

2nd April 2020

To all Colleagues and Friends of Safety Groups UK, our Member Groups and their Members

These are extremely hard times for every country in the world, every business, every household and family are suffering to some extent during this horrendous situation we find ourselves in. The worldwide Coronavirus outbreak is devastating in every sense, the effects of which may never be fully overcome.

We have all heard and hopefully taken cognisance of the advice, guidance and instructions regularly provided by Westminster, Scottish Government, Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies. It is important that we all consider that advice and act accordingly. I am not going to proffer further technical or medical advice and guidance because we should be listening to our Governments and I do not wish to add to any confusion, further confliction or misinterpretation in terms of official guidance. I do hope however to assist in the provision of some reassurance that by working together with a common goal and following the rules, that we will survive this.

Set against this backdrop, the Board and Partners on the Management Advisory Committee will meet virtually on 20th April to discuss how we can improve the support we provide to groups during this period and beyond.

Following the example of many SGUK groups who have already embraced new ways of working and new technologies to bring their respective communities together.

We will also of course discuss the massive success of the 2019 Awards event at the Royal Horseguards Hotel and 1 Whitehall Place in February of this year. The feedback is 100% positive, it was a brilliant day, and once we got started, all of my personal stresses and concerns disappeared for a wee while.

We presented 28 awards: from certificates for Bronze (1), Silver (4) and Gold (7) in the Excellence category, culminating in the Alan Butler Award for the best entry in this section being awarded to South and West Wales Group;

The Maurice Adamson Award for Outstanding Service was awarded to Lee Fisk, a very worthy recipient from East Anglia Construction Safety Group;

Commendation certificates (3) and Highly Commended certificates (4) for Innovation, and Development through Education Awards;

The Stevenson Shield for Innovation (2nd Place) was awarded to MVV Environment; The Lord Cullen Trophy for Innovation was again awarded to Dundee and Angus College and the Albert Porter Rose-bowl went to Tayside Integrated Safety Association;

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MVV Environment was awarded the Runner up Trophy, and Parklands Academy was awarded the SCOS Award for Development through Education;

A new award for this year: Grangemouth Contractors Safety Alliance was awarded the Health Risks at Work Special Projects Award.

All of the award entries were of an extremely high standard which made it very difficult in terms of judging, every entrant being worthy of the highest award within their respective categories, and the Board congratulates all the winners. We also thank everyone involved in the organisation of the event (too many to mention individually). Without going into detail, we also believe that the change of venue from the House of Lords to Royal Horseguards, and holding the event a month later in the year contributed to the success, the decision to change was not taken lightly.

Whilst massive success is demonstrated, the cost of the event this year was in excess of previous years. We have shared through our annual reports that this event, whilst our flagship, is not a revenue earner and indeed more than often runs at a loss. This will be a topic for discussion at the meeting on 20th April where we will consider ways in which to deliver an awards programme and ceremony but without such a significant impact on our financial resources. Moving away from the familiar can be uncomfortable. I feel however that I need to make the SGUK network aware of the need for change.

In addition to the awards and routine business, we will also be discussing the next AGM, which should be held around June, and is normally held in conjunction with a local group. Due to the Coronavirus situation, it may not be possible to do that, so we need to discuss alternative arrangements, or even postponement.

Finally, whilst all and sundry are quite rightly praising the NHS for their dedication and commitment during these troubled times. I would share the pride we have in the NHS staff, whether frontline, support staff medical and non-medical, carers, whether in a hospital; residential or visiting homes: I think we should also demonstrate our pride and give thanks to all the other essential workers / service providers, and I name but a few: delivery drivers; taxi drivers; postmen and women; shop and supermarket staff, who are going that extra mile. I'm sure many others have been missed, but to all of the above and any missed, on behalf of SGUK Board, Management Advisory Committee and Supporters – We Salute YOU.

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Norman Stevenson

Chair SGUK

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