



*Promoting excellence in
public services in the East Midlands*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009 – 2010

Well what another year in the public sector it has been! 2009/10 has seen many ups and downs for local government – it feels like there were more downs than ups – and it is easy for some to become despondent. Challenges in our world have always existed however (though admittedly not to this extent in my experience) and we are able to be members of SOLACE because we are competent to handle the rough as well as the smooth.

In such times it is important to offer each other practical support, including via SOLACE HQ and via particular association with SOLACE East Midlands Branch - at least to know it is there. I hope members see benefit in the Branch Executive's attempts to offer, firstly, a link between the national HQ and our region and, secondly, a facility for networking with colleagues in our region. It is hard to actually gauge all members' views on this, but those that attend our AGM and our Branch events indicate support for efforts made to date. So that's our contribution!

Thanks to those who do attend events, as that is the members' contribution that we seek - as you know we don't collect financial contributions, we just want to see your pretty faces! Indeed, it's always good to see some new faces at events, as well as those more familiar, but we would like to see more. Thanks to those who have made presentations to us - Rita Sammons, Director of SOLACE Enterprises, Paul Diamond of iMPower, and Kate Rose of MJ/socitm and Gov Mentric. As one of the few Branches to have its own website, don't forget that material is available via www.solaceeastmidlands.org.uk.

Last December we were kindly hosted at Rushcliffe Borough Council and that event looked at issues of the day including: chief executive recruitment during the economic downturn (!), using website customer feedback to demonstrably improve council services in South Tyneside and, improbably, targeting vulnerable adults/children and simultaneously achieving efficiencies.

I deliberately use the term "events" as I do not encourage routine meetings. Ever trying to think of something different to entice members to attend just one or two times a year for just two or three hours, I have proposed a relaxed Branch event where we practice our juggling skills more professionally! I remember that in my first year as Chairman a RADA inspired acting session at Leicester was well received; this is in the same spirit. Join in! More news in due course!



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On resources, the Branch operates frugally and continues to benefit from the good offices of colleagues and others in arranging presenters, venues and catering. This year our Treasurer advises that the bank balance remains around the £3000 mark. We try not to eat into this balance and look to operate efficiently!

It is common for us all to consider efficiencies, and that is the same for the Branch Executive. Some Branches don't meet at all, other have looked to merge. I feel that there is still a role for a SOLACE East Midlands Branch, but what do you think? If members have ideas for the future of the Branch, please get in touch or respond to surveys we issue. In the meantime - I say again - join in!

Finally, it is with pleasure that I especially thank my Executive colleagues Lynn Aisbett (Vice Chairman), Robert Moreland (Secretary), Alan Mellor (Treasurer), Janet Beaumont (Branch Development Officer) and Fiona Rye (my P.A.) for their support over the year.

Simon Bovey
Chairman
SOLACE East Midlands



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