
Minutes

Meeting RIBA West Midlands Regional Council/Forum
Date 17 March 2009
Venue The John Osborne Room, RIBA West Midlands, Birmingham & Midland Institute, Margaret Street, Birmingham
Present Dhiran Vagdia (in the Chair)
Olly Brock
Ray Bullen
Barrie Hall
Anthony Lloyd
Mark Rizk
Kevin Singh
Noel Street
Ian Tipton

In Attendance Matthew Dobson
Amanda Evans

1.0 Apologies Greg Brunt
Amanda Harmer
Malcolm Hay
Gavin Orton
Victoria Poole
Patrick Redmond
Helen Wootton

2.0 **Approval of Minutes of 2 December 2008**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2008 were approved.

3.0 **Matters Arising from the Minutes of 2 December 2008**

3.1 Minute 3.1: RIBA Awards Jury 2009

Matthew Dobson reported that the shortlisting meeting had taken place on 10 March and he was pleased to confirm that 16 entries had been submitted reflecting a broad range and type of project. Seven of these entries had been shortlisted and will be visited by the Awards Jury in early April.

3.2 Minute 3.2: Delegations Review

Regional Office to remind Greg Brunt and/or Tony Lloyd that a synopsis regarding this is required before the next meeting of Council.

**Regional
Office
GB/AL**

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3.3 Minute 3.6: Branches Website

There was a discussion regarding the Branches Website. It was decided that Matthew Dobson should discuss the possibility of setting up an independent branches website as part of the proposed contract with RIBA West Midlands' appointed PR Company. **MD**

3.4 Minute 5: Female Architects

It was felt that there was an inadequate representation on Regional Council of female architects. All members were asked to review their contacts, with a view to encourage an accurate representation of our members within the Regional Council. **ALL**

4.0 Publications Working Group

AREA Magazine

Matthew Dobson reported that he and Kevin had met with three companies tendering for AREA. Clarke Associates offered the best pitch and value for money. They will design, format the publication and sell sponsorship. Matthew and Kevin Singh had some reservations regarding the design; they felt it was good but not dynamic enough. They would get back to Clarke Associates this week and ask them to re-think the design. The contract would be from April with the first magazine due in Summer 2009. The Region will use its own editorial, and there will be a 60/40 split on editorial and advertising. After costs are covered any profit will be split 50/50. One large sponsor is being sought, in addition to the smaller ones that are already committed. It was suggested that greener companies should be targeted. **MD/KS**

Dhiran Vagdia reported that the RICS was reducing the size of its regional magazine and Olly Brock suggested they could be offered a slot in our publication.

It was agreed that the magazines should follow a theme for each issue.

Dhiran Vagdia advised the Meeting that if this went ahead, it appeared that RIBA WM had nothing to lose. All agreed that an instruction should be given.

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Dhiran Vagdia thanked the Communications Group for the work involved to get to this stage and encouraged other members of Council to get involved. He asked Matthew Dobson to set up a contract with Clarkes and to inform Holman Group and Edge Creative that they had been unsuccessful on this occasion.

MD

4.1 Awards Dinner

Matthew Dobson confirmed that the Region would be joining with BAA for the Summer BAASH on Friday, 22 May 2009 at Aston Business School. RIBA Awards would be announced at the beginning of the evening.

Dhiran Vagdia suggested there could also be a Dinner later in the year so that the Region could invite guests which would include AWM, Government Ministers and the like. Venues were suggested and Mark Rizk pointed out that as a non-Birmingham member, distance and access was a consideration. For North Staffordshire members anywhere further than Birmingham was not suitable. Mark also confirmed that North Staffordshire was not going ahead with their Dinner this year.

Noel Street suggested Catalyst Education as a sponsor, and its supply chain, along with the Council, could be approached for sponsorship.

Kevin Singh said he thought Mecanoo would speak at the Dinner, and he would check this. After further discussion and given the potential risks involved, Matthew Dobson was asked to look at the feasibility of a Dinner later in the year and report back at the next meeting.

MD

4.2 BMI

Matthew Dobson reported that a feasibility study was being carried out by Gavin Willetts looking at various different options on using the John Osborne Room and BMI space in different ways. Gavin's report will be completed by late March early April. Barrie Hall emphasised the importance of working closely with the BMI management on any future plans.

4.3 Education & Outreach Update

The new Think Architecture careers brochures and a

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powerpoint presentation will be available shortly. Olly Brock suggested a note be put in AREA to inform members as this would greatly assist at careers events.

Regional Office

Matthew Dobson reported that Region had hosted a delegation of Chinese and Taiwanese architects which had been successful, although the extent of engagement from members had been limited. This may have been due to the short notice given to members. This led to a discussion on the nature of communication with the membership. Members resolved to improve and upgrade the existing monthly bulletin. Members discussed how this might be integrated into the new PR contract with Clarke Associates. Matthew Dobson to speak to Clarke Associates about delivering a template, and also about looking at other options for a new template as soon as possible.

Regional Office

MD

4.4 Student Participation

Kevin Singh to liaise with the Regional Office and Dhiran Vagdia regarding appointment of student representative.

**KS/DV
Regional Office**

4.5 Best Practice

Matthew Dobson reported that the Regional Office team had visited the offices of North West Region in January, and met with colleagues from other regions. There had been a good exchange of information and an opportunity to see how things are done differently in other Regions. West Midlands to host a similar event in June.

5.0 Matters for Decision

Dhiran Vagdia asked for views on the proposal to change RIBA Council to RIBA Forum. All agreed to accept the name RIBA Forum.

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6.0 Finances

Ray Bullen approved and signed the accounts for 2008. Ray also outlined how Branch Grants had been awarded previously and how Branches had only received their grant if they could prove how it was to be used, and how it had been used the previous year.

Matthew Dobson then spoke of the need to update this system to comply with requirements of the Charity Commission.

The proposed new system would offer a framework whereby individual branches and societies would be able to apply to the Region for funds to support specific projects. An application form would need to be completed detailing the nature, timings etc of the project. Applications received would then be considered by up to three members of the Regional Forum and the Head of Region. Application forms are the best way of ensuring probity in RIBA's financial relationship with its branches, and ensure compliance with the Charity Commission.

Matthew asked members to let him know if they wished to sit on the committee. Anthony Lloyd and Ray Bullen volunteered. Dhiran Vagdia suggested Alan Cotterell. Amanda Evans to speak to Alan.

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Office**

Ray Bullen confirmed that the deadline for the first round of applications is 1 June 2009.

Changes were approved by all.

All branches Chairs and Treasurers to be informed of the new system.

**Regional
Office**

7.0 Any Other Business

Anthony Lloyd reported that RIBA Council was holding their next meeting in Cardiff on 26 March 2009.

Dhiran Vagdia commented on a successful Past Chairs Lunch held on 3 March 2009.

Dhiran Vagdia also mentioned that he was looking to appoint a Vice Chair with a view to being succeeded at the end of his term in 2010. All members are encouraged to

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consider this position and speak to Dhiran/Matthew if they wish to discuss it in more detail.

ALL

Matthew Dobson reported that he would be meeting with Ian Austin MP's office in the next few weeks. Ian Austin chairs a group of the eight big public sector agencies which acts as "war cabinet" for regional issues during the recession. Early indications are that Ian is keen to hear from RIBA and therefore we are setting up a small meeting with three or four of our members to get key messages across.

RIBA West Midlands is also hoping that Ian Austin will speak at an event in June that is being organised by Matthew Dobson and Noel Street.

Forum members then discussed key arguments they would want to get across:

1. Mark Rizk mentioned as example, Wrekin Construction in administration and that banks are not lending to SMEs.
2. Public Procurement methods, particularly Framework., they are good during the good times but not right for the economic climate at the moment.
3. Voluntary Internships as is the case with the manufacturing sector. Must remember that architects are trained people. Many are trained thanks to public sector funding and that investment is being lost.
4. OJEU contradicts sustainability of local industry aims.
5. Architects are going out into schools and encouraging students to take up careers in architecture. This is a positive message.

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8.0 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Regional Forum will be held on Tuesday, **23 June 2009** at 4.00 p.m. at the Regional Office.

Dates and Times of 2009 Forum meetings

Regional Forum	RIBA Council
23 June 2009	30 June 2009
22 September 2009 and AGM	6 October 2009
1 December 2009	8 December 2009

Signed:

Dated: