
Council Courier

27 June 2024

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

Obituary

Members were remembered with a minute's silence. Particular mention was made of Oliver Chapman, Alan Seager and Julyan Wickham. Council resolved to send condolences to next of kin.

Minutes of previous meeting, 21 March 2024

Agreed as a correct record.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion moment

Jo Bacon gave a short presentation on improving gender equality in practice, including efforts made by Allies & Morrison (her company) to close the gap. There was a series of steps which practices could take across a range of indicators. She suggested there could be a RIBA employer award for 'best practice employer'. There was general support for this.

President's report

The President's extensive list of engagements was noted, including the Bartlett Part 3 Lecture, the Community Land Trust National Conference 2024 at which he chaired a session on Sustainable Retrofit and a presentation at Westminster University with Jenny Russell as part of the Standing Conference of Head of Schools and Architecture (SCOSA) meeting.

He then thanked members of Council who were finishing their terms at the end of August:

Simon Allford

Jo Bacon

Julian Baker

Graham Boyce

Chithra Marsh

Sumita Singha

Ryan Stuckey

Chair of Board's report

Main points:

- House of Architecture Project: three webinars had been held with the membership and good feedback had been received.
- Influencing workshop: RIBA's lobbying efforts had been reviewed and some new topics introduced.
- Sustainability conference: was being planned to take place before COP at the end of the year.
- An exhibition on modern housing might be considered after the election of a new government in July which would likely have housing as one of its priorities.
- Garden party at Buckingham Palace: had included invitations to all Council members.
- Stirling Prize: plans were already under way for the 2024 event.

CEO Report

The report was noted.

Membership subscriptions 2025

After discussion the Council voted to agree a rise of 5.5% in subscriptions for 2025 (by a vote of 18/10/3¹).

Branding review

A presentation on the RIBA brand review and its implementation was given with plenty of feedback received from the floor, a lot of it on actual design issues. Members were encouraged to make further comment offline, particularly in relation to the mission and vision statement.

Governance Review

Jamie Hunt, Director of Legal and Governance, gave a presentation on the progress of the governance review. Revised draft regulations would be shared with Council and Council would be given feedback on any comments members had made.

AOB

Timothy Onyenobi raised regulation of function as an urgent issue to be addressed. Jennifer Dixon confirmed that the Practice and Policy Committee would be taking a proposal to the Board and Council.

Workplace and well-being discussion part 2

Three presentations were given, followed by a discussion.

Victoria Xenia Riis from the Confederation of Danish Industries talked about the Danish Model of national collective bargaining on minimum pay and employment. This is based upon collective agreements between the Danish Association of

Architectural Firms, the Danish Union of Architects and Designers, the Danish Association of Constructing Architects and the Danish Association of Professional Technicians. The employees covered include architects, landscape architects and technical designers. Interns are not a part of the collective agreement.

Alex Reeves and Kirsty Logan of Architype Architects, which specialises in decarbonising construction, provided insights from their practice on the architectural workplace.

Jake Arnfield and Cameron McKay, branch activists at the Unite union, to which the Section of Architectural Workers is affiliated, talked briefly about their work with salaried workers in the architecture sector.

Discussion/Questions

- 1) 'What methods are in place for whistleblowing [in the Danish system]?'
 - In 2019, the EU made whistleblower rules, which were implemented in Danish law in 2021. The rules aim to ensure that it is easy and safe to report violations of the law, that these reports are followed up on, and that whistleblowers are protected against any retaliation.
 - Companies with 50 or more employees must have a whistleblower scheme.
 - In relation to breaches of collective agreements or employment law cases, there is a special trade union system where the organisations work together to resolve the conflicts.

¹ Votes in favour/against/abstentions

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- 2) What are the benefits of the labour market model that is a common feature in Denmark and Sweden?
- There are many advantages to the Danish model
 - the flexibility and flexsecurity model that provides flexibility for the employer and security for the employees is a great advantage.
 - In addition, an advantage is also that employers and employees have a great influence on the conditions in the labour market through the organisations.
 - The duty of peace is also an advantage, as the collective agreements ensure stability and peace in the labour market.

Next, representatives from Architype gave examples of the company's initiatives to create a supportive and inclusive working environment focused on employee well-being as well as sustainable architecture.

Finally, the Section of Architectural Workers' presentation focused on the problems encountered by some in the workplace and findings reported in the AJ. A discussion ensued about some of the data it referred to. It was pointed out that the RIBA code of conduct does not say that every hour of overtime has to be paid but it is incumbent upon the employer to have clear policies on overtime. Also, there was a distinction to be made between RIBA chartered practices, and the rest: data needed to be specific about the kind of practices failing to provide appropriate working conditions. It was important to identify the divergences from the previously published RIBA codes and guidance documents to address any examples of poor practice. There also needed to be enforceable sanctions.

The plight of international graduates was highlighted and the current difficulty of gaining practice experience in SMEs.

It was suggested that the RIBA could collect data on the performance of RIBA chartered practices concerning pay, payment of the living wage etc. The President volunteered to put together some recommendations in consultation with the Chair of the Practice and Policy Committee, Jennifer Dixon.

The President then thanked the speakers and the Council for their contributions.

Expert Advisory Group reports

AI, generative design and data: Phil Allsopp outlined the membership of the group, the meetings which had taken place since November 2023 and the accompanying workstreams: Research, Ethics and Practice, Education and CPD and submission of a final report by December 2024.

Finding and Accessing Architecture:

Félicie Krikler and Funmbi Adeagbo updated Council on the last meeting of the group on 4 June which had included:

- a discussion on work placements and the RIBA work experience toolkit.
- a discussion about marketing and communications in general and the need for an overall yearly strategy.
- The RIBA's education and outreach programme had been reviewed to see if this could be better targeted.
- HOAP was an opportunity to engage future generations of architects and this should be included in the wider comms plan for HOAP.

- Maryam Al-Irhayim spoke briefly about Future Architects and a desire to see the RIBA's digital marketing strategy to assess synergy between them.
- Funmbi Adeagbo reported that she had recently visited a business to discuss apprenticeships.

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