Accessible Retail Annual General Meeting

Chairman’s Report

I am pleased to be able to report on the activities of the Board. The most recent change, announced at the Annual Conference is that Jo Lord stepped down from the Board at the end of September due to increased business commitments. I and the rest of the Board are extremely grateful for Jo’s contribution as Chair over the last two years. It would be important to note, however, that Jo’s involvement with Accessible Retail actually goes back many years. Her contribution has been much appreciated by the Board and indeed I am sure by all our members.

During the course of the last year the Board has sought to represent the interests of Accessible Retail to Government and responded to various consultations and made appropriate representations. We have continued to build links with other trade and professional bodies and supported the charitable objectives of our members.

Only last month we held our Annual Conference at the RiGB which continues to be well received by members and included a new initiative “Meet the Retailers”. In September we attended in conjunction with the PMA, Revo in Liverpool another extremely successful event and we will continue to seek to cooperation with both Revo, the PMA and other bodies in our sector. We also ran a CPD session for our retail members and will be looking at rolling this out wider in the coming year.

A number of regional social events were held during the course of the year with the support of our members. This included the presentation of our 55th Variety Sunshine Coach to Redburn School in memory of Ian Coul at an event hosted by RBS at their Headquarters in Edinburgh and was combined with a social evening. In additional other social events have been held in Leeds and Bristol.

We have also had sporting events and other social events which included the now regular events for five-aside football, golf and of course the Quiz. Another essential part of our organisation is YAR (Young Accessible Retail) which aims to provide representation and promote networking opportunities amongst younger individuals in the out-of-town retail sector. I would like to thank the YAR Chairman Russell Homer and his committee for their work and support over the last year. The committee was set up to organise and host events with a view to encouraging working relationships amongst its members through the organisation of social events, training/APC opportunities and charity fundraising of which there have been many.

But also importantly, for all our events both social, sporting and professional a special note of thanks should be extended to all of you who have supported these events and indeed those organisations that have provided sponsorship during the course of this year.

Looking to the future the Board is keen to support the charitable objectives laid out in the Articles and to support all of our members with the challenges that all businesses face given the current uncertainty surrounding BREXIT. We are also undertaking a review of the organisation of the Board and seeking a Retailer representative to the Board that arises from a vacancy which will be advertised shortly.

Thank you for attending this AGM and enjoy the rest of your day here in Liverpool.