

General Assembly Meeting Minutes, 19th January 2022

10.30am, Hybrid meeting – Venue: The Royal Society of Arts, 8 John Adams Street, London, and Virtually via ‘Big Marker’

Chair: Wei Yang, RTPI President 2021(in person) and Timothy Crawshaw, RTPI President 2022 (in person)

Virtual attendance: Andrew Taylor; Andrew Trigger; Andrew Martin; Adele Maher; Aidan Culhane; Alison Blom-Cooper; Alice Lester; Atefeh Motamedi; Bernadette Hillman; Carol Ramsey; Cara Chambers; David Lowin; David Stovell; Deb Upadhyaya; Emily Kitching; Gabrielle Appiah; Giuseppe Zanre; Gwen Thomas; Helen Fadipe; Janet Askew; James Wilson; Jayanand Kumaraguru; Jeffrey NG Tsz Lok; Joanne Harding; Jennifer Winyard; Joanna Dymowska; John Collins; John Dagg; John Coleman; John Powell; Judith Onuh; Jean Florence-Churchill; Jennifer Winyard; Kirsty Macari; Layla Vidal-Martin; Laura Webster; Lubaina Mirza; Lynette Swinburne; Lindsey Richards; Mark Southgate; Meeta Kaur; Michelle Quan; Neil Harris; Paul Bateman; Paul Lemming; Peter Geraghty; Martin Edwards; Maria Dunn; Michael Vout; Nicky Linihan; Niall Byrne; Olafiyinfoluwa Taiwo; Pippa Cheetham; Rebecca Dewey; Robyn Prince; Sarah Platts; Sean Taylor; Stefano Smith; Sue Manns; Tola Amodu; Thaddaeus Jackson-Browne; Tania Skelli; Tom Venables; Tony Crook; Uche Echezozo;

In- Person attendance: Sue Bridge;

Apologies for absence: Sean Fox; Samer Bageen; Laura Archer; Maria Dunn

In attendance: Victoria Hills (Chief Executive) (In-person); Sukhpreet Bhatia (Governance Manager)(Virtual attendance); Simon Creer (Director of Communications)(In-person); Craig McLaren (Director of Scotland & Ireland) (Virtual attendance); Roisin Willmott (Director of Wales & Northern Ireland) (Virtual attendance); Simone May (Governance Officer)(In-person); Lucy Barton (Regional Co-ordinator London) (Virtual), Sarah Woodford (Head of English Regions) (Virtual); Lesley Mitchell (Head of Human Resources & Compliance) (Virtual), Jennifer Bosiacki (Head of Finance) (Virtual), Deidre Wells (In-person)(Item 5)

S. No.	Agenda Items
1.	<p>Welcome message by the President of RTPI and the Chair of General Assembly, Wei Yang</p> <p>The President and Chair welcomed everyone to the first General Assembly meeting of 2022. The President and Chair stated that she had very much hoped to welcome everyone in person but unfortunately due to the covid situation it was not possible.</p> <p>The Chair gave an overview of the agenda for the day.</p> <p>The Chair reflected on 2021 and reported that the RTPI had finished 2021 with a record number of 27,000 members and the Institute had worked very hard to build a case for positive planning. The RTPI have demonstrated how important the planning profession is to tackle the climate change, to deliver levelling up and to support agreeing recovery. She reported that the RTPI had won the Best Industry Institute Award in Black Professionals in Construction (BPIC) Awards 2021.</p>

	<p>The Chair thanked the CEO and staff for all their work and the Presidential Team Timothy Crawshaw, Sue Mans, and Sue Bridge for her leadership to the Board of trustees. She warmly welcomed Sue Bridge to the Presidential Team for 2022.</p> <p>The Chair reported since the last GA meeting in October, COP26 had taken place in Glasgow, which the Presidential team and Chief Executive attended. A positive case was made as to how planning can deliver a position solution to tackle the grander challenges of our times. The Chair reported that she had chaired a presidential dinner where about 20 presidents were invited from built and national environment institutes to talk about their shared professional responsibilities and how to deliver their joint commitment on how they could collaborate and achieve a zero carbon and prosperous future together. The Chair reported that she had drafted a joint charter and further input and endorsement would be sought from leaders from the RTPI sister institutes to demonstrate how they could work together with a shared vision.</p> <p>The Chair advised members that this was an important year with the Levelling Up Bill and the Planning Reform will conclude this year.</p> <p>The Chair reflected on her Presidential year she reported that she had visited all the RTPI Nations and Regions in person apart from Northern Ireland and Ireland which she met virtually due to restrictions in place. She clearly heard members frustration regarding planning resource and considered this issue where every she could and this including writing a paper for the last Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair reported that she had received one comment on the minutes from David Lowin, Southwest Rep regarding the debate on the 'Role and responsibilities of the General Assembly' as to why the open discussions were not recorded into the minutes. The Chair responded to this comment that it was a very broad and open discussion which had taken place and the discussion notes had been recorded separately.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the Chair of the Board, Sue Bridge to introduce her report.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>BOT Chair's Report</p> <p>The BOT Chair, Sue Bridge welcomed Members to the first meeting of 2022 and welcomed new members on to the GA. The BOT Chair asked members to receive the report as read but gave a few points on the report.</p> <p>The BOT Chair encouraged members to vote in the ballot and vote in favour of the motion.</p> <p>She drew members attention to 4.1 of the report, stating that the Board was disappointed that only 25 members of the GA put themselves forward for membership of standing committees this year, in addition, she brought to the committee's attention the very disappointing turnout by GA members to the elections of the trustees. She reported that one of the main duties of the GA members was that they vote for the trustees of the Board as representative of the whole membership. Only in 2019 was there a poorer turnout when it was 67.2% compared to 69% in 2021. She asked members the question was their barriers in preventing members voting in the trustee's election. She advised members that</p>

	<p>her inbox was always opened to receiving comments and if anyone had any comments, they were encouraged to email the Chair.</p> <p>The GA members noted the report.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><i>New Years' message/Chief Executive's Report</i></p> <p>The Chief Executive welcomed everyone to the first 2022 GA meeting and advised members of the top 10 priorities for the New Year. They were as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retrofit – to complete refurbishment of Botolph Lane. It was anticipated that it would be open to colleagues and members by late summer. It was a real opportunity to recalibrate the space in central London but also to provide better value for our members by providing touch down space. - Homes – to lead a conversation with colleagues and members on the right homes for the RTPI. - Lead – on governance to complete the programme of all changes considered over three years to the byelaws and regulations. How we lead ourselves and Project One Institute will consolidate with GA members and draw up a plan of action. - CHANGE – drive for delivery of projects, change on how we bring groups of individuals into planning, a pilot EXPLORE will be run for the first time for young apprentices. - Welcome – looking forward to welcoming first town planner apprentices as they are going through the final stages of their apprenticeships. Celebrating membership at the awards ceremony. - Togetherness – a whole host of events will be organised with something for everyone and showcase the very best of what planning has to offer. - Infinity – work will continue above and beyond with digital transformation, and it is important to bring in new digital intervention for smooth member experience. - People – delivery of the Volunteer Strategy and RTPI Volunteer People Strategy so we can get the attract and retain the very best talent we have. - Brand – delivery of some early work of a new RTPI Brand Strategy recalibrating our world leading brand. - Convene – utilise the power of the International Strategy to expediate the delivery of this important part of work and foster a programme of international collaboration with international partners. In the UK and Ireland, we will rally our brightest thought leaders to help inform and influence government policy. <p>The Chief Executive reported that there would be so much more that colleagues and volunteer members would be working on over the course of the year. As the RTPI stand strong at 27,000 members, not complacent but are confident that the year has started from the best possible position. She thanked the GA members for all they did and would do and wished them a great year ahead.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding the growth plan and that it had been noted that there had been an increase in Chartered members by just 15 compared to last year. The Chief Executive stated the global financial crash in 2008-2009 approximately, approximately 1,500 chartered members had been lost from an all-time high. Since 2017-2018 chartered members had slowly began to regain previous losses. It is an improving situation, and overall membership is the highest its ever been we are still recovering the actual number of chartered members we lost at the time of the global financial crash.</p>

	<p>ACTION: It was agreed that members could attend a membership briefing with the Head of Membership which would give further in-depth detail into the growth plan of membership, this would be followed up after the meeting.</p> <p>[post meeting note: it was agreed that this will instead take the form a presentation from the Head of Membership to all GA members at the June 2022 meeting]</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>GA Debate: The right homes for the RTPI</p> <p>The GA members were asked to note the summary and ‘stocktake’ of what has changed since the launch of the Corporate Strategy. The following points were raised: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Space to sub-let to be kept under review. - Another office or physical presence in Northern Ireland to be explored. - Net Zero carbon taken into consideration during proposals for the Botolph refurbishment. - To get more people into planning especially internationally, 10% growth in student and 5% growth in graduate. - A physical presence in the nations was good and it seems to be about right. - Support space being accessible to members. - Visibility in places like Hong Kong’s planning exhibition or partnering with planning schools internationally for support could be options. - Institute could have a role in promoting other planning organizations sharing their space. - Linking ‘homes’ to the regional bases and opening spaces to the next generation of planners by having young planners’ meetings there. - Mini Hubs in Universities could help with retention of international students as well as providing a base to promote the apprenticeship programme. - Office space must be at its cheapest and most available given the widespread shift to working from home and companies having downscaled their accommodation strategies/footprints. - Survey members and ask them how they might like to use Botolph Lane as a Hub. - Bookable meeting space – spaces where Planners can come together to have a collaborative discussion to design new places in person. - No drinking culture and no alcohol in building. <p>The Chief Executive asked for volunteers from the GA to join a working group / sounding board to keep the discussion going.</p> <p><i>[Post meeting note: no members have yet put themselves forward, and GA members are reminded of this opportunity should they wish to get involved]</i></p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Announcements and presentations of various awards</p> <p>The Chair of the GA presented the following awards: -</p> <p>Honorary Membership: Jeff Bishop <i>[this was presented virtually]</i></p> <p>Outstanding Services Award: Deidre Wells <i>[this was presented in person]</i></p>

	<p>Presidents Special Award 2021: National and Regional Chairs and National and Regional Young Planner Network for 2021 for planning achievement. <i>[The formal announcement was made at Wei's Valedictory Speech in the afternoon. Certificates were posted afterwards to each recipient.]</i></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Update from Committee Chairs: International Committee</p> <p>The GA members noted the slides presented.</p> <p>The previous Chair, Janet Askew thanked the President for her Presidential year stating it had been a very good one.</p> <p>She stated to GA members that she had very much enjoyed her time as Chair of the International Committee for the past four years and her main ambition was to internationalise the RTPI and the reason for this was because the RTPI have members in 80 countries and they carry the RTPI reputation, the RTPI is very well known around the world and has a very big influence, Young planners want the RTPI to be more international. She reported there were three things the international committee had achieved was implementing the new International Strategy which goes well with the RTPI's 10-year Corporate Strategy, it builds upon the many networks and the international work that had been carried out. The Strategy really develops the international work of planners across the world and the problems which we all share, climate changes, post covid solutions. There are many international partners through the Commonwealth Association of Planners, 54 countries, through to the Council of Spatial Planners, 47 countries, through the Global Planners Network and the UN Habitat. Young Planners also play a big role in this, the RTPI chair's the Commonwealth Young Planners Conference. The Strategy states that we must continue to make the RTPI more visible not to our own government but to other governments and helping planners all across the world where they are facing attacks on planning. The second point was about the work of the International Committee working across the RTPI departments and committees, internationalising isn't just for the international committee it crosses across all other activities. She thanked the Chief Executive for recognising this and the Corporate Strategy also recognises this. The Policy and Research team have been conducting international research, publishing it with international outreach. She thanked Michele Vianello and Richard Blyth for all their hard work and commitment. She reported that in education many accredited universities have great many international links and the international committee want to expand the influence in that which will help increase international members. The International Strategy was written from members from different committees which was important and welcomed. She welcomed Tom Venables who will be the new Chair for the International Committee.</p> <p>Tom Venables thanked Janet Askew for her tremendous work on the International Committee over the past 10 years and that the Strategy that had gone forward will be implemented and the committee will aim to achieve what has been set out. The internalisation of the profession was critical for survival and relevance of the profession, there was a lot that could be shared internationally as UK planners but a lot that UK planners could learn from what other countries are doing. He reported that he had been involved in setting up several events that hopefully can be continued for RTPI London, for example exchanging information with Singapore, Singapore have been digitised for years and have been using GIS on a day to day, this is something that we could incorporate for future planners. The internalisation was a key priority for growing members, important in growing our</p>

	<p>globally reach, important in our standing in the UK. He reported that there was a very strong committee of past and new members. The International Strategy as being crucial of the implementation of the Corporation Strategy and the continuation of the profession and this a lot of the roles of the committee moving forward. One of the aspects which is clear in the international committee is what can be done in the Nations and Regions to think Internationally, there were a lot more international groups have come forward in the nations and regions, he encouraged the regional representatives on GA to try and engage with the international committee including events, there were so many cross-international events which they could be involved in. Another focus of the committee was to ensure international recognition on international platforms and international events, the World National Forum is coming up in June in Poland, a link will be shared, and this event was open to everyone. The Head of Policy and Practice would be representing the RTPI at this event. COP27 is coming up this year and the international committee would be interested in this event and the outcomes from COP26 and ensuring a presence for the profession.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Summary and overview of the morning session</p> <p>The Chair concluded the morning session of the General Assembly and conclusion of her being Chair of the General Assembly.</p> <p>She congratulated Sue Manns, the Immediate Past President on her legacy across the nations and regions and across the Institute in championing diversity, she also congratulated her on the recognition of the State Honours award from the Queen.</p> <p>The Chair reported it was an exciting time for the planning profession and that there were 4 planners recognised in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours in 2021 and 1 in the Queen’s birthday list in the Summer. She stated that the General Assembly was a key platform for members to contribute, not only reflecting their views but also acting as an ambassador and to tell people that they are a member of the General Assembly.</p> <p>The meeting concluded for lunch.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Welcome back from 2022 President Timothy Crawshaw</p> <p>The newly elected President for 2022 and Chair of the General Assembly Timothy Crawshaw welcomed everyone back. He thanked Wei Yang and hoped that the afternoon’s session would be an interesting debate.</p> <p>He welcomed Zoe MacGregor for the debate on the ‘Volunteering Strategy’.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Debate topic: Volunteering Strategy</p> <p>Zoe MacGregor thanked the Chair for the introduction. Zoe reported that she would be talking about some of the work that had taken place so far regarding the Volunteering Strategy and four development areas for 2022.</p> <p>Zoe reported that the last time the Volunteering Strategy was discussed was at the General Assembly in 2019 and it looked at the draft Volunteering Strategy. There were four main areas of the Strategy: -</p>

- A shared vision for volunteering
- A diversity of opportunities
- A communicative and supportive environment
- Virtuous learning cycle

The Strategy was launched in 2020 in line with the Corporate Strategy and is a 10-year Strategy the debate today was to talk about what to achieve for 2022.

A staff Project Board and Advisory group was set up with terms of reference and consists of 12 members of staff across the organisation. Priorities for 2022 were our volunteering offer and being consistent across the RTPI, knowing and celebrating the impact and communication and engagement.

The GA members debated what they considered to be the potential benefits and challenges of the volunteering 'offer', how to ensure consistency across the Nations and Regions, International volunteers and in specific roles and committees, their current experience and what worked well and could be better. The following points were raised: -

- Safeguarding training needs to be addressed.
- Ensure all the appropriate insurances are in place.
- Consistency across the Nations and Regions, International volunteers and in specific roles and committees.
- Consistent induction process and ensuring the start is consistent.
- Seeing the impact on the ground, plus some sort of recognition.
- Learn from other volunteering organisations outside of the sector – the biggest in the country – as to how they recruit and retain volunteers.
- Better understanding of why our current volunteer's volunteer.
- Splitting volunteer constituency – information vastly different, what people need to do for their specific role.
- Retaining current volunteers.
- Keeping volunteers up to date with information. Sharing best practice, via conference twice a year perhaps?

The GA members then debated on how to communicate the activities of volunteers and their impact within the RTPI and in the wider community and how to raise awareness of the diversity of voluntary roles? The following points were raised:

- Email service on Planning Aid – true eligibility and process, cost benefit value to members.
- Difficulty in regional levels to join.
- Raising the profile of volunteer opportunities.
- Time and length of time – more about the impact the volunteer has.

The GA members discussed on how we can celebrate the impact volunteers have and when, are there milestones/key points that should provide recognition? The following points were raised:-

- Outstanding Services Award – regions to put forward more candidates.
- Gold Medal / State Honours
- Volunteer of the Year award
- Blogs/LinkedIn/Twitter

	<p>Zoe thanked everyone for their contribution and the useful and positive debate.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Update from Committee Chair: Membership and Ethics Committee</p> <p>Layla Vidal-Martin introduced herself as the new incoming Chair to the Membership and Ethics Committee (MEC) she gave an overview of what the Membership and Ethics Committee had worked on in 2021 and what they were seeking to achieve in 2022.</p> <p>Layla reported that the MEC takes delegated responsibility of behalf of the Board of Trustees for managing entry to membership, growing and retaining existing membership and maintaining professional standards, ethics and discipline. The Membership Assessment Advisory Panel and the Conduct and Discipline Panel also report into MEC. The strategic priorities were acquisition, requisition and retention of members as well as maintaining professional standards.</p> <p>The Committees work in 2021 focussed on developing GROWPLAN which is the 10-year implementation plan for membership growth support strategy and contributing to a Wellbeing Hub for the Institute. The Committee also worked on NURTURE which launched a pilot mentoring programme.</p> <p>Looking forward to 2022 the MEC will focus on: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implementation of GROWPLAN • Member Value Review • Member Engagement • NURTURE – evaluating the pilot • Streamlining processes and procedures for Digital Transformation • Supporting first apprentices through the Degree Apprenticeship • Reviewing the Code of Conduct <p>Layla thanked everyone and if advised members if there were any questions to contact her or the governance team.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Debate topic: What next for Planning after COP26?</p> <p>Craig McLaren gave an overview of what so far had been done for COP. He advised GA members that the COP26 summit had taken place on 31st October-12 November in Glasgow. It was an opportunity to highlight the importance of planning and planners in achieving net zero and climate change. There was a hub on the website of the useful things that have so far been done.</p> <p>The aims of COP26 were to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase understanding of the role of planners and planning can play in tackling climate change internationally across each of the 4 UK Governments, the Irish Government, and other national governments internationally. • Influence the COP26 discussions and debate, elevating the position of planning in tackling climate action. • Increase the profile of planning, planners and the RTPI. • Identify and highlight good planning practice to international audience and UK governments.

Actions that have been taken so far are:

- Plan the World We Need research and campaign
- Planning reform in England
- Planning Review in Northern Ireland
- National Planning Framework in Scotland
- Planning Review in Ireland
- Presidential meetings in COP26 Blue Zone
- COP26 Green Zone and Fringe engagement
- UK Green Building Council virtual pavilion
- UK Green Building Council virtual events
- Blogs series and social media
- RTPI COP26 web hub
- Events in regions and nations
- RTPI International groups

Craig thanked everyone for listening and handed over to Richard Blyth on what would come next for COP.

Richard Blyth gave an overview of documents that the RTPI had worked on over the past two years: -

- 5 Reasons for Climate Justice
- Strategic Planning for climate resilience in Liverpool City Region
- Place based approaches to climate change
- Planning for a better future

The RTPI were also working on the planning reform and the government's proposals of changing the national government framework in England. A need to develop design codes was being explored. Two 5-nation projects were being planned for 2022 focusing climate change, Brexit, covid implications, water supply, water treatment and water quality. A new research strategy that starts in February and this will work closely with accredited planning schools about their research and the RTPI's research and how they work together. There was also a new Research & Planning Committee that meets for the first time in March.

The GA members were asked to consider what we do with RTPI's research output and the impact of influencing. The following points were raised: -

- Important that the RTPI is a thought leader in terms of climate change and getting to net zero carbon. The difficult sectors of transport and domestic housing and power are central to what planning does.
- Welcome the better links between the accredited schools and the RTPI; important that Partnerships communicate.
- What can be done practically now, and also trying to lobby for change regarding planning and the circular economy; retrofit, what new skills are needed to deal with this.
- Consistent policy basis across the country; rather than many different local policies, in delivering take up, speeding delivery and reducing cost.
- Publish/promote our own Research papers.
- Promoting collaboration between big developers/LPA to promote Grid sharing and sustainable energy sources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing practical examples, highlighting where are issues and identifying potential solutions. • Integrating and aligning as far as possible public concerns on climate change with our strategy so that we go forward with an inclusive strategy. • Mapping the extent of green land take of development and what is being done to offset the carbon footprint and impact on the natural environment.
<p>12.</p>	<p>Closing words from RTPI President 2022 Timothy Crawshaw</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting virtually and in-person and for the great debates that had taken place at the meeting. The Chair closed the meeting.</p>

Approved,

Chair,
 Wei Yang/Timothy Crawshaw
 President 2021/2022