

BFA SOFA REPORT April 2022

Peter Gill and Kay Hoffmann

(... for the benefit of new members, the BFA has two chairpersons, aka 'The Sofa')

During the past year we have continued to work with the priorities we identified at the outset of our sofa-ship:

- To identify where the life in BFA is just now
- To re-enliven BFA by inviting more connection and support among members

We have been meeting online at least once a month to discuss and sense into BFA matters. The association has welcomed many new members this year (see Suzi's report for details) and things have been ticking over fairly peacefully.

To foster connections between BFA members, we arranged a series of online gatherings last year where members could meet for inspiration and support. These events were appreciated by those who attended and generated some lively discussion as well as creating a space where members could get to know one another and have Peer Consultative Support time in small groups.

The 'buddy system' for new members appears to be working well. Many thanks to Suzi Mackenzie and her team of 'buddies' for keeping this going.

Following feedback that some of the website content on BFA training options was unclear, improvements to the relevant webpages were made last year. Our thanks to Amona Buechler, Ildiko Davis, Clare Myatt, Suzi Mackenzie and others for their input. (See Ildiko's website report for detail on other changes and improvements to the website over the past year.)

It was a joy to be able to finally arrange an in-person gathering in November 2021, when twelve of us met at the gloriously ramshackle Lower Shaw Farm, near Swindon. As well as having a lot of fun together, experiencing some wonderful peer-led workshops and enjoying focusing in-person again, we also got the ball rolling on three alive themes: overseas membership, trainee membership and the role and title of 'secondary mentors':

The outcome of the first topic is that BFA now welcomes members living overseas on the condition that they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Trained with a UK based BFA Mentor or TIFI Coordinator
- Have been based in the UK as an existing member and have now moved (or returned) to another country
- Have connections with current BFA members, a sense of belonging to the BFA community and an affinity to BFA's values

The secondary mentoring process is currently being reviewed by Amona Buechler, Amanda Raine, Paula Newman and Robert Copperwhite. Their discoveries and suggestions will be circulated soon.

A range of views on trainee membership were expressed both at the gathering and on the gaggle email list however this issue has not yet reached a consensus.

Our thanks and appreciation go to everyone who has contributed to the running and development of BFA during the past year:

- Suzi Mackenzie, Membership Secretary, for successfully navigating the move to online fee-paying, membership applications and renewals and ensuring new members receive a warm welcome.
- Camilla Sim, Treasurer, for another year of managing our finances and Greg Thomas for taking over the role this year.
- Gordon Adam, for producing wonderful BFA newsletters.
- Ildiko Davis for her ongoing sterling work on the website.
- Clare Myatt for her efficient handing of website enquiries.
- Elizabeth Smith for overseeing the gaggle group and distributing certificate paper.
- Everyone who has been involved in a subgroup or in developing other areas behind the scenes.

At time of writing we are preparing to host an online gathering and AGM on April 2/3 and looking forward to a juicy mix of member-led workshops, focusing time, Peer Consultative Support groups, an open forum on BFA matters and a social 'Wonder' space during the breaks – thanks to Alison Thorpe for arranging the latter. We hope to see many of our members there.

Finally, we will both be stepping down from the sofa at the April 3rd AGM. It is an inspiring challenge to be at the helm of a focusing-oriented association which operates entirely by consensus. We have both enjoyed the experience of gently guiding the BFA ship for the last two and a half years but feel this is the right time to hand over to newer members.

The new sofa will be appointed at the AGM on April 3rd. Celia Dawson has kindly volunteered to be a candidate for the role.

Peter Gill and Kay Hoffmann, April 2022