

## ACIP President's Report 2019/2020

Each year at the AGM the president makes a report summarising the ACIP year we have just had and looks forward to the year ahead. This presents me with a challenge! Up until mid-March everything was going well, we had new groups starting, record membership, healthy finances, a multinational committee and our biggest worry was the Bastion's steep staircase, lack of a secondary exit and its inability to handle a large social!

Since Covid 19 arrived we have had to adapt rapidly and I am reassured with the result. Despite being in the most vulnerable demographic none of us in the Dordogne, to my knowledge, have contracted the virus, though we did have one member in the Netherlands who did but is OK now.

ACIP has taken an economic hit, as our rent, insurance and standing charges carried on but our income from the bar and events did not. But that is what reserves are there for and we have easily weathered that aspect of the crisis.

The year started well; after the Bordeaux Christmas trip we brought in the New Year with the Galettes des Rois, a well-attended French language social, and at the end of January Burns Night was duly celebrated. Francais Sans Peur emerged as a fun social group where everyone was coaxed into speaking in French and the French literary discussion group became a new feature. A Gardening group sprouted. The Helping Ourselves and Helping Others initiative began and the Bastion was opened for Lonely Sundays. The Ladies Lunch group started, suspiciously just around the time that the Weight Matters group stopped (is there a connection?) and the Country & Western Line Dance in Audrix was great fun. Then came Covid 19.

On March 17th we had to shut the Bastion and cease our group activities and only recently have we been able to restart activities, initially in gardens, but now, as the weather gets cooler, back in the Bastion though with new rules to keep the place Covid free.

During the hiatus several group leaders have decided to retire from their roles and we would like to thank them all for their selfless service to others. Christine Walter, who has taught beginners French for the past six years, Jane Bower and Edith Bourel, who have handled the more advanced French groups, are all stepping down, as is Jenny West, who has organised the language tuition for many years. Jenny has handed over responsibility for language tuition to André de Wandeler but will continue to teach. We will be focusing especially on spoken French as this is the area where many of us are weak (or terrified).

The Committee has lost two valued members this year, Mandy Williamson, our membership secretary, had to retire for health reasons, and now Annelies Rhee who has so successfully organised so many events - the ACIP Vide Grenier in particular- is moving back to the Netherlands. We miss them both and we appeal for more volunteer helpers please!

The committee did update the ACIP Statutes to reflect how ACIP is actually run and I recommend their approval by you at the AGM.

I would like to thank my fellow officers André, Paul and Martin for their support and I recommend that you re-elect them. I would also like to thank the rest of the committee - Maddy, Martine, Alec

and Julie - and the Support Team – Jane (Morris), Lianne and Simon and if we are re-elected, we shall in turn re-appoint them and the Support team.

What about the future? We have had to cancel our forthcoming programme but hope to reschedule the Vide Grenier in the spring, if we are allowed, but I cannot make any promises.

I think flexibility and adaptability are going to be key. We don't know what might happen; will there be a second wave, if so when, how bad and how will the government respond? The questions are endless and unanswerable. We will try to do the best we can in whatever circumstances exist at the time! That is the only promise we can make

I therefore recommend that you vote to accept the updates Statutes and to re-elect your current Officers at the AGM. Thank you.

Andrew

President