



*Promoting excellence in
public services in the East Midlands*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2008 – 2009

Yes it's AGM time. Last year we met in the wonderful surroundings of The Belfry and we are back here to enjoy their hospitality again. Thank you to everyone who attended then, and welcome to everyone who is here today.

In June we had a very informative presentation from Professor Paul Flemming from the Institute of Energy and Sustainable Development at De Montfort University. Held in their award winning, low energy, naturally ventilated Queen building we looked at the crucial challenge of Climate Change. The Institute is working in depth with a number of local authorities on climate change issues, and this was an ideal opportunity to learn from each other and share what has worked so far, and what the plans are for the future. This definitely provided food for thought for councils, given National Indicators and many Local Area Agreement targets.

January's meeting was equally thought provoking. Lynn Aisbett gave an insider's account of the impact the 2008 fire at Melton Borough Council had on the Authority and its residents. As a consequence of her presentation I am sure Business Continuity Planning was even higher up on everyone's agenda when they got back to the office.

The Melton meeting also saw Sandra Whiles and myself reflect on personal highlights of 2008; taking part in the Japan Study Tour, organised by the Japan Local Government Centre. It was an experience I will never forget. Those of you who attended our branch meeting in January will know what I mean, but I hope I adequately captured the experience for others to enjoy when I penned the article in the March edition SOLACE's e magazine 'Focus'. The tour, brilliantly hosted by CLAIR (Council of [Japanese] Local Authorities for International Relations), opened eyes and challenged the customs of the twelve UK and German public sector participants.

2008 has been an interesting year, what does 2009 hold for us?

I must call upon members of SOLACE in the East Midlands to support branch events and activities as much as possible. I remain committed to the belief that there is strength in having a collective voice and in having a network to seek solace in these pressing times!



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Finally, many thanks to Robert Moreland for performing the Secretary and Branch Development role. Thanks to Lyn Aisbett for being Deputy Chairman and to Alan Mellor, our Treasurer, who retired from local government during the year. It continues to prove challenging to sustain the Branch but the team have made such valued contributions – often by just being there.

Simon Bovey
Chairman



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