

Council Courier

26 September 2024

This is an informal account of the discussions and decisions taken at Council.

Obituary

Recently deceased members were remembered. Particular mention was made of Brian Lowe.

A minute's silence was held.

Regulation of Function sub-committee:

Adrian Dobson encouraged members to come forward to join the latest iteration of the committee.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion moment

The President explained for the benefit of new members the importance of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 'moment' on Council agendas which was a brief opportunity to share positive examples of greater inclusivity in architecture and other professions. He highlighted the social mobility initiatives of the Co-op in addressing pay inequality, which had included prioritising skills rather than background when assessing job applicants.

<https://www.raconteur.net/talent-culture/co-op-chief-people-officer>

He encouraged any Council members who wanted to speak under the slot at the next Council meeting to come forward.

President's report

The President's diary report was noted, in particular his attendance at the Labour Party conference, the meeting with Sir Michael Lyons on Housing, work with the Honours Committee (convened

to discuss honorary fellows) and the Stirling Prize jury.

Chair of Board's report

Main points:

- Meeting with Ministry of Housing, Communities and local government
- Meeting held with RIBA's new patron, HRH the Duke of Gloucester.
- Jack Pringle appeared on BBC Radio 4's the Today programme talking about building regulations.
- Other updates given on House of Architecture Programme, Grenfell report and conversations with the ARB.

CEO Report

The report was noted.

Board appointments

Council confirmed the appointment of two new trustees to the Board:

1. Tom Foggin
2. Phil Allsopp

It also confirmed the reappointment of two serving trustees when their current term on the Board elapsed:

1. Jennifer Dixon
2. Sumita Singha

RIBA AGM

Over lunchtime RIBA's Annual General Meeting was held. The AGM adopted the 2023 Annual Report and Financial Statements; and approved the appointment of the MHA Macintyre Hudson, as RIBA auditors.

Governance Review

Jamie Hunt, Director of Governance and Legal Affairs, updated Council on revisions to the regulations.

Expert Advisory Group reports

Fire Safety: Chair of the group Jane Duncan gave an update on the work of the group. This included the impacts of phase 2 of the Grenfell report.

Climate emergency: The group had formed three sub-groups devoted to Retrofit, Education and Whole Life Carbon. Duncan Baker-Brown has published two books on adaptive reuse in recent months. Judit Kimpian represented RIBA on a number of groups internationally, including ACE and CIC Climate Change Committee (of which Mina Hasman was now the Chair and Jon Greenfield a fellow committee member).

Mina Hasman then gave a presentation on the UK net zero carbon buildings standard. Members of the EAG were always available to provide further information.

Sumita Singha offered an update on the CAA general assembly in Kigali and gave examples of its focus on climate change and sustainability.

Finding and Accessing Architecture

Co-leads Félicie Krikler and Funmbi Adeagbo began their update by inviting additional Council members to join the group. Members based outside London would be a particular bonus, as well as an external marketing expert. The action points of the group were noted by Council.

AI, Generative Design and Data

The group had been looking at the way technologies could enable practices to

engage more effectively with clients, and how to upskill architects by making information/data more accessible.

The concluding report due later in the session would identify areas in which architects could engage with clients using new technology. The ultimate goal was for 'planetary stewardship' and the normalisation of sustainability with the possible suggestion of a wide-reaching conference in 2025.

Dan Brown asked if the EAG could clearly link their work with offsite/MMC and if RIBA could generally provide more guidance to architects etc in relation to offsite/MMC.

Housing and Planning

The new government had issued a consultation on the NPPF and RIBA would be responding. The group's central task was to establish how to make the future planning system more effective.

New towns: city and county architects could be important to new cities and placemaking.

Other issues to be considered by the group:

- Retrofit in relation to housing and planning
- Evaluation of design codes
- Permitted development rights
- Age-related planning

Discussion: The new UK government - policy and influencing opportunities

There was a discussion on how RIBA could best respond to the new government's five missions to:

1. Kickstart economic growth
2. Make Britain a clean energy superpower
3. Take back our streets
4. Breakdown barriers to opportunities
5. Build an NHS fit for the future

For the architecture profession, this might mean:

1. Increasing housebuilding
2. Energy efficiency and sustainability
3. Good urban design, placemaking
4. Making architecture a more inclusive profession
5. Delivering high quality buildings and places

Points made from the floor:

- Could RIBA be physically closer to Westminster during the planned closure of 66PP, and engage MPs?
- Engagement with All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) was recommended. This was a lower level of influence. Any involvement by members needed to be coordinated by RIBA.
- RIBA still needed to be a 'thought leader' on sustainability and drive up standards, not just acquiesce to large scale mediocre house building.
- NHS land and Foundations for the Future: NHS land was often under-utilised and procurement could be wasteful. Greater efficiency should be an ambition.
- Publicly-owned land: ideas were sought for best use, e.g. by housing associations.

- In Scotland (Edinburgh) new housing required assessment on the basis of need – about 95% of it ought to be affordable housing but this percentage was never attained. The UK needed the right kind of homes and for these to be designed well.
- Architects should be embedded in local authorities and this was an idea which should be promoted to government.
- Architecture education should receive the same public funding as engineering and be treated as a STEM subject.
- Infrastructure was a key part of making developments sustainable.

It was agreed the subject presented huge opportunities and resource could be well-directed to it.

The President then thanked Head of Policy and Public Affairs Phoebe MacDonald for her participation in the session and Council members for their contributions.

Reports received on:
Gender Equity
Housing and Planning Policy/Public Affairs update
House of Architecture Programme
Returning Officer election report 2024

End