

Greetings for Christmas and the New Year.

This is a busy time of year! You don't need me to tell you that of course, as we juggle Light up a Life events, carol services and all the other extra things that go on in the hospice world. I hope all the events you plan and conduct go well, bringing some comfort to those grieving and sad at Christmas. A new colleague talked to me recently about how she was feeling 'strange'. In fact, the impact for her working in a hospice environment as Christmas approaches was proving quite a challenge, as she acknowledged a heightened awareness of people's distress and sadness in contrast to her previous office environment of frivolity and cheer. It's one to watch for ourselves.

There are a few bits of information I need to make you aware of, maybe to read and inwardly digest in the New Year.

Firstly, thanks to Margery Collin for sending out reminders of membership renewal. Please get these back to her as soon as you can, and encourage your team to sign up too. The immediate benefit is a reduced cost for the conference in May.

You will probably be receiving various requests for membership renewal in January and I am aware that many of our members belong to other organisations such as UKBHC, CHCC and APSE. There is a cost associated to each one of these and you have to decide which take priority. In the light of the PSA decision regarding chaplaincy earlier in the year, I would urge everyone to join the UKBHC as well as our own association. There is a commitment and some work needed to join UKBHC, but I believe the benefits to the profession as not to be underestimated. Please look at the website and give it serious thought.

Secondly, the conference planning is coming along well and already we have speakers confirmed. Further details will be available very soon but for now, make a note of the dates: 14th– 16th May in Swanwick, Derbyshire.

Hopefully you will have read about the latest developments with the Chaplaincy Leadership Forum and the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health. These 2 groups have merged to form the Healthcare Chaplaincy Forum for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care. This may all sound as if the words have simply been re-arranged. In fact there is a lot more to it in that there will now be a more open dialogue between all our partners in the community of healthcare chaplaincy, including NHS England, to take forward planning, and strategic policy. More details will become available following the first meeting on February 21st 2018.

Finally, following the establishing of the European Research Institute for Healthcare Chaplaincy, funding has become available to roll out a research project in various European sites. The focus of the research is to assess the benefit of the PROM for spiritual care as piloted and developed in Scotland. ERICH is looking for partners to undertake the research and the AHPCC executive are proposing that our association is one of those. Initially we are looking for chaplains who would like to know more about the process and what is required. Details are available if you wish to consider joining the project under the AHPCC banner, and I am happy to have the conversation with you. The executive felt it would be of great benefit to chaplaincy in this country to be part of the project, as well as gaining a wider perspective on the European scene. For now, this is to explore interest, but I will write more on the New Year to explain the commitment involved.

I am so sorry to have bombard you with so much information at once. It's a lesson to me to write these letters more frequently. So finally, on behalf of the executive committee and myself, every blessing and joy for the Christmas season.

Very best wishes

Karen