

Council Courier

06.12.2017

This is an informal account of the discussions and decisions most recently taken at Council. Action notes and official minutes will be produced in due course.

Obituary

Council resolved to send condolences to next of kin. Particular mention was made of Graham Saunders, Vincent Scully, David Marks and Gilbert Herbert.

Declarations of interest

Simeon Shtebunaev: elected as the RTPI Student Representative on its General Assembly for 2018-2019. Architects' Benevolent Society ambassador for 2018-20.

Minutes of previous meeting, 28 September 2017

Agreed subject to a minor amendment.

Matters arising from the minutes

Communications Committee: its role would now be reviewed as part of the Constitution Review and its members informed of this by the President as its chair.

Trustee code of conduct: a small number of members were yet to sign the Council approved and a request was made for a further guidance note and an undertaking to review the document as part of the Constitution Review. The President would write to those members who had yet to sign the existing document.

RIBA's cultural mission

The President as acting chair of the British Architectural Trust Board (BATB) summarised the activity since March 2017 to undertake a view of the RIBA's cultural offer. So far the review had not been carried out, although members of

the BATB and key staff had been surveyed about the RIBA's cultural purpose and the challenges of delivering it.

It was queried whether the RIBA was rising to the challenge presented by other competitors in the cultural sphere. The offer provided at 66 Portland Place was no longer seen as vibrant or important by some. Other points:

- Would the question of BATB's autonomy be addressed in any review?
- The organisation contributed in various ways to the cultural offer, including internationally and through education, as well as through BATB.
- RIBA's cultural purpose should pervade all RIBA activities and be self evident in its behaviour.
- Did the RIBA's business plan work against enhancing the cultural offer at 66PP given the commercial imperative that also existed? Could these two things be brought into better balance?
- There had already been an examination of the building's future use and the membership had been widely consulted at the time. This should be noted.

The new chair of BATB, once appointed, would be involved in the cultural review and setting its terms of reference.

Council members were invited to submit suggestions on how to enhance the

RIBA's cultural offer. Separate from this, Council members were asked to submit written comments on the draft cultural mission. The document would then be revised under the auspices of the new BATB chair.

President's report

Main points:

- Enhancement of research capability was continuing with the imminent election of a designated Vice President.
- Letter to The Times published on housing/House of the Year award.
- Work on policy and government engagement continuing.
- Lively presidential Twitter account.
- MOU being produced with CIOB and RICS on Design and Build challenges to the professions. Question of procurement to be revisited.
- Ethics Commission formed – text to be circulated to Council and to regional directors publicising its work and inviting engagement.
- Invitation issued to President to visit Plymouth and Falmouth universities.

RIBA Board report

The minutes of the 14 September 2017 Board meeting were noted.

Suggested future agenda items for Council:

- Future of the profession
- Regulation of the profession worldwide
- Role of RIBA's regional offices
- Regional devolution
- wider representation of BAME architects in the profession.

- Social mobility

Chief Executive's Report

- New Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development Geoffrey Milton introduced.
- Survey on impact of Brexit: running until 21 December.
- 'Global talent, global reach' - report into economic impact of Brexit on profession to be published 7.12.17.
- Expert Advisory Group on Fire Safety had met and was meeting on a monthly basis with input from specialists; information was being shared via Architecture.com. There would also be a full day of events held on the subject.

RIBA Finance report and 2018 budget

An underlying deficit of £255k was reported for 2017 in line with earlier forecasts.

All senior officers and their corresponding vice presidents agreed to portfolio targets included in the budget for 2018.

Council considered and voted to approve the budget for 2018.

Vice president standing report: Practice and Profession

Caroline Buckingham (VP Practice & Profession) and Adrian Dobson (Executive Director, Members) made a joint presentation on the work of the department and its strategy for 2018.

Appointments

Council voted to appoint Flora Samuel as the RIBA's new Vice President Research.

It also approved the membership of the International and Finance and Operations Committees and appointed Mark Jermy as the Chair of the Audit and Oversight Committee.

Professional Standards

Council noted the report.

Professional Services Contracts

Council approved the RIBA Professional Services Contracts to be published by April 2018.

Governance

Constitution Review Group (CRG):

Council agreed the following recommendations made by the group:

- i) Move to proportionate, simplified governance structures and enabling, principles based approach.
- ii) Council to feature:
 - Representative and advisory function on behalf of the profession,
 - Sets the strategic direction and policy at high level,
 - Has power to appoint and remove from Board of Trustees,
 - President Chairs Council (but has a seat on Board, not Chair of the Board), and
 - Move from four to three meetings a year, accent on gaining insight and discussing key issues for the profession, rather than detailed operational oversight.
- iii) RIBA Board to feature:

The Board is the proper seat for the fiduciary duties. The Board delivers the strategic plan as part of its business planning function and is accountable to Council for operations of RIBA;

- Size should reflect Charity Commission guidance – no more than 12 board members;
- Skills based composition, reflecting skills required to run a charity in nature of an SME, rather than ex officio Council members (financial, strategic, legal);
- Chair may be a non-executive director;
- Chair to have ability to co-opt where particular areas of expertise required;
- Sound principles of corporate governance should provide the checks and balance, including:
 - i. Council has power to appoint and remove;
 - ii. Audit Committee, Remuneration Committee and Nominations Committee to remain independent from the Board and report directly to Council;
 - iii. Reporting to flow up through the boards and committee channels.

SGM – the Honorary Secretary gave an update on the results and voting of the SGM held on 16 November. All the resolutions had been passed and Privy Council approval would be sought after the

statutory three months had elapsed.

Membership Reinstatements and resignations

Council noted the election of

- 167 new chartered members;
- 10 new associate members;
- 9 new affiliate members
- 744 new student members

including readmissions, together with resignations.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Elsie Owusu, the new Chair of Architects for Change, had been asked by the President to attend the RIBA Board in this capacity and to report on EDI issues. He would meet her on 15 December to discuss future plans and reporting to Council.

AOB

The student and associate members of Council had been invited to collaborate with the Commonwealth Association of Planners and Architects to promote the theme of urbanism at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April 2018. Anyone interested in further involvement should contact them.

Reports for information:

- Membership report
- Equality and Diversity update
- Main committee reports
- RIBA Enterprises report
- Visiting Board report

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