

Meet the two newest members of the BDA Honours Committee

The BDA Honours Committee is delighted to welcome Siân O'Shea and Sue Kellie



Siân O'Shea FBDA. MSc RD

Q What led you towards becoming a dietitian and how has dietetics changed since you became a dietitian?

My love of cake (Battenburg in particular) and science led me to dietetics! I loved baking and was never far away from the kitchen. My domestic science teacher gave me a booklet on dietetics when I was about 14 and from then I was determined to train and work as a dietitian.

I began my career in a teaching hospital in England where I had the opportunity to specialise in renal dietetics before moving on to be assistant charge dietitian in New Zealand. I returned to the UK as a district dietitian in 1978 before finally moving back to my homeland of Wales in 2005.

It was here that I specialised in working with adults with learning disabilities and began my BDA career as Wales Constituency Council Member, establishing the Wales Board (Bwrdd Cymru BDA) and becoming its first Chairman.

Q Why do you think it is important that we now have a BDA Honours Committee?

I believe each dietitian has a responsibility to promote their specialty and to work continuously towards profiling a credible and professional identity. Nonetheless, clinicians (including dietetic support workers) who go over and beyond their day-to-day remit for the benefit of patient care and the profession deserve to have their work recognised on both a local and national level.

I have been Honorary Chairman of the BDA on two occasions from 2013-2015 and 2017-2018, and privileged to have been involved in two Chairman's themes. These are Trust a Dietitian and Dietitians Do Prevention which place dietitians at centre stage, promoting the profession as key protagonists for change and champions for improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and populations within the UK.

Q What would you say to members if they are thinking of nominating a colleague for one of the BDA Honours?

We all need to work together to raise the profile of the profession. Sometimes this can feel a bit tiresome as we face many obstacles with nutrition expert wannabes, an abundance of fake news and at times an endless stream of negativity on social media platforms.

But pause for thought – we are the threat to them as we are the only regulated and evidence-based nutrition experts. Let us celebrate our excellence by recognising those within the profession and telling the world....don't be shy! As a colleague once said to me: "We must shout loud and proud!"

It can be a bit daunting putting together a nomination but the Honours web pages contain useful examples and information for you which will help you along the way. Also, members of the committee will happily answer any informal queries you may have. Get in touch at honoursawards@bda.uk.com.

By the way, I still love cake!



Sue Kellie

Q What led you towards becoming a dietitian and how has dietetics changed since you became a dietitian?

I was aware of dietetics as my dad had type 1 diabetes and saw a dietitian. He wasn't particularly complimentary about her but that didn't stop me.

I was attracted by the balance of food, people and science and I've never regretted the decision to train as a dietitian. I was always aware of how patients and others would see us and receive and use the information we were sharing and I hope that insight helped my practice.

Like all professions, some things change and some don't. There were around 2,000 dietitians when I trained and there were fewer than 20 of us in my class, very different to now. So I have loved seeing the profession grow and develop.

We are a more confident profession, the scope and depth of practice has changed exponentially and we demonstrate our impact everyday. We have grown in status and profile although I'm sure there is always more that could be done.

"It's really important that we can encourage submissions for national honours to help dietitians be recognised more widely."

Q Why do you think it is important that we now have a BDA Honours Committee?

One thing that changes only slowly is our reticence as a profession to recognise our good work and shout out about it. The Honours Committee exists to help the profession recognise the impact of individuals for service users, the profession and more widely. It's especially important that we can encourage submissions for national honours to help dietitians be recognised more widely.

Q What would you say to members if they are thinking of nominating a colleague for one of the BDA Honours?

I would say please do think about who you know and whether you would like to nominate them. There are many dietitians doing amazing work that could be recognised.

Then, like all submissions, answer the question. Gather the information you have, look at any gaps and find someone else who may be able to fill those gaps. Be positive and tell us about the impact your nominee has had on you and others. We love hearing about inspirational dietitians.