

Addition to 2019-202 Annual Report

The Annual Report and Accounts is now on the website however, as it covers the academic year ending July 2020, some seven months ago, I thought it would be useful to summarise events since then.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our operations; we opened for our Autumn term (normally our busiest), with a blend of face to face, hybrid, and online classes only to have to close after four weeks due to Rugby being placed in a high tier category. We continued with online tuition only.

Then our Spring term, due to start on the 11th of January, was hit by the national lockdown and, as a result, we were once again only able to operate online. The Government's road map means that we will have to continue in this way until the 17th of May, which is four weeks into our planned Summer term.

Needless to say, our finances have been severely impacted and despite making every possible cost saving, unfortunately including having to make our three catering assistants redundant, we have had to draw extensively on our reserves to survive. We have used the furloughing scheme when ever appropriate, secured a number of local grants and have been extremely fortunate to receive a tremendous response to our appeal for donations from past and present students. In addition, many students donated their refunds when face to face classes had to be cancelled. Many thanks to you all for your support.

The months ahead will be difficult; however, with restrictions easing and significant numbers of you feeling sufficiently confident to return to the Guildhouse, then I believe that our future is secure.

It is appropriate to recognise and thank our office team, led by Sarah, and my fellow for Trustees for their incredibly hard work in getting us through the last twelve months. Without their commitment and determination, we would not have survived.

Normally we would have held our AGM in December of last year. Obviously, events have prevented us from doing so and we have now decided, in line with the Charity Commission's advice, to hold our next AGM in December of this year. If you have any questions regarding the Annual Report & Accounts, or this update, then please feel free to forward them to the office and we will get back to you.

Finally, and on a personal note, I have decided to stand down on the 23rd of April from both Chairman and Trustee roles after 15 years in the post. My successor will be Carin Jackson, currently our Honorary Secretary, and to support her we have created two new roles of Vice-Chairs, which will be filled by Rob Close and Steve Becker, both of whom are currently trustees.

I know that the Percival Guildhouse remains in safe hands!

David Dove
March 2021