

I can't believe how quickly 2 years has gone! I got a call from Iain Varah the then Chair, when at a UK sport event at the Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, asking me to consider the Chairs position and it seems like yesterday not nearly 3 years ago!

I repeat what I said last year at the end of my first year as Chair of °CLOA. Being Chair is a privileged position, in so far as the organisations you come into direct contact with and the people within those organisations that you have the opportunity to engage with. But it isn't just that. Being on the Executive and being Chair allows you to mix with some great peers and people whose knowledge and support have been invaluable. So first and foremost I would therefore like to formally record my personal thanks to Heidi for keeping the momentum going behind °CLOA and providing me with the support you need as Chair. The work she does behind the scenes and the enthusiasm and passion with which she carries out her work is nothing short of fabulous.

I would also like to welcome and thank our sponsors who have supported:- namely Xn Leisure as Principle sponsors, as well as support provided by Alliance who can't be here today, but who have provided literature for you to take away. We do operate on a very limited budget and their support is incredibly valuable to us.

So, it's been an eventful year topped by us now having our AGM post General election with developments in the past week or so adding extra spice to future discussions no doubt. The work of the Executive continues to be progressive and impactful. We have to be selective in what we do, but we do continue to influence key people across

partner organisations as well as provide support and guidance to our membership.

I’d like to outline some highlights though:

- Membership drive – the landscape for culture and sport is turbulent with redundancies and early retirements arising due to the relentless pressure on budgets, indeed many organisations have had their subscriptions budget cut. To counteract this and ensure our membership base continues to grow, we have been running a membership campaign to recruit non-subscribing local authorities. This has resulted in 3 new corporate members and 11 Individual members recently.
- Phase 3 ‘Commissioning for Local Authorities’ work with Sport England – we appointed The Media Group to produce additional films about the process around topics such as ‘Building relationships’ ‘Shaping the offer’ alongside a more focused case study looking at the journey in Durham. The aim being to make the resources more engaging. We’ll be cascading these over the coming months, so do look out for them. We will also be co-ordinating focused strategic challenges in a number of locations to help build relationships locally, help bring previously identified opportunities to fruition, and further position the contribution of sport and physical activity within the wider corporate commissioning agenda.
- We have worked with LGA on the production of the placemaking publication [People, culture, place: the role of culture in placemaking](#) that highlights how councils are using culture to create a sense of shared identity and purpose in their areas, and to tackle their big issues of the day. It contains 10

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case studies where officer and political leadership has combined to develop innovative practice using cultural activities to bring about positive changes to their places. Together, these show how the arts and culture can be used to improve a wide range of measurable outcomes, from education and wellbeing to economic growth and community cohesion. Many thanks to members who submitted case studies.

- We have contributed to the County Sport Partnership review carried out by Andy Reid and continue to input. We have also assisted Sport England as part of their wider consultation process on the local delivery pilots and continue to advocate strongly for funding to be focussed more towards local delivery, with local authorities playing their place making role.
- We continue to enjoy really positive relations with SPORTA and with Brian Leonard in particular. I attended their AGM and took part in panel debate about the state of the sport and leisure sector. SPORTA are keen for ‘CLOA to play a more proactive leadership role, representing the “client” function of Local Authorities in discussions with Sport England and ACE.
- I have spoken at a number of other events including, the “Why Sport” event in Manchester in October and the Elevate conference in May 2017, both of which gave me a chance to talk about repositioning physical activity to drive cultural change. By speaking at this event, as well as other colleagues on the Executive at other events, it gave our members the opportunity to attend at discounted rates or even for free.
- We have had difficult conversations at the Executive about some of our leadership development work (Leading Learning) and perhaps in light of things I will come too we might reflect on the role we play in supporting the development of the

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Leaders of tomorrow. The key question being how do we best support and grow our leaders of tomorrow in this sector.

- We have held strategic conversations with The National Archives (Jeff James CEO) and thanks to Isobel Hunter for all her support in continuing to broker such a positive association.
- Whilst we had a slightly different presence at the LGA conference this year, I think our contributions continue to be welcomed and thanks to John Wileman and Richard Hunt for their contributions alongside Vice-Chairs Polly Hamilton and Debbie Kaye.
- We are working with the LGA and SPORTA, looking at producing a short guide on delivery models for Leisure centres and Sport
- We are also working with Creative Industries Federation on an incentivised membership deal to give our members access to CIF reports, research and events.
- Our bulletin continues to be hugely valued by members and the feedback is really positive. Heidi has developed the approach with a number of new sections that includes; space for members to place adverts for senior leisure and culture posts; a focus on best practice with member case studies; and a quarterly update from the work of the Executive Committee.
- Thanks must go to the Vice Chairs and Past Chair for their support across many areas of our work as an Executive:
 - Thanks to Polly who has done sterling work on the Arts and culture front leading conversations with ACE as well as giving evidence at culture sport and media committee in terms of ‘CLOA’s response to the Countries of Culture inquiry.

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- Thanks to Debbie also, who amongst other things has been our eyes and ears inside ukactive, where we enjoy positive working relationship and one that we will continue to further develop.
- Thanks to Ian Brooke, for your support in pulling together ‘CLOA’s response to The Parks enquiry launched by DCLG and for engagement in a number of other pieces of work.
- Finally, thanks also to Iain Varah who continues to represent ‘CLOA on the Libraries Taskforce, inputs wisdom into planning the Commissioning work with Sport England, deputises for me as Chair and has been of great support to both myself and Heidi.
- Looking ahead, we might be at a crossroads, but one which present opportunities. I believe there is a vacuum ‘CLOA can fill in providing support, advice, guidance to both Sport England and ACE, but it would require ‘CLOA to grow its membership and build its capacity to find the time to undertake that support work. We are asking both ACE and Sport England, how we can help them and I’m convinced that a strong ‘CLOA is in their mutual interests. We have put proposals to both ACE and Sport England and are having our first conversation with Sport England in July.

So, in summary:-

It been an incredibly rewarding time as Chair, I think we have some vitally important conversations to come but I’m really hopeful that in 2 years’ time ‘CLOA will be stronger than ever. I’d like to thank you all for your support and the spirit into which you have contributed to meetings. As Iain Varah will know though being immediate Past Chair

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doesn't mean I'm off the hook, so I will look forward to giving Ian Brooke, our incoming Chair, all the help I can in the 2 years ahead.

Thank you to everyone and keep the passion for what we do burning!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Allman', written in a cursive style.

Mark Allman - Chair of °CLOA