamp and Zoe Thomas.

Diversity and inclusion

Sussex is committed to welcoming all members and the inclusion of many young men and women on council is influencing the way we operate and taking us towards our 2020 Vision. Work is underway to include members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) community as we begin to truly represent the CII membership, our workplaces and community. Seeds have been sown for Sussex to participate in the CII-sponsored Women of the World (WOW) next March. I hope one day soon we will participate in the annual Pride parade in Brighton.

Simply Sussex

This pioneering publication was introduced at the start of our 'Sussex' journey and described our activities weekly. It went online in September and now boasts a readership far beyond Sussex. CII National President Robert Fletcher praised our efforts and I would like to thank my co-editor Susan Stamp and Nigel Cheater for managing the online production.

Social Media and the Website

In late August our website was refreshed as part of a major exercise led by the CII. Working with our Regional Membership Manager, Victoria Rees-Price, Nigel Cheater designed and tested the new pages and the result is a friendly but business-like showcase to our local institute. It is now a reference site for our policy guides and contains an area for Company Champions to download promotional material.

Alongside the refreshed website we launched our LinkedIn and Twitter accounts and each now has over 100 followers/connections.

Public Relations

We have raised our profile beyond the immediate Sussex area and were thrilled to be featured twice in The Journal and once in Financial Solutions over the past six months. In addition, I was interviewed by Insurance People magazine and the resultant article gave an ideal opportunity to promote our institute to a wider audience.

Spring Survey

In March we invited around 1370 members to complete an online survey which included questions suggested by our teams to assist them in shaping 2016-17 plans. I am delighted that 53 members replied, representing a response rate of 3.6% which is very encouraging. Initial results will be shared at the AGM.

Sussex Seniors

Some members are less active in our profession but nevertheless retain an interest. This led to the introduction of our very successful Sussex Seniors' afternoon tea which we plan to continue as a regular feature in our programme. Benefits from this included supporting some welfare calls from families, ideas for a community project and additional ticket sales for the Annual Dinner.

Presidents' Evening

Those attending the AGM will be invited to join both the incoming and outgoing Presidents for a drink and buffet. This again is a new initiative replacing the traditional President's Evening and we hope to meet newly elected, retiring and prospective council members along with supporting employers.

My biggest challenge of the year was to understand the institute's finances and this was driven by a cut of £9809 in the 2015 second tranche. This led to many conversations and analysis resulting in a cut back of expenditure from November. The team acted professionally and introduced new disciplines and practices which ensure that I hand over a viable and sustainable financial plan to my successor.

In closing I would like to thank everyone who has helped me personally. I retired from Zurich/N&G in January and now plan to spend more time with my family. Living in Greater London, it is no longer feasible to take an active role on council but I look forward to supporting the incoming team from a distance and watching Sussex become a recognised Centre of CII Excellence.

Mark Longford FCII, CertPFS, FCIM
President 2015-16