

Summer 2016

This post-conference letter is well overdue and apologies for taking so long to reflect on our time together in Swanwick. It was great to meet so many AHPCC members attending for the first time who are working new to chaplaincy. I hope you felt supported and encouraged by the conference. Every year we reflect on how warm and friendly the event is as we greet old friends and meet new ones. The executive is yet to see the evaluation and feedback from everyone but the general view given at the time was one of appreciation and encouragement. We valued the openness and honesty of our speakers as they dealt with some challenging issues and topics that stretched our minds and thoughts. The range of workshops available also offered us time to speak together and share the richness of our experience and stories. On your behalf, I offer a huge thank you to everyone who took part, especially Tom and Sally who did the organisation in their own time to make it possible. Hopefully, the regional groups are continuing to provide a useful and welcome focus for discussion, support and nurturing each other. Please send in news of what your group is doing as it may be feasible for chaplains in nearby areas to join you for special events and speakers.

Margery Collin and I attended the European Network of Healthcare Chaplains held in Hungary from 1st -5th June. There was a full programme of sessions presented by those who have done research in chaplaincy and spiritual care recently. It was refreshing to hear that so much is being undertaken to support chaplaincy for the future by under-pinning our work with evidence that is positive and being listened to. Our 'field trips' to local hospitals and health care units made many of us aware of that there is such contrasting provision of end of life care within Europe. There is a lot to share and I am hoping to make various pieces of work available to our members, although you can go straight to the ENHCC website for more details.

There are many pertinent issues around for chaplaincy teams at the present moment which UKBHC and the Chaplaincy Leadership Forum are discussing on our behalf. Recently the British Humanist Society have been challenging the recruitment procedure for chaplains within various hospital trusts. There is considerable debate and discussion taking place around this matter and I will keep you informed of any development. If any of our members working in the NHS has concerns, please get in touch with me. UKBHC has submitted the application for professional registration of chaplains to the Professional Standards Authority and we await a response.

In the meantime, as we live in turbulent days politically and feel the uncertainty of the way forward, Chaplains persist in speaking of hope and peace. That is our role and our gift to those in our care.

Every blessing

Karen Murphy