

## CEO INTRODUCTION - COUNCIL REPORT JUNE 2020

As always, before I write my Report to Council, I review the previous one, just a few short months ago; life for the majority of us has changed considerably. As of today, we are in Week 10 of the Covid-19 Lockdown with over 36,000 deaths in the UK, including a very prominent Past President, Donald Leeper, who died only a few miles away from Balham in St George's Hospital – naturally we send our condolences to his wife, Pauline, and the family. We are now facing, arguably, one of the greatest National Emergencies in our history. Tough times for us all and CIBSE included.

In January I referred to Stuart MacPherson, as President Elect, and my visit to Hong Kong and China at the end of November 2019. We were struck by the impact of the protesters, little knowing or understanding the consequences of Coronavirus, which was already evident in Wuhan. Once the Lockdown came into effect on the 24 March, I found myself returning to my Army Staff College days, and using the 'OODA Loop' – Observe, Orientate, Decide & Act – the whole purpose is to be agile and this I hope is true of CIBSE.

From a staff perspective, the vast majority are working effectively from home, using Microsoft Office 365 and Teams with our files 'in the cloud', remote access to our CRM and our phone system, where even the reception phone can be answered remotely. We have kept Balham open with minimum staff levels to deal with the post and keep the building secure. Our priorities are to:

- **Maintain Business as Normal.** Membership renewal which is currently receiving positive engagement.
- **Maximise Revenue Streams.** Services, Certification & Membership especially.
- **Prepare for the 'New Normal'.** Our aim is to be even stronger and more effective.

You will read more of this in the body of this Report, but I am pleased that all of the staff have responded so positively; we have focussed on being a strong "CIBSE family" supporting each other while driving the business forward.

Cash management has been and will remain our priority for this year. We started the year in a strong cash position but with face-to-face training ceasing, Journal advertising revenues, certification and our events revenues all significantly down. With Board agreement, we have taken around £500K of savings in-year, as described in the President's recent email to the members. This is effectively putting the priority on virtual meetings this year and so no President's Dinner and very little travel & subsistence this year. While still challenging, our intention is to get to November without having to call on our current £1.8M reserves – if we are successful that will be a major achievement. I want to say thank you to the Finance staff who not only have produced Forecast 1A in record time but are now embarking on 1B, at the end of June.

As the nation came to terms with the enormity of the challenge a large number of our members, coordinated by the Royal Academy of Engineering, responded to the barrage of technical queries from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), that provides scientific and technical advice to support government decision makers during emergencies. As an observer, I want to say a huge thank you to them, not only the timely and often short notice requests but also the complexity of the questions which were significant too. Scientific and Engineering advice is never straightforward, however, the consequences of not getting it right are equally daunting. For all our members and staff who have given their time and advice so freely, a very big thank you.

Against all that background on the 5 May we were able to hold our first ever virtual AGM and Presidential Address. So, a warm welcome to Stuart MacPherson as our new President and a big thank you to Lynne Jack whose tenure is at an end. I am sure for both of them it was not quite the year they had anticipated – but then neither had we. For these virtual events we had around 160 attendees, which was significantly up on our normal numbers at the Royal Society. Without giving away too many secrets, I think we had at least seven rehearsals for the AGM but from the feedback we received, it was worth it.

The virtual theme has continued with a Virtual Board Discussion, in lieu of our Board Away Day at Cumberland Lodge, on Membership & Engagement; then a Virtual Board Meeting. The SLL emulated this, with an online Annual General Meeting, President's Address by Bob Bohanon and online panel discussion. We now look forward to our first virtual Council meeting; as always, your feedback is important to us and each meeting does tend to have its own unique challenges, so please do let us know what you think and how we could improve.

Within the body of this report you will find the detail of our activities and responses to the new challenges. In my opinion CIBSE is in a very good place, the issues facing society from Climate Change to Building Safety to Covid-19, and there many more issues in-between, means that professional engineering expertise is much in demand. CIBSE has adapted to the new circumstances and is ready for the future, we are positive and enthusiastic; we just need to go and shape a better future for society; keep agile and remember the OODA Loop!