

BRANCHOUT

No. 147

Spring 2011

<http://southwest.rtpi.org.uk>

Welcome from the Chair



Yippee – my year as Chair has started and I am really looking forward to it. Brett will be a hard act to follow but I am looking forward to the challenge of being your Chair as this is an exciting but very tough time to be within the planning profession. Here are a few of my thoughts to get you going.

So, 2011, another year and no doubt another flurry of changes for us to cope with. No doubt you have already managed to get fully up to speed with the

Decentralisation and Localism Bill (!) which eventually materialised on 13th December - very neatly timed in the busiest time of year leading up to Christmas. Although much of the contents of the Bill were expected I was personally a little disappointed that the suggested third party right of appeal had been dropped as I actually wrote my planning thesis on this topic back in the mid 1980's and was looking forward to seeing how many of the suggestions I made back then had made it into legislation.

The overall theme of decentralisation and giving back to communities is all very laudable and much of the content of the Bill is probably publicly welcomed. I am sure it is the right thing to do, giving communities empowerment but am I the only one who is cynical enough to think that many local people really are not going to be bothered about doing something for the benefit of their community with little money and little support? I suppose we will just have to wait and see but to me it seems that this is going to lead to even greater divisions in society between those communities who do chose to work together and who have the time and money to accomplish things and those who cannot do this or chose not to. I do feel the Bill presents a bit of a mixed bag in this sense.

A whole new raft of legislation and guidance documents will be required to bring about the changes that are proposed. There have been many very worthwhile announcements but at the moment there is still a lot of "flesh to put on the bones" and questions to be answered and no doubt this will emerge over the coming months and I look forward to the conference series where hopefully many of these emerging issues will get discussed.

And, as well as the Bill itself, what about the National Planning Policy Framework? Well, this has not been explicitly included in the Localism Bill and further details are eagerly awaited.

Then we have spending cuts, particularly hitting the local authority sector but inevitably these will filter outwards and I can't see this year being an easy time for any of us financially. Obviously, there will be winners and losers, Planning Aid in particular, must get a mention here with the cuts in funding putting this vital service at risk at a time when Planning Aid is much needed to support local people and communities through changes which affect them – isn't that what 'localism' is all about or have I missed something here? Further job cuts in both public and private sectors are also anticipated which mean for those who are lucky enough to retain a job, it's more work for less pay yet expectations will remain high, and for those seeking employment a broad skills base is going to be key to success.

Fuel bills are rising and for an area as rural as the south-west this can only have a devastating effect on the economy and impact on rural communities. But is it all doom and gloom? Well, I hope not, I think there are some real opportunities for planners to make a difference provided we embrace the changes and accept that change isn't necessarily all bad. The planning system has adapted over time and I for one have seen my own role and skills base change dramatically from what it was even just fifteen years ago.I have very fond memories of the very first team computer at Taunton Deane which took up the whole of one work station area and of the shared office mobile the size of a brick. Where would most of us be now without a computer on every desk and a mobile, or even two, in every pocket?

"The times they are a-changin'" to quote Bob Dylan.
Plus ca change!

Jean Marshall

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All Change at Planning Aid in the South West

You may recall that I always introduce my articles with what I hope is a witty little quote and this quarter's one seems particularly apposite...

There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know. DONALD RUMSFELD

Whilst our energies have been focussed on a "business as usual" approach with volunteer engagement to the fore over the winter, clearly much of the impact of the Government's announcement on Planning Aid funding still has to be seen and plenty will happen from now until the 31st March. Planning Aid's national network of over 1200 volunteers are being represented by the Chair of each Regional Advisory Panel on the Planning Aid England National Advisory Panel and will be informed of the results of their continuing discussions through the usual volunteer channels, mindful the most current RTPI statement is that;

The RTPI has responded to the Department for Communities and Local Government announcement that it is now inviting applications from eligible organisations for grant funding under its Supporting Communities and Neighbourhoods in Planning scheme.

Sue Percy, Director, Professional Services, Royal Town Planning Institute, said:

"We are very pleased that ministers have now published the funding prospectus and have invited applications by February."

"This will enable Planning Aid England, which is set to lose all of its existing funding, to prepare a bid to provide planning advice, guidance and support to communities. We believe we are very well placed to deliver the types of high quality, professional and completely impartial services that will allow communities and community organisations to engage effectively with the planning system in the way the government wants."

"The decision to end grant funding to Planning Aid England was a severe blow but we recognise that the government is looking at different approaches to supporting communities in the field of planning."

SWPA VOLUNTEER WINTER TRAINING PROGRAMME



We have been committed to delivering training for our volunteers with the offer of free local training events in November and December. Over 25 delegates heard 3 volunteers deliver a series of Environmental Planning Made

Easy presentations over a November morning session at the Imperial Pub in Exeter (one of the presenters, John Bosworth, is pictured right delivering his session). Event feedback by extremely positive, with great emphasis placed on volunteers training each other and there would certainly be an aspiration to repeat this event elsewhere if the situation presents itself after March.



A second training briefing to volunteers was equally well attended and received at the start of December, at Exeter's Corn Exchange by Planning Aid's National Planner, Sue Manns, focusing on potential impact of the Localism Bill. Other events of a similar nature were held in our other regions.

Copies of each presentation are available by contacting our Administrator, Chloe Buckingham, on swadmin@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

As in my previous articles and even more so in this particular article, I wish to offer my personal thanks to all our network of volunteers who have over many years given their time and energies in supporting our community planning and case work activities. My thanks should be also shared by officers and the executive of the RTPI SW Region, who have been superb champions of Planning Aid since its inception all those years ago.

In particular I would like to highlight those volunteers on our Regional Advisory Panel and especially our Chair Mike Oakley, who provides very real friendship, support and guidance, in enabling such a positive performance within our operational framework.

Much remains unknown looking forwards, though our volunteers are being provided RTPI/Planning Aid updates when made available through their usual channels, and if I am not in a position to offer further articles, I can truly say that it has been a pleasure working with, and for, our volunteers in helping support the hard to reach in the South West to positively engage within the planning system!

PETER ORBAN Manager, South West Planning Aid
swco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk/0117 929 7292

The decision to end Government funding for the Planning Aid service in England at the end of March 2011 was discussed at some length at a joint meeting of the RTPI SW Regional Management Board and Regional Activities Committee in mid January. It was subsequently also considered at a meeting of the Planning Aid SW Regional Advisory Panel. In both cases it was resolved that every effort must be made to maintain the Planning Aid service in the South West under the auspices of the RTPI. The form of the future service, after 1st April 2011, will be very dependent both on the RTPI's national policy on planning aid and also on the scale of funding granted by the Government from its new fund which aims to support communities and neighbourhoods in developing the new Neighbourhood Plans (see Peter Orban's report above). The RTPI SW is particularly concerned at this time to assure all planning aid volunteers that, whatever the final form of the future planning aid service is in the region, their experience and expertise will continue to be crucial in providing advice on a range of planning issues to these individuals and groups who, for financial reasons, are unable to seek other professional planning advice.

Mike Oakley RTPI SW Assistant Secretary and Chair Planning Aid SW Regional Advisory Panel

RTPI SW Regional Management Board/Regional Activities Committee Meeting 21 Jan 2011



RTPI SW Joint RMB/RAC Committee 2011 – for full details of 2011 Committee go to <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/387&ap=1>

A surprise return to the Chair!

- Due to the unforeseen unavailability of this year's Chair and Senior Vice-Chair our past Chairman, Brett Spiller nobly stepped in to the breach to chair the meeting of the Management Board and Activities Committee on 21st January.
- The meeting received an excellent presentation from Mark Pearson of Creating Excellence about the future of Design Excellence in the South West ably supported by Jim Claydon, Chair of the Design Programme Steering Group and Board Member of Creating

Excellence. Local authorities and other public bodies are being invited to subscribe to a programme of design support that will provide cost-effective access to the services that they need to deliver successful local projects, better places and stronger communities.

- The meeting received a report on the future of Planning Aid, which despite its truly outstanding record will lose its current government funding at the end of this financial year. Although there is to be an alternative source of funding for "neighbourhood planning" and for which the RTPI can make a bid, it appears the dice are loaded against success in the way in which the rules for bidding are framed. It is even possible that the operation of Planning Aid may return to the RTPI Regions as it was prior to 2004. Options for continuing Planning Aid are being explored so watch this space for developments.
- It is confirmed that the annual dinner this year will take place on Friday 1st July – book early to avoid disappointment. Previous dinners have been excellent occasions and this one will be too!
- An update on policy work by Geoff Walker, RTPI SW Policy Officer. A full report can be viewed at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3029&ap=1>

"What has the RTPI ever done for me?"

According to Ann Skippers, last year's President, this question accounted for about 90% of the emails she received during her presidency, so at the December Regional Activities Committee meeting we collated a few facts and figures that we wanted to share with you.

We are a member organisation, dependant on subscriptions and income from our CDP series. We do get some central funding from RTPI HQ although, for reasons I still can't understand, ours is one of the lowest grants in the UK.

What we do, we do for you, with your money. If you think we could do things differently or better, then please let us know. We are not a closed shop and try very hard not to be a talking shop. We are only as good as the people who chose to get involved.

So, what did we do for you last year? Amongst other events, we;

- Ran 11 affordable CPD events, attracting 1106 delegates (by contrast, one other Region ran only 4 events).
- Ran 2 workshops for planning support staff.
- Organised and contributed to several Young Planner events, including the MATRICS Ball and an APC event in February.
- Raised the profile of planning in the region by attending events with organisations including RIBA and CIH.
- Hosted a presidential visit to the region.
- Organising the 3rd annual RTPI SW dinner event in Exeter.
- Attended the careers fair at UWE and Plymouth University.
- Published 4 editions of Branchout.
- Replied to over 40 consultation documents.
- Attended the RTPI General Assembly meetings and Regions and Nations Panel.

- Judged the regional planning awards and attended the award ceremony.
- Sponsored awards for planning students at UWE and attended the award ceremony.

We think that this is a fantastic effort; given that this is for most of us something we do in our spare time, although we would not be able to do half of this without the huge amount of support that we get from Helen Clarke, the Regional Coordinator and Geoff Walker, the SW's Policy Officer.

Mike Harris is the new Young Planner rep in the SW, taking over from the sterling efforts of James Holbrook. Mike is in the process of establishing a Young Planners Steering Group which will be working to deliver more events and support for Young Planners. If you are interested in attending any events or getting involved, please contact Mike at: ypsouthwest@gmail.com.

For those of you unfamiliar with the inner workings of the RTPI we have a regional representative, Janthia Algate, who attends General Assembly (GA) on your behalf, with the remit of representing the SW and reporting back to the Regional Activities Committee (RAC) and Regional Management Board. Other members of the RAC also sit on GA, including Don Alder, Kath Haddrell and Richard Williamson, although there are many other SW planners on GA as well. The purpose of GA is "a forum for debate about the development of planning policy and practice. It is also responsible for the RTPI's corporate policy".

Don is also a member of the Executive Board, which is responsible for the management of the RTPI, including senior appointments.

Hopefully you will have read the pen portraits of the Regional Activities Committee in the last and future issues of Branchout and realised that we are a diverse bunch of planners from around the SW and the Channel Islands, including, inter alia, junior and senior officers in central and local government, academic institutions and the private sector.

Kath Haddrell, Editor

RTPI SW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – The RTPI SW Annual General Meeting will take place on Friday 8th April 2011 at 12.45 pm. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/646zt9x> for further details.

RTPI South West Planning Achievements Awards 2010

sponsored by WYG Planning & Design



The RTPI SW Planning Achievement Awards presentation was held on Monday 24th January 2011 at the Urban Reef Restaurant, The Overstrand, Boscombe. The Awards and Commendations were given in the annual competition run by the RTPI SW in which entries are judged by a panel of professional peers. To achieve an award, entries must demonstrate something beyond the ordinary and be seen as a significant planning achievement in both a regional and possibly national context.

There are two categories – “schemes on the ground” and “other planning work”. For 2010 the judges had eleven entries to consider. The Awards were presented by Brett Spiller, RTPI SW Chair 2010 and David Lowin, Planning Director of WYG Planning & Design which sponsors the awards. The winners were:

Boscombe Spa Village Regeneration Scheme Bournemouth Borough Council

This is a high quality completed scheme, which includes the refurbishment of the previously semi-derelict Overstrand Building and the Grade II listed Boscombe Pier, the refurbishment of the nearby Boscombe Chine Gardens and the redevelopment of a former car park by Barratt Homes as the 'Honeycombe Chine' apartment complex. In addition, an artificial surfing reef has been constructed a little way offshore. All of this has involved extensive community involvement throughout. The Boscombe sea front has been transformed into a high quality beach and 'surfing destination', attracting significant new private commercial investment. This scheme is seen as an exemplar for what could be achieved in other seaside resorts in the South West and nationally, in which initial teething problems with the surfing reef, should in no way be seen to detract from what is a significant planning achievement.

Winner of the 'schemes on the ground' category and overall winner of the 2010 competition.



L-R Cllr Peter Charon, Bournemouth BC; David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller, RTPI SW Chair 2010 & Mike Holmes, Bournemouth BC

Kingston Mills, Bradford on Avon The Nash Partnership, Bath

This scheme, for a comprehensive mixed use redevelopment of the former Avon Rubber factory along the riverside in the heart of Bradford on Avon, is seen as an outstanding example of a planning and design process, working closely with the local community, that has tackled and overcome significant site constraints and problems that defeated previous redevelopment attempts. Significant progress has already been made with the scheme on the ground.

Joint winner in the 'other planning work' category



L-R David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller; Edward Nash, Nash Partnership

Redefining Sturminster Newton Matrix Partnership

Here, the completed and realistic Town Design Statement and Development Brief, illustrate the beneficial outcome of a close working partnership between an proactive local community group ('Sturquest') and a supportive local planning authority (North Dorset District Council). This represents a model which could potentially be replicated in other small market towns in the South West and nationally.

Joint winner in the 'other planning work' category



L-R David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller; Nicola Laszlo, North Dorset DC & Sturquest; Ben Baillie, Matrix Partnership

OTHER PLANNING WORK ENTRIES

Chard Regeneration Framework LDA Design & South Somerset District Council

Chard, which is not a traditional rural market town, has suffered greatly in recent years due to the loss and running down of a series of industries. LDA Design has produced a realistic regeneration strategy, with notable local community involvement, based upon phasing of proposed development linked to essential new highway schemes. The approach is seen to have wide application in settlements of this scale.

Commendation



L-R Fraser Osment, LDA Design; David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller; Andrew Gillespie, South Somerset DC

**Exeter Area & East Devon Growth Point :
Green Infrastructure Study & Strategy**
LDA Design

A pioneering approach to the difficult task of co-ordinating policy-making and actions on a wide range of issues across local authority boundaries. Also a good example of planning to reduce the impact of major development on sensitive 'green infrastructure' assets.

Commendation



L-R Fraser Osment, LDA Design; David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller; Neil Blackmore, East Devon District Council

Bridgwater Strategic Framework
Gillespies

A good example of an effective joint working partnership between an active, community based organisation ('Bridgwater Challenge', now 'Invest in Bridgwater') and a supportive local planning authority (Sedgemoor District Council), all co-ordinated by consultants. A key element here has been mutual commitment to community consultation – something that has, historically, been difficult to achieve in the town. Also impressive is the use of documents produced by this work as part of the evidence base for the Sedgemoor's emerging Core Strategy.

Commendation



L-R Paul Sobczak, Sedgemoor DC; David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller; Barry Williams, Gillespies

Clay Country Vision

Terence O'Rourke Ltd in association with Orascom, Imerys, The Eden Project, and Cornwall Council.

This entry relates to proposals for a massive multi-nuclear Eco-town, which would be the most significant development in Mid Cornwall for many years. The opportunities for environmental and economic regeneration here are many and the operational scale is vast. The consultant's 'Context & Analysis' and 'Framework Proposals' documents are both excellent in format and innovative in producing a 'Vision'. A good start to what is a huge regeneration challenge.

Commendation



L-R David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller; Paul Rogers, Terence O'Rourke

**SCHEMES ON GROUND CATEGORY'
ENTRIES**

Gloucester Quays
WYG Planning & Design

This scheme, for the redevelopment of a large site in the southern part of the historic Gloucester Docks, includes high quality conversion of historic buildings and high quality new build (The Gloucester Quays Designer Outlet, hotel and multi-storey car park) blended together in an impressive way. Though not yet fully complete, the scheme is already proving to be of critical importance to the economic future of Gloucester.

Commendation



L-R Rob Eaton, Gloucester City Council; David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller; Rachel Robinson, WYG Planning & Design

**Granby Green & Cumberland Gardens, Devonport,
Plymouth**
Plymouth City Council

Here, two small public open spaces have been significantly improved, involving 'ownership' of and support of the local community. Close attention has been paid to safety and security issues and the work has involved the re-use of materials from other parts of the City. The involvement of the local community in local projects such as these, continues this Local Planning Authority's outstanding record of community involvement in the planning process.

Commendation



L-R David Lowin, WYG; Brett Spiller, Patrick Bowes, Plymouth City Council



Localism Seminar

Held in partnership with Baker Associates and No 5 Chambers



Just three days after the Localism Bill was introduced to Parliament, RTPI SW hosted and chaired a seminar at which Baker Associates and No. 5 Chambers sought to interrogate what the Bill will mean.

John Baker of Baker Associates and Peter Goatley of No 5 Chambers, gave presentations exploring the Bill and the implications it may have for the planning world. Mike Palmer of Plymouth City Council did a brilliant guest slot within John's presentation and then as part of a Panel taking questions from the floor.

The event familiarised those who hadn't had time to go through the 406 pages, 207 clauses and 24 schedules of the Government's proposals - in outline at least.

The matters highlighted by the speakers included:

- The abolition of RSS
- The retention of the LDF, with the adoption of DPDs by local authorities still requiring acceptance of the Inspector's recommended changes
- The introduction of the ability of qualifying neighbourhood forums to make plans for their places that can be adopted by local planning authorities as part of the development plan.
- The replacement of the IPC by the Major Infrastructure Unit at PINS.

Expected but not mentioned in the Bill is the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. It was rumoured this would be used to deal with planning applications in the absence of an LDF. A reminder again that there is more to be developed in the Bill, and of the great significance of the forthcoming National Planning Policy Framework.

The panel discussion at the end of the seminar focused on two areas: the implications for strategic planning, and the prospects for neighbourhood planning.

There is real concern about the absence of a formal requirement for strategic planning when housing is not being delivered and infrastructure decisions and funding are needed. The combination of a rather weak sounding Duty to Cooperate and the LEPs with a

strategic role but with only part coverage (and almost certainly without a planning or housing role) didn't feel too promising to participants.

Everybody seems to believe in communities bringing more of their concern for their places into planning. Real reservations were voiced about the representativeness of who might be involved under the provisions set out. What is clear is that unelected bodies do not have the power to make policies that will conflict with or inhibit the pursuit of plans by the local planning authority. In fact, with relatively little incentive, some complicated process checks and balances, and the prospect of very little resources, the speakers at the event found it hard to see a lot happening at the neighbourhood level.

After all of the uncertainty, the speakers were keen to encourage people in the planning world to avoid prolonging the hiatus, but to press on with what it is they need to do.

- **Local authorities** should be putting LDFs in place, developing their own housing numbers according to PPS3 and getting on with CIL - now confirmed as part of the toolkit and essential to bringing forward infrastructure in conjunction with development. They should also be working up a dialogue with potential community planners where neighbourhood plans would help take implementation forward.
- **Developers** should look at the possible role for community plans, and work with communities. They should seek to make their schemes wanted by the planning authority and communities, and above all appeal if things are not going ahead in time.

The Bill is now into its Committee stages, with a lot of discussion and many possible amendments expected. It is definitely a continuing story and one where the RTPI at every level is very active.

The Bill is certainly driven by a radical ideology. Whether what actually happens will be that radical depends who does what with the provisions as they are developed and enacted.

The RTPI SW would like to thank Baker Associates and No 5 Chambers for their assistance with putting on this timely event.

The Public Health White Paper – what does it say to planners?

As part of its reorganisation of the NHS, the government published its public health white paper "Healthy Lives, Healthy People" just before Christmas - www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Healthyliveshealthypeople/index.htm – with a number of supporting documents.

This may not have been bedtime reading for every planner, though perhaps it should, given the shared roots of planning and public health.

As well as the changes in how health services will be run, including the transfer of public health responsibilities to local government, it has a number of key messages for planners.

The white paper makes clear that pollution, air quality, noise, the availability of green and open spaces, transport, housing, access to good-quality food and social isolation all influence the health and wellbeing of the local population. All issues influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the planning system.

It goes on to say that improving the environment in which people live can make healthy lifestyles easier and that the environment we live in is one of the influences on our social and cognitive development, self-esteem, confidence, personal resilience and well-being, which impacts on our health and our life chances. It also goes on to state that climate change is one of the biggest public health threats of the 21st century, with the potential to increase health inequalities.

Thus the Government wants to adapt the environment to make healthier choices easier and to create healthy places to grow up and grow old in, that support people in making healthy choices, that makes these choices easier and that enable active ageing to become the norm rather than the exception. Addressing health inequalities remains a priority. To help achieve this the white paper makes a number of

proposals relevant to planners:

- Looking how to take forward health considerations in the new National Planning Policy Framework
- Creating a new designation to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities
- Increasing tree cover
- Active travel and physical activity to become the norm
- Better designed neighbourhoods and houses that support people's health and enable active ageing to become the norm rather than the exception
- Encouraging development of more homes that are accessible and that meet the needs of an ageing population
- Promoting physical activity by children and young people including access to high-quality physical education, encouragement of competitive team sports and supporting walking and cycling
- A new public health outcomes framework covering tackling the wider social, economic and environmental determinants of health and health improvement

Although the coming together of public health and planning is welcomed, it raises a number of questions about how this will happen, which the white paper doesn't answer.

The current consultation over the public health white paper that ends on 8 March 2011 and the national planning policy framework that ends on 28 February provides an opportunity to raise these and other issues.

The evidence base has informed the development of the White Paper.
Stephen Hewitt
Chair of Creating Excellence

Co-Leader
RTPI Healthy Communities Group

Specialist Professional Planner
Healthy Urban Team
Bristol City Council

informa
health
nhs chief
nhs chief

Celebrating 21 years of the agency project

This year UWE's Department of Planning and Architecture celebrates 21 years of the Agency Project, a module that delivers a valuable insight into planning practice for final year undergraduate students.

The module, which is currently managed by David Johnson, a senior lecturer within the department, successfully hosts approximately 80 students each year with organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.



Year four agency project students work with local representative, Ben Barker, to prepare a green infrastructure audit and plan for Bedminster, Bristol.

During the five weeks of the unpaid placement, students are required to produce a worthwhile and demanding piece of work to a brief agreed by both the host and the student. The module is well-received by the students who are able to gain some valuable experience via an opportunity that allows them to apply their knowledge and skills to a 'live' practical project. Employers have also found the module a rewarding experience, consistently commending the students on their enthusiasm and motivation and the new

ideas and experiences they are able to introduce to the host team. The Agency Project runs annually during May and June. We would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the module over the years, and would welcome expressions of interest from employers who would like to get involved in hosting students in the future. Please contact David Johnson (David6.Johnson@uwe.ac.uk) for more information.

Departmental news

The year is looking a busy one for the department. Highlights include:

- staff from the department have been invited to attend the 6th International Conference on Planning and Design to be hosted in May at the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan City, Taiwan;
- a conference on health and the planning system has been arranged at UWE for the 7th June by staff from the WHO Healthy Cities Collaborating Centre which is based within the department. The event is being developed in collaboration with the previous members of the NICE Policy Development Group which comprises experts with an interest in health and planning from across the country, and;
- funding has been received for a feasibility study into the setting up of a Health and Place Enabling Service (HAP-E) in the south west to help public health agencies and planners work closer together, especially in the context of localism and integration of public health into local authorities.

Details of the department's activities can be found on our web-page: www.uwe.ac.uk/et/pa



Brett Spiller presents Sarah Masters with her national prize

Celebrating student achievement

Brett Spiller attended UWE's graduation service in November 2010 and awarded prizes on behalf of the RTPI South West to the following students:

- Candice Coombs and Sam Kerek, who were jointly awarded for the best contribution to the planning profession based on the Agency Project;
- Jemma Davey, who was awarded for the postgraduate work making the best contribution to planning practice based on the Masters dissertation, and
- Camilla de Burgh, who was awarded for her performance on the MA Urban Design programme.

Further students also received commendation from the RTPI nationally, namely:

- Sarah Masters, for the best performance on an RTPI accredited undergraduate programme;
- Sarah Winfield, for achieving the highest mark overall in the final year of an RTPI accredited postgraduate programme, and;
- Maria Stasiak, for excellence in examinations in the Joint Distance Learning MA Town and Country Planning.

Congratulation to all of our prize winners.

CLIMATE CHANGE TRAINING

The RTPI SW is working with SW Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, to roll out in-house training on all aspects of climate change mitigation and adaptation. With a pallet of 11 different modules to choose from, the training can be tailored to suit the needs of your organisation.

The in-house training will be facilitated by CAG and will cost from as little as £64 per person*. Further details will be included in subsequent editions of Branch Out. If you would like further details please contact Helen Clarke, Regional Coordinator on southwest@rtpi.org.uk

*Based on 30 attendees attending a half day training session; excludes VAT.

Student Planning Activity Day A regeneration planning exercise in Teignmouth



Teams at Work

In October 2010, Teignbridge District Council was approached by a local school enquiring about the use of a brownfield site for a planning exercise for sixth form students with an interest in architecture, planning and surveying. Keen to help the schools, and to undertake early engagement in preparation for a secondary schools planning conference

scheduled for March, Teignbridge agreed to help.

A regeneration site in Brunswick Street, Teignmouth provided an ideal area for the exercise. Located just a few steps from the seafront, the 2 ha area features two council-owned former garage sites, a car park and several privately owned properties "ripe for redevelopment."

The Southwest RTPI supported the day through participation of Brett Spiller, and in providing prizes and career materials. Local professionals from architects Lacey Hickie Caley (LHC) and commercial agents Stratton Creber also volunteered a day's effort to work with and inspire the teams. About forty sixth formers, many of whom hope to go into planning, architecture and related fields attended the day.

The event was modelled on the successful schools' sustainable planning competition run by RICS, but with more focus on planning approaches. Prior to the workshop, students were sent background information for the area including planning policy, employment and retail assessments, heritage information and examples of development briefs. This provided the students with an introduction to the planning process in general and the area under study.

On the day students were placed in teams of four and were briefed with background talks on planning and viability before going on a short tour of the site. Their task was to identify their development objective for the site (eg, maximise profit, deliver community benefits, create and income stream) and to produce, within three hours:-

- a SWOT analysis of the site,
- a development plan showing layout, building heights, land uses etc,
- a Sustainability Appraisal,
- a Community Engagement Plan,
- and either a marketing strategy or press release about the site.

The level of concentration, and the results from the students, was amazing. All nine teams produced a high quality design and all provided an indication of the project viability – with some showing profit, and some demonstrating the need for enabling grants to deliver community benefit. Most of the groups produced mixed-use regeneration schemes delivering housing and commercial space. A few sought to maximise profit with high-spec housing and commercial space, and several provided innovative and specific plans to introduce low carbon buildings and lifestyle to the area. Connections to the seaside, and the local food and arts scene provided inspiration for many of the teams.

The professional panel, including Brett Spiller, Neil Emery from LHC, Ian LeGrice from Stratton Creber, and planning, heritage and regeneration officers from Teignbridge listened to short presentations and judged the groups. Using set criteria, the average score was 67% of available points with many scoring more than 75%. There were some very well thought-out ideas on the treatment of car parking, active frontages, and site layout. For example, one submission established a small area for town centre allotments to specifically provide a space for residents of neighbouring retirement flats to interact with the community.

The top prize went to a team from Colyton Grammar School in East Devon.

Their "Green Heights" proposal took inspiration from bed-zed, and featured a £4m redevelopment project which included flats, offices, art studios, and commercial space with residential on the first and second floor. A car share scheme and cycle space reduced the land take for parking and reinforced goals of delivering low carbon, active living.

The second and third place prizes went to two teams from Torquay Girls' Grammar School. Both teams had technically outstanding plans with one group excelling with their community engagement ideas.

In presenting the prizes on behalf of the SW RTPI, Brett Spiller, said:

"I couldn't help but be overwhelmed by the innovation shown by the students. The teams all showed a genuine interest and passion for regeneration, and displayed a real depth in their understanding of the practical issues involved in delivering development, from community engagement to viability. ... it was also very pleasing to see such a talented group of young people expressing a desire to enter the built environment professions."

The day was also very useful for Council officers. The ideas raised by the young teams are sure to provide inspiration as the council create a development brief for the site, and engage with the community.

For more information call Mary Elkington, Growth Point Project Officer, Teignbridge District Council on 01626 215466. mary.elkington@teignbridge.gov.uk

DIARY DATES

Friday 8th April 2011 – RTPI SW Conference – **Design & Masterplanning** – Venue: Steam Museum, Swindon
Cost £75+VAT for RTPI members, £85+VAT for non members. Special rates for full time students/retired/unwaged members.

Friday 13th May 2011 – RTPI SW Conference – **Infrastructure Planning** - Venue: Taunton Conference Centre. Cost £75+VAT for RTPI members, £85+VAT for non members. Special rates for full time students/retired/unwaged members.

Friday 1st July 2011 – **RTPI SW Annual Dinner** – see enclosed flier for further details.

Friday 15th July 2011 – RTPI SW Conference – **The Green Agenda** - Venue: Roland Levinsky Building, University of Plymouth. Cost £75+VAT for RTPI members, £85+VAT for non members. Special rates for full time students/retired/unwaged members.

Further details available from Helen Clarke, RTPI SW Coordinator, Tel 01823 250822 or email: southwest@rtpi.org.uk



Geoff Wyatt

The Region is sad to announce that Geoff Wyatt of Clarke Willmott & Clarke Solicitors, and formerly Planning Solicitor at Taunton Deane Borough Council, passed away in early February. Geoff was a Member of the RTPI and instrumental in running the Planning Club at CWC. He was a strong supporter of all our Regional activities and a true friend to many. He will be missed.

All contributions for Branchout to:

Kath Haddrell or Helen Clarke, RTPI SW Co-ordinator

Contact details:

Email: Kath.Haddrell@infrastructure.gsi.gov.uk Tel (day): 07976 898360

Address for correspondence:

Ground Floor, East Reach House, East Reach, Taunton. TA1 3EN.

The deadline for the next edition is 3rd June 2011.

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