

An important letter to all AAIA members, March 2021

Firstly, I hope that you are all keeping safe and well. Doubtless the re –opening of schools has been a considerable relief, though the work that has gone into preparation for it by teachers and LAs alike must have required commitment, dedication and huge amount of effort.

Secondly I have two issues to share with you that are of importance to every AAIA member:

1. Conference 2021

I am pleased to report that all arrangements for the conference from **7th to 9th October at the Highcliff Marriott Hotel, Bournemouth**, are firmly in place. A superb line up of speakers has been confirmed to explore the theme '*Quality Learning Post Covid – 19: creating the conditions for learning that sticks*'. I am attaching the programme and a flier in case anyone has not accessed these as yet.

At the time of writing, there are only 35 places left, as applications have been coming in steadily since booking opened in January. I would urge anyone wishing to attend to book in during the summer term, rather than in the autumn, as by then we may be unable to guarantee availability. Bookings can only be done online at www.aaia.org.uk and please remember that this is a conference for those whose membership is current at the time of application. Hopefully, the Covid situation will have eased significantly and enable us to gather for a face to face event.

2. The future of AAIA

Our organisation has been championing the centrality of classroom assessment to quality learning and teaching for 32 years. In that time it has successfully overcome any challenges to its existence. It is ironic then that, in 2021, when the need to know where pupils are in their learning without the 'crutch' of a national test is so incredibly important, AAIA now finds its existence under severe threat.

This threat is not from any external source but from within. It is a stark and undeniable fact that the age profile of the Executive's officers is high. Whilst their experience and long service to AAIA is invaluable, they wish to step down at some point soon after the AGM at the 2021 conference and hand over the reins to members who will inject new blood and their energies to carry the organisation forward.

Whilst there are potential candidates to fill two of these posts, the bottom line is that none of the officer posts have definite successors identified so the Executive seeks concerned and committed members who would be interested in taking on the roles of President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary or Communications Officer.

Unless volunteers come forward this year two outcomes, which are inextricably linked, will be inevitable:

- i) No planning will take place for a national conference in 2022 (normally this would have already begun)**
- ii) AAIA will cease to exist as from October 2022.**

Successive presidents have warned of the dangers every year and made pleas for volunteers to come forward. However, now the writing is on the wall and the organisation is in crisis and facing stark and painful consequences. There is only one source from which potential post holders can be drawn and that is **the membership**. I appreciate that the past 12 months has had far-reaching consequences for everyone and I do not underestimate the impact this has had on you all. That said, if AAIA is of value and beneficial to you, I would ask everyone to think most seriously about taking on a role (or sharing it with another). Full support will be given for as long as it is required and, on an ongoing basis, the current post

holders will be available for advice and guidance. However it would be wrong of me not to highlight that taking on any of these roles will require some additional commitment.

As the website homepage makes clear, **AAIA is a non – profit making, voluntary organisation**. All travelling expenses and supply cover (where applicable) are funded for Executive members attending Executive and regional meetings. However, no Executive officers or regional representatives (who also sit on the Executive) are paid, nor do they have 'free' access to the annual conference.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, liz.depper@googlemail.com or the Secretary, Pauline Cue, pauline.cue1@virgin.net if you have views to express about any of the above and/or you wish to know more about the officer posts that will fall vacant in the autumn. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Liz

Liz Depper
AAIA President