

I'm very proud to have completed my two years as the Chair of The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association.

My main reflection over the past two years is I'm more convinced than ever of the importance of a well-functioning professional association. I believe that CLOA has an increasingly important role to play to help to make sure the broad benefits from leisure and culture are understood and effectively achieved.

CLOA is about collaboration, sharing good practice, getting honest views about what does and doesn't work, being able to easily bounce ideas off colleagues across the country – for me this is invaluable and saves me a huge amount of time.

### ***Sector leadership***

We work closely with central government and key national organisations such as Arts Council England, Sport England and The National Archives to influence the development of national policies and to lobby for positive change within our sectors.

The Association is not only important in its own right, but acts as the hub for many other influential professional organisations working in the leisure and cultural industry. It provides a unique vehicle for cross-fertilisation of ideas towards common goals and plays an important part in delivering our vision – *that every locality has a thriving, high quality and distinctive cultural and leisure offer.*

Communication with the membership continues to be of key importance with the fortnightly e-bulletin at the heart of our offer and a recently launched new website that is mobile friendly.

I would urge colleagues to take out a corporate membership – this isn't about boosting CLOA's membership (well maybe a bit!) It's more because I believe it is an easy step to take towards a fuller system approach as you can have more people, hopefully across a range of service areas plugged into the strategic benefits of leisure and culture.

### ***Strategic partnerships***

Our strategic partnerships have been refreshed and reviewed and we are embarking on a pilot project with Sport England entitled 'Navigating Local Systems' which will help with join up in localities around tackling inactivity.

CLOA have been leading the Local Government Physical Activity Partnership (LGPAP). This is a collective body of organisations who are either responsible for or have an interest in the provision of local services. The first ['think piece' on physical activity](#) has been published and there will be more to follow.

### ***Business plan achievements***

CLOA's ultimate measure of success is the number of members we have, so it's great to see our membership continuing to grow and I'm pleased to say that CLOA now has 355 members which is a further growth of 23% since last year. Most of our members are in

## **Chairs Report 2018/2019**

senior positions in Local Authorities and CLOA's Executive is made up of senior leaders including Local Authority Chief Executives.

However, there has been a focus on increasing involvement of future leaders and striving for greater diversity on the Executive. This will support future organisational resilience. 7 new members joined the Executive last year and we will be welcoming 1 further new Executive member in this coming year.

### ***Much appreciated support***

I feel very fortunate to work in a sector that makes such a difference to peoples' lives. Simply put I believe that leisure and culture are the things that make our lives enjoyable; they keep us physically and mentally healthy and are key ingredients in most of the happy times in our lives. They help bring communities together and cut across societal divides. It's no wonder we have so many passionate people working in the sector; it's because every day they see the difference that leisure and culture make.

I've worked with some amazing people in the role as chair of CLOA, learnt lots and hopefully helped to move CLOA and the leisure and culture sectors forward and will continue to strive to do so. I'd like to thank my colleagues on the Executive who have led on a number of important work streams with partners. In particular the Vice Chairs; Debbie Kaye for her work in representing CLOA on ukactive Board, Polly Hamilton and Val Birchall for their liaison work with ACE and the Past Chair Mark Allman for supporting LGPAP and drafting the first think piece.

Other members of the Executive who deserve a mentioned for their ongoing contribution to the work of CLOA are: John Wileman for Swim England, Quest and CIMSPA. Iain Varah and Julie Russell for the Libraries Taskforce, and Sue Thiedeman for support with the conference planning.

I would like to thank Heidi Bellamy for the high level of commitment and input into supporting the Association.

Thanks to our sponsors Xn and Mace, their ongoing support is really valued and our newest sponsor Pitchbooking, so please do make time to visit their stands today.

And finally to the Greater London Authority for hosting our AGM / conference – it is very much appreciated.

Now to take up my new role as immediate past chair!

Ian Brooke – Chair of CLOA