Dear AHPCC Members

Following our recent executive meeting, there are a few things to share and explain, as well as reminding everyone about registering for our conference this year. We met in Manchester at Media City UK which was a very interesting place. We are aware that our three face-to-face meetings are expensive to organise, so, conscious of saving money where we can on travel, meeting here saved a considerable amount. As ever, it was a useful time of sharing and planning, especially for the upcoming conference in May.

Registration forms are now available and you will notice some changes. Firstly, after seven years of keeping the conference fee at £240, we have had to increase the cost to £280 to keep up with rising costs of the conference. The Hayes still offers us good value for money, is a convenient place for most people and the feedback from attendees is that this remains a positive experience. You will also notice that we are no longer offering an early bird rate as it seemed unnecessary. The alternative fee is for non-members only. If you can only attend for a day the cost will be £100, or £150 with an overnight bed and breakfast. Considering the cost of many conferences, these fees remain exceptionally good value for the content and experience as a whole. We have some excellent keynote speakers in place and a wide selection of workshops on offer, as well as the usual quiet spaces for sharing and our personal reflection. I am delighted that Keith Munnings has agreed to be our conference chaplain this year. Keith is from a Buddhist background and brings with him a depth of experience to share with us.

The website has begun to undergo significant work in the capable hands of Mike Rattenbury, formerly chaplain in Inverness and a previous editor. He has kindly agreed to assist Gary Windon in keeping the website updated, starting with removing out-of-date material so that our public website face is clear and current. Please send him resources to share, comments, photos, etc, that you are willing to be made public, using editor@ahpcc.org.uk.

The executive talked about the role and purpose of our regional groups and we are aware that the groups operate in a variety of ways. The experience of those who meet regularly is that support is there to be drawn on, and that resource sharing is helpful. Some groups have retreat days, overnight stays, or training sessions led by external people, and find that the time set aside to meet is time well spent. There will be space at the conference to report on what groups are doing, but we really want those who convene the groups to encourage everyone attending to use the groups as a source of support in what can be an isolated role. Mike will be creating a more visible page for regional groups to access and post meetings and events.

While the conference is the main focus of our year, a lot goes on behind the scenes to make this happen and I am grateful for the hard work that is happening. It will be good to meet in May and people who are new in post are warmly welcomed, of course. Please contact any of us on the executive if you feel we can help in any way or just to make a link and chat.

Very best wishes

Karen