

Council Courier

05.07.2018

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 Jill Jones, Will Alsop and John Edwards (former director of RIBA East Midlands).

Declarations of interest

There were no new declarations.

Minutes of previous meetings, 23 March and 2 May 2018

Agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the minutes 23 March 2018

Gender pay gap in the profession: an update had been given to Council on the steps being taken to achieve a framework for chartered practices on the annual publishing of data.

Future agenda items for Council: papers on equality and diversity and on education would be presented to the September Council meeting. The Future of Architecture was a topic for that day's meeting.

City of Culture 2021: the RIBA West Midlands office would be informed of any RIBA plans in relation to Coventry's status as the next UK City of Culture.

ARB/RIBA liaison: updates on meetings would continue to be provided to Council.

2 May 2018

Use of non-disclosure agreements by the RIBA: Council voted to agree that

the President could do no more to investigate Elsie Owusu's assertions over the use of NDAs without any evidence being provided (30 in favour, 1 against and 16 abstentions).

Allegations by Elsie Owusu of unconscious bias: The President stated that discrimination was undeniably a major issue for the profession and the wider construction industry, as distinct from the institute. Any complaints about discrimination experienced within the institute should be made through the correct channels. In the belief that all organisations could improve, the President had requested EO to produce proposals for additional measures to be considered for adoption by the RIBA in her paper to be brought to Council in September. He assured the Council he was doing everything he could on the question of discrimination.

President's report

Highlights:

Discussions on how to address the gender pay gap in the profession. Attendance at Venice Biennale, RAIC conference and AIA conference, as well as a visit to the Chicago Architecture Centre with many useful lessons and possible collaborations for RIBA.

Question from Simeon Shtebunaev (Student member)

Simeon Shtebunaev confirmed he was happy with the answer the President had supplied concerning the level of information Council members received in their papers.

RIBA Board report

The minutes of the Board meetings of 22 February and 10 May 2018 were noted.

Chief Executive's Report

Two events at the RIBA had now been streamed live – a Liberal Democrat housing policy event led by Sir Vince Cable at 66PP, and the RIBA Hustings event at 76PP.

The AIA convention had included the first round table meeting for chief executives from the UK, Canada, Australia and the USA.

A report was given on an investigation into a leak of commercially highly confidential information to the press; the investigation had been undertaken at the request of a Council member. Anyone present who had so far failed to respond to the enquiry was urged to do so by the President. The outcome would be reported in due course.

Equity sale in RIBA Enterprises

Council noted the update on the transaction, and congratulated the team responsible for the deal on a better than expected outcome. It approved a payment of £4m to the RIBA's Defined Benefit Pension Scheme in order to allow the fund to be de-risked, and noted plans to consult on the investment of funds released by the sale.

Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on Fire Safety

Council voted to reconfirm the terms of reference, remit and membership of the RIBA EAG on Fire Safety and endorsed its policy recommendations in full.

Jane Duncan, Chair of the EAG, welcomed the suggestion of making a detailed presentation on the findings of the group to any Council members

interested, and streaming this to the wider membership if feasible.

Mandatory knowledge of health and safety

Council voted to agree

- a) the introduction of a mandatory level of knowledge in health and safety and building users' life safety that all UK-based RIBA Chartered Members must meet;
- b) that the mandatory knowledge will be assessed by an online test that all UK-based RIBA Chartered Members must pass and re-validate on a five-yearly basis;
- c) that the core competencies that will form the basis for the detailed curriculum and online exam, to be further developed by the RIBA Health and Safety Expert panel and other advisory groups, and approved by RIBA Practice and Profession Committee;
- d) that the timeline to include this requirement as a professional standard of all UK-based RIBA Chartered Members to be as set out, with all RIBA members given at least one full subscription year (until 2021 renewals due in October 2020) to pass the test.

Professional Standards report

Council noted the interim report on the professional code of conduct review, including work to identify a preferred standard of proof required for professional conduct hearings (criminal v. civil standard). A member consultation was under way and Council would be presented with final recommendations in September 2018.

Constitution Review Group

Having agreed at its previous meeting to transfer Trustees' fiduciary duty to a smaller body in line with Charities Commission guidance, Council voted at this meeting to agree the following recommendations:

1. RIBA Board composition:

- i) President is ex officio on the Board (but not the Board Chair, as of right)
- ii) Other roles including the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, selected against a skills matrix, may be ex officio Board members
- iii) Roughly 12 members max and 7 (or majority) from Council, also selected against the skills matrix
- iv) Chairs is open to the most competent person, skills based appointment.

2. Standing Committees reporting to the Board:

- i) Audit Committee
- ii) Nominations Committee
- iii) Remunerations Committee

3. Standing Committee reporting to Council

- i) Standards (Conduct) Committee, oversees the 'public benefit' function of Conduct, for RIBA (currently sitting under Practice & Profession Committee which lacks independence)

4. Further committees – general right for

- i) Council to create committees and working groups as it sees fit, to inform strategic thinking and direction of the profession; and
- ii) Board to create such committee structure as it

- iii) sees fit from time to time, in order to deliver the administration of RIBA the membership organisation.

5. President role:

- i) Should be the advocate for the RIBA and its members and provide its main external facing function in accordance with the royal charter
- ii) Would be the ambassador for the corporate strategy of the organisation
- iii) Should have a 'presidential budget' to deliver the presidential manifesto aligned to the RIBA strategic plan.

Further work of the Constitution Review Group to be reported back to Council at its next meeting.

Trustee report and financial statements 2017

Council approved the Trustees' report and accounts for 2017 pending minor updates. Final accounts and document to be approved at the AGM in September.

Council also noted the external auditor's report, approved the letter of representation for signature and noted the risk register.

Awards Review

Council noted the report and endorsed the work so far carried out to identify possible changes and improvements to RIBA Awards. Council members were asked to forward any further observations to Jane Duncan (the chair of the working group). The final report on implementation to come to Council in September 2018.

Future of Architecture

Tim Bailey led a discussion centred on the future of a) the architect (both role and individual), b) the practice of architecture; and c) the profession as a collective endeavour. Ensuing points made by Council touched on:

- Importance of architects being leaders in the acquisition of knowledge
- Imagining the viewpoint of incoming members
- Propagation of the brand
- Revisiting the original charter
- Competing role of architectural technologists
- Losing ground to project managers
- Importance of research and development
- Quicker routes to qualification, greater flexibility and possibility of specialising at an earlier stage
- Develop RIBA's role in engaging non-architects with architecture
- International focus
- The profession could be a major driver in shaping cities and how they change
- Involvement of architects in developing new technologies and applications
- Reacquisition of professional standing
- Future of professionalism and the changes it brings (free access to information)
- Genuine engagement with younger generation and the very young (including pre-school children)
- Digitalisation and innovation as a means of engagement
- Being an organisation accessible to those not yet qualified.

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- Blue-sky thinking versus a focus on the present and the value of the profession

The President thanked Tim Bailey for his presentation.

Membership Reinstatements and resignations

Council noted the election of

- 0 new Fellows
- 610 new chartered members;
- 37 new associate members;
- 49 new affiliate members
- 496 new student members

including readmissions, together with resignations.

AOB

Simeon Shtebunaev thanked the President, Carys Rowlands (Head of Professional Standards) and Clare Corbett (Executive Director, External Affairs) for their help in facilitating a debate with the RIBA's student and associate members and the Commonwealth Association of Architects.

Outgoing members of Council:

The President thanked those members who were standing down on 31 August: Tim Bailey (North East), Jonathan Ball (National), Jane Duncan (Immediate Past President), Ruth Donnelly (Yorkshire), Mark Hodson (Yorkshire), Mark Jermy (East Midlands), Dominic Kramer (East Midlands), Richard Parnaby (RSAW), Mark Percival (National)

Reports for information:

- Membership report
- Membership subscriptions 2019
- Equality and Diversity update
- Architects for Change update
- Main committee reports
- Visiting Board report