



January 29th, 2021

Update from Nikki Edwards, Trust CEO

**When others
speak ... let's
make sure
we listen**



Zoom, Teams – how did we ever live without them? We used to say the same about mobile phones and, in an earlier generation, about TV. I expect similar things were mentioned by later-era cave dwellers about the wheel.

It has been a bit of a lifeline for many. A friend describes the early days of trying to connect his tech-resistant parents to Zoom in the first lockdown. The process sounded ... fraught! At one stage my friend was on Whatsapp video, with the phone pointed at his dad's laptop, talking his dad through launching Zoom having also had to go through how Whatsapp worked! They got there in the end.

Thing like this have been worth the effort. At a time when some people have not seen their loved ones for the best part of a year, online communication is all we have had.

Over the past few days, I have been reflecting on a number of events and experiences, all of which made me think more deeply about the impact of words and the need to not just communicate, but to listen.

I had the privilege to attend an online prayer meeting, led by Bishop Ruth and our Diocesan colleagues with more than 70 attendees from across a large geographical area.

We shared 'Dwelling in the Word', Colossians 3. 12-17'. Paul talks about how we should 'welcome' the Word of God and our lives will be all the richer for doing so. We need to do this in all facets of our lives with the words of all our colleagues and friends. The meeting included break-

out sessions when we could do just that - share our own experiences and reflect on those of others.

Later in the week I joined a new network group with other CEO colleagues from across the region.

Again, we listened and shared our recent experiences. Closer to home, I spent time with the Central team here at Trust HQ, listening to individual stories of personal achievements and experiences.

With all these activities I was reminded about the need to 'be present'. How easy it would be to switch off and activate the speaker's 'mute button'. Easy, yes, but also a missed opportunity.

It has been funny to read that the phrase of the year was 'you are still on mute' but each of us needs to make it our personal mission to, instead, turn up the volume when others speak and really listen.

We have had to rethink the spoken word in ways that would have been unimaginable 12 months ago. We do very little face to face and, other than family, when we do speak, it is from behind a mask. The rest is virtual, on laptops or phones.

So it is important that we listen – closely – to our friends and family. If we are 'present' we will hear wonderful new things and find ourselves enlightened by their voices. Try it! I certainly will.

Nikki Edwards