President’s letter, May 2020

Dear Friends

We will all feel the lack of our annual conference gathering this year. It’s always such a valuable time for sharing and connecting, as well as receiving from the content from speakers and workshops. It was going to be another good year’s conference on the theme of Communication. Although we are not meeting face to face, there is a real sense of being connected with each other, especially through the way regional groups have responded. Our AGM will be an opportunity for a bit of connection albeit rather different on the blessed Zoom.

I am thoroughly heartened by the level of sharing resources, networking, support etc that has been offered and received during these difficult times. Our members have been working in many different ways with some remaining in the hospice setting, others like myself, working from home to support patients and families by phone, and some have been furloughed from working. It’s been tremendously helpful to have links, information, resources shared so freely with each other and made available for wider sharing. As ever, chaplains show themselves to be generous people and not precious about keeping things to ourselves. I always notice that at conference people are prepared to give away ideas that have worked for them and then offer it on.

At the AGM we will be going through the usual reports and business for the association. It’s good that we have been able to make this possible so that we maintain the requirements of the constitution, and also allow for discussion if that’s possible. I want to thank all the executive members for their continued support during this time. Mike and Gary have been especially busy updating the website and keeping track of everything that has been sent through. It means that, as an association, we have a current and user friendly website that has been a valuable resource to those looking for information.

We will all be reflecting on our work during this time and wondering about its effects on our patients, families especially in bereavement, the staff and volunteers we work with and ourselves. It would be good to receive your thoughts in due course about your experiences and maybe share them on the website. I’m particularly struck by the way people are facing grief and funerals when having to do things so differently. There is a lot to think about and it would be good to share our thoughts.

In the meantime, the work of the executive continues, as we look ahead to a future conference which may take the form of a retreat if the joint conference with CHCC and MHA goes ahead. Watch this space!

Finally, we are holding elections this year in the AGM. Carol Gully has been nominated for secretary and there is another space available. Please get in touch if you would like to know more.

Keep well and safe, my friends, and keep in touch

Every good wish

Karen