

## **Chairman's 2009 AGM Address**

During the last 12 months the full impacts of the financial crisis became evident, and the sports and play sectors are not immune from the problems. However, the fall-out for our industries has been far less severe than in many other parts of the economy. Indeed, across the broad range of member associations and the hundreds of businesses they represent, there has been no real evidence of doom and gloom, and many sectors have actually flourished despite the difficult trading conditions.

The Federation has been unstinting in its efforts to provide leadership for members in the last 12 months. The ideas raised at last year's Summit meeting have been developed into coherent strategies, and this programme of support for members will continue to be enacted in the coming year.

Thankfully, the FSPA agreed to invest in an umbrella before the rain came! Using the ring-fenced budget set aside for PR and lobbying, we appointed College Public Policy to help with our lobbying. Tangible proof of the wisdom of that decision is evident on several fronts: improving public health by cutting VAT on sports goods for SAFEA and SGIA members (we are now working with the Public Health Commission on this initiative); the publication of the 'Politics of Play Paper' for API members, thereby keeping play on the political agenda; action on the proposal for future EU regulation of distribution and the EU Waste Framework Directive in relation to the UK; and a range of meetings with key civil servants, Government ministers, opposition officials, MPs and other stakeholders.

Following the open meeting with Sport England hosted by the FSPA, the Federation organised an excellent event – under the theme of 'Principles of Partnership' – which was held with the County Sports Partnerships Network, Sport England, several national governing bodies and Federation members. It was illuminating that the external bodies were highly complimentary about the approach of the Federation and its members and appreciated the enormous, mutual benefits that could be gained by working together, especially when devising sports initiatives. The Federation has taken note of the main message – 'partnership, not sponsorship' – and is already following up on the key action points, notably the formation of a Steering Group to devise and deliver pilot projects.

Our Managing Director, Jane Montgomery, has been highly active in maintaining an efficient, effective FSPA administrative team and using her skill in lobbying on behalf of you, the Federation's members. As a flavour of the influence that we can now exert, Jane's travels have led to regular meetings with Sport England, as well as with the monetary team at the Bank of England, and she is in close contact with the European play & sport federations.

The membership has grown steadily during 2009 through the 17 member associations, and they have been augmented by the Club Manager's Association of Europe (CMAE) – operating with full Federation support since the beginning of the year.

Financially, the Federation is in good health, and because of this prudent financial stewardship under David Pomfret knowledgeable guidance, we will be able to fulfil its programme of activities in future. After lengthy consideration of the various alternative options, the Federation agreed a 10-year renewal of its lease of Federation House, with a mutual break option in five years. A significant sum has already been spent upgrading the building so that it provides a comfortable working environment for the, administrative team who work there and an excellent, attractive venue for members' meetings. I encourage you to make full use of these facilities.

Although Jane Montgomery's work is indispensable to the Board and to the Federation, she would be the first to acknowledge that the effectiveness of the FSPA is dependant on the skills, hard work and diligence of the entire administrative team. During 2009 Jacqui Baldwin decided to retire after many years of sterling service, and the Board is indebted to her for the dedication with which she carried out her work for the golf and other sectors. Luckily, we had no need to recruit a new staff member to replace her as Milly Durrant had demonstrated that she was highly capable of filling Jacqui's role, and the change was achieved seamlessly. Milly was replaced by Eileen Taylor, who has already shown how important she will be to the team in future.

David Pomfret, Deborah Holt, Kate Costin, Janet Stranks and Debbie Goddard make up the rest of the FSPA team, and on behalf of the Board – and you, the members – I am proud to congratulate them on the dedicated, professional and friendly way in which they have strengthened the Federation and so ably supported the members we are all here to serve.

The FSPA enters 2010 with every reason to feel highly optimistic about the future of the sports and play industries. The Federation's role is to provide the leadership and support that will help your businesses flourish, and the Board's commitment is to achieve - and exceed - these expectations in the year ahead.

Bruno Broughton,  
FSPA Chairman

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009