**AHPCC President’s Report 2012 - 13**

This has been a busy year for us as an organization, with plenty to celebrate and some challenges to meet as well.

At our AGM in May 2012 Steve Barnes stood down from the Presidency due to ill health.

I want to thank Steve for his encouraging and generous leadership during his time as President, and for his support since then.

The Executive has met three times during the past year, with day meetings at Hospice House in London and an overnight stay in Belfast. We are also planning to meet at The Hayes, Swanwick, before Conference begins. I’m grateful to the Executive for their hard work and enthusiasm throughout the year. I’d also want to stress that being on the Exec. can be fun, and would urge members to consider this when we come to elect new members at our AGM!

We have decided as an Executive to use the freedom given by our Constitution to appoint a Vice-President, both to deputise when necessary for the President at meetings, and also to be available to step in and provide continuity if the President has to stand down before the end of her/his term of office. I’m delighted that Markus Lange has agreed to take on this responsibility. (Please note that this is an appointment from within the Executive, and not a post requiring an election. There is no automatic assumption that a Vice-President will duly become President, though of course he/she is free, as is any member, to stand for President when the post becomes vacant).

These are some of the things the Executive has been doing in 2012-13:

1. **Planning our annual Conference**

As soon as one year’s Conference is over, we have to start thinking about the next one.

I want to express my gratitude to Ian Stirling, our past Conference organizer, for the time and energy he gave to planning Conference 2013. We’re also indebted to Dawn Allan and Tom Duncanson, who agreed to take on the role of organizers to continue the good work that Ian began. I’d encourage all members to remember that this is *your* Conference: so please offer us your ideas about future themes and speakers, so that we can make the experience beneficial for everyone.

1. **Development of the AHPCC website**

Mike Rattenbury has done a great job with our website; and an important initiative has been the launch of a Forum, so that members can post queries and share ideas. This is still in the early stages of development, but overall the website has become a primary means of communication for us, and members should log on regularly for news of training opportunities and job vacancies, as well as keeping up-to-date with broader issues affecting Chaplaincy.

1. **AHPCC Guidelines and Standards**

The AHPCC was a pioneer in producing written guidance and professional Standards for the benefit of chaplains and their employers. However, in a rapidly changing healthcare environment these can easily become out-of-date. This year, Mike Rattenbury has worked on amending the *Guidelines for Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplaincy,* and the 2013 draft edition is now on the website for your comments. We are also looking again at our Standards, particularly now that the United Kingdom Board for Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC) has produced its own Chaplaincy Standards (2009). Rather than “reinvent the wheel” by doing a complete rewrite of our own Standards, one option for us would be to adopt the UKBHC Standards and produce a Specialist Palliative Care Supplement that would cover areas of particular relevance to our context, such as multi-disciplinary team working. I would be interested to hear members’ views on this, and will keep you informed of any developments in the coming year.

1. **Changes in our relationship with Help the Hospices and the need for new administrative support**

In recent years, Help the Hospices has held our membership lists and provided administrative support for our annual Conference. Last summer, we were informed by them that, as from April 2013, they would cease to provide this service for us and other organizations, as part of a shift in their strategic priorities. We are grateful to Help the Hospices for their support in the past and will continue to collaborate with them in the future. However, this has left us with decisions to make regarding our future administrative arrangements. We will have a thorough discussion about this at our forthcoming AGM, but the main options before us are:

* coming to an agreement with Equinox, publisher of a new Chaplaincy Journal which is replacing the previously separate Journals produced by the College of Healthcare Chaplains (CHCC) and the Scottish Association of Chaplains in Healthcare (SACH). Equinox would be prepared to offer us a “package”, whereby members would receive the Journal and they would administer our membership. (Equinox has already agreed a similar arrangement with SACH).
* finding another organisation or an individual who would be willing to provide us with administrative support.

There will financial implications for us whatever we decide, and I will write to you again about this after our AGM.

**5. UKBHC and progress towards professional registration** The UK Board has met regularly through the past year and held its AGM in Birmingham last September. The Board continues a conversation with the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) regarding the requirements that need to be met if Chaplaincy is to establish a voluntary register. Other UK Board initiatives include the development of an online induction course for new chaplains, soon to be launched via the UKBHC website.

I know that not all AHPCC members have registered with the UKBHC, and that there are a range of opinions about the merits or otherwise of professional registration. I hope that we will keep talking about this, and I will do my best to answer your questions and keep you informed of developments as they occur.

**6. Links with other Chaplaincy and external organizations**

It is important to look beyond our own Association, and to build on links with others in the world of Chaplaincy and spiritual care. In the past year, we have continued our involvement with the following groups:

**Multi-faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy (MFGHC):** Markus Lange has been our representative on this group. Last November I was one of the speakers at a special gathering sponsored by the MFGHC: “Celebrating Healthcare Chaplaincy in a multi-faith context”.

**European Network of Health Care Chaplains (ENHCC):** Mike Rattenbury attended the biannual Conference of the ENHCC in June 2012, held in the Netherlands.

**European Association of Palliative Care** (**EAPC) Spiritual Care Task Force**: Ian Stirling has been our link on this group, and last year attended the EAPC Conference in Trondheim.

**Liverpool Care Pathway Reference Group:** I have represented Chaplaincy on the LCP Reference Group, which continues to audit and develop the LCP and monitor responses to it.

I realise that these organizations and groups may feel like little more than a list of names to some members. We hope to provide further information about them at this year’s Conference, and will follow this up from time-to-time with special features on our website.

Overall, this has been a year full of activity and change. Through it all, I am aware of the things that stay the same: not least the dependable and compassionate presence of chaplains in their places of work. Thank you for what you do, and for all that you contribute to the AHPCC.

**Judy Davies**

**AHPCC President**

**May 2013**