

## **BILD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

After 10 years as BILD's Chair and an involvement with the organisation that spans over 25 years, I have decided that it is a good time for me to stand down and make way for people with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

My time with BILD has been very rewarding and varied and I have gained a great deal from being part of an organisation that constantly strives to improve the life circumstances of people with learning disabilities and autism (and increasingly with other mental health conditions). Over the years I have performed a variety of roles. In the early years, the focus was on developing the Physical Interventions policy framework. For a period in the late 1990s I acted as BILD's social work adviser. From its beginning in 2001 I chaired the Physical Interventions Accreditation Panel. Then in 2010 I was invited to become BILD's Chair – an honour that in the early stages of my involvement I would never have imagined.

Over the years I have worked with four Chief Executives, each of whom made different but equally valuable contributions to the organisation. In my early days John Harris was a dynamic leader who ensured that BILD had a national reputation and played a significant role in policy development. Keith Smith continually stressed the importance of listening to people with lived experience and recognising that what they told us should have a key influence on how BILD operates. This message lives on. Ann Chivers brought entrepreneurial skills and enthusiasm that ensured that BILD weathered some very challenging financial difficulties and did not collapse. Ben Higgins has brought modern business planning skills, a wealth of national contacts and has ensured that BILD has regained its position in the national, and international, scene. I have also worked with some amazingly committed staff members, many of whom have routinely worked excessively long hours and, where necessary, have made financial sacrifices to ensure that BILD survived. It has been a privilege to work with such a great group of people. BILD Trustees are a group of busy and talented individuals who, notwithstanding their demanding lives, are willing to give freely of their time and talents without any expectation of financial recompense. They bring such a wealth of specialist knowledge, skills, and experience to BILD's work and, again it has been a privilege to work with each of them. I would particularly like to acknowledge the efforts made, over the years, by the Trustees with lived experience who have worked tremendously hard to understand complicated agenda items in order to be able to contribute fully to the organisation's development. Lastly I would like to particularly mention the work of BILD For the Future which is going from strength to strength and is playing an important role in setting BILD's agenda.

As well as my retirement, our Treasurer, Fred Mumford, has also decided that it is time for him to stand down. Fred has been Treasurer for longer than I have been Chair and has done a tremendous job of keeping BILD's finances afloat, particularly during the difficult period that began in 2010. BILD has benefitted greatly from his professional skills, prudence and straightforward common sense and we have a great deal to thank him for. We wish him every success in the future and offer our grateful thanks for all that he has done.

It is particularly pleasing when an outgoing Chair can be confident that the person who is taking over is going to be able to do a really good job. Fiona Ritchie has a wealth of experience and knowledge and a national reputation for being committed to listening to the voices of people with learning disabilities and autism. I wish her all the very best in her new role.

BILD has had numerous successes during the time I have been associated with it and I am reluctant to single any out. However, the recent news that some of our PBS materials are about to be translated into Mauri demonstrates just how far from Kidderminster we have come over the years! I am particularly pleased that I leave knowing that the BILD Certificated Training scheme will become fully operational within the next few months – a dream that has taken almost 20 years to achieve but we got there in the end!

Notwithstanding the adverse impact that dealing with COVID-19 is having on our (and many other organizations') finances, I leave BILD in a much stronger financial situation compared with when I took over as Chair in 2010. I look forward to hearing of BILD's continuing successes in the coming years.

Alan Jefferson