



Brooke Smith Planning commended in RTPI National Planning Awards

Big things often come in small packages. Birmingham-based 'Brooke Smith Planning' has been singled out for special praise by receiving a commendation in the 'Small Planning Consultancy of the Year' category in the Royal Town Planning Institute, National Planning Awards held in London earlier this month.

The judges gave the 10 strong firm a specific commendation for its 'problem solving, commercial realism and a clear appreciation of sustainability'.

Louise Brooke Smith, Managing Director of 'Brooke Smith Planning', who was last year's winner of the 'Woman in Construction Award 2010', expressed her warm appreciation for the accolade. 'We are absolutely delighted with the award as the commendation honour has only gone to a handful of the awards finalists' she said. 'To have the support and endorsement of our peers and the professional recognition of the RTPI is fantastic'. Louise added, 'We are really pleased that the hard work of everyone in the team and the service that we deliver to our clients has been highlighted in this way'.

The company, which was established in 1994 has recently been re-branded from CSJ Brooke Smith, and has developed a new look for 2011 to reflect its expanding national client base. Projects undertaken by the Company include a the redevelopment of a listed property at

Pitmaston HQ in Birmingham, a housing renewal scheme for Orbit HA in Stratford on Avon and an appeal success at Bescot Retail Park in Walsall.

Advantage West Midlands won the top award in the 'Spatial Planning Projects' Category for their work in devising a Waste Strategy for the region. The aim of the study is to divert waste away from landfill and create green jobs for the region as part of a low carbon economy. More about this in the next edition. ■



Louise Brooke Smith and Will Charlton collect the RTPI award from the National President, Richard Summers.

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Message from the Chairman

It was with great pleasure that I formally took over the role of Regional Chair from Stephen Hill in January to represent the RTPI in the West Midlands.

Stephen has done a fantastic job as Chair over the last 18 months and I would like to record my thanks for his hard work and dedication. Steve organised several very successful local debates on the future of planning in the region and there were many other CPD and networking events. I want to maintain and build upon these initiatives over the coming year.

As I set out in the last edition of Tripwire, the West Midlands is my home region and I am looking forward to representing the RTPI in our region this year. My focus for the coming year is 'to support the planning system and all planners in the West Midlands during these challenging times'. I think it is important to promote the successes of planning in the West Midlands and to deliver a mix of CPD, discussion and networking events across the region that are genuinely accessible to our members.

Planners and the West Midlands *Region* (err... if we can still say that word?) are facing

unprecedented challenges. The combination of Local Authority and Central Government funding cuts and the slow recovery in the development industry will leave many areas of the West Midlands in limbo. Planning and regeneration departments may also not have the resources to assist the private sector to bring forward schemes quickly, thus, slowing the recovery even further.

The recent announcement that CLG funding for the Planning Aid England will be cut from April 2011, will mean that this valuable service that assists local communities to engage and influence change in their own areas, will be significantly reduced and potentially removed from some parts of the Country. And let's not forget, the cuts do not even come into effect until April, so we don't know what the true implications will be once planners currently in post are lost.

As some of you may know, I am also currently Chair of the West Midlands Planning Aid Advisory Group, a role likely to become redundant after March. My intention in becoming Chair of both Planning Aid and RTPI West Midlands simultaneously was to reinforce the historic link between the two. In

the light of the announced Planning Aid cuts, this link is now even more important than I had originally envisaged. The slow reduction in a permanent Planning Aid presence in the West Midlands, the expected closure of the office in Ludgate Hill and loss of the experience and trained staff after March is likely to mean that RTPI West Midlands again takes on a leadership role for Planning Aid in order to ensure that existing volunteers are retained and that this valuable service is maintained at a sustainable level.

I know that developments are moving quickly on this matter and the RTPI is working hard behind the scenes to ensure a credible nationwide service is maintained after March 2011. However it is clear to me that Planning Aid in the West Midlands will be 'downsized' and we will need to remain vigilant that the successes of recent years are retained in the longer term. I will keep you updated.

So the key challenge for the RTPI and all planners is to ensure that the positive outcomes that planning can bring are highlighted in the debate about funding cuts and the Localism Bill. As Chair of RTPI West Midlands I will seek to highlight these benefits to the decision makers and represent your views.

At the same time, RTPI West Midlands is bringing forward an initiative for unwaged planners to access many of our successful CPD events free of charge. This initiative is on a 'first come, first served basis', so please contact Sue Griffiths-Jones westmidlandsbranch@rtpi.org.uk if you are interested in taking up this opportunity. This is just one of the ways that we are helping unemployed planners in the West Midlands during these challenging times. I will keep you posted of other initiatives, and would also welcome other ideas from you too.

The year ahead is likely to be both interesting and challenging and I have not under-estimated the importance of taking over this role at this period of radical upheaval in the planning system. In order to represent your interests, I would welcome your views and ideas on the services the RTPI and RTPI West Midlands provides and in particular any suggestions as to how we can assist members in the future.

In addition, I should be interested to hear your views on projects and initiatives that show localism in the planning system in action. Please feel free to email me at: mw@alliance-plan.co.uk

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the date for this years RTPI West Midlands Summer Ball and Awards has been fixed for Friday 8th July. I hope to see as many of you as possible there. ■

Mark Walton

Chair, RTPI West Midlands



John Acres welcomes Mark Walton as the new RTPI West Midlands Chairman.

The Localism Bill

The Government's 'Localism Bill' is arguably the most significant piece of proposed legislation to affect the planning profession since the 1947 Act. Following its introduction to the Commons on 13 December 2010 (reported in the last edition) the Bill received its 2nd reading on 17th January 2011 and is now going through its formal Committee stages. It is not expected to be enacted until next year.

The RTPI has closely followed the drafting and subsequent passage of the Bill and has undoubtedly been influential in affecting its content. Full details of the Institute's angle on the Bill can be seen on the RTPI website.

Briefly the RTPI has:-

- Produced briefing papers for all MP's outlining the RTPI's views,
- Circulated a consultation paper to all RTPI Networks, Panels and Regional Committees seeking their comments
- Encouraged members to write to their local MP and set out key issues for them to consider as the Bill passes through the Committee stages,
- Submitted written evidence to the Bill Committee
- Submitted an amendment to Clause 90 on the 'Duty to Co-operate'.
- The new Chief Executive has given evidence to the Bill Committee.

There are 5 key points to the RTPI's position:-

- It supports the concept of the National Planning Framework but wishes to see it

embodied in statute within the Bill and be given a Spatial Dimension,

- It welcomes the strengthening of the Local Development Framework, now likely to be renamed as Local Plans,
- It welcomes the provisions for more community engagement but feels the Neighbourhood Planning proposals need to be simplified
- It is concerned over a lack of resources to implement the community engagement proposals – through the removal of support for Planning Aid,
- It considers that strategic planning should be strengthened.

What's going on in the Region?

In addition to feeding our comments back to RTPI HQ, the RTPI West Midlands region has staged two very successful joint events on the Localism Bill.

On 17th December 2010, just days after the publication of the Bill, the RTPI and No5 Chambers held a valuable seminar to convey the contents of the Bill to members.

More recently, on 17th February the RTPI and solicitors DLA Piper staged a 'Breakfast Briefing' event to take a more reflective view of the Bill, consider its wider implications and to convey the work being done by the RTPI to refine its clauses for the benefit of the planning world.

Both of these events were well very received by the delegates and were over-booked with a waiting list of people who would have liked to attend. Sadly, however in both cases there were a large number of absentees on the day who didn't sent

apologies thereby denying others the opportunity to attend the seminar. The situation is summed up nicely in the following email which was received just after the joint RTPI/DLA seminar.

'Hi Sue,

A quick note to send my thanks to you and to say how much I enjoyed the 'Localism' event this morning. The speakers provided an excellent overall summary of the Localism Bill and its potential implications, both good and bad for planning, development and the economy.

If you have an opportunity, please pass on my thanks to the speakers and to colleagues at DLA Piper for hosting the event.

It was mentioned by Stephen Hill that the overheads accompanying the presentations would be available, on request, and by e-mail. I would therefore be grateful if you would send a sent to me in due course.

On a somewhat downbeat note, it was noticeable, at the conclusion of the event from how many name badges had not been used; presumably resulting from a large number of no-shows. This must have been particularly disappointing for the speakers, the hosts and you. The organisation and catering that is required to put on such events is not insignificant and the fact that it is apparently 'free' should not be a factor when asking to be included on the guest list.

Many thanks once again and look forward to seeing you at the 'Employment law' seminar.

Best wishes Rajeev Prakash RP Strategies' ■

The Great Debate – focuses on the 'Localism' theme

For the 5th year running, the Great Debate incorporating representatives from across the Built Environment professions was held at the Nyquist Theatre at the Arup Campus, Blythe Valley Park in Solihull – this year organised by the Institute of Civil Engineering.

The 5 panellists, from RTPI, RIBA, RICS, ICE and HCA tackled a range of questions mostly focused around the concept of 'localism' and the problems facing the West Midlands region. The event was chaired by Professor Kathryn Moore from the Landscape Institute, who introduced the proceedings with her own thoughts.

What does the 'Big Society' mean? Will 'Localism' work? and does 'Localism' mean Nimbyism? were three of the key questions addressed by the panel. Our own Chief Executive, Trudi Elliot, representing the RTPI,

pointed towards political leadership as the key to delivery. The much travelled Professor Tom Foulkes, representing the ICE cited Hong Kong and China as examples where major projects are progressing. He felt we were right to worry about Nimbyism, as a barrier to growth. Paul Spooner, Regional Director of the Homes & Communities Agency felt we should play to the strengths of the West Midlands region.

However Ant Clerci from the RIBA reminded us that many of the traditional industries in the West Midlands, such as ceramics, manufacturing and motorcycles had now gone. Several of the panellists felt we needed to develop 'green' industries in the region. Martin Perks, Regional Chairman of the RICS suggested that we have an opportunity to retrofit buildings with energy saving solutions.

As always there were some positive contributions from the 80 strong audience

with some concern that the green infrastructure within the West Midlands should not be sacrificed in the desire to achieve economic growth. With Regional planning being 'air-brushed' out by the current Government, one wondered whether the co-ordinated political leadership would happen and how the holistic strategy for the region would be maintained. ■



Editorial Interview with Trudi Elliott, the new RTPI Chief Executive

Our October/November 2010 edition of Tripwire was the first regional magazine to announce the appointment of Trudi Elliott as the new RTPI Chief Executive. In this edition we score another 'first', an interview with the new Chief Executive after her first few weeks in office and at a time when her feet have barely touched the ground.

Tripwire asks some of the questions which are exercising the minds of planners in the region – and some which possibly aren't!

Question: What is the future for professional planners where local people are being given such a large stake in planning their communities?

Answer: The Localism Bill is currently going through Parliament and as I write there is still a considerable lack of clarity as to how the new neighbourhood planning system will operate in practice. At the moment the role envisaged for professional planners, as set out by Ministers, is one of supporting communities in developing a 'localist' vision for the future of their neighbourhoods. We argue that the new system, whatever its final form, will require more professional resources and capacity in order to fully support these communities. Local authorities will face a challenge in reconciling the need for additional capacity with enormous pressures on their budgets. But is also, I believe, an opportunity for planners to demonstrate their value to communities.

Question: How can planners deliver the progress and change which society needs when budgets are becoming so tight and jobs in both the public and private sector are being lost?

Answer: There's no getting away from the fact that budgets are going to be very tight for the

foreseeable future and this will pose huge challenges for the profession. We will all need to continue to argue as effectively as possible, making the case to national government, local government, and employers to recognise the value of planning in meeting key community and business aspirations. Delivering housing and new infrastructure, driving forward economic growth and recovery, risk not be achieved without adequate planning resources. Inevitably, given the restrictions on budgets, this will need new and imaginative ways of working, with planners in all sectors working more collaboratively with one another and other partners. Planners also need to have greater freedom to use their creative and innovative skills more effectively.

Question: What is the future for strategic planning in a climate where regional and indeed sub-regional planning is being lost?

Answer: The RTPI was successful, through leading the group of 30 national organisations who came together under the 'larger than local' banner to get the government to recognise the importance of strategic planning and for the need to go beyond their original proposals in this area. We have to recognise that Ministers view the system of regional planning from 2004 as a being failure and that they see 'strategic planning' as being largely voluntary. We recognise that voluntary arrangements for strategic planning have existed in the past but with varying degrees of success. What we need to ensure is that there are mechanisms in place to encourage local authorities to work together. A strengthened 'duty to cooperate' is essential to ensure that a group of authorities work together in partnership and to deliver common goals, especially controversial schemes such as everyone needs but may not want in their areas.

Question: How do you see the future for the West Midlands?

Answer: Even when all the evidence outlines the scale of the challenge, I am inherently optimistic for the West Midlands – I should be, it's where I live. It's also a microcosm of the country with areas of growth and opportunity and areas of challenge. In the absence of many regional institutions local authorities and the business community, the professions and the voluntary sector have got to step up. We need to continue to focus on skills, ensure localism and connectivity is a strength not a problem. The West Midlands local authorities had a long history of working together voluntarily and need to do so again for those communities need that at 'larger than local.'

And on a lighter note –

Question: Who is your personal role model?

Answer: My two grandmothers – they both worked, which was very unusual, but then they taught me how to bake!

Question: What drew you towards planning and where would you like to take the profession?

Answer: I'd like to see Planning seen inherently as part of the solution not part of the problem.

Question: Which places (at home or abroad) most inspire you?

Answer: Walking in the Wyre Forest takes some beating.

Editor: Trudi Elliott – thank you very much. ■

Most promising planning students win RTPI awards

Every year, the newly elected Regional Chairman makes awards, sponsored by the West Midlands RTPI, to the two most promising first year students in our two regional University planning courses.

This year's awards go to **Charles Haynes** from Birmingham City University and to **Kerry Walker** from the University of Birmingham.

Congratulations to them both! We hope they will both continue to excel in the remainder of their courses and ultimately have successful planning careers. ■



Tripwire celebrates 10th birthday!

Tripwire, the West Midlands RTPI Magazine, is celebrating its 10th birthday in its current 'red-topped' format and, like 'Planning' Magazine, deserves a bit of a facelift.

We are therefore, giving it a new livery, changing the format and spring cleaning the image – with some new and interesting features. We want to make it more appealing to readers, more of a sounding board for planners and in this current climate of 'localism', more responsive to local views and news.

We would also like to make 'Tripwire' more valuable to potential advertisers, whether planning consultants, local authorities, house-builders or the voluntary sector – so if you want to advertise for regional jobs (or maybe just want to get your message across to over 2000 planners in the region), please contact either the editor or

our Regional Co-ordinator, Sue Griffith-Jones, at the following email address westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk or see the advert on the back page.

We will continue to produce alternate printed copies of the magazine (3 times a year) for those planners who don't have access to a computer or prefer to receive 'the real thing'. But we will continue to circulate Tripwire every two months (6 issues per year) by email. We do not intend to follow the practice of some other regions and go for an email only magazine. However, if you do prefer to receive Tripwire by email only, please contact Sue Griffith Jones.

Our first issue in 2001 promised that Tripwire would be rewiRED and REDesigned so that it would be simply RED. Now we are giving it a fresh coat of paint so that in future it will be GREEN; to signify the GREEN apolitical stance of the planning profession,

the GREEN shoots of economic recovery and the GREEN environmental credentials of the planning profession – matching the 3 cornered social, economic and environmental facets of the 'sustainable development' concept.

Above all, we want to adhere to the objectives and ambitions we set out 10 years ago. We want to make it more topical, more absorbing and more entertaining so that it reaches all planners in the region

John (Green) Acres
Editor

Postscript: For those who are interested, the original 'Tripwire' newsletter dates from the early 1980's and was previously produced in black and white. The name Trip-wire was suggested by Richard Roper from Dudley MBC as a result of a competition amongst the readers and is an anagram of 'RTPI'. ■

Editor's thoughts

Britain is justly proud of its system of representative democracy. Whether one adheres to the philosophy of 'one person one vote' or favours some form of proportional representation, the outcome is broadly the same – that Governments are voted in on a broad manifesto, where the package of policies are rigorously debated prior to the election and then put to the test through the ballot box. The Government is then given up to 5 years to implement their programme – with little opportunity for public consultation, less still intervention.

With the exception of major constitutional issues, such as European integration, British people rarely get the chance to vote on individual issues. Normally the Government is expected to get on with the job, with her Majesty's opposition charged with the responsibility of monitoring and usually criticising their progress.

But things are changing. The gradual emergence of networked communications and instant messaging in the form of Internet, Facebook and 'Twitter' have opened up unprecedented opportunities for political influence, as we have recently seen in Egypt, Tunisia and now in Libya and Bahrain. No longer are Governments immune from the power of the electorate – they are suddenly at the mercy of pressure groups, demonstrations and campaigns as never before.

Last week, following an effective email campaign, the Government performed possibly the quickest 'U' turn in politics by abandoning the decision to consult on selling

off Britain's forests – admittedly probably the most poorly presented policy idea yet produced by the Coalition – and there may be more to come.

However, the 'Localism' Bill introduces a brand new concept, previously untried in this country, of having referenda more or less 'on demand'. Under Clauses 39-55 of the new Bill, as few as 5% or more of the electorate, or alternatively one or more elected members (confirmed by a resolution of the Council) can trigger a local referendum on any 'local matter', which must be held within 12 months. Whilst the result of the referendum is not binding on the Council, they must consider what steps the authority proposes to take to give effect to the result.

This seems likely to put immense pressure on local authorities, with one eye on the next local elections, to follow the mood of their electorate and accede to the whim of the people in supporting (or more likely objecting) to whatever proposal is being debated. The power of the Parish pump will inevitably hold sway as people (possibly devoid of all the facts and findings) take an instant view on the merits of major schemes and proposals. Put simply, carefully prepared proposals presented by planners (or developers) despite having been subject to full Environmental Assessment and possibly comprehensive public consultation, may yet be subject to a further test – that of raw public opinion.

It is impossible to judge at this early stage what the outcome of this 'referendum lottery' might be, but one thing is clear –

once the 'genie is out of the bottle', it is very difficult to replace it. Moreover, whilst there is much to be said for single issue consultation, it can only be a matter of time before all Government policies and proposals are subject to 'continuous assessment' by the public. We may be fast approaching the time when the red button on the TV screen becomes the ultimate weapon. ■

John Acres
Editor



Cutting Red Tape

Every incoming Government normally starts with a positive announcement about the need to 'cut red tape' – and the new Coalition Government was no exception.

One person's essential safeguards are often another person's mindless regulations, but there are so many examples of 'red tape' and it is often the planners who get the blame for introducing it in the first place.

Over the coming months Tripwire will be regaling your stories of being tripped up by regulations and 'red tape'. Here is just one example:-

It all started with our desire to replace the front door to Ripon Cottage, which is a Grade II listed building. The door, which was not an original feature of the cottage, is warped and ill-fitting and is slightly incongruous – we think it was probably recycled from another house by the previous owner. Above all, we wanted to make the cottage more secure after a burglary a few months earlier.

I contacted the Conservation officer at the local authority and explained our desire to replace the door with something more 'in keeping' with the cottage. After several phone calls, a site visit and an exchange of correspondence in which we were encouraged not to replace the door, I received an email from the Conservation Officer which in brief said,

'Dear Mr Acres, Thank you for your email regarding the replacement of the front door to Ripon Cottage and attached photographs, I draw your attention to my earlier email in

which I advised the door should be simple, painted softwood and that replacement of the existing door (although it is not thought to be historic) will require a listed building consent application. The application should include a Design & Access statement which makes reference to what is significant about the building, justifies replacement, explains why the alternative has been chosen (in the context of PPS5).details any historic fabric affected and details of pre-application guidance. You should submit a detailed application form, site location plan at 1:1250, colour photographs (before and after), joinery details, elevations showing the position of the door etc. (4 copies



of this information are required). Further valuable advice was provided.

Puzzled, I responded to the Conservation Officer by return:-

'Dear M, I am quite taken aback by your reply. Is it usual to require a full Design & Access Statement for replacing a front door? Could you please point to the policy document which advises that doors should be in painted softwood? Yours JA'.

The reply from the Conservation Officer was helpful but clear:-

'Dear Mr Acres, I confirm it is normal practice to ask for a D & A Statement for a front door – they are required for any application for Listed Building Consent. Where it comes to commenting on the access, I am assuming this will not really change, therefore a statement to this effect will suffice.....' (oh well that's all right then!).

PS: To save time, we have painted the door instead!

Do you have similar examples of red tape which need cutting? Emails or letters to the editor please, at the normal address. ■

John Acres



Redditch generates more heat than light

Redditch hit the headlines recently when it approved an application for the use of energy from the incinerator at Redditch Crematorium to heat the neighbouring Abbey Stadium Leisure Centre swimming pool. The decision was made by Full Council on 7th February 2011.

This is apparently the first time that 100% of the flue gas energy from a crematorium has been used in this way and the Council estimate that this could decrease Co2 emissions by 4% per year as well as creating one of the greenest Leisure Centres in the country.

The cost of the equipment will be a mere £39,000, but will result in

savings of nearly £15,000 per year, with the source meeting 42% of the Leisure Centre's heating demands. According to the Council some 80 – 90% of the consultation responses received have been in favour of the idea.

However, elsewhere in the Region, in Rugby, a proposal for a crematorium and 7500 plot cemetery in the village of Willoughby has received rather less support, with posters and placards against the scheme standing like gravestones all over the village. It is not clear whether the residents of Willoughby simply expect to live for ever. Perhaps they are simply concerned about the potential follow-up application for a heated swimming pool! ■



European Trip - A postcard from Poland

A small group of West Midlands' planners has made a further visit to Poland as part of the continuing exchange between the West Midlands and the Lower Silesia region. The exchanges, which have now run for about 10 years, don't just include planners, but each visit has tried to widen the interests represented to include architecture, transport and geology.

This year's visit included Margaret Wilkinson of *Planning for Real* and one of the main events was a demonstration of its techniques to planners at the Wroclaw city planning department. This form of participation is not practiced in Poland and was well-received by the hosts.

The other major event was a British-Polish conference on techniques for dealing with flooding. The Poles have much experience of flooding and it was interesting to see how their experience mirrors our own. Important talks were also held with officials of the Lower Silesia Region, who were concerned about the demise of regional planning in Britain and were worried that cooperation on a regional level might be a victim of the cuts at our end. The group was able to suggest how cooperation might continue.

It was not all hard work. The group made interesting visits within the region to a hotel, built in a beautiful mountain setting, but entirely without planning permission. They also went to the border town of Zgorzelec, which has struggled economically as a suburb to Gorlitz, in Germany. Increasing



Wroclaw's central square – Rynek at night.

cross-border co-operation should help its economy in the future. The catastrophic effects of major floods were seen at Bogatynia, where the clearing up operations were still underway.

The group was one of the smallest to take part in the exchange, with just 3 planners from our region- Christina Mannering (Sandwell), Michael Vout (Telford & Wrekin) and Martin Haslett (Warwick), in addition to Margaret Wilkinson. A very warm welcome was extended by the Polish hosts but to prove that the spirit of international co-operation is not dead, new members to the group would be very welcome. The next part of the exchange is likely to involve hosting a Polish planner in our region next year, and explaining our work to them.

This event was only one strand of the co-operation between the West Midlands and

Lower Silesia. In September Michael Vout took part in an international summer school organised by Wroclaw University of Technology which focussed heritage and was a joint venture with AESOP and the UN. Another level of co-operation is the 'Partnership for Good' which focuses on regional policy and cross-border activities (<http://p4g-project.eu>) where the future representation of the West Midlands is in doubt. ■

Anyone who would like to join the group should contact christina_mannering@hotmail.com

Martin Haslett



Flood damage at Bogatynia.

Urban Design Forum

My final event as Chair of the Urban Design Forum was the Annual General Meeting on Friday 25th February. Mike Vout from Telford & Wrekin Council has now taken over as Chair of the forum for the next year.

Following a short Annual General Meeting, Steve Dallaway from Birmingham City Council Housing Department gave a short presentation on the new Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust council house building programme.

Steve then led us on a guided tour of some of the recently completed Council houses which are part of a £26 million house building programme, which began in January 2010. The new family homes are being delivered by the Trust on Council owned land, which has been donated for free. These plans represent Birmingham's first major Council house building programme in almost three decades.

I am looking for volunteers from the forum to put themselves forward for the role of vice chair. For further information please email annabel.stott@me.com ■

Thank you

Annabel

Left: Merritts Hill.
Right: Admington.



Continuing Professional Development

..... Events Calendar :: March > June

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Non-members of RTPI welcome to attend.

THURSDAY 14 APRIL

EIA and Development Workshop A guide to effective EIA Delivery

The workshop will outline the EM process and its management, look at specialist topics such as air quality, archaeology, ecology and water, present case studies and provide an expert panel to discuss key issues for planning and answer questions.

Time: 10am to 2pm (registration & refreshments from 9.30am)

Cost: £35 incl VAT including lunch. Full-time students and the unwaged £15. Free places available for unemployed RTPI members seeking work.

Venue: Cameo Suite, Coleshill Hotel, Coleshill B46 3BG

Details & booking: Sue Griffith-Jones

Tel 0121 709 1599

Email westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk

FRIDAY 8 JULY

RTPI West Midlands Summer Reception & Awards Ceremony

Venue: Botanical Gardens, Birmingham

Time: 7.30pm

Cost: £40 incl VAT

Details & booking: Last year this event was fully booked with a waiting list.

To reserve your place, a table or to enquire about sponsorship opportunities please contact Sue Griffith-Jones

Tel 0121 709 1599

Email westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk

OTHER EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH

From Kyoto to Copenhagen to Cancun: Choosing the Path Less Travelled

Venue: Birmingham

Cost: Free

Organiser: The Cambridge Society (Birmingham Group)

Details & booking: Trevor Webb

Tel 07904 156 146

Email trevor@blackswanland.com

WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH

Talking Cities - Clarity and Complexity in the Public Realm

Venue: Birmingham

Cost: £5

Organiser: MADE

Details & bookings: Email info@made.org.uk

Tel Sally on 0121 363 0064

THURSDAY 17 MARCH

The Habitats Directive: A Developer's Obstacle Course?

Venue: London

Cost: £60

Organiser: Centre of European Law, King's College

Details & booking: Tel 0207 848 2387

Email cel@kcl.ac.uk

TUESDAY 29 MARCH

Wood in Construction

Venue: Burton-on-Trent

Cost: Free

Organiser: National Forest Company

Details & bookings: Tel 01283 551211

WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH

Implementing the European Convention: A Visual Assessment of Valencia

Venue: Birmingham

Cost: £5

Organiser: MADE

Details & bookings: Email info@made.org.uk

Tel Sally on 0121 363 0064

WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL - THURSDAY 14 APRIL Trees, People & The Built Environment

Venue: Birmingham

Organiser: Institute of Chartered Foresters

Details & booking:

www.charteredforesters.org/conference/

TUESDAY 14 JUNE - WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE

RTPI Planning Convention Planning the Big Society?

Venue: London

Cost: RTPI Members £339 +VAT,

Licentiatees £140 +VAT,

Students £99 +VAT

Organiser: RTPI

Details & bookings: Email

services@rtpiconferences.co.uk

Tel 0845 082 1171

SUNDAY 19 JUNE - WEDNESDAY 22 JUNE

International Urban Design Summer School

Venue: Birmingham

Cost: £895 +VAT early bird rate until 31st March

Organiser: MADE

Details & bookings: Tel 0121 363 0064

Email info@udss.org.uk

RTPI YOUNG PLANNERS' CONFERENCE 2011, BIRMINGHAM 'PLANNING FOR GROWTH'

The Annual RTPI National Young Planners Conference is coming to Birmingham in October 2011 and is being organised by YPwestmids.

The success of the conference will depend on the ability to raise sufficient sponsorship.

We would like to invite your organisation to sponsor the Conference, which would deliver many benefits including helping to raise your organisation's local and national profile and promote your organisation to the planning community of the future.

A number of sponsorship opportunities are available, including sponsoring welcome drinks and the formal dinner; workshops; study tours; and having a stand at the exhibition.

We would also be pleased to discuss any assistance that your organisation could offer 'in kind'.

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