

BAA President Blog – 2nd November 2020

Part of the work that needs to be completed for our annual general meeting on November 26th is the Annual Report. This will provide a historical look back over the financial year of April 2019 to March 2020. This has actually been more of a challenge to do this year, as that period pre-dates the Covid pandemic which really started to impact us in late March. It is difficult to think of the time pre-pandemic and all the good things that were happening and the challenges that were being addressed. We have completed the report and will be delighted to share this with you at the virtual AGM on Thursday November 26th. I do hope you will be able to join us. Professor Kevin Munro has kindly offered to share some of the recent work from the ManCAD team during the same session.

This time spent reflecting has made me review what has happened so far this year as well. We have all been working like never before, in ways we could not possibly have guessed would happen. Whilst departments were working differently supporting their patients, our wonderful educators quickly took their lessons online and private hearing care members were able to eventually reopen their centres as essential retail services. Here at the BAA, your board took the immediate decision that we had to do as much as possible to support you, our fellow members (whilst managing our departments, university students and courses and day jobs).

The first thing to come from the decision was the BAA guidance document released in March. This was quickly followed by the first Joint Guidance Document as protagonists in the profession realised there was strength (and less confusion) if there was one audiology guidance document. We appreciate that many will have had to follow trust and CCG instructions first and foremost, but the Joint Guidance was an important piece of work for us take a lead on. Working with BSA, BSHAA and AIHHP we have produced guidance that has helped many of you have discussions with your local Infection Prevention departments and safely see your patients again.

Running alongside this work was the completion of the much-anticipated website. This took longer to launch than originally planned, but we feel it was worth it in the end. It is proving to be a valuable resource, which is developing almost daily with fresh content across the hundreds of pages. The bulk of the content is in the members' area, with a growing Knowledge Hub of information covering all areas of Audiology. Whilst we have started this database of content, we very much look to members to help us develop this audiology resource. Documents, protocols, research, papers, videos, articles can all be uploaded if you share with us. Just drop an email to Victoria who takes care of this work for us:

victoria@baaudiology.org

The new website provided the conduit for us to increase our support to you in education and CPD. As well as an area focused on the 'process' of CPD reflective practice and appropriate forms, we were also able to upload 49 conference presentations from 2019, all back copies of the BAA magazine and host the recordings of our new member webinars.

Webinars. Love them or hate them, they have got us through the last six months. They have provided a wealth of information, a forum for sharing with colleagues and a valuable resource of education. BAA started with our webinars focused on supporting Heads of Service and Audiology Leads and this quickly progressed into an online programme of monthly themed webinars for all members.

The BAA webinars have hopefully filled some of the gaps left by us having to cancel our conference. July was about member updates and career progression, August focused on Tinnitus and September was Implantable Devices. We have just completed two wonderful Paediatric webinars in October before heading into Adult Rehab territory in November. The culmination of this work will be a week of webinars in November. We have some fantastic content planned for the last week of November.

I hope you have had the chance to catch the webinars either live or via the website? Another huge benefit of the new website is being able to upload the webinars shortly after they have been presented live. There is a section for you in the members area dedicated to all the webinars we have held so far. I was on the webinar last Wednesday given by Dr Johns on the Neuroscience of Speech and Language. Neuroscience has always been my area of interest and what fascinated me in my early career and as part of my degree (before the Audiology BSc existed). I was rapt. It not only updated my existing knowledge, but I learned so much more. I am going to go back to watch it again as Dr Johns delivered this excellently – I like to get excited about a topic and this has made me want to read more on his research. The feedback we have received from fellow audiologists on the webinar has been a joy to read.

We have been increasing our collaboration with the Ida Institute over the last few months and they have many exciting projects coming to fruition now. I hope many of you have had the chance to take part in the surveys on the projects with the Person-Centred Hearing Network overseen by IDA Institute. Webinars on these are coming up.

I am also following the wax removal debate regarding GP and community NHS services and working with some of our partners and colleagues from the third sector to see what we can influence. What are your views on delivering wax removal as part of the Audiology service? Many of us have this embedded in our services and it works very well. Access though is variable.

There is so much more work going on behind the scenes; next year's annual report is going to be a long one! But I cannot finish today without one last reminder that there is still time to vote on for our new Board members in November. Please vote! We are delighted with how many people want to join the Board and carry on all the great work being done to support you, our members, and ultimately our patients.

Take care

Kath Lewis