

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

I am pleased to be able to report on another successful year for Accessible Retail although that it is not to say that there have been and indeed remain a number of challenges.

Firstly I would like to thank my fellow Board Members for their support during the year and of course the work of Louise Oliver and the team at SR Events.

You will also hear shortly from Kevin Jarvis, the Treasurer on the work we have been doing to ensure the continued success of the company, regulators our commercial contracts and address our finances. There remain significant challenges ahead for the sector and Accessible Retail is not immune from these. Whilst we have seen an increase in membership we cannot do all that we do without the support of our Gold Members and sponsors – this is a challenging area especially given that cost pressures being placed upon our member firms and of course retailers more generally. It is not surprising therefore that this has presented a major challenge for the Board during the course of the year.

The Christmas Lunch is again another highlight of the year and we are looking forward to this years event on the 6th December our Core Sponsors are B&Q, AEJ Complete Facilities Management and Savills.

It is worth remembering that events such as the Accessible Retail Conference, once again held at RiGB would not happen without our sponsors and this year we were very grateful for the support of Dreams and Avison Young.

At our conference we had a variety of speakers reflecting on the Challenge of Change. I was extremely pleased to be able to arrange for Mike Adams the CEO of Purple Tuesday to tell us about the initiatives he and his organisation are working on. It is of course Today Purple Tuesday and we will hopefully hear of the success of the day in the next few weeks.

Other successful events have included the Golf Day sponsored by Stockford Anderson, Eric Young & Co and Savills and of course all we should thank also all those member firms that have supported the First Friday Drinks.

Only last week we had a enjoyable evening at Bloomsbury Lanes sponsored by CS2.

In March we were able to support one of our key Charity Partners Variety in a very successful event in Birmingham which included a study tour of Junction 9 and Grand Central with the support of Quadrant, Costa, Nandos, Hammerson, Thompson Heaney and Redleaf. It was here that we presented our 56th Variety Club Bus to Dame Ellen Pincents School with the support of Paul Bishton, an AR member who has particular reason to support the school. These are only a few highlights of the year with other CPD events and of course a number of events also organised by the Young Accessible Retail.

As I outlined when I first started this report the challenges our organisation, indeed other representative bodies and the sector as a whole remain, especially with the unanswered question as to the outcome of BRExit but also the significant challenges that increased costs such as the National Living Wage, the London Living Wage, the cost of business rates and the cultural shift being seen in retail with the advent on online retail and changing customer demand. We are working closely with both PMA, SAS, and Revo on the issues.

During the coming year we will continue to work on behalf of all our members, seeking to address the challenges of the sector and it is worth remembering that as an organisation we represent the interest of all not just Occupiers but also Owners, Investors, Agents and Professionals - we have to steer a careful path to ensure that we pull together collectively in the best interests of our sector.

Thank you for attending this evenings event and indeed your support of AR.

Andrew Hetherton

Chairman, Accessible Retail Ltd