

## Chair's report to the AGM March 2021



The formal report of the trustees to the members for the period 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 forms part of the financial statements which will be available at the meeting. This will be filed with the Charity Commission and Companies House, as well as being sent to members. This report deals with matters which are required to be dealt with at the AGM, and also sets out thanks to the many people who have assisted SAPERE.

### Retirement and election of trustees

The current trustees are:

Gina Pattison Brusik	(elected at the AGM in March 2020)
Kay Chapman	(elected at the AGM in March 2020)
Alison Barne	(elected at the AGM in March 2020)
Jeannie Cohen	(appointed by the board in November 2017 with effect from the end of the November 2017 AGM)
Rod Cunningham	(appointed by the board in November 2017 with effect from the end of the November 2017 AGM)
Jack Langley	(elected at the AGM in 2019 (Treasurer))
Ivana Mahendra (Chair)	(elected at the AGM in 2019)
Finia Kuhlmann	(elected at the AGM in 2020)
Paul Stockley	(appointed by the trustees in May 2019)

Under the articles, one third of the board must retire at each AGM, and those who must retire are those who have served the longest since they were last appointed. Accordingly, Rod Cunningham, Jeannie Cohen and Jack Langley are retiring. Jeannie Cohen and Jack Langley are standing for re-election.

The board recommends the re-election of Jeannie Cohen and Jack Langley.

Rod is a trainer trustee and under the articles, the trainers nominate a representative and the trustee Board then recommends that the Nominee is appointed as a trainer trustee. The Board recommends that Chris Houghton is appointed. Chris brings wealth of P4C and training experience with 30 years in education and I look forward to welcoming her to the trustee Board. Rod Cunningham therefore ceases to be a trustee at the AGM. We are immensely grateful to Rod for his many contributions to SAPERE over many years. Rod was a vocal supporter of the P4C practice in SAPERE.

### Chris Houghton: brief biography

I worked in Primary Education for over 30 years, including many years as a SENCO and 10 years as a Consultant Primary Teacher for Gifted and Talented Education, during which time (2001-2010) I designed and managed Rotherham's Key Stage One Enrichment Cluster for children identified as dually exceptional. I also organised Rotherham's Maths Master Class programme and delivered training and support for P4C in all Rotherham Primary Schools. Since accepting voluntary redundancy in 2010, I have continued working as a SAPERE Level 1 trainer. For the last 2 years, I have been a member of SAPERE's Professional Standards Board.

In a past life I was a Parent Governor acting as Vice Chair for quite a few years, and also President of Sheffield Swimming Association. I have been a shop owner and a swimming teacher, and I once worked in a residential facility for children with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently I devote myself to my family, including 8 grandchildren aged from 5 to 22 years old.

The result will be that the board is as follows:

Jeannie Cohen	(elected at the AGM in March 2021)
Chris Houghton	(appointed by the board in March 2021 as a Trainer Trustee)
Jack Langley	(elected by the AGM in March 2021 (Treasurer)
Ivana Mahendra (Chair)	(elected at the AGM in March 2019)
Paul Stockley	(appointed by the board in May 2019 as a Trainer Trustee)
Alison Barne	(elected at the AGM in March 2020)
Finia Kuhlmann	(elected at the AGM in March 2020)
Gina Pattisson Brusik	(elected at the AGM in March 2020)
Kay Chapman	(elected at the AGM in March 2020)

## Dealing with COVID-19

Covid-19 has dominated the second half 2019/2020 financial year, impacting lives in ways that were hard to imagine a year ago. Many have lost loved ones, endured grief and loneliness. The economy, education and schools were plunged into a very difficult place. Despite all of that, SAPERE kept going and I'd like to thank Amelia Foster, our CEO, and Nags Khokhar, our Accountant, for their leadership and financial stewardship, ensuring that SAPERE has managed its finances to continue to operate through this very difficult period. I'd like to thank the entire SAPERE team for showing resilience and teamwork, supporting each other and trainers to continue to deliver high quality, sustainable P4C to schools. Alison Allsopp and Susan Holding have been instrumental in creating, selling and delivering the online Level 1 and Level 2A.

Despite the reduced hours and furlough, Clare Woodcock and Mary Boullin are working on the forthcoming relaunch of the website, which will present a more accessible and professional image of SAPERE and will also enable greatly improved booking of training courses directly on the website. As an interim measure, a revamped version of the current site went live in May 2020. The finance team has successfully converted to a new accounting system, Xero, making the financial reporting easier and more transparent. Since March 2020, activity has also concentrated on the conversion to remote working and cost reduction. SAPERE has moved out of its Abingdon office and successfully operates remotely thanks to the admin team. We have taken advantage of the furlough scheme, which helped us to reduce costs whilst supporting the livelihoods of the SAPERE team.

## Financial Stability

Covid-19 had significant impact, substantially reducing income and reserves. Nevertheless, we continue to operate with a significant cash balance which represents the deferred income where the training has not yet been delivered. We are looking forward to the easing of the social distancing rules to enable the trainers to deliver the courses during the 2021 / 2022 financial year. In the meantime, we were granted the government backed "Bounce Back Loan" and were able to unrestrict some of the charitable funding to support the ongoing operation. This has given the trustees the confidence to assess SAPERE as a Going Concern for at least 13 months.

The Golden Bottle Trust has supported SAPERE for six years, finishing in August 2020. We are extremely grateful to the Golden Bottle Trust. We would also like to thank Harvey McGrath who has funded SAPERE's core costs for three years. The trustees are deeply grateful for this support which has been invaluable in allowing SAPERE to strengthen its management and staff capabilities and establish a sound platform from which our activities can start to be funded primarily from the growth in commercial activities. We will always need to do some fundraising though, to help schools and communities who cannot afford the full cost of P4C training and support. Jen Simpson has been working hard applying for grants to help us fund some exciting future projects.

## P4C

This has been an incredibly tough year for all of us, including for our trainers who are central to delivery of P4C. The trustees thank you all, again, for everything you have done to train schools and individuals, under very difficult circumstances. Thank you to those serving on the PSB and to everyone working with Alison Allsopp on developing and delivering the online version of the Level 1 and Level 2A training. The course was very well received by the schools and attendees, with all the places taken up and with very positive feedback. This has enabled us to continue to engage with the wider education community, and created an option for those in remote or international locations with interest in P4C. SAPERE remains committed to developing P4C in schools, trying to reach children in areas of disadvantage in particular. Steve Bramall developed #PhilosophyFriday, as well as overhauling all our resources to support teachers trying to deliver P4C in difficult circumstances.

## Going forward

Despite the challenges that Covid poses, it also offers an opportunity to rethink our operating model and how we best serve our beneficiaries, protect our financial position and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. We have started the strategic review process, consulting with the trustee Board and staff as well as sending out a questionnaire to trainers. As the trainer community is a very important stakeholder for SAPERE, we'd like to continue and conclude this consultation during 2020/21. The SAPERE team will be in touch with further details.

We remain very keen to work with all our trainers, members and schools to promote P4C throughout the UK. If you have any ideas for increasing the spread of P4C, or for projects – perhaps a group of schools local to you who would love to do P4C but who can't afford it, or a particularly dynamic secondary which we could use to create a hub with its feeder primaries, or a group of alternative provision centres – which the central team and the trustees can help to fundraise for, **please** do talk to Amelia, Jen, Susan or one of the trustees.

Finally, my personal thanks to the entire SAPERE team and community, working tirelessly together to bring good, sustainable P4C to schools, especially during the difficult Covid times.

**Ivana Mahendra**  
**Chair**  
**March 2021**