

# *Summary report – 2014/15*

**Institute  
of Internal  
Communication**

***The power within***

Chief Executive Steve Doswell reflects on  
IoIC's annual performance and priorities  
for the rest of 2015.

**IoIC observes two calendars. The AGM is traditionally the start of a new year of activity for IoIC and much of this report takes the 2014 AGM as its start point. However, the year ending 31st December is IoIC's financial year and I will begin by reflecting on 2014 financial performance.**

### Finance

We report a year-end deficit of £32,647. A number of factors were involved, most notably a decline in sponsorship income, subscription income underperforming against expectations and a slight rise in operating costs. Although we have put added resources into collecting money owing to us, the aged debt level remains higher than we would like and we will sharpen our focus on this during 2015. Without petty cheese-paring that will hinder our ability to be effective, we will also reduce costs where we usefully can. The modest appearance of this year's report and accounts is a reflection of that.

### Priorities for 2015

I note the need for IoIC to work smarter to secure sponsorship income, to collect what we are owed and to keep a lid on our costs. During my time as chief executive I have made it my priority to build our capability, equipping IoIC to operate in practice as the professional institute it became in name and law back in 2010. IoIC does not exist to make a profit and we are not commercially-driven, and yet we must generate income, achieve viable surpluses and be commercially capable if we want to achieve other aspirations which are our true purpose.

I want to see IoIC return to financial surplus quickly, without losing focus on the rest of our programme. I will therefore make it my priority during the current year – with the full and active support of the Board and IoIC staff - to drive through the changes we need to make this year in order to achieve our financial and other plans.

### Silver linings

A disappointing financial result should not mask some excellent operating performances. A successful – and memorable – annual conference and an equally high-quality IoIC awards dinner met their financial targets and yet were delivered at reduced cost. Suzanne Peck and the respective event teams deserve huge credit for producing these results with no loss of quality for these, our flagship events. Credit also to the regional teams in

Scotland, the North, Central and London (South was inactive during 2014) for delivering varied programmes at much reduced costs. Members in the regions can debate which event was the highlight – certainly the Scotland awards event and the Central seminar and awards ceremony are the leading contenders. Credit for these performances goes to Lesley Allman and her Midlands-based team for the latter and to the dedicated group in Scotland who delivered their event despite the lack of a regional director, a position since filled.

### Professional development

So what of our activities beyond those already mentioned? During the year since the 2014 AGM, IoIC has kept its focus on professional development and insight, which I believe are the cornerstones of an institute at the centre of the sector it serves. Demand for professional qualifications has continued to bring candidates to IoIC seeking accreditation via our Foundation and Advanced Diplomas. Sixteen 'public' and four in-house cohorts of candidates have now completed work on the Foundation Diploma, while the Advanced Diploma is now running for a fifth successive year. There is no doubt that part of the strength of the Foundation Diploma derives from our ability to demonstrate its quality and robustness as independently verified by Southampton Solent University (SSU). We have now also begun the lengthy process of securing external accreditation for our Advanced Diploma, again via SSU.

Accelerate, our premium training course, has firmly established itself at the centre of our training programme, alongside a range of existing short-course offerings. During the year we launched a new coaching masterclass, delivered by Sheila Hirst, and the inaugural run was over-subscribed. Feedback was excellent. This has now been added to our existing portfolio of short courses, many of which have become hardy perennials and continue to enjoy demand year-in, year-out. We were also able to enlist the inimitable Rachel Miller, who ran a highly popular session on her virtually unchallenged social media territory. As the advent of social media demonstrates, skills and techniques evolve over time and we will continue to look for new offerings to ensure that our professional development programme retains its currency. A comprehensive review of our training programme is planned once we are adequately resourced to conduct it.

Training courses are a standard but far from exclusive way to build credit via CuPiD, IoIC's continuing professional development programme. This was clearly demonstrated during 2014 when members continued to pay the modest enrolment fee to begin their CPD journey to Professional Practitioner status, drawing on reading, participation in IC sector events, networking and other activities that contribute to their development as practitioners and their CPD credit.

### Insight

Practitioners expect institutes to stimulate fresh thinking and create knowledge through research. IoIC's response during 2014 was a significant increase in freshly commissioned research alongside a renewed effort to develop content for our website and InsideOut magazine. IoIC published research on the size of the IC sector in partnership with long-standing supporters theblueballroom; and on leadership, trust and communication, in partnership with Top Banana and conducted by Westminster Business School. Just before Christmas, members also received a copy of our e-book on trends in IC, expertly edited by Catherine Park. What's important is that all three sources of insight were made freely available to members. This is a clear benefit of belonging to the one UK professional body that is uniquely dedicated to the development of internal communication and the people who practise it. Sometimes, not being profit-driven presents challenges but in this respect, for our members, it's a positive advantage.

### Events

The IoIC Awards and the Conference, renamed IoIC Live and held last year in Brighton, remained our highest profile events, albeit with healthy competition from those awards ceremonies in Scotland and the Midlands. On 13 November 2014, we also presented 'Super Thursday', five events in one day in Bloomsbury, London, comprising the Communicator of the Year (COTY) lunch (the headline COTY award being presented to Justine Roberts, founder of Mumsnet); the ICon Awards presentations; the IoIC/FEIEA joint seminar on Internal Communication Crossing Cultures; the FEIEA Grand Prix awards ceremony; and the 30 under 30 presentations. It was a considerable success, a huge achievement and happily, we won't be repeating it all in 2015 as it will be another

country's turn to host FEIEA's autumn events! We were delighted, however, to receive a collective Diploma of Honour from FEIEA during the ceremony in recognition of IoIC's contribution to FEIEA over many years.

### Fellowship

Elsewhere in the life of IoIC, president Suzanne Peck conducted a review of Fellowship and she will lead on the process of considering nominations and awarding new Fellowships during 2015.

### GSCom and GCS

In 2014, IoIC joined a consortium of universities, professional bodies and education agencies from across Europe in a bid to secure European Union Erasmus funding for a new online Global Masters Degree in Strategic Communication (GSCom Masters). IoIC's role will be to ensure that IC is adequately reflected and positioned within the overall curriculum. While an initial bid was unsuccessful, a second bid has since been made. If successful, it could bring over £60,000 of additional income to IoIC, along with an opportunity to influence the shape of a substantial postgraduate programme with international reach. We will learn the outcome later this year.

Also last year, and largely thanks to efforts by Board member Andy Rushton, IoIC was able to offer the Government Communication Service (GCS) a significant membership package, bringing 145 new Members to IoIC while the Foundation Diploma was adopted by government as part of its IC professionalisation programme. Shortly before this report was written, the Cabinet Office had accepted a comparable offer for 2015, involving the Advanced Diploma. Not only does this bring valuable new revenue and membership to IoIC, it also gives your Institute a role within the current skills development drive for cross-government communication practitioners, a very large professional population.

### Office move

IoIC moved office at the end of September 2014, following the termination of the landlord's business and the administrator's decision to close Oak House. We could have done without the distraction but we were able to secure new premises close by on favourable terms.

### The Board

We are at a transition point in the governance of IoIC. The current Board has been in place for three years and is therefore at the end of its mandated period of office. During that time, Board members came increasingly to the view that IoIC would be best served by a smaller Board on which members were each given oversight of a specific aspect of the work of IoIC. In December 2014 the Board voted wholeheartedly to approve the adoption of a trimmed down Board.

Since this requires a small adjustment to IoIC's Constitution, it will be subject to a vote at the forthcoming AGM on 30th April. Whatever the outcome, the next Board will almost certainly be smaller anyway, firstly because there were fewer nominations than places available on the Board. This is commonly the case and meant that we did not need to hold an election this time. The second reason why the new Board is likely to be smaller is because several Board members are standing down this year.

Despite these departures, what we will have for the next three years – and members should take plenty of comfort from this – is a group of hard-working, committed and talented activists (I use this word intentionally), knowledgeable not only about internal communication but also about what it takes to run and nurture IoIC. The new Board line-up will be announced at the AGM on 30 April and via our website.

### Thanks

I offer my thanks to Nigel Hay for making a huge contribution to IoIC as finance director for many years, in which role he was able to provide comfort and wise counsel to my predecessor Kathie Jones and to several 'generations' of Board members as well as me. He will be missed and it is important that IoIC quickly secures the services of another figure with comparable acumen who understands our organisation and its purpose. We're working on it.

I would like to thank Sheila Parry who has made an immense contribution to IoIC, first as professional development director and over the last year in facilitating the Board's work in drawing up a strategy for the next three years. Currently Sheila is leading our efforts to recruit a head of commercial, a role we see as a crucial element in turning our strategy with its ambitious targets for growth into reality.

Thanks also to Julian Grice, former IoIC London director and for the last three years our Board chairman, who adeptly managed the Board meetings and kept Board members focused during this time.

We have been blessed with a succession of highly effective Central region directors, none more so than Lesley Allman, a natural and hard-working leader who has built the Central seminar and awards dinner to become one of IoIC's flagship activities. Thank you, Lesley.

Thanks also to Tracy Keates for her constant efforts to maintain a programme of activities in the North of England and for her loyal and unfailing presence at Board meetings; to Catherine Fallon for her fresh thinking about membership; to Mark Hill, who helped us re-imagine how the regions could develop and who is embarking on a new initiative to rekindle IoIC activity in the south west; to Sophie Hewitt, our first 30 under 30 alumna to join the Board, who is stepping down through ill-health and who we hope will be able to return in future; to Andy Williamson, who begins a new career role but who will continue to support our work, and to Rosie Mowatt.

### The team

Some faces do not change, and in the case of the following people, IoIC members can be truly thankful. Thank you for another year of hard, patient and fruitful work to membership & operations manager Tim Beynon; events manager Brenda Scott; PR & marketing consultant Catherine Park, and Phil Weare, professional development manager. This is the team at the heart of IoIC's operations, and for most members and contacts they are the voices and faces too. Some roles will change slightly this year but we're changing tactics, not the team.

### You

Finally, once again we thank you sincerely for choosing to belong to IoIC. By doing so, you share a common purpose with the Board, the central team and all other members – to build and establish IC as a profession. It remains the noble cause for which I work, and I hope you do, too.

Steve Doswell, Chief Executive,  
April 2015