From: Evan Dawson
Subject: Snapshot - No.5
Date: 28 August 2020 18:03:12

Dear RPS Trustees, staff and volunteers

This week started with the welcome news that the South Wales RPS Region has been awarded a grant from the Welsh Government for participation in its new online learning festival. The application was written and submitted by RO Rhys Jones, after we discussed it. Congratulations to him, and I hope very much that this is the shape of things to come as we develop our fundraising “offer” more clearly.

Monday was finances day for me, following receipt of the July management accounts from Nikki. I spoke with each of the department managers to understand their figures and reforecasts, which was a useful way for me to make sure I’m on top of things. We are currently looking at reduced income and expenditure due to the pandemic - so it’s not an easy balancing act. Also that day, I had a meeting with our website developer. This was also a tricky conversation, as there have been many problems lately, so it was important to be open and honest about our difficulties. I think we have a way forward mapped out, and they are going to fix some of the most pressing concerns immediately, prior to another meeting (with more people) in a couple of weeks. On a more uplifting note though, I had a first conversation that afternoon with Roxanne, who has so many creative ideas about making more use of the RPS building to improve the visitor experience.

On Tuesday, I attended my first (online) RepCom meeting, chaired by Simon Hill with aplomb. It was attended by several volunteers, including Elaine Herbert from Australia. We had several interesting discussions, including a presentation about the RPS’s many international members, the annual Awards Ceremony, and the organisation’s strategy. I then spoke with our partners at MPB, who are keen to continue sponsoring the RPS, and providing equipment. In the afternoon, together with Michael, we met (online, of course) the staff of the Duchess of Cambridge to review our relationship with them. (By the way, when Michael talks about the history of the RPS, it’s really inspirational. I felt that he must have known Victoria and Albert personally.) The conversation was very positive, and there are several projects we hope to develop together over the coming year, including the Holocaust project, which has already been featured in the Journal.

On Wednesday, I had my first full board meeting, which lasted almost the whole day. Chaired by Alan Hodgson, they are a really supportive, experienced and engaged group of trustees. We covered a lot of ground, including reports about all aspects of the PRS’s current work, its finances, investments and future plans, as well as issues around diversity and inclusion. We also signed off on the Annual Report and Accounts for 2019, which will be presented at the AGM in a few weeks. At the end of the day, I had my first meeting with Martin Parr, who showed me around his gallery next door. As you may know, he has had a very difficult few months, and it was very interesting for me to hear about this from him directly.

Yesterday I wasn’t working, as I had to take my son to London for an appointment.

We drove there from Bristol, to be safe - and it was fascinating to see the city again. Much of life seemed to be continuing as normal, but with fewer people and cars. In Regents Park, the ducks, geese and herron were oblivious to all this, as followers of my Instagram account will have seen!

Today, I was back at work again, talking with Simon B about creating a new membership strategy, and reviewing progress with replacing Progress (our CRM system). I spoke with Alan Hodgson about the AGM announcement, which is online here; with Liz about the Education budget and strategy for next year; and I had my first conversation with Izzy, who invigilates in the gallery, and also has lots of ideas about how we could engage differently with the public.

There are two updated website pages I'd like to draw to your attention:

1. The international pages are refreshed, after great work by Emily and Janet.
2. Our weekly members competition has been running for some time, resulting in some tremendous images, which have featured on the home page of the RPS. You can see all the recent images here, thanks to great work by **Emily**, **Nathan** and others.

Next week, I have more meetings to review strategy, and separately to discuss how the RPS will address its inclusion approach. I have several more introductory calls with volunteers, and also with Kathleen Morgan, editor of the Journal. You should receive the next edition the next few days too!

We will also start to make RPS House more accessible for staff next week, with our new cleaner Abdi coming in each morning before we arrive, briefed by Matt about our Covid safety measures. Do say hi to Abdi, if you see him.

I hope you're enjoying my weekly Snapshots, and please do send me anything you'd like me to share. I would be grateful if chairs and ROs could circulate this to their group members, if appropriate - and if you are receiving this indirectly, do drop me a line if you'd like me to add your email to the circulation list.

As usual, please do drop me a line if you'd like to discuss anything.

Happy bank holiday weekending!

Evan

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