

Trustee's Report 2009 - Steve Bidwell.

2009 has been a funny year in that it seems to have passed by all too quickly and to have provided little to report upon. It has felt that little was happening but I am aware that much has been going on in the background at Chadwick Court and all will be revealed in the next few weeks.

Early in 2009, the effects of the recession started to be felt in Chadwick Court and warnings were issued about the anticipated fall in income as a result of training budget cuts within the organisations to whom Chadwick House Group sell course materials.

As a result the CEO was tasked with reviewing the whole organisation to prepare it for tough times ahead. Much energy within Chadwick Court has been directed to this ongoing review which should result in savings being made and the organisation being better placed to handle the challenges ahead. I have been very much at the fringe of the reviews and it is anticipated that a significant report will be before us at the December Council meeting although John Freear in his role as Chairman of Council has been very much involved in the reviews.

One of the noticeable problems within Chadwick Court has been the feeling that CIEH and CHGL were two very independent organisations and with tensions evident between the two. So often we have been told that this is not the case and everyone got on well together but I can't say I was ever fully reassured. As the review has progressed the CEO has become very aware that there is not the togetherness he would wish to see and he has now taken over the role of leading both organisations to ensure commonality of direction. As a result there has been a casualty in the form of the Managing Director of CHGL and I guess in the coming weeks we will learn of any other casualties of the process.

Last year the CEO embarked on a series of roadshows to re-energise the regions but the roadshows were generally poorly attended. However they did show up where Regions or Branches were moribund and there has been a determination to address this by putting more resources and support into the regions. Locally in the East Midlands I have been asked to take on the role of Regional Support Officer and I am pleased to take this on. It is very much a new role and will develop over time and indeed we are still defining some of the detail but if there are any issues that can't be resolved at Branch level I would encourage all East Midlands members to raise them with me.

There is a new funding formula to be applied which will determine how much funding goes into each region. Active regions will earn more money than inactive ones although there are a couple of other factors in the equation for instance the number of Members and the size of the Region geographically.

The East Midlands is regarded as active and we have been able to evidence the activities and the funding formula is not detrimental to the region. The 5+1 Pack initiative has been well received in the region and it will continue next year. Whilst it provides very low cost training it has also assisted in demonstrating "activity" which should mean we attract a good level of funding into the region. At the next Council meeting in early December the Budget for next year will be set and we will then know what funding we have been allocated.

There has been a suggestion that the formula should have a green element to it and Branches and Regions will be encouraged to undertake an environmental audit to assess their carbon footprint. Certainly the Climate Change Agenda is gaining momentum and Local Authorities are best placed to deliver at a local level and it is imperative that Environmental Health gets the recognition it deserves for the valuable contribution we can all make in this important area. It is perhaps the one thing that unites us all regardless of our chosen specialist areas of work.

Steven Bidwell

Email: steven.bidwell@bolsover.co.uk