

WELCOME TO MEMBERS WEEK FROM MARK AUSTIN, GGF PRESIDENT



Good morning ladies and gentleman. Welcome to Members' Week – the industry's largest virtual event and something I never thought I'd hear myself say, but these are extraordinary times and your health and safety comes first and that's why the GGF decided to run this year's annual conference via video.

Over the next three days the GGF will deliver 10 online events with no less than 18 guest speakers and panellists who will cover the key topics affecting our industry. If you are attending the webinars over the next few days, you hear from experts in the fields of the economics, politics, health and safety, technical, training, standards, digital marketing, finance and the environment. It promises to be a varied, interesting and perhaps even exciting few days ahead as the GGF once again has led the way in showing that together we can find a way to still engage and communicate, through these extremely unusual times

Members' Week is a much welcome boost for our industry which like practically every sector has had no events or anything to really look forward to. I will not dwell on the pandemic, but there is no way to sugar coat what our entire industry has endured and is currently still in the mist of going through, including on-going supply chain problems, logistical issues, adapting to the necessary social distancing and costs of Covid-19 precautionary measures, which has had its own challenges in terms of getting hold of adequate and sufficient PPE, hand sanitiser and

screens etc., Thankfully, the GGF remained operational through COVID and worked closely with Members, Government and health and safety experts to provide good safe guidance to help the industry follow the restrictions and operate safely. That's proved a great help, but we still have our work cut out for the future and until a vaccine is found, the new normal will be about us all taking responsibility and carrying out the appropriate steps to make sure we can live and work safely.

Personally and for the record, I was very proud of the way the GGF Management and staff have rallied round throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, taking steps before the actual lockdown to pre-empt one should it come, to ensure that GGF Members were still able to make contact and receive help and support. Many of the Managers and staff worked long extra hours and weekends for no extra pay, something for which I wish to formally thank them on behalf of all members and clients connected to the GGF and its group of commercial subsidiary companies including FENSA, BFRC, InstallSure RISA and Borough IT. It has been an incredible effort all round.

Back to today and I am delighted to welcome the GGF Board to Members Week, and in particular our two new Board members Richard Sellman and Paul Kellett. Both have joined at arguably our most difficult time but their work so far in a relatively short space of time has been considerable, in particular with the Strategic Working Group which came about after the Chairpersons' Forum which we held in February this year.

The Chairpersons' Forum was set up to improve communications between the GGF Board and GGF Chairs of the specialist technical groups, committees, regions and countries. The Forum was attended by 95% of the GGF Chairs, a great turnout and I thank all the Chairs for their time and input into the making the Forum a productive event. Their views on behalf of their groups were listed and further discussed by a Strategic Working Group made up of 6 Chairs who distilled the points made into strategic and operational recommendations. No easy task and again I must thank them for the hard work and time put in to make the progress we've made on this front, which you will see when John Agnew, GGF Managing Director presents the outcomes of the Strategic Working Group later this morning.

Without stealing John's thunder, the Board will ensure the GGF's focus over the next 6-12 months will be all about helping and supporting all GGF Members during the recovery and the GGF will continue to invest in its Members' services. The plans are in place and in action, so that when we do reach the end of the tunnel, the whole industry should be in a genuinely strong position to then kick-on once there is an up-turn.

Members' Week has a lot going and these three days are for you and you can take part using the Chat function and the Q&A function to ask questions. In the Open Forum later this morning you can verbally ask questions of the GGF to Myself, John Agnew, MD and the Board. With so much going on in our industry, I hope you find the presentations and debates stimulating and useful for your business. Thanks for joining us today and though I wish it was

under normal circumstances, I still hope you can enjoy the GGF's first ever virtual annual conference.

Thank you.

Mark Austin
President
Glass and Glazing Federation