



CANCER

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FRANCE

SUPPORT

SUMMER 2020

DORDOGNE EST & LOT NEWS



PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

When I last sat down to write the DELot Newsletter at the end of February, I little imagined what was waiting just around the corner. Here at CSF in the Lot and East Dordogne, we were full of plans for our new awareness-raising initiative 'CSF at the Caff' and in fact Pat Lockett and I hosted our first one in Cahors on 4th March. We were also looking forward to holding a breast cancer discussion group and of course, preparations were well under way for our Spring market, with many stallholders already booked and raring to go.

And then along came Covid-19 and lockdown which, at the time of writing, has now been eased with a further announcement due on 2nd June. What a challenging few months it has been! On the positive side, we were blessed with mainly good weather, so we could make the most of the Spring working in the garden and watching the season unfold before our eyes. Our clients found that their various scheduled treatments and procedures for their cancers carried on as normal, with appointments being kept in person at the hospital or with consultants by WhatsApp[®].

We all became proficient with online communication and the new verb 'to Zoom'[®] came into our language. Our Association has held a Bureau meeting and a Council meeting via GoToMeeting[®] and I think we all appreciated the opportunity to meet face-to-face, albeit on screen, and to find our enthusiasm for the cause remained undiminished.

As you will know, I have kept our members up to date with latest developments on the Covid-19 front here in France, thanks mainly to the excellent summaries published by the British Embassy in Paris following each Presidential or Prime Ministerial broadcast. We can see a faint glimmer at the end of the tunnel and I wish all of you a safe and healthy summer. I know many of you will miss the usual visits from friends and family, and so many events in the summer social calendar have been cancelled. However, we have turned a corner and can only hope that the way ahead becomes clearer and a little easier for us all.

Anna

EXTENDED SERVICE DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

At the start of the lockdown, CSF National swung into action and launched an extended service to offer a sympathetic ear to any Anglophone feeling isolated, anxious or vulnerable due to the Covid-19 situation. Many Associations, including of course, ours, signed up for this initiative and many of our compatriots were helped by this measure. We also saw an increase in enquiries for our cancer support service, so the publicity push reaped benefits and we will continue to build on this momentum.

NATIONAL AGM

Just before our world changed the CSF National AGM was held in Limoges and DELot was well represented by your President, Anna Shackleford; Vice-President, Philippe Mika; Trainer, Active Listener Support and ITC reviewer, Heather Moorhead and of course, our own Pat Lockett in her role as National President. We all reached Limoges late morning on Wednesday 11th March and a few of us foregathered for a buffet lunch in the handy Chinese restaurant before heading over to the splendid conference venue, the *Conseil Départemental de la Haute-Vienne*. We had a full afternoon with lively discussion of the reports from the various officers, and in the evening we all met for dinner and more inter-Association discussion at a nearby restaurant.

The following morning was themed, ‘Moving Forward Together’ – a thought-provoking session covering topics such as the motivation and rationale of CSF and what we do well and how do we know it? We then moved on to consider the challenges facing us – how to attract more clients, for example, and to explore the possible strategies we can use and actions to be taken.

We all came away with plenty to ponder on; it is always good to look outside our own Association to see how our colleagues in other areas operate. In some instances we can smugly pat ourselves on the back when we recognise how well we do things but there is no room for complacency and we can, and will, always learn from some Associations whose initiatives we could adapt for our area.



Philippe Mika (left) has just told Anna Shackleford (second left) that DELot's picking up the bill!



Pat Lockett (second left) with past National, President Penny Parkinson (in red)



A well-attended AGM

LIFE UNDER LOCKDOWN

This newsletter has been somewhat dominated by the C word (and in this case I don't mean cancer!) but, to lighten the mood a little, members were asked to share any anecdotes of life under lockdown. Pat H, one of our Active Listeners had this to say: -

"In 'normal' times, my granddaughter who lives in New Zealand used to FaceTime® me and we would chat as she was getting ready for school, and while her Mum was in the shower. Sometimes in the evenings she would ring me while she was having her bath and tell me about her day. During lockdown, every night now between 9pm and 10pm here in France which is between 7am and 9am in New Zealand, my granddaughter FaceTimes® me and we play for up two hours while her Mum works from home and her Dad works at the hospital. I haven't played so much for forty years. Her first words always are "Good morning grandma, what are we playing today?" My daughter says I'm the best babysitter she has. It's amazing how technology and worrying times can unite us as families and we can help each other even though we are many, many miles apart."

Pat H

I personally have a regular Sunday Zoom® session with my two best pals with whom I worked in Germany over 40 years ago! Therese is now back in her native Dublin and Annie lives in Melbourne. Each Sunday brings back memories - and this is going to date me! - of Cliff Michelmore and June Metcalfe as I inwardly recite "it's 11 o'clock in Dublin, 12 noon in the Lot and 8pm in Melbourne which means it's time for 3-Way Family Favourites"!!

Anna

WHO ARE OUR ACTIVE LISTENERS AND VOLUNTEERS?

CSF is aimed at helping Anglophones – English speakers of any nationality, although our members and clients are predominantly British nationals. However, we thought you'd like to know that in our Association, two of our Active Listeners and one of the members offering Language Support are French nationals and of course are totally bilingual. One of them has recently been elected to her *conseil municipal*. They all bring such a wealth of knowledge of the French medical system and legal and social procedures and we are very fortunate to count them among our numbers. Another Active Listener is Spanish and is fluent in English and French. Having also worked in Belgium and Luxembourg, she brings a truly international perspective to our efforts. And one of our many valued Volunteers hails from the Netherlands and through her contacts, we are aiming to make our services known to the Dutch community, many of whom are excellent English-speakers and could maybe use our help.

NATIONAL CYCLE FOR LIFE UPDATE

You may remember that the National annual fund-raising event, a cycle ride from Rochefort to Thiviers, was due to take place from 3rd-7th June. This has been (fingers crossed!) postponed and a shorter ride, from Rochefort to Angoulême, is now scheduled for 23rd-26th September. Obviously this may again change, but at the moment we are working towards this event, and there will be an update in the next newsletter, so watch this space!

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

I would love to have that crystal ball which reveals the future but, as I don't, all I can tell you is that we will be holding our next Council meeting in June online again. We would love to hold some kind of social / fund-raising event in the Autumn but who knows if this will be possible? We will keep you posted and, in the meantime, I look forward to writing to you again in the Autumn after our summer 'break'. We wish you all the best summer that you can have.

CONTACT DETAILS

Contact: - CSF Dordogne Est et Lot on our local 24 hour Helpline - **06 35 90 03 41**

Email: - delot-president@cancersupportfrance.org

National Helpline: - **0800 240 200** - calls from a landline are free and are taken on an answerphone

National Helpline email: - helpline@cancersupportfrance.org

To access the CSF Forum, follow the link (need help?) on the National website: -
www.cancersupportfrance.org

(Please note that all of our links need to be copied and pasted into your email and browser - *Editor*)

Created and edited for CSF Dordogne Est et Lot by Margaret York, Editor