Warm greetings to everyone as I put pen to paper and write my first letter to you as President of AHPCC. It was with great trepidation that I took on this role from Judy Davies. We are all grateful for the thoughtful and sensitive way in which she has led our organisation over the past 4 years, supporting members with difficult issues and being our voice at the table of significant discussions for chaplaincy. I can only say that I will do my best to carry on Judy’s good work and offer on behalf of our membership, our thanks for her leadership.

I have been associated with APHCC for about 16 years, starting when I was a volunteer chaplain, and instantly felt included within a warm fellowship of support and care when joining the organisation. One of the strengths I feel that we offer to our members is a sense of being part of the bigger picture of chaplaincy, no matter how many hours we work or how we feel about the contribution we make. This is clearly seen at the conference when full-time, part-time and volunteer chaplains are together as one. Yet again, the feedback from the conference pays tribute to the atmosphere of openness and sharing that we all find so supportive. The overall conclusion of the feedback was that people enjoyed the variety of speakers and workshops, valued the space offered to be quiet and reflective, the venue continues to suit most people. The one area of complaint, however, was the coffee! There was a general consensus that it was awful! Grateful thanks go to Tom and Dawn for organising the conference and all the hard work that goes into this.

There are various ongoing issues for chaplaincy at present that are up for discussion, which the UKBHCC and Chaplaincy Leadership Forum are attempting to address. I will keep the website posted with any updates. As ever, if you have issues that you wish me to take to these groups, please contact me and I will be pleased to raise concerns that are current for us all.

The executive group will be meeting again in October and we welcome to the group our new members, David, Liza and Bob. Richard, who had the secretarial role, has now moved from his hospice back into parish ministry and we wish him well. Nigel has stepped up to the mark and has kindly agreed to be our new secretary. Contact details for all the group are on the website, and please contact any of us if there are issues you would like us to discuss at the meetings.

Chaplains work in a fragile world where we make ourselves vulnerable on a daily basis to emotions and experiences that shape and mould us to be the skilled practitioners and caring human beings that we are. We must take care of ourselves in this work and find meaningful support where we can. Supervision, spiritual direction and peer support all play a part, but our organisation also exists to offer support and care to our members. I feel it is a significant part of the presidential role to be available to support our members, so please get in touch if you feel a chat would be helpful or any of us can support you in some way.

With very best wishes

Karen.