

19 November 2022

Dear Member,

Mindful that some time has passed since our AGM, I thought it timely to update you on activities since then.

Firstly, and with Veronica's active support, we have welcomed 10 new Members to our Association, including four from Rendezvous and three from our partner organisation, the VFOS in Oberursel. I am particularly pleased about this as it reflects the strength of the partnership between our communities. Veronica, Hilary and I have joined VFOS.

This increase in membership is welcome but I recognise that this is only the start. We intend continuing to focus on attracting more members from across our local community, including young people, local clubs and organisations, together with representatives from local businesses.

I recently joined Andrew Colver from Rushmoor Borough Council on an online meeting with Virginia Barrett, the Principal/CEO at Farnborough College of Technology (FCOT) together with Larry Magee Vice Principal. It was an extremely positive meeting as FCOT are clearly keen to work with us to develop links with our twin towns, to the benefit of their students. By way of an example, plans are now in hand for a Group of students to take part in Oberursel's Brunnenfest in May.

Andrew has also agreed in principle to join RIA early next year and I am currently actively seeking to recruit other Rushmoor employees.

I am still working on the recruitment of a new Treasurer and hope to have good news soon. In the meantime, I am indebted to Akmal for kindly agreeing to continue in the role, pending a new appointment.

I am pleased to confirm that we are going ahead with our plans to take part in the Oberursel Christmas Market from the 25th – 27th November.

I appreciate that given the short notice, it was not possible for many of you to take part, however Veronica, Hilary and I will be going, and we have been allocated a space in the Rathaus foyer.

Clearly, we have been restricted in the number of items we can take by the space available in our car, as well as post Brexit import restrictions. That said we will be taking a good selection of past favourites including mince pies, Christmas puddings, shortbread biscuits, marmalade, tea and lemon curd. We also have a small selection of memorabilia in relation to our late Queen, who was so well respected in Germany.

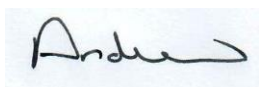
We have also obtained two banners and sweatshirts proudly displaying the new RIA logo and I will bring one along for you to see at our next meeting. We can then order more if there is sufficient interest.

We are treating this year's trip as a post COVID and Brexit pilot, which we can review collectively well before next year's market.

I would, if at all possible, like us to meet before the end of the year and I have provisionally booked a meeting room at the Council Offices for 7.00pm on the 15th December. Given the time of the year and the relatively short notice, I accept that this might not be convenient for some of you. I would however be grateful if you could let Veronica know as soon as possible if you are able to attend and, subject to the number of responses received, a decision on whether or not the meeting would be viable. Your invitation is attached.

Many thanks again for giving me the opportunity to Chair the RIA, and in case we are not able to meet before the New Year, I would like to thank you sincerely for your support and to wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

With best wishes,



Andrew Lloyd

Chairman