

Contents

Message from the Chair
Editors Blog
South West Young Planners
John Clotworthy Obituary
Thank you to frontline services
Priorities for Planning Reform in England
Planning Aid England
Engaging Marginalised Communities
Enforcement legal update
Biodiversity Net Gain
Jersey Shoreline Management Plan
A tale of two islands
Managing archaeological loss
RMB RAC Update
Getting to know you Alexis Edwards
RTPI Elections 2020
RTPI SW Awards 2020
RTPI SW Dinner Charity Raffle
Homeworking in the lockdown
Breathe resilience, yield results
CPD in the era of covid19
RTPI Online CPD events



RTPI South West
Royal Town Planning Institute

www.rtpi.org.uk/southwest

BRANCHOUT

No 181

SUMMER 2020

NEWS

Message from the Chair

Welcome from the Chair...

I am willing to bet that in 2015 anyone who suggested where they might be in 5 years got it wrong! It is strange to be functioning in this 'new normal' whilst receiving daily e-mails with the increasingly annoying and ever present - in these challenging times...

Planning was encouraged to continue as best it could, which for public sector meant massive evolutions within really short time frames and for some on reduced capacity due to the need for Local Authorities to provide crisis response services. From my perspective of the private sector, many companies reduced staff through furlough leaving those remaining picking up what they could and those on furlough with a lot of uncertainty. As 'non-essential' services are now being encouraged to re-mobilise some of these staff have been brought back and local authorities are now considering recovery of staff to office environments.

As the remote environment has settled mental health has become a key issue for all sectors and planning is certainly not immune from this. With planning committees -recorded and now available on you tube!- being run from the comfort of your own home and often confrontational comments put to professionals in what would have been the security of your home environment there are certainly more issues with separating the home/work/life balance. On the relative short notice of lock down who would have thought that we would be adapting to this pattern 3 months down the line.

In respect of the RTPi Chair role the pandemic has resulted in the cancellation of the face to face CPD events that had been planned and programmed since the early part of the year with time now being given to how our more traditional approach to professional development can evolve to reflect the needs and restrictions of our current society and members. In the absence of the RTPi SW Annual Dinner we are still holding an online raffle with an opportunity to win some amazing prizes and the proceeds to go to the Charities that had been selected which have never been more in need of support. If you are tempted and can spare it please take part! (link to website for raffle)

In the background we are building connections with other planning professionals in order to move forward more collaboratively in the future and ensure the RTPi members are represented and acknowledged for their key role in the built environment. The South West will also host the RTPi President visit 'virtually' to showcase Southmead Development Trust's exceptional community engagement. Other virtual events are also currently under consideration and we are always happy to hear from you as to any areas that you would like us to focus our efforts!

The technological advancements have been impressive for staff but also for all the - slightly older - elected members who are coming along for the ride! Some things are brilliant, some things are scary but, in those times, just focus on one step at a time. Every time you move forward you are already ahead of those that have given up! Be bold, be brave and breathe.

Dawn de Vries
Principal Planning Officer,
Sedgemoor District Council



Editor's blog

Personally, I can not believe how much has changed since the last edition of Branchout about 4 months ago. The global pandemic has changed so much, the way people live and work. It has also brought new challenges, both personal and professional. Trying to reflect this 'new world' as it is now known, has been difficult, however, we have tried to reflect the many different situations that people find themselves in at present.

The South West Young Planners have provided their personal reflections and tips on working from home and ways for coping with being furloughed. There is also a though provoking piece on 'what can planning learn from the biggest public health crisis in a generation' written by Jennifer Joule from the West of England Young Planners who is currently furloughed. Further personal and professional development advice is provided within the 'breathe resilience, yield results' article.

I don't know about you however I think I have done more continued professional development (CPD) than I have done in the last year! There are many planning seminars and webinars to view and to increase your knowledge on a number of subjects. Full details of the RTPi events and how to access CPD are set out within this edition. Not forgetting the wealth of articles in this edition of Branchout which can all support CPD.

Unfortunately, all CPD events have been cancelled across the South West until next year however some of the speakers who were due to speak have provided articles of their presentations. Articles include, how to engage with marginalised communities, biodiversity net gain, the Jersey shoreline management plan, managing archaeological loss and a tale of two islands.

Again, as a result of the pandemic, the annual dinner has been cancelled, however there is still an opportunity to buy a raffle ticket or two. All proceeds will be split equally between the following charities, 'Caring in Bristol' and 'Julian House'. Personally, I have my eye on the tickets for a tour at Old Theatre Bath Royal. Good luck!

I hope you enjoy getting to know our new RTPi SW Regional Activities (RAC) Committee member Alexis who joined this year. If like Alexis you want to join the RAC committee, details are provided in the RTPi Elections 2020 article.

I know it is difficult and challenging at the moment and people have concerns and worries whether it is work or personal. I hope the articles in this edition provide you with sign-posting and advice to help you.

Keep safe and well.

Do you have news to share or an article to contribute?
Contact
southwest@rtpi.org.uk



Julie O'Rourke

RTPi South West Junior Vice Chair

South West Young Planners Round Up

West of England Young Planners

Tips for working from home, or being furloughed

Michael Downes

- Plan out what you'll be working on ahead of time
- Communicate important actions and expectations with anyone who will be home with you - for example, tell those you're living with when you have an important meeting

Jennifer Joule

- Make a list the night before of what you want to achieve the next day. Be realistic and try to put an approximate time period next to each activity. When you wake up you have a plan for the day and get a boost each time you tick off a task.

Isabell Brumwell

- Get a chair with proper back support to prevent back ache (I discovered that my kitchen chairs are incredibly uncomfortable for sitting in for long periods of time!)
- Phone colleagues rather than email when possible and take the time to chat as well as discuss work
- And sit as far away from your fridge as possible to avoid endless snacking!

Ellen Fortt

- Make sure you are comfortable wherever you have made your work area, even at the dining table your screen and chair need to be comfy for the 9 til 5.
- Try and keep a routine to help make that work and life balance, whether that's going for a walk the same time everyday or trying to get up the same time as usual.

Emily Johnson

- Make sure that you get out of the house at least once a day - this has helped with my mental health over the past month

Monica Forde

- Do a 'fake commute' in the mornings and walk round the block before sitting down for the day;
- Take regular breaks away from the screen;
- Regular exercise – including explore new streets/ areas on the 'daily exercise'

Tamsin Sealy

- Stick to regular meal times and eat away from your desk. A silver lining of this situation for me has been making the sort of lunches I wouldn't have in the office, such as poached eggs or extravagant homemade salads
- Change your Skype or Teams status to 'Away' and close your laptop when you take a break and do not rush back early if you get a notification. You are entitled to a proper break.

Laura Eimermann

- Always trial the virtual conferencing system before joining a project call – to avoid 40 minutes of your microphone failing, cutting in and out and general embarrassment.



Find out more
www.rtpi.org.uk/swyp

South West Young Planners Round Up

A 'Young Planner's' project...

For the last 12 months, as part of a large multi-disciplinary delivery team at Arup, I have provided town planning and consenting advice to Highways England for the 'Keyn Glas' A30 Environmental Designated Funds project.

The project comprises the design and delivery of 17 strategic and multi-functional landscape and cultural heritage schemes, spanning across approximately 50km² of Cornwall's varied landscape. Projects are focused on enhancements to water quality, flooding, landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage. Each scheme seeks to identify and deliver environmental benefits to help alleviate historic effects from the strategic road network (the A30) and would deliver biodiversity net gain in line with the Environment Bill 2020.

Arup's Planning team in Bristol supported each scheme during design development; pre-application engagement with stakeholders; preparation of planning applications and other consents / licences; and, through delivery by advising appointed contractors on conservation and management issues through implementation.

The landscape comprises valuable heritage and designated sites including: the World Heritage Site; Listed Buildings; Registered Parks & Gardens; Conservation Areas; Scheduled Monuments; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and, Special Areas of Conservation. These assets (both individually and cumulatively) as well as the prominence of agricultural land posed interesting planning challenges to overcome!

In recent months, notable schemes for which consents were secured include:

- A 'Green Bridge' over the A39 highway, to re-connect existing habitat features and historic severances of crossing species such as bats and badgers as well as creating a viewing area to Scheduled Monument 'barrows' within the landscape.
- The Wheal Busy heritage project comprised the redevelopment of a Grade II listed 'Smithy' building, a feature of 'Outstanding Universal Value' within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site which will ensure stabilisation of the building for years to come.
- A major flood alleviation scheme, comprising; the restoration of the condition and setting of a historic 19thC boating and fishing ponds to help mitigate flooding in the wider catchment area downstream.

Working within a large delivery team of technical specialists and interest groups through design development has equipped me with greater knowledge and appreciation of ecological, flood management and land contamination risks within the South West. Most importantly, I have an increased understanding of mitigation and enhancement strategies available and how planners can help to overcome challenges associated with scheme delivery.

The funds allocated by the Department of Transport were awarded for design and delivery up until March 2020 under the Road Investment Strategy 1 period (RIS 1). Applications have been made for additional funding from April 2020 (RIS 2) for the next stage of delivery. I am excited to see delivery on the ground in the coming months and the long term environmental benefits the project will bring to Cornwall.



Monica Forde
Town Planner at Arup

South West Young Planners Round Up

What can planning learn from the biggest public health crisis of a generation?

No doubt like many across our sector I have recently found myself 'furloughed', and therefore with a lot more time on my hands to consider some of the bigger questions surrounding this pandemic. It seems inevitable that many aspects of our lives will be altered as we emerge from the crisis. I reflect on some of the ways the pandemic might leave its mark on the planning system; in particular, how we think about public health planning, open space and engagement.

Chronic vs. Infectious Disease

Planning began as a response to the public health crisis of the Victorian city; a response to high rates of infectious disease brought about through overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions. Over time, however, focus has shifted to the chronic conditions that have resulted from the design of our living environments and our resulting lifestyles. In light of this shift, the focus on infectious disease has been somewhat forgotten. Could Covid-19 bring the role of planning in preventing, or at least mitigating, infectious disease back in to focus?

I don't see this pandemic leading to a move away from the trend for densification of living in cities and towns. Countries with the highest population densities have not seen higher mortality rates from Covid-19. However, I do see it heralding a move to stronger requirements for private outdoor space, access to public parks, living areas from which to work from home, and urban 'greening'. Could the role of Health Impact Assessments be elevated moving forwards, with enhanced space standards and new, national standards for access to private and public open space?

Reclaiming the Streets

It appears I am not the only one who has declared the social distancing measures a form of cycling utopia. Empty streets and unseasonably good weather have brought everyone out and, around Bristol, there are significantly more cyclists and pedestrians than any other road users. Although not a new concept within the world of planning, this modal shift has brought into sharp reality for perhaps a much larger audience the sheer dominance of cars and motorised transport, and the marginalisation of the pedestrian and cyclist to the alarmingly narrow street edge. Moving forwards, could this crisis provide the impetus for a new wave of pedestrianisation, investment in cycle lanes, and reclamation of the biggest area of public open space on everyone's doorstep: the two-lane highway reserved only for cars?

Consultation and Engagement

Spending so much more time at home, and limited to exercising in your immediate neighbourhood, the characteristics and qualities of your locality will no doubt have been brought sharply in to focus. Perhaps that means you're now incredibly grateful to live within walking distance of a park or shop, or you have come to value those fields on the edge of your village for a quick escape to walk the dog. It's not hard to imagine people taking a greater interest in improving their neighbourhoods by becoming more engaged in objecting or supporting local planning issues. Within the West of England Young Planners group we've heard that enforcement reporting is already up. There is an opportunity here to broaden out planning's appeal and engage, through virtual communication, with a wider cross-section of the public. Particularly as consultation practice is shifting online, could planning reach out to younger, busier and more transient residents?

Ultimately, it is still too early to tell what this pandemic might mean for the long-term future of planning. Much depends on how long the 'lockdown' and other forms of social distancing will last, whether the government intends to deregulate aspects of the planning system with the intention of boosting growth post-Covid, and quite how much we forget once we're back to our old lives. I would urge planners to remember their experiences. As planning professionals we have a responsibility to respond positively and proactively to the pandemic. Now is the time to consider and retain positive lessons from the lockdown and push for higher quality private and public amenity space, a shift away from the private car and a broader and more inclusive approach to consultation. This is a once-in-a-century event and it requires and presents the opportunity for significant innovation in practice.

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS



Jennifer Joule
Planner at Lichfields

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South West Young Planners Round Up

Devon & Cornwall Young Planners

News

It has been a challenging start to 2020 in a number of ways, but DCYP have remained enthusiastic in looking to cater to the Young Planners in the region.

Before the Coronavirus lock-down, DCYP were able to squeeze in a successful pan-professional event with young architects hosted by The Design Review Panel. The positive feedback received is hopefully a sign of more joint events between young planners and architects.

We had a number of other events in the pipeline which unfortunately are postponed until business returns to normal. **These include:**

- APC Event (Plymouth) – CANCELLED – New date being explored
- Passivhaus Development (Exeter) – CANCELLED – New date being explored
- Coast and Flooding (Plymouth/Cornwall) – On hold

That said, we have some great virtual CPD events being organised so that Young Planners can continue to develop in their careers in these uncertain times.

In other news, there has also been some discussion about the group expanding to incorporate Somerset since there is no longer a Young Planner Group for that region. This has been raised with the group who are open to the idea and already have a member who is based in the area.

Future Virtual Events

The following events will have limited places to ensure the virtual forum works efficiently, and that everyone “attending” has an opportunity to interact with the speaker. We hope to “see” many of you there! However, please give us a 48-hour heads up if you can no longer join so that we can let someone else on the waitlist take your place.

- Heritage Event – Historic England
- Licentiate APC Q&A– RTPi APC Assessor
- Biodiversity Net Gain

Steering Group Update

2020 has also been challenging for DCYP after losing 3 key members – Rebecca and Imogen have both taken temporary leave of the group, while Stuart has left to take up an opportunity in Bristol. We will miss his enthusiasm, but know he will make a great addition to the West of England Young Planners group and wish him every success.

That said, following the Design Review Panel event in February, 2 new members have now joined. These are Faye Stewart (Bailey Partnership) and Elliot Dommett (Stantec), who are already proving to be positive additions to the group with good ideas for future CPD and social events. The current, Devon and Cornwall group is as follows:

Keegan Ferreday Avalon Planning - Chair

Opani Mudalige LRM Planning - Vice Chair & Treasurer

Laura Laius AECOM - Secretary & Events

Faye Stewart Communications

Elliot Dommett Administration



Find out more
www.rtpi.org.uk/swyp

South West Young Planners Round Up

Here our newest members briefly introduce themselves and how they are keeping busy during these extraordinary times:-

Elliot Dommett

Where do you work?

Stantec/Planning Technician

Where did you study to become a planner?

I am currently studying BA Urban and Environmental Planning part time at London South Bank University, after making the switch to Planning from Civil Engineering in 2018.

What is the best thing about your job?

Working collaboratively with so many other brilliant professionals, helping to develop successful projects in the local area and playing a genuine role in shaping our communities.

How have you been passing the time during the lock down?

Lots of video games and NFL re-runs!



Elliot Dommett
Stantec
Planning Technician



Faye Stewart

Where do you work?

Bailey Partnership as a Graduate Town Planner.

Where did you study to become a planner?

I studied at Plymouth University attaining a BSc in Geography and MSc in Town Planning.

What is the best thing about your job?

It is great to be part of a team which delivers physical outcomes that have the potential to positively impact on people's lives. I enjoy the complexity which is associated with Planning, having to work collaboratively with other disciplines to find sustainable solutions.

How have you been passing the time during the lock down?

When I have not been working I have been enjoying baking, and then running off the calories afterwards!



Faye Stewart
Bailey Partnership
Graduate Town Planner

South West Young Planners Round Up

Dorset Young Planners

A week in the life of a Planning Inspector

I have been a Planning Inspector for just over a year and the vast majority of my casework is located within the South of England. To date, I have determined appeals in a variety of locations stretching from Essex to Cornwall. Travel is an essential part of my job and it is a privilege to visit different parts of England on a regular basis.

My caseload consists of a mix of Section 78 appeals, which includes householder appeals, new dwellings, commercial projects, agricultural development and everything else in-between such as prior approvals, advertisements and appeals against conditions. Other Inspectors deal with specialist casework such as local plans, enforcement and listed buildings.

Prior to my appointment I worked for a private practice in Dorset for five years. However, my planning career began in local government after I graduated from the University of the West of England in 2012.

Inspectors are typically assigned 4 cases per week, but this can vary depending upon the complexity of the case and type of procedure. Casework is normally organised in weekly or fortnightly blocks by a Team Leader who builds programs of work for Inspectors 8 to 10 weeks in advance.

As a Band 1 Inspector, I determine most of my cases via written representations. However, where the evidence needs to be tested by questioning, I can conduct a hearing. Casework that needs to be determined by a public inquiry will typically be assigned to Band 2 and 3 Inspectors. The criteria for determining the procedure for planning appeals is set out within Annexe K of the

Planning Inspectorate's Procedural Guide (March 2020). Inspectors typically work from home and they are responsible for organising their work in such a way to ensure that decisions are completed in a timely manner. I typically undertake my site visits on a Thursday or Friday and then write up my decisions the following week, but other Inspectors prefer to do their visits at the start of the week.

I normally begin my week by preparing for my forthcoming site visits. This will include reading the file and making notes on the main issues. I will also use the day to schedule future site visits, book travel and, if necessary, arrange overnight accommodation. Then on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday I will write up my decisions in relation to the site visits that I had undertaken during the previous week.

Proof reading is a very important part of the job, so once a decision is drafted, I will put it to one side and then check it thoroughly the following day. Once a decision is completed, it is sent to my Case Officer for despatch. Unlike local government, where managerial sign off is required for most delegated planning decisions, as the appointed Inspector, I am solely responsible for what is decided.

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When working from home, I strongly believe that it's important to establish a routine that maintains a good work/life balance. Whilst Inspectors do not have any set hours, I aim to have a definite start and finish time, but this can vary from day to day dependent upon what I am working on. To ensure that I stay focused, I take regular breaks throughout the day, which normally includes taking my dog for a walk at lunchtime. I find that leaving the house and getting some fresh air gives me time to process the morning's work and prepare for the afternoon. Whilst no two weeks are the same due to wide variety of casework that I undertake, I have sought to provide you with an insight into the life of a Planning Inspector.

Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

Member of Dorset Young Planners Steering Group



Christopher Miell MPlan MRTPI

Find out more
www.rtpi.org.uk/swyp

South West Young Planners Round Up

Meet our newest members!



Jess Glover, Pure Town Planning

CAREER: I found my calling in planning through studying Human Geography at the University of Birmingham and through a voluntary internship at a built environment organisation in Birmingham where I participated in community placemaking and urban design initiatives. Funnily enough, during this time I assisted in running workshops at local schools to educate young people about the architectural and planning professions and found that I myself was captivated by the subject and wanted to pursue a career in planning.

After university and a gap year venturing across South East Asia, I started working at Pure Town Planning in Bournemouth and have now been there for over three years. In this time, I have progressed to the role of Planning Consultant and have also completed a master's in Urban Planning at UWE. As a Planning Consultant I especially enjoy the variety of projects I work on; one day I might be submitting an appeal for a contemporary plot split and the next devising a scheme for beach huts.

FUN FACT: Being in lockdown has provided a great opportunity to get back into running after I vowed never to run again after completing the Birmingham Half Marathon in 2014. Last week I achieved my 5KM PB in 24:05.

WHY I JOINED DORSET YOUNG PLANNERS: Joining the Dorset Young Planners Steering Group has been a great way to get involved in organising CPD and social events for planners in the Dorset area. When I moved to Bournemouth, aside from my work colleagues I knew very few local planners. Being part of DYP has introduced me to a network of like-minded people who share an equal enthusiasm for planning and do not zone out when discussing Green Belts or Article 4 Directions!



Frances Summers, Dorset Council

A BIT ABOUT ME: In 2015 I moved from Scotland to sunny Dorset. It was about this time that I decided to embark upon a Master's degree in Urban and Rural Planning and I moved rapidly from a part time administrative maternity cover role to a full time senior planning policy officer.

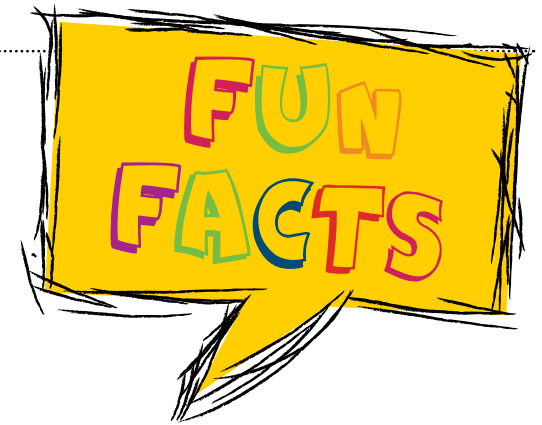
In my role at Dorset Council I lead on topics such as affordable housing, housing mix, housing for the elderly and disabled, communications and consultation for the new Dorset Council Local Plan. Dorset Council has recently become a unitary Council and I am a lead officer on a Local Plan from a legacy authority and this plan is currently at examination. The Purbeck Local Plan was the first plan submitted under the new NPPF. The area covered by the local plan contains significant expanses of internationally designated sites and it is home to high house prices. Planning in this context has been interesting and we continue striving to progress this plan through to adoption.

WHY DID I WANT TO BE IN THE RTPi DORSET YOUNG PLANNERS

STEERING GROUP?: Being 37 with two teenage children I tend not to think of myself as 'young' anymore, but I cautiously attended a Young Planner event, nervous in case I was the oldest there. I want to know as much about planning as I can and thought an event would help me get a bit of CPD. It is also worth going as the planning world is made up of such a small pool of people I thought it likely I would work with some of these people at some point in my career so meeting them in a social environment would be beneficial. It went very well, I felt at ease immediately and most importantly had really good fun.

At one of the events I asked the group if I could help with any of their events. I have since enjoyed collaborating with the steering group members and learning of their work experiences in the wide variety of sectors in which we all work.

FUN FACT: I used to teach piano and guitar to adult male prisoners.



Forthcoming events:

We are aiming to host one webinar a month to compliment the range of virtual opportunities on offer through RTPi Online

1 July - Webinar:

How to build a town square and the implications of social-distancing requirements of a Covid-19 world'
www.rtpi.org.uk/townsquare

August - Social evening:

Bingo

8 October - Webinar

Delivering Green Infrastructure
www.rtpi.org.uk/greeninfrastructureoct2020

Find out more
www.rtpi.org.uk/swyp

John Clotworthy Obituary

The 1993 Chairman of the RTPI South West Branch, John Clotworthy, sadly passed away on the 18th April, a victim of the Corona virus. His career was based almost entirely in the South West, his first post being in the Wiltshire County Council Planning Department. In 1982 he joined Yeovil District Council as Chief Planning Officer in 1982 from Kingwood District Council where he had held a similar position. Soon after Yeovil District Council became South Somerset District Council and John served the Council in a number of roles including Director of Development Services when he was Branch Chairman. By the time he retired at the end of 1999, the Council was experimenting with services based on four devolved area offices. John's final post was Director of Area South, focussing on Yeovil.

Throughout his career he supported the work of the SW Branch, in particular when at South Somerset where he encouraged the staff to participate in Branch activities. He was a member of the Branch Executive for some years, before taking on the role of Chairman. Subsequently, over the period 1996-1998, he served in the important role of the SW Branch Representative on the RTPI National Council (now the General Assembly). For many years a highlight of the Branch events was the Annual Branch Weekend usually held in the area where that year's Chairman was based. In 1993 Dillington House near Ilminster in South Somerset was the venue with a programme focussing on rural issues. This included a session 'Planning for Small Towns', John being one of the speakers. The Weekend also included a session 'Tourism and the Countryside', the Annual Branch Dinner at Dillington House and a visit to Montacute House. John also spoke at another 1993 event on the familiar subject over the years 'Planning in a re-organised Local Government'!

During 1995 the RTPI SW celebrated its Golden Jubilee, 50 years since its foundation in May 1945. To mark the Jubilee and also recognise the significant contribution over many years of Lindsay Smith (Branch Secretary 1997/78; Branch Chair 1995) who had recently passed away, the Branch decided that a viewfinder should be erected, Ham Hill near Yeovil being selected as a suitable location. John played a key role in implementation overseeing a series of actions including the receipt of necessary permissions/consents and the design/production of the viewfinder. He also persuaded the District Council to donate the Ham Stone from which it is made.

Mike Oakley

Member of RTPI South West Regional Activities Committee



John Clotworthy
The 1993 Chairman of the
RTPI South West Branch



John came to South Somerset in 1982 as Chief Planning Officer and worked for South Somerset until 1999....

He built an impressive team of policy and development management planner around him and was instrumental in raising the status of sound planning and design in the District. He oversaw, amongst other projects, the major town centre transformation of Yeovil. He was equally committed to seeing the natural assets of the countryside and villages developed in the most sensitive manner and was a committed conservation planner, committed to the long term prosperity the district that he loved.

John was much respected by colleagues. He was a meticulous planner who was always intent on securing the very best development for the district and the calm manner in which he set about raising standards and highlighting quality design gained many converts to sound planning amongst council Members and the community".

Martin Woods

Director of PlaceSenior Leadership Team
South Somerset District Council



John and his son Roger
at Wembley

THANK YOU to frontline services

As town planners, most of us are probably pretty comfortable with the idea of society, of the state and of state intervention. Most of us are probably more comfortable than not in playing by the rules, so the idea of a lockdown might be easier for us than others.

But what has been less easy since the Covid-19 lockdown is hearing tales from the front line. One of my friends is Head of Nursing for a Trust in the east of England. She has had the virus for at least two weeks and has been very poorly although thankfully not needing to be hospitalised. Every day she feels guilty for not being on the wards, doing her bit. Other friends have returned to nursing and one cousin is still teaching for the children of other keyworkers. Friends in local and central government are being redeployed, one was in tears at her first phone call on a council helpline from a very elderly, frail lady who was desperate for food.

I have never been more grateful for the NHS, for GPs and all those who keep the healthcare systems, including social care, porters and cleaners, selflessly working day in, day out in circumstances more harrowing than I can contemplate without adequate PPE. Seeing the bruised faces of exhausted NHS staff is shameful, they deserve better, and although I take part in the Thursday night clap, it seems very a very poor substitute for PPE that would keep them safe.

We should be grateful too for the Royal Mail, for our refuse collectors, for the emergency services and cleaners and for those keeping the supermarkets and local food stores open. Grateful also to those in local and central government who are working around the clock, stepping way outside of comfort zones to keep us as safe and well as possible.

I have also been incredibly grateful for the arts these last few weeks, for live streamed concerts/shows and the advent of technology which allows for pre-theatre drinks before watching a stream from the National Theatre. For those living alone, this has been a wonderful way to feel part of something, a shared experience that has been much missed.

“Thank you” doesn’t seem an adequate way to express our gratitude - staying home and ensuring we avoid catching / spreading Covid-19 is probably the biggest single thing we can do to make their lives easier. It doesn’t seem too much to ask.

So, from all of us in the RTPI SW, a massive, heartfelt THANK YOU to every single frontline worker - you are all heroes.

Kath Haddrell

Associate at WSP

Member of RTPI South West Regional Activities Committee



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Priorities for Planning Reform in England

In March, MHCLG set out the government's vision for housing and planning in Planning for the Future . Central to the delivery of this vision will be an upcoming Planning White Paper, which aims to ensure the planning system harnesses innovation and stands ready to meet 21st century challenges. We welcome many of the proposals and support the vision of a resilient, well-resourced system ready to deliver nationally and for communities. However, we are concerned that some of the proposed reforms are influenced by an incorrect diagnosis of the problems, and accordingly will not help deliver the government's objectives.

With the benefit of the expertise of our members and our experience of past planning reforms, we outline our vision of how to deliver on the government's goals, while avoiding any potential pitfalls. We observe that while government recognises the need for a properly-resourced and improved planning system, it can also portray planning as a regulatory barrier to delivery. We provide evidence that demonstrates the risks of market failure from uncontrolled development, and recommendations for how better planning can be part of the solution to both our housing crisis and the government's wider objectives.

This paper demonstrates how a well-resourced, digital planning system is essential for the delivery of the government's built and natural environment goals, and how a user-friendly system is an essential support for a 21st century levelling up agenda.

We put forward five main recommendations for reform that can deliver on the vision of a planning system for the 21st century. This will be followed in the coming months by a detailed paper on how planning should respond to the impacts of Covid-19 and ensure a sustainable economic recovery.

The objectives of planning reform

We structured this paper around the objectives of planning reform we have observed in Planning for the Future and other recent statements from the government. These objectives are:

- Ensuring affordable, safe and secure housing for all
- Creating beautiful, sustainable places
- A clearer, more efficient, and more accessible planning system

In keeping with the government's broader objective of ensuring planning is ready to tackle 21st century issues, we also suggest three additional objectives for planning:

- The climate and environmental emergency
- Economic recovery and levelling up the nation
- Improving health and wellbeing

Five recommendations for planning reform

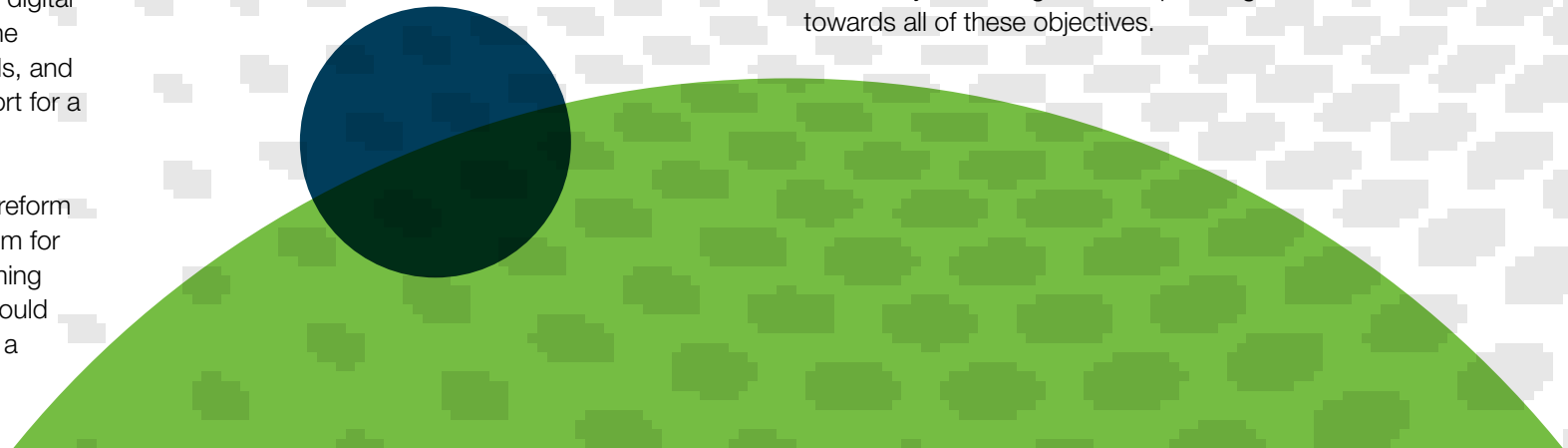
Based on years of research and the expertise of our members, we have identified five key recommendations for reform. Government should:

1. Invest in place

We urge greater investment in planning as a prerequisite for achieving many of the government's objectives. We welcome increased funding for infrastructure and affordable housing, to which should be added a major grants programme to stimulate housebuilding by councils, housing associations and SMEs. This investment can help to maintain delivery and stimulate productivity, including in the aftermath of Covid-19. We also recommend that Chief Planning Officers become a statutory position, to enable better coordination of this investment.

2. Refocus planning on 21st century issues

While housing delivery is crucial, policy must give more priority to key issues including decarbonisation and climate resilience, design and beauty, connectivity and accessibility, wellbeing and public health, and economic growth. Housing is currently crowding out the other important objectives and preventing a holistic approach to planning. The government should also measure what matters by assessing how well planning has contributed towards all of these objectives.



Priorities for Planning Reform in England

3. Display leadership on the digital transformation of planning

Harness technological innovation to foster more efficient and inclusive planning, building upon the innovations by planners under the Covid-19 lockdown. This should include making all planning documents machine readable, standardising terminology and processes across government, developing common evidence and analytical capabilities, and investing in open source tools which can be used across the development sector.

4. Provide a clear direction for strategic planning

Addressing 21st century issues requires long-term strategic planning across wide geographical areas and sectors, which aligns and integrates the economic, infrastructure and environment priorities of local authorities and other stakeholders. The government should provide a clear direction on the level and scope of strategic plans, supported by place-based infrastructure funds and incentives for engagement in plan-making. Examination processes must be appropriate for strategic plans in different parts of the country.

5. Support a strong, plan led system

We welcomed the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission's finding that the emphasis in planning should be on proactive plan-making. Government should also consider whether more fixed time scales and consistent structures are appropriate for local plans and should incentivise other statutory consultees to engage. It should also support local authorities to play a greater role in strategic land assembly. We do not believe that increased use of zoning is practical or desirable.



Read more at
www.rtpi.org.uk/prioritiesforplanning

Planning Aid England South West

May 2020 Update

In light of the current COVID-19 situation, please find below a brief update on PAE operations:

- PAE continues to deliver planning advice via our volunteer-led advice email advice service, which can be accessed via advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk. A huge thanks to our volunteers who are helping to ensure that this service runs smoothly by providing timely and accurate email advice.
- Planning advice is also available via www.planningaid.co.uk. Over the coming months we'll be updating existing content as well as identifying current gaps for which to produce new content. We have recently added a section on COVID-19 covering new PD rights and Local Planning Authorities' response to COVID-19.
- PAE volunteers are continuing to deliver 1:1 support for our casework clients via remote channels, again many thanks to all those volunteers involved in supporting casework.
- The development of PAE's new RTPi Learn CPD modules on Planning and Community engagement is progressing and will be launched in the summer. The package consists of three modules, introductory, intermediate and advanced, with the introductory module being suitable for anyone interested in community engagement in planning - for example elected members, community groups and community organisers, as well as planners.
- PAE staff continue to engage in community consultation for NSIP projects via remote channels and, in due course we will share our experiences/lessons learned from this shift to virtual engagement. Additionally, we welcome feedback from volunteers who are using creative IT solutions to deliver consultation.



You can register as a volunteer here:
www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/volunteering/how-to-apply/



Planning Aid

England

Engaging Communities in Planning

Engaging Marginalised Communities

A personal perspective on this tricky subject from Jeff Bishop, an executive associate with Place Studio and author of *The Craft of Collaborative Planning*.

"Don't talk to the Judean People's Front. We are the People's Front of Judea and we represent the people".
(Apologies to Monty Python.)

Being 'inclusive' is - rightly - unavoidable, and that applies within planning

I have tried to address the issue for many years without ever cracking it, I know nobody (or any guidance) to have done so, and the list of those to 'include' gets longer every year. Digging into the issue highlights major questions, not just practical but also ethical, even philosophical. So all I can do here is to outline very briefly some of the questions that must be addressed before setting off, even if there is, to be blunt, no 'right answer'.

Terminology

The word 'marginalised' is loaded, implying either direct exclusion of some people or exclusion by default. Three terms are commonly used within planning. 'Seldom heard' suggests we can contact a group, they contribute but maybe we don't always take much notice. 'Hard to reach' suggests the problem is about accessing a particular group rather than engaging them. 'Hard to engage' is the opposite; they are accessible but they either resist engagement or we fail to provide them with (in their view) appropriate opportunities. Some car drivers now even call

themselves a 'persecuted' group, suggesting that people out there may have a different perception of themselves from that of planners. Understanding the nature of any potential exclusion is critical.

Who to Include

Your Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs) will list who to include; usually young and elderly people, people with disabilities and BAME communities. Some SCIs also list travellers, faith groups, homeless people, home renters rather than owners etc. And what about women as a group often argued to be marginalised, or those in the LGBT community? Should we include night workers, who may have strong opinions about play area location? Or joggers, who use paths and open spaces quite differently to casual walkers? Such lists could go on for ever and rightly be different on different topics.

Now that weasel word 'community', suggesting areas of common interest amongst a particular group. But too often that commonality is assumed by professionals just to make life easier. Consider 50-65 year olds, the so-called 'empty-nesters'. When asked to get their views on a high street, the very few I managed to 'reach' firmly resisted any suggestion of treating them as a 'community' with common interests.

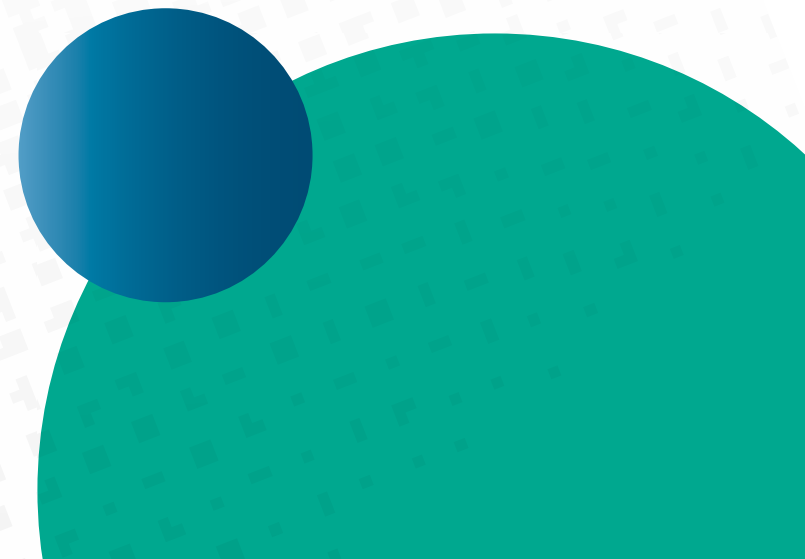
Always avoid imposing definitions on people, placing diverse needs under a single banner. A blind person, wheelchair user and walking frame user may all be 'disabled' but each has very different spatial needs. Are they really a 'group' or a 'community' and do they – not just you – think that?

How to Include

At last, we get practical. Or do we, because it is often assumed that all we need is some clever methods. But that's like a doctor writing a prescription before fully understanding symptoms!

First, ask who speaks for any community. Is that all of them or could it be a representative from that community or a professional speaking for them? And who decides? Care is needed to 'get under the skin' of any community to find out who best to engage with and how best to do that, all in a way which is thorough and inclusive while also being appropriate and respectful.

Having cleared that hurdle, published guidance gets a little clearer. Most importantly, don't kid yourself that you can do it all. Go through people who are part of, or work with, any particular group – community worker, youth leader etc. They will, as it were, 'get you in the room', although you do then need to be creative (with their help) to find the methods – even the language (in all senses) - that will succeed. Carefully targeted methods, and lots of them, are essential, but only once the other key questions are answered.



Engaging Marginalised Communities

Using Any Results

Assuming you manage to access and hear from key groups, what then? The canoeists want you to prohibit fishing in the canal; the fishing community suggest banning canoes. Some people suggest 'shared space' in housing areas but blind people using sticks worry about the lack of pavement edges to help them navigate safely. Having got such information from each group separately, do you have the skill, or legitimacy, to decide which set of opinions should take priority?

The usual way to resolve such conflicts is to bring 'everybody' together in some form of shared workshop. That's fine for those who attend but many of those you will have spoken to would never, and in some case physically could not, join and contribute to a workshop. Which takes us back to who decides.

To What Effect?

Now the crunch. You have put in all the careful thought and amazingly resource-hungry and costly effort, but what to do with it? Look at some Local Plan policies and ask yourself how these could be amended to take account of what your inclusiveness work might bring out. Those policies may be wrong, or marginalise by default, but how might you phrase sharp and succinct policies to address all the complexity that your work will inevitably have highlighted? I know no answer to that.

It is really only at the level of projects and development management that the detail could be used. That's fine if your authority is leading a project because you (potentially) can do all the necessary work. But most schemes come from outside and, without any requirement on applicants to undertake community engagement, how can you be sure that inclusivity has been fully addressed, especially if all of the above is so expensive for any applicant?

Conclusions

Please avoid sleepless nights wondering how to navigate this minefield - as I said, nobody has 'the answer'. But the questions must be addressed because 'marginalised' and 'community' can mean different things in different communities. The key is to go into it all with your eyes open and seek out advice and guidance from those who know the territory (or territories) better than you possibly could. Then and only then hunt out all those wonderfully creative methods that people have developed, or develop (and share) your own.

I may never have cracked inclusivity but trying to address it has proved remarkably enjoyable and rewarding. After all, isn't all this what makes planning so interesting and important?



Enforcement legal update from Ashfords

Planning enforcement is a discretionary power. It must be expedient to take enforcement action, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations. Importantly also, it must be in the public interest. So how are LPAs dealing with planning enforcement during the ongoing Coronavirus crisis?

In the specific case of the delivery of food, sanitary products and other essential products, the Government moved quickly and in a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) by Robert Jenrick issued on 13 March 2020, LPAs were urged 'to take a positive approach to their engagement with the food retailers and distributors, as well as the freight industry, to ensure planning controls are not a barrier to food delivery over the period of disruption caused by the coronavirus.'

In the WMS, Mr Jenrick says that 'the Government recognises that increased frequency of deliveries, particularly at night, could have a temporary impact on local residents but this needs to be balanced by the significant public interest in ensuring local residents have continued access to food, sanitary and other essential goods in their local shops'.

Changes to Permitted Development rights closely followed the WMS, allowing temporary relaxation to permit pubs and restaurants to operate as hot food take-aways.

The Coronavirus crisis has introduced new practical and legal issues to dealing with planning enforcement. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 (the "Regulations") came into force on 26 March 2020 and are part of the Government's response to the huge threat to public health.

Amongst other measures, the Regulations required the closure of certain types of businesses and placed stringent restrictions on the movements of individuals. Regulation 6 provides that during the emergency period, no person shall leave the place where they are living without a 'reasonable excuse'. Those reasonable excuses include to obtain basic necessities, exercise, medical assistance, to provide care and assistance to a vulnerable person and to travel for the purposes of work or to provide voluntary or charitable services where it is not reasonably possible for that person to work, or to provide those services, from the place where they are living.

A 'reasonable excuse', which has had less of an airing in the press, is 'to fulfil a legal obligation, including attending court or satisfying bail conditions, or to participate in legal proceedings'.

Whilst leaving the house to collect materials / equipment and to attend land to undertake works required under an Enforcement Notice would probably fall within fulfilling a legal obligation, I think that it would have been a bold LPA to initiate a prosecution if someone did not comply during the emergency period.

In response to these issues, LPAs are already introducing longer compliance periods in statutory notices which are being issued currently and are negotiating with recipients of statutory notices which have already taken effect.



Enforcement legal update from Ashfords cont...

Construction hours

Fast forward to the Prime Minister's video address on Sunday 10 May, in which he announced relaxation to some of the lockdown restrictions. Following that address, on 11 May 2020, Robert Jenrick issued a further WMS which urged LPAs in England to 'take a swift and positive approach to requests from developers and site operators for greater flexibility around construction site working hours. This is to ensure that, where appropriate, planning conditions are not a barrier to allowing developers the flexibility necessary to facilitate the safe operation of construction sites during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to proceed at pace with work otherwise delayed as a result of COVID-19.'

The WMS says that applications to amend temporarily conditions or construction management plans (until 13 May 2021) should be made to the LPA in the usual way and that decisions should be issued quickly, within 10 working days. LPAs are advised that applications to extend working hours until 9pm Monday to Saturday should only be refused if there are 'very compelling reasons for rejection'. LPAs are further advised that 24 hour working where appropriate may be justified in non-residential areas.

In terms of what may constitute 'very compelling reasons' the WMS says that 'Applications should only be refused where there are very compelling reasons such as significant impact on neighbouring businesses or uses which are particularly sensitive to noise, dust or vibration, which cannot be overcome through other mitigation, or where impacts on densely populated areas would be unreasonable.'

MCHLG guidance in the form of Q&A followed on 13 May 2020. It didn't add a great deal of detail to the process. Modest or short-term changes may be agreed informally with the LPA and they should use their discretion not to enforce against a breach of working hours.

Construction working hours are most often restricted by condition. The options available for LPAs to relax restrictions are to:

- agree variations to conditions informally by an exchange of emails / correspondence;
- invite applicants to make applications for non-material amendments under s96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
- treat the proposals in the WMS as a quasi-permitted development right and only request more formal steps if the developer or site operator extends hours of construction beyond those envisaged in the WMS or where the site is surrounded by properties which are more sensitive to noise, dust and disturbance; or
- for sensitive developments, require an application for a minor material amendment under s73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Restrictions on construction working hours can also be contained in planning obligations, usually in the form of a Construction Management Plan ("CMP"). It is common that CMP obligations include the ability for the LPA and the developer to amend the terms of the CMP by written agreement. Where the terms of the obligation do not allow this, LPAs may choose to allow amendments to CMPs without formally varying the planning obligation by a Deed of Variation.

It will be important for those LPAs being asked to relax construction working hours to consider how they choose to communicate with those residents who may be adversely affected. LPAs will be very familiar with the requirements for formal consultation for s73 applications but for the other options set out above, LPAs may need to review their Enforcement Policies / Local Enforcement Plans and Statements of Community Engagement. It is clear that the Government does not want the planning system to impede the recovery of the economy or the provision of housing. LPAs will have to strike a difficult balance between facilitating consented construction beyond the traditionally imposed restrictions and protecting the health and amenity of local residents. So, no real change in focus there then.

Enforcement legal update from Ashfords cont...

The Amendment Regulations

Following the Prime Minister's address on 10 May 2020, the Government laid the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2020 (the "Amendment Regulations"), which came into force on 13 May 2020.

The Amendment Regulations, amongst other measures, permit the following:

- The collection of goods ordered from a business in any way permitted under Regulation 5 (online, telephone, text or post);
- To take exercise alone, with one or more members of their household or with one member of another's household;
- To visit public open space for the purposes of open-air recreation to promote physical or mental health or emotional wellbeing with one or more members of the household or with one member of another's household;
- For the purposes of work or to provide voluntary or charitable services, where it is not reasonably possible for that person to work, or to provide those services, from the place where they are living;
- Activities in connection with the purchase, sale, letting or rental of a residential property;
- Visits to waste or recycling centres; and
- Opening of garden centres and outdoor sports courts.

In the context of these relaxations, LPAs may well be considering returning back to usual business when it comes to enforcement. However, there are a practical issues which will affect how officers can investigate breaches and how decisions relating to enforcement can be made.

Practical considerations

Enforcement Officers are less likely to visit sites and need to put more responsibility on complainants to provide evidence of possible breaches including photographs, diary records and even virtual views of sites by complainants using platforms such as Zoom, Skype or MS Teams.

Site visits from officers are likely to continue where there are allegations of serious unlawful works to protected trees or to heritage assets. Decisions whether to physically attend sites will require an assessment of the seriousness of the alleged breach and the safety of the officer.

Decision making

In cases where a breach has been established, there may be a delay in obtaining authority to take enforcement action. Most decisions to take enforcement action will be delegated to officers but the range of delegated powers varies from authority to authority. At the start of the crisis, some authorities extended the powers delegated to senior officers, even enacting the emergency decision making powers in the constitution to the Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service.

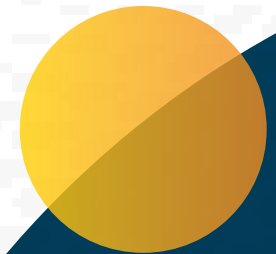
There will be enforcement cases for which a committee resolution may still be required.

Local authorities may now conduct meetings remotely. Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020, introduced the power to make regulations with regard to the meeting and proceedings of local authorities. Secondary legislation followed on 4 April 2020 in the form of the 'Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020'.

These regulations enable local authority meetings to be held virtually by phone or video overcoming the long-standing statutory requirement for members to be 'present'. The regulations also override the restrictions contained in local authority constitutions. Virtual committees are now routinely being held and for the most part, appear to be working reasonably well. There is a very good hints & tips guide that was published by the Planning Advisory Service on 8 April 2020.

CIL and Section 106 obligations

So what about CIL payments and Section 106 obligations? A number of LPAs were proactive and reviewed how they deal with CIL payments and financial contributions under due Section 106 Agreements falling due when construction had halted. Measures include pushing back trigger dates / events, negotiating new instalment plans and exercising discretion in administering penalties for late or missed payments or administrative errors.



Enforcement legal update from Ashfords cont...

On 13 May 2020, the Government published guidance explaining that it proposes to amend the CIL Regulations in due course to give authorities more discretion to defer payment for small and medium sized developers without having to impose additional costs on them. These changes include deferring payments, disapplying (temporarily) late payment interest and to give discretion to return interest already charged where the collecting authority considers it appropriate to do so for developers that have an annual turnover of less than £45 million.

Until such amendments CIL charging authorities are encouraged to:

- introduce or extend existing instalment policies;
- use discretion in determining what, if any, enforcement action is appropriate in respect of unpaid CIL,
- take a positive approach to their engagement with SME developers, to ensure CIL liabilities do not cause undue burdens over the period of disruption caused by the Coronavirus; and
- note the existing flexibilities they have around enforcing CIL for larger developers, including flexibilities over the imposition of surcharges (Late payment interest will remain mandatory where such flexibilities are used).

For Section 106 obligations, the guidance encourages LPAs to consider whether it would be appropriate to allow the developer to defer delivery and to take a pragmatic and proportionate approach to the enforcement of obligations during this period. The Government says that this should help remove barriers for developers and minimise the stalling of sites.

Conclusions

During this unprecedented crisis, planning enforcement may not be a high priority for local authorities as they struggle to continue to carry out their core statutory duties as well as the additional responsibilities responding to the impact of the Coronavirus. However enforcement remains an essential part of the planning process and is vital for maintaining public trust.

The Government's position is clear; it does not want the planning system to impede the recovery of the economy. The steps already taken to safeguard the delivery of food and other essential products, to enable pubs and restaurants to operate as take-aways, to extend construction hours and to address the difficulties caused by CIL and Section 106 payments are clear articulations of this position.

With regard to general planning enforcement, LPAs will need to continue to investigate breaches and to take appropriate enforcement action. In this new normal, there are additional but not insurmountable, legal and practical considerations. Site visits and the collection of evidence will be more of a challenge. Longer periods for compliance will be required and, in my view, so will a greater degree of leniency when deciding what action is proportionate and in the public interest.

I would recommend to all enforcement practitioners, the excellent NAPE Planning Enforcement Handbook which was published on 18 May 2020

Duncan Moors
Legal Director

ashfords



The aim of this handbook is to guide planning enforcement officers in England towards correct decisions, whether this be taking formal enforcement action or taking no action at all. Whatever the decision, there must be an auditable trail of officers' actions; based upon the law, government guidance and the evidence available.

The Handbook is not written as a substitute for official publications, nor does it give hard and fast rules or specific legal advice. It is not a substitute for formal training or in-depth research, discussion and consideration of what can be complex issues.

Find out more at

[www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2020/may/
planning-enforcement-handbook-for-england/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2020/may/planning-enforcement-handbook-for-england/)

Could Biodiversity Net Gain be a game-changer?

From an ecologist's perspective, the increasing visibility and emphasis given to the natural environment in the UK's national planning policies and frameworks is a good thing, as is the increased public awareness and support for the environment. But how good is it for planners?

Whether you are a local authority planner, a planning consultant or a planner working on delivery of infrastructure projects, you cannot help but come across such terms as biodiversity enhancement, protected species licensing and environmental impact assessment on a regular basis. Now, the draft new Environment Bill specifically references a mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement for much of the proposed development in England, and environmental net gain is probably just around the corner.

Why the natural environment needs planners

The evidence on UK biodiversity change can be confusing. The most recent State of Nature Report (2019) showed that 13% of UK species are now threatened with extinction whilst 39% have decreased in abundance over the past 10 years. Yet 31% of species have increased over the same period so how much of a problem is there? Well the numbers do not tell us everything and not all species are equal. Increasingly governments are recognising the important role that biodiversity plays in providing essential ecosystem services to support human health and wellbeing: climate regulation, pollination, flood management, air quality improvement and mental stimulation are just a few examples. How we manage our land, freshwater and seas inevitably impacts on the capacity of our biodiversity to provide these services. Biodiversity loss through development is a major cause of species decline here in the UK and must be tackled. UK governments have now recognised that planning policy and delivery are critically important components of effective

action to answer these challenges. Most recently, the Defra 25 Year Plan set out ambitious targets for improving our biodiversity and wider environmental condition and environmentally-friendly planning was identified as a key mechanism for delivery. That puts a huge responsibility on your profession. I think it is up to others to support you in making sure you have the tools, training and clarity you need to deliver what is asked and I share some ideas later on in this article.

Biodiversity
loss through
development is
a major cause of
species decline

Could Biodiversity Net Gain be a game-changer?

In 2016 CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management), together with CIRIA (Construction Industry Research and Information Association) and IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), published the first UK Principles on Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development and in early 2019 the same three organisations published the first practical guidance on implementing biodiversity net gain. As a planning policy, how much impact could it have?



RTPI Webinar:
Biodiversity Net Gain, 28 July
[www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/july/
biodiversity-net-gain/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/july/biodiversity-net-gain/)

Could Biodiversity Net Gain be a game-changer?

Well, a no-net-loss policy clearly hasn't worked in terms of halting biodiversity loss. And whilst policy frameworks often talk about gains, the reality is that it is rarely happening in practice. By requiring most development in England to deliver a net gain for biodiversity the Government is sending a powerful message that this matters. Every development will require a calculation of the site's biodiversity value, using the Defra metric which takes account of the habitats present and their condition. Put (very) simply the development proposal must then show how, having first strictly followed the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and mitigate impacts, the creation and restoration of habitats, both on-site or, potentially, off-site, will lead to an overall gain for biodiversity. Developers will have the benefit of a transparent calculation of the net gain they must provide and what is required of them, reducing uncertainty and delays.

There are still a lot of risks. The 10% net gain due to be mandated is not, in our view, enough once you allow for margins of error in the calculations. Biodiversity net gain must supplement strict adherence to the mitigation hierarchy, not replace it. Some developers may be tempted to try and undervalue the existing habitats in order to minimise the actual gain required. There are spatial and temporal issues regarding habitats lost and habitats created/restored, as well as concerns as to how the long (30 year) management of the new habitats will be monitored and enforced. But, and it is a big but, if done well, if done responsibly and if planners can be given time to understand the risks and opportunities then, yes, over time it could well be a game-changer.

Some local planning authorities and developers have not waited for the Government to get its act together in mandating biodiversity net gain. They have factored biodiversity enhancement into their projects for some time, recognising the societal and business benefits of doing so. Hallbaron Ltd was granted planning permission for 255 ha site on the edge of Teignmouth in Devon. Application of the biodiversity net gain metric to the design scheme showed that, despite proposed compensation measures on site, no biodiversity gain could be achieved. Instead the shortfall was translated into a cash sum to be used to deliver offsite enhancement locally through the creation of new grassland and hedgerow habitats. So, it can be done. But it is planners who will be making sure it is done. Are you getting enough support?

Developing new approaches, such as biodiversity net gain, should be done in collaboration with the planning system. Planners' understanding of biodiversity and wider environmental issues matter to ecologists and environmental managers. A core part of CIEEM's work is supporting its members to provide the right level of information and interpretation of ecological reports needed by planning authorities to reach robust decisions. Recent innovations such as an EclA report checklist and new guidance on accessing and using biodiversity data are designed to help our members but also to help the planners. We need to be working more closely together, at both strategic and site-based levels, to ensure we understand what is required and we are helping each other to deliver the best possible outcomes. We need collaboration, not confrontation.



RTPI Webinar:
Biodiversity Net Gain, 28 July
[www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/july/
biodiversity-net-gain/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/2020/july/biodiversity-net-gain/)

Could Biodiversity Net Gain be a game-changer?

Some practical suggestions

This summer we are launching a new series of webinars, designed specifically for planners and planning committees, covering different aspects of biodiversity and the planning system. These are not aimed at ecologists, these are for you, to help you better understand what is required, what you should expect from different ecological reports, what biodiversity net gain means for your roles and responsibilities. You can find out more about the webinars and register at www.cieem.net/Events/

Our website also provides a wealth of guidance and advice to its members (and to homeowners) on biodiversity issues and the development process.

Some of these will also be of relevance to planners:

- Guide to ecological surveys and their purpose
- Advice note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys
- A householders guide to engaging an ecologist
- What to expect from a bat survey: A guide for UK homeowners
- Guidelines for ecological report writing
- EclA Checklist
- Accessing, sharing and using biodiversity data

This is alongside our new Directory of Registered Practices (also available via the Planning Portal) to help developers, homeowners and planners find the right ecological expertise they need, local to them.

A Vision for the future

Our vision is for our two professions to work more closely together to promote sustainable land use and development. By supporting each other we can deliver better outcomes for the natural environment, the economy and society. Developing a shared understanding of our challenges and opportunities, working together to find solutions to problems at every spatial scale and achieving common goals creates a win-win for everyone. We hope our vision is your vision too.

Sally Hayns

CEcol MCIEEM – CEO of CIEEM



Further reading:

State of Nature Partnership (2019) State of Nature Report 2019

https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/55654-1_RSPB_State-of-Nature-Report_ONLINE_AW3_v4.pdf

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development, A Practical Guide CIRIA C776a

<https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-good-practice-principles-for-development-a-practical-guide/>

CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development – Case Studies CIRIA C776b

<https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-case-studies/>

RTPI Practice Advice - Biodiversity in Planning

The RTPI has joined forces with the Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning to publish new advice for our members on the obligations and opportunities to promote biodiversity through the four UK planning systems.

Available to download here

www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2019/november/biodiversity-in-planning/



Jersey Shoreline Management Plan

Jersey has one of the largest tidal ranges in the world - up to 12 metres (approximately 40 feet) - and as global warming changes the world's climate, the risk of coastal flooding and erosion are increased, with consequential risk for people, property and the island's economic and environmental resilience.

With climate change bringing an increase in sea level and more frequent and intense storms, Jersey's government has had to adapt its sea defence strategy - based on the maintenance of a mix of Victorian sea defence and German anti-tank walls - to a more proactive policy-based approach to ensure future resilience that is both comprehensive and sustainable.

In response, the Jersey Shoreline Management Plan (JSMP) has been developed, in partnership with AECOM, and adopted in January 2020. It sets out the management intent for the entire coastline over the next 100 years to prevent and manage the effects of coastal erosion and flooding having regard to risks to the island's community, environment and economy.

In developing the JSMP, the risk of coastal erosion and flooding has been assessed using hydraulic modelling, historic maps and beach surveys. Coastal flood risk, from still water levels and wave overtopping, was assessed using the UK National Oceanography Centre guidance, and the 50th percentile results for the IPCC 'RCP8.5' climate change emission scenario ("business as usual"), giving a resulting sea level rise prediction of 0.83 metres by 2120.

The SMP aims to protect Jersey's shoreline from coastal flooding to a 1:200 year return period event based on an assessment of risk for three epochs:

- Present day (2020-2040);
- Medium Term (2040-2070); and
- Long Term (2070-2120).

For each epoch four policy options have been considered to manage flooding and coastal erosion risks.

No Active Intervention (NAI)

A policy decision to not invest in coastal defences or maintenance work, where the shoreline will be left to naturally evolve without intervention. This policy will generally be applied to natural areas of the coastline which are currently undefended.

Maintain the Defence Line (MTDL)

Existing coastal defences are maintained and where the level of flood protection may decrease in some locations over time due to climate change resulting in sea level rise. This policy will generally be applied where the existing defences currently provide a reasonable standard of flood protection or prevent erosion of the shoreline.

Adaptive Management (AM)

A policy to proactively manage and mitigate coastal flood or erosion risk. The policy will be delivered through various management schemes / initiatives depending on the level of risk and the circumstances. This could include improving the standard of flood protection for an existing sea defence, constructing new defences, raising awareness of flood risk to local communities or recommending flood protection for individual properties.

Advance the Line (ATL)

New sea defences are built seaward of existing defences. This policy will only be implemented in areas where there is currently a significant risk of coastal flooding or erosion, or where it will deliver additional benefits for the community, environment and economy.



Jersey Shoreline Management Plan

To assess the best option for the different parts of the island's coastline, it was divided into six areas, each with similar risks of flooding, coastal erosion and levels of development, which were further subdivided into smaller units so that the management intent is appropriate at a local scale.

The policy selection followed an appraisal process where the relative merits of each policy option were considered having regard to the impacts on existing structures, the community and the environment, along with an assessment of the economic costs and benefits of each. The JSMP now provides a robust policy framework to manage risks associated with flooding and erosion from coastal sources around Jersey in a sustainable manner over the next 100 years. It will be used to inform the development of planning policy, as the government prepares the next Island Plan; and will inform the prioritisation, development and implementation of shoreline management infrastructure schemes for priority areas.

Kevin Pilley

States of Jersey



**More information
can be found here:**

[www.gov.je/GovernmentPages/
StatesReports.aspx?ReportID=5173](http://www.gov.je/GovernmentPages/StatesReports.aspx?ReportID=5173)

A tale of two islands Fiji and Jersey

During the course of the past year I have had the opportunity to spend time on sabbatical with two overseas National Trusts, working with them to give advice in relation to planning and heritage-related matters. Both are island-based, both have planning systems based on the UK system, yet they are in different continents, hemispheres even, and are 10,000 miles apart.

The challenge in attempting to describe my experiences, both personal and professional, is in knowing where to start and where to stop – I could fill a book. So in this article I will endeavour to compare and contrast the main planning-related challenges and will try, but may fail, to gloss over the beautiful beaches, spectacular waterfalls, beach cafes and equable climates.

I should really have entitled this “a tale of two archipelagos”, as “island” is an inadequate description in relation to both. Jersey, well-known to many readers, is a British Crown Dependency and is a self-governing island within the Channel Islands. Fiji is an Independent Commonwealth Republic comprising 330 islands, just over 100 of which are inhabited. Both therefore have long-standing close relationships with the United Kingdom, hence the similarities between their planning systems.

As a UK planner parachuting in (well, not quite literally...) I found these similarities meant that I could hit the ground running in terms of understanding the processes – planning applications, local plans (or planning schemes) in Fiji, listed buildings, planning committees. There was much that is familiar there. The differences however can be subtle, or can be in your face, and I found that the island nation aspect can throw these differences into sharp focus.

Both Jersey and Fiji are heavily reliant on income from the tourism that is based on their stunning environments, particularly their coastlines. In post-Covid times this will be a real challenge, especially in Fiji which in economic terms is a developing nation and has little to fall back on. Both share the challenge of balancing the exploitation of that environment for tourist-related or high-end residential purposes, but both are acutely aware of the dangers of destroying the goose that has laid the golden egg. With the inevitable push-pull characteristics of democratic decision-making processes and making balanced judgements, and the additional pressures within relatively small communities where everyone seems to know everyone, it can be difficult to achieve consensus or even consistency.

The sealed system nature of islands also presents both opportunities and challenges. On the plus side, there is the potential for truly integrated planning, for example of the terrestrial and marine environments. Their relatively small size means that both officers and elected members have an overview of the whole island environment and the opportunity to develop planning processes that encompass the whole, in contrast to the UK where we have separate marine and terrestrial planning processes and the coastline itself can appear to get neglected by both. The sealed system however presents its own challenges; these are environmental on the one hand for example the implications of climate change, or socio-economic/process-related, especially where demand for development is high. Duty to co-operate? Where else does the development go?

These challenges and pressures can also be significant in relation to heritage and the weight given to conservation. Islanders share a passion for their island, but differ in terms of how to manage what is special about it. In Fiji there is an element of stability through the historic mataqali kinship group-based system of land ownership, and the Fijians' deep attachment to their land and culture, however this does not generally apply in the urban areas and economic pressures mean that there is an incentive to attract international investment from regimes that do not share the same understanding of heritage and its significance.



Green Island

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A tale of two islands Fiji and Jersey

On the practical front, the islands' environments make them desirable places in which to live and work, but their geographies mean a degree of isolation. It can be difficult to attract and retain professional staff, and can be especially difficult to acquire specialist expertise. In the voluntary/environmental sector this is a particular challenge, hence my involvement through my former role as Head of Planning for the National Trust in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Neither the Jersey nor the Fiji National Trusts can afford the luxury of their own in-house planners. International collaboration, for example through the auspices of the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO), or the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), can be a lifeline in terms of both sharing expertise and giving professional support. And, as I myself have found, it is absolutely a two-way process; there is much that I have learnt and been able to bring back for the benefit of my own professional development and to share with others back in the UK.

The islands' environments make them desirable places in which to live and work



Karin Taylor

Chartered Town Planner and Landscape Architect and now works freelance and as a volunteer for INTO and CAP, following a career in local government and as Head of Planning for the National Trust.

Managing archaeological loss in the face of coastal change

The coast has always been an enigmatic place to live, work and play. The ongoing relationship we have with our coastal landscape is reflected in the rich archaeological heritage that past peoples have left to us. However, the coast has always been a dynamic place full of change. Unfortunately this change can mean that many of these archaeological sites will be lost to us forever. Through understanding past coastal change and managing this effectively means that we can embrace the transformation aspects of loss and create new opportunities associated with an ever changing coast.

The South West is home to over 1,130km of coastline and more than 62% of the population lives within 10km of the coast (Murphy, 2014). The coast has provided access to rich resources and trade making them attractive places for settlements and military defences. Seemingly unimportant mounds in the landscape indicate the presence of Bronze Age burial mounds or Iron Age hillforts. From the imposing twin Tudor castles at Pendennis and St Mawes that guard the river Fal to the hauntingly beautiful silhouettes of mining chimneys that line the cliffs at St Agnes, each site has a unique story to tell. The archaeological heritage that we see now is only a snapshot of what once existed. Most of which has been claimed by time and tide. Coastal heritage is important to both our individual and collective sense of identity, community and place. We recognise its importance in not only our lives but as something that we want to protect and pass on to future generations.

Though as anyone who has ever ventured out for a coastal walk on a stormy day can attest to, the coast is not a static place. The coastline that we see today is not the same one as we will see tomorrow. This change will only be exacerbated by the additional pressures caused by an increasingly unpredictable climate. In general climate change means that we are expecting a trend of warmer drier summers and warmer wetter winters (Lowe et al., 2019). Historic England have acknowledged that “the effects will be felt by all types of heritage asset, whether on land and or in sea, comprising buildings, buried archaeology, parks and gardens and landscapes” (Heathcote et al, 2017; 90). Archaeological heritage represents a finite resource, once it is gone it is gone forever. Managing this loss has become a crucial question that the heritage sector have been looking for answers to for some time now.

Shoreline Management Plans (SMP's) produced by local authorities under guidelines from DEFRA divide the coast into 11 distinct 'cells' in which sediment movement is limited. Each cell is then managed through a distinct policy option: hold the line, advance the line, managed realignment and no active intervention. These plans are designed to be implemented within three distinct epochs at 20 years, 50 years and 100 years. Within these epochs the policy options utilised evolve as they, like the coastline itself, are not static. In general there has been a trend to move away from more intrusive methods such as hard defences under 'hold the line' to more discreet forms of management such as 'no active intervention', as often these hard defences limit the natural flow of sediment and cause problems further up the coast.

For heritage protection and management there are several ways that heritage may be formally protected including designation, planning, stewardship, ownership and agri-environmental schemes (Fluck and Wiggins, 2017). Though it is estimated that less than 5% of archaeological coastal sites have statutory protection (Flatman, 2009). Preservation by record remains one of the most effective ways to mitigate against archaeological loss. Starting in the early 1990's Historic England (then, English Heritage) commissioned a series of Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Surveys (RCZAS). Archaeological units around the UK conducted both desk based assessments and then rapid walk over surveys to help record and understand the archaeological heritage on the coast. The aim of which was to give an overview of the types as assets that were present and the general state of their preservation. From there targeted projects could be created to investigate important sites before they are lost.



Managing archaeological loss in the face of coastal change

Loss is as much a part of the story of the coast as anything else and there are some unexpected benefits offered to us from this. These opportunities lie in us being able to access and actively engage with our archaeological heritage in ways we wouldn't otherwise have access to before. After all, it is only with each cliff collapse that new fossils can be recovered from Dorset's Jurassic coast. Projects such as CiTIZAN, The Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network, aim to help highlight the importance of archaeological sites on the foreshore and intertidal zone through offering recording and monitoring training to citizen scientist all around England's coast (www1). The original dataset records are based on the results of the RCZAS combined with select Historic Environment records, data from the National Trust and local archaeology groups. Using an app which can be downloaded from their website members of the public can help enrich this record through recording eroding archaeology in their area. CiTIZAN also encourage active community engagement through projects at key sites. There have been 18 such projects led by CiTIZAN around the South West coast alone.

Understanding and managing loss on the coast has never been as important as it is now when the heritage sector is at its most vulnerable from both climate change pressures and the, as yet unknown, impacts of the current Covid-19 crisis. There are many places both coastal and inland that may have potentially closed their doors for good. Through managing archaeological loss we can engage with heritage creating a deeper understanding of our past and better resilience in the face of an uncertain future.

Tanya Venture

Currently undertaking a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) with Historic England/Uni of Exeter



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Regional Management Board & Activities Committee Up-date

Since the spring edition of Branchout the Regional Management Board (RMB) and Regional Activities Committee (RAC) have not met in the traditional sense of the word. The meeting scheduled for 24 April was held by video conference and, as it was a bit of a test run, it was limited to the RMB. Now we know the GoToMeeting app works, we will extend the July meeting to the RAC as well. In the meantime, the RMB looked to engage the RAC as fully as possible in the April meeting by seeking their comments / questions on the papers being considered, and sharing those thoughts with the papers' authors for any response before being considered by the RMB.

The principal matters considered were:

Impact of Covid-19 on RTPI SW's planned activities

Dawn de Vries in her Chair's report set out the cancellations from our spring and summer offer including CPD events, the annual dinner and RTPI President's (Sue Manns) visit to the South West. We've produced a fresh programme for the autumn looking to blend the feasible with the popular, and are now keeping our fingers crossed these can go-ahead. We'll also look to introduce a virtual offer as part of a national and regional programme being co-ordinated by RTPI HQ. The RMB also agreed to look into arranging a virtual visit by Sue to parts of the South West she would not otherwise have been able to get to.

With the cancellations, Chris Balch as Honorary Treasurer explained that the budget forecast looked very different from that originally planned and cautioned against taking on any further financial commitments for expenditure later in the year until we knew events would be able to go ahead.

Nations and Regions Panel

Peter Ellis reported back from April's Nations and Regions Panel, including noting that he had aired the concerns about the hole in the government's safety net relating to small limited companies with a sole director that had been raised by members in the South West. Going forwards, it was thought helpful if draft agendas for panel meetings could be shared in advance so as to allow regions to identify items for consideration and shaped to allow more time for iterative discussion of matters raised by regions.

RTPI SW Awards for Planning Excellence

Concern had been expressed to the RMB about proceeding with this year's awards given they were due to open in early May when the country was still locked down. The RMB very much appreciated that many colleagues were facing an uncertain future with competing demands on their time. RMB was also mindful that other regions and the RTPI as a national organisation were keen to keep as closely as possible to business as usual including running the regional awards. This is because of the positive messages that result from the awards programme, including, this year, the potential to showcase how planning has been innovative in responding to the challenges of the pandemic.

Because of the unprecedented impacts of Covid-19, the RMB agreed to add in an extra, and preliminary 'expressions of interest', stage to the 2020 awards to gauge likely interest. This would help in understanding colleagues' capacity to contribute to showcasing the best of planning in the region and their appetite to do so. All other RTPI regions were encouraged to also include the additional stage. Even if there were not enough possible entries to run the competition, the RMB was keen to find other ways to highlight those that had expressed an interest including, for example, articles in Branchout.

Survey of SW LPA support for RTPI membership and publicity given to Planning Aid

There was discussion about the good work underway to understand the picture across the region of local planning support (LPA) for membership of the RTPI and the publicity on LPA websites given to Planning Aid England and the support they offer. It was agreed to complete the work, highlight good practice (including through Branchout) and encourage support for RTPI membership in those LPAs where practice was less supportive. It was also agreed that a similar overview relating to larger private sector practices in the region should be prepared so as to understand better the support given to RTPI membership.

Reports from working groups

The RMB also considered helpful updates from working groups including reports from the South West Young Planners and Planning Aid and were encouraged by the work undertaken to engage members.



Getting to know you - Alexis Edwards

New Member of the RTPI SW Regional Activities Committee



Why did you decide on / choose a career in planning?

I can't quite remember how I ended up choosing a career in planning, but I suppose all the years I spent playing with Lego, and then SimCity when growing up must of rubbed off. This coupled with the fact I had enjoyed reading Geography at University meant I took up the opportunity to read a Masters in Town Planning as one of Geoff Walker's last cohort at UWE. Shortly afterwards I moved back to the South Coast to take up a graduate planner role at Bournemouth Borough Council.

After cutting my teeth in Development Management for a few years I shifted to work on the Local Transport Plan and capital programme. Transport is quite a niche area for planners particularly as of many of those working in transport generally have engineering backgrounds, a point some never fail to remind you about. Working in transport can be very varied ranging from very local small scale but hugely important accessibility improvements up to bypasses and railways.

I'm a keen advocate of Transit Orientated Development. I like the interaction of the different systems, the challenge of the balancing network efficiency against coverage. If you've ever played Mini Metro you'll know exactly what I mean, but the timescales for delivering improvements, particular rail, are just so long it can be disheartening. If you think developing a local plan takes forever try getting something through Network Rail's GRIP process.

Despite the current circumstances, I remain positive for the future, the challenge of climate change will be huge but, as planners, we have been championing many of the solutions already. Obviously, transport has a big impact and needs to up its game, but we can design communities that are no longer car dependant. I particularly like the idea of 20-minute neighbourhoods where your main needs are met within a short ride or a slightly longer walk. It does feel a little like going back into the past to plan for the future but what's to stop us using the classic techniques in new ways?

What about your current job / What does your job involve?

I've recently changed jobs. It's been a slightly strange experience as not only the organisation is relatively new, BCP Council is just over a year old, and so the structures are still being developed but it is also bound up with the Coronavirus changing the ways of working.

For the last 10 years I worked in transport policy, covering local and regional transport strategies, developing proposals for new stations, writing policy documents and preparing business cases for transport investment. During this time, I was offered the opportunity to study for a Masters in Transport Planning and Engineering at University of Southampton, which was eye opening at how far behind transport training is in comparison with planning. I suppose this reflected the different emphasis placed on the practicalities of doing transport stuff i.e. traffic modelling, calculating BCRs, and pavement construction rather than questioning how the transport should respond to climate change or reducing car demand.

I've moved into Transport Development Management, whilst not a new area, looking at planning applications again but from the transport side has been a bit of a change in scale. Up until recently I had been working with colleagues across the South West on the strategic transport plan for the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body which was quite an ethereal project. Whereas now the impact of my work is more immediate and direct as it is focused on the transport impacts of new developments which will hopefully be built in the next few years.



Alexis Edwards MRTPI MTPS

Transport Development Team Leader
Growth & Infrastructure
BCP Council

Getting to know you - Alexis Edwards

Principally Transport DM is all about ensuring highway safety, convenience and amenity are not compromised through developments. Clearly much of the job is about ensuring the transport impacts are provided for as part of a planning application and the eventual scheme is safe for the end user. Often there is tension as the local highway authority has different priorities and objectives as we work towards different legislation than the local planning authority. Because of this we are often painted as the bad guys and whilst everyone likes a villain, it is more that we are looking at things from a different perspective. It just Transport DM is more focussed on the mechanics of how things work i.e. is there enough turning space rather than the aesthetic, that's not to say we're looking to blacktop everything in sight. This said I do think we both want the same things in providing quality places for people to live and work as good design will last.

Why have you got / did you become involved with the Regional Activities Committee?

A healthy branch needs new members to keep it alive, and as I felt I could offer fresh ideas and a different viewpoint, so I put myself forward. As transport planners are a niche group, I felt that it would benefit the RAC to hear from an aligned field. I'm hoping to learn from the RAC and RMB's wider range of expertise and ideas and apply them into my own work.

What do you do when you are not planning?

When not planning I try to get my kids involved in looking after our allotment. You have to love their enthusiasm for digging, sowing and watering. There's something particularly therapeutic about watching a crop grow from a tiny seed into fruits and vegetables you can enjoy cooking and eating. I guess it makes you slow down and enjoy the journey. Living in such a beautiful part of the country you do feel spoiled for choice for places to visit, but the New Forest has a real pull for me and so is our go to destination for a long leisurely walk. My French brother-in-law is also a huge fan as the diversity of landscape is so varied in comparison to where he lives that no visit is complete without a trip. Given my French family I do spend a fair amount of time in France. We're slowly working our way through the Châteaux of the Loire Valley. We're hoping to bag Château de Cheverny later this year, the model for Marlinspike in the Adventures of Tintin.

RTPI Elections 2020

Find out how to apply online

Nominations for RMB and RAC positions open shortly - and this year we have gone digital.

RTPI South West is inviting members to get involved in the running of the Institute.

This year RTPI South West is delighted to announce that all regional vacancies for 2021 will now be advertised alongside vacancies for the General Assembly and Board of Trustees.

How do I get involved?

You will shortly receive an email from us with a link to our new nominations website. This will list all the vacancies in our Region (Regional Management Board and Regional Activities Committee).

rtpi.org.uk/elections2020 www.rtpi.org.uk/elections2020

What does the RMB and RAC do?

The joint committee of the RMB and the RAC represents the regional membership and delivers a range of services. The RMB sets the business plan for the region and together with the RAC it delivers with the Regional Coordinator a range of activities to benefit members and raise the profile of planning, this includes:

- Steering the CPD event programme for the region
- Inputting into consultations and policy updates
- Inspiring future planners and supporting the Young Planner Groups activities
- Contributing to research
- Organising inter-professional networking opportunities
- Raising the profile of planning.
- Contributing to the quarterly E-Newsletter 'Branchout'
- Judging the RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence
- Supporting the activities and promotion of Planning Aid England.
- Celebrating at the Annual Regional Dinner in Bristol

Why should I get involved?

Being on the committee is your chance to make a difference and influence not only the local member activities within the region, but also to help raise the profile of planning amongst the wider built environment sector and the key movers and shakers within the region. It will support your career development and give you the chance to work with a wide range of new colleagues.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for people who can demonstrate a variety of different life and work experiences, a zest for new ideas, a willingness to speak their mind, strategic vision and a desire to make a difference – most importantly we are looking for people with a real commitment to the RTPI and its objectives.

What is the commitment?

The joint committee meets five times a year either virtually via video call or in Taunton, Somerset. Travel expenses in accordance to the RTPI Travel Policy are reimbursed for attendance at meetings.

Are there other opportunities?

To support the RMB and RAC there are Working Groups (WG) and a Judging Panel who work with the Regional Coordinator to shape and deliver activities. These are:

- Environmental Education & Future Planners Working Group
- CPD Working Group (Conferences and other CPD Events)
- Social and Networking Group (The Annual Dinner and other networking and interprofessional events)
- Policy and Research Working Group
- Editorial Working Group (E-News and Branchout)
- Planning Aid
- South West Awards Judging Panel

The South West Awards for Planning Excellence are assessed supported by a panel of judges and it is open for any RTPI member, student or licentiate to be considered for membership of the panel. The Awards are a great way to be a part of celebrating what is great about planning and showcasing excellent examples of planning excellence.

**Nominations will
OPEN on 15 June
and close on 27 July**

**Find out more at
www.rtpi.org.uk/elections2020**

RTPI Elections 2020

I am already a member of an RMB/RAC – what do I need to do?

If your term is due to end at the end of 2020, and you wish to re-apply, you will also need to complete the nominations process online by 27 July.

If your term is not due for renewal, you do not need to apply (check with us) if you are unsure.

Is it possible to apply without using the online site? Unfortunately no, but please get in touch if you need help in completing the form.

Application Tips:

- Find out more about the role you are applying for in advance – read the role description, speak to your regional coordinator, regional Chair.
- Speak to your two 'supporters' in advance – you will need their permission to include their name and email. Once the form is completed, they receive an automatic email asking them to confirm their support.
- Have a photo ready to upload

Please remember to also update your contact details by logging in to our website - as your registered details will determine which positions are advertised to you.

What happens next?

Nominations for both RMB and RAC close on 27 July.
RMB positions: The current RMB will be notified of the results and in the event where a position is contested, a ballot will be held electronically (21 August to 23 September).

Results will be announced on 28 September 2020.
RAC positions: If you have applied for an RAC position, your application will be considered by the RMB following the results of any RMB elections (or sooner if an election is not due to take place). Your place on the RAC will then be confirmed in writing.

“Sitting on the Committee enables you to represent the planners within your region and have a voice in inspiring change and inputting innovative ideas to shape the planning system.

Angharad Williams,
RTPI SW Senior Vice Chair

South West Awards for Planning Excellence



About the Awards

South West Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate projects and people who have helped create exceptional places and improved the lives of those who live and work there; highlighting how planning and planners work to create a safe, healthy and sustainable future.

As well as projects we also encourage individual entries into Young Planner of the Year. Going through the Award process is a great way for an individual to reflect on their accomplishments to date and it can be an empowering process to go through.

Flexibility with entering this year

The RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence are currently open for entry, but given the current pandemic situation we are very aware that this is affecting colleagues in differing ways and many are facing an uncertain future with competing demands on their time. We also know that there are many exceptional planning projects pre COVID19 plus stories of more recent innovation in planning practice as a result of the situation. We are keen to celebrate and promote these achievements, share positive stories, lift morale and learn from experience.

Therefore we can be flexible with the deadlines and can grant extensions if this would help. On the other hand, for those unable to enter, we will work to find other ways to promote their achievements.

If you would like to enter Young Planner of the Year or a project into the Awards but unsure if you can meet the deadline, then we would be happy to discuss some options.

- Free to enter
- Awards open: Monday 4 May 2020
- Entry deadline: 26 June 2020 (extensions to be agreed)
- Results of the 2020 Awards announced in mid-October
- A virtual presentation ceremony will take place in November/December
- Download the entry forms for projects and Young Planner of the Year at www.rtpi.org.uk/southwestawards

Sponsored by



STRIDE TREGLOWN

Why should you consider entering?

[> Back to contents page](#)



In a fast paced and ever changing planning climate, the SW RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence provides an important opportunity to share and reflect upon what can be achieved, and what is indeed being achieved, by planning professionals and communities across the south west. WYG is proud to sponsor this initiative.



Stride Treglown are delighted to continue our sponsorship of the SW RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence in 2020. The quality of the diverse submissions we have seen in recent years continues to demonstrate the importance of the input of planners have in the development process and, in particular, the ability to influence projects which involve the creative re-use of sites."

1. Champion the power of planning at a local level

Our regional Awards for Planning Excellence celebrate planning at its very best; they reward the brightest talent in the profession; the teams, projects and individuals that transform our local economies, environment and communities where we live and work.

2. Professional recognition

Winning, or being shortlisted, is a clear demonstration of your professionalism and high quality work. Judged by your peers, the RTPI Regional Award for Planning Excellence Winner logo is a seal of approval.

3. Exposure

Winning, or being shortlisted, is a great way to gain more exposure for you, your teams and your organisation whilst demonstrating the great work you do. The awards celebrate what planning can achieve and are a great opportunity to shine the spotlight on your organisation. Entrants are also regularly featured as speakers at events, host site visits, included in visits from the RTPI Presidential visits and much more.

4. Recognise and reward your staff

Entering your project or Young Planner colleague into the RTPI Regional Awards is a public way of demonstrating that you recognise the hard work and achievements of the planners on your team. Show your team that your organisation is proud of them and the work they do and celebrate their talent.

5. Reflection

The awards process is a great way to reflect on your accomplishments to date, away from the daily pressures of work that can make you forget all you have achieved, and can be an empowering process to go through.

6. National Awards entry

The winners of the RTPI Regional Awards for Planning Excellence 2020 will be automatically entered into the RTPI national Awards for Planning Excellence 2021.

Winning entrants will:

- Receive an award winner's logo for use on their branding and email signatures, along with a framed certificate and trophy
- Be included in a press release on the RTPI website, shared across social media channels with over 25000 members
- Receive an announcement in the RTPI South West regional e-bulletin and Branchout magazine.
- Be announced on the RTPI South West Twitter feed, to 900 followers
- Overall Winner will be automatically entered into the RTPI national Awards for Planning Excellence 2021.

Shortlisted entrants will:

- Receive an announcement in the RTPI South West regional bulletin
- Be announced on the RTPI South West Twitter feed
- Be displayed on the RTPI South West Awards webpage

Sponsored by



STRIDE TREGLOWN

RTPI South West Dinner - Charity Raffle

RTPI South West has a long tradition of raising money for local and national charities at its annual corporate dinner. This year due to the COVID19 pandemic, we are unable to host the dinner which was due to take place on the 12 June 2020 at We the Curious in Bristol.

For 2020, RTPI South West had agreed to support housing related charities and in particular those that supported homeless people, giving them the right support and tools. The Charities chosen to benefit from a raffle were Caring in Bristol and Julian House.

Given the pandemic we are currently in and the extra crucial support these charities need to help their clients to stay safe, healthy and access the care they need, RTPI South West will still run a raffle, but virtually.

We are asking for a donation of £5 per individual entry (not including Gift Aid). For example if you donate £15 you will be entered into the raffle 3 times. Once you have completed your donation (which can be made anonymously on the webpage), please forward your email receipt to southwest@rtpi.org who will allocate you a raffle number(s).

The raffle will officially open on the 1 June 2020 and run until the 30 June 2020. The RTPI South West Chair will run a random number generator to allocate the prizes to the raffle number holder soon after the closing date. Please note that many of (but not all) the prizes are located in and around Bristol and Bath.

RTPI South West will take no admin fees or profits from this raffle. 100% of the total raised will be donated.

Raffle prizes

- Family disc golf voucher at Mendip Activity Centre
- 2 x Bristol Ferry Boat family tickets
- An open time race session go-karting voucher with Team Sport
- A £50 voucher for www.experiencedays.co.uk
- Stand up paddle boarding session at Cheddar Lake
- Tickets to at match at Somerset County Cricket, Taunton
- A family ticket to the Roman Baths, Bath
- Tickets for the Watershed, Bristol
- Gin Experience for 2 at Psychopomp Microdistillery
- Can you escape Locked in a Room?
- Afternoon tea for two at Thornbury Golf Club
- Tickets to Komedia, Bath
- £100 voucher for Slaters Menswear
- Tickets for a tour at Old Theatre Royal, Bath
- 2 Social Lane tickets for Urban Axe Throwing at Whistlepunks

Good luck and thank you!

How to enter?

To enter the raffle please visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RTPISWDinner2020
CharityRaffle



Charity raffle in aid of:





THE FUTURE OF FOOD AID BY CARING IN BRISTOL



The Covid-19 crisis presented Caring in Bristol with a new challenge. The traditional ways of 'feeding-the-needy' have become unsafe, and out of date. So, it was time for an upgrade. Introducing: Cheers Drive, the UK's first-ever free food delivery service for the homeless.

With food provided by the brains behind Bristol hospitality legends Emmeline, Pasta Loco, Salt and Malt, Pony and Trapp, The Hatch and Bianchi's, you can now buy a takeaway that will be safely delivered straight to a homeless person in Bristol, who have been moved from shelters and off the streets into temporary accommodation where they can self-isolate.

The project also supports those still currently sleeping rough and those who are vulnerably housed throughout Bristol.

Cheers Drive feeds up to 400 homeless people per day and you can play your part by buying a takeaway made up of one freshly cooked hot meal, a packed lunch and breakfast for just £10.

To date Caring in Bristol's Cheers Drive has delivered over 24,000 meals to those who are homeless and extremely vulnerable during COVID19. Please support Cheers Drive to keep going here:

caringinbristol.co.uk/project/cheers-drive

Tough times for the most Vulnerable

Coronavirus has caused massive upheaval and anxiety across the full spectrum of society, including the homeless and other vulnerable groups.

All of the Julian House fundraising events across the South West have either been cancelled or postponed and charity shops and bike shops are closed, all of which has also had a huge effect on income used to fund its life-saving services. This loss of fundraising income would be devastating at the best of times.

In spite of these challenges, Julian House has worked incredibly hard to maintain as many of its services as is practical and, in some areas, expand them. One example of this is the provision of over 40 extra bed spaces in BANES for those living on the streets – something which was achieved in double quick time.

Very early on in the pandemic, rough sleepers were identified as a very vulnerable group. Underlying health issues, the rigours of a street-based lifestyle and simple impediments such as no access to washing facilities, all meant that they were particularly at risk. Likewise, the difficulty of not being able to safely self-isolate was another major threat.

Working alongside B&NES Council and DHI, sufficient accommodation was identified which could provide respite from the street. In just a few days these properties were made ready to receive their first occupants. This required a huge effort from the two charities' staff teams and some amazing support from the wider community, to provide some of the essentials to make empty properties become homes.

Since the start of the Coronavirus outbreak, collaborative work in Bath, Devon, Dorset and Basingstoke has helped to ensure that resources are directed to the most vulnerable and gaps in services addressed.

Roanne Wootten is the Operations Director for Julian House – "In ordinary times you would have to say that bringing three properties and 40 bed spaces into use within a matter of days was simply impossible. The leases alone would take weeks and the other logistics would be equally challenging.

The considerable support of the local councils and a massive effort from already stretched staff made the impossible possible. Likewise, it has been touching to see the community responding so rapidly when we asked for donations such as bed linen, towels and food."

During the crisis clients will be supported by outreach staff and in the event that Coronavirus symptoms become apparent those affected will be helped through their isolation period – keeping them safe and reducing the general risk of transmission.

Julian House's domestic abuse team has also been severely impacted by the Coronavirus. The increase in domestic abuse has seen demand for their services increase as nationally calls to domestic abuse service are up 25% since March.

Whilst we're being told that staying at home is our safest option, for many this isn't the case. For people with an abusive partner, lockdown means captivity. Two women are killed every week by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone, the Coronavirus isn't the biggest threat they are facing.

It's also a huge challenge for those who Julian House are already supporting in their refuge projects, currently a lifeline for 15 women and 19 children. Whilst they may be away from their abusive partner, life in refuge is difficult enough at the best of times but social distancing and self-isolation have made it nigh on impossible.

Our challenge is far from over and we need your help more than ever. Please support our emergency appeal

www.justgiving.com/campaign/JulianHouse-CoronavirusFund

or contact Cathy Adcock to see how your organisation can help cathy.adcock@julianhouse.org.uk



Working from home – how has it been for you?

I've been WFH for 6 weeks now and although it seemed inevitable that lockdown was coming, I didn't relish it; in a previous life I achieved my career dream of becoming a Planning Inspector which is home based. It transpired reasonably quickly that I am not good at being alone; as a sociable team player, who happens to be single with no kids or pets, I struggled badly with the isolation of literally not seeing anyone for many days at a time. That, together with bereavement and dealing with the consequences of the addiction of a close family member, lead to a breakdown and a change of job. I've thrived on being part of a team ever since.

Although office based, I have a small home office in the garden (unlike my converted spare room of old). It means I literally still have to go out to work. I have made an effort almost every day to dress as I would for the office, watermelon skirts, red lippy and all. I have tried to go for a walk and cook a meal from scratch every night, acknowledging that mental health is as important as physical health. I am very grateful that I am still really busy and so weekends still feel quite different for me - two days when I am not in the office and when I can catch up on housework or relax, check up on friends and family. A real benefit is not getting up at 5am to commute to work, I am sleeping better and saving money from no commuting/parking costs. On the other hand, I am in Skype or Teams meetings almost all the time which feels exhausting and it seems harder to carve out time to write reports which seems to be a common issue amongst those I've spoken to.

Virtual life goes on; I attended the RTPI Membership and Ethics committee over video link and have used Skype/ Zoom to have virtual dinner or drinks with friends which has been really lovely – living alone for the last 6 weeks I have missed seeing faces! I have had to remember to accept the things I cannot change, change what I can and remember the wisdom to know the difference. I have become really good at counting my blessings, the garden, walkable access to the countryside and town centre and I can't help but wonder about those living in PD office conversions with no access to a balcony or in some cases, even a window. The town and country planning regime emerged from a public health crisis and we can but hope this crisis leads to better living conditions going forward.



Kath Haddrell
Associate at WYP

Breathe resilience, yield results

According to People Management 25% of employers expect to make permanent redundancies due to COVID-19, despite the government introducing an initiative to avoid unemployment, over 50% of employers will make use of the scheme to furlough staff. That's a significant number of professionals who were former members of the active workforce who must tackle a drastic lifestyle change, in addition to obeying lockdown laws.

It's important to know that if you are one of those affected – you are not alone. Feelings of self-doubt and purpose might be bubbling at the surface, but relish in the time you have free, from the responsibilities that you once had. Push forward, stay focused and dedicate this time to develop your personal and professional self.

3 tips for personal and professional development:

Upskill For those who haven't already, signing up to an online training course is one of the easiest ways to keep your skills sharp, increase your capabilities and offer an avenue for those planning to take a different career direction. Open University and Alison provide free courses, so it won't cost a thing!

Reach out To gauge an understanding of how the job market is performing speak with an industry expert, most are offering free resources such as CV reviews, salary benchmarking plus useful advice and guidance. This is particularly insightful if you are planning to use this time to transition to something new. LinkedIn is a great platform for harnessing connections, contacting individuals and a less formal way to reach out.

Volunteer It's important to make your time out count. For most professionals, this leave of absence is likely to be the longest they experience other than maternity/paternity leave up until retiring from work completely. Dedicating this time to give back will not only have a positive impact on your community, but it will also positively reflect your altruism when you return to work or look for a new opportunity.

Finally, put your physical and mental health first; If any of the above tips raise conflicts with your own personal wellbeing then take a step back. It's imperative that this downtime is used to recharge batteries, clear mindset and prepare yourself for the next chapter in your journey.

Unsure where to volunteer? Your industry needs you!

'do some good' is a property industry initiative led by professionals across the sector. Their mission is to bring the industry together to help disadvantaged groups in our communities.

During the COVID19 pandemic, their efforts are focused on helping support the NHS and other at-risk groups with space for accommodation, parking, storage of goods, food drops, volunteers for at-risk sectors as well as with donations of PPE, supplies, food, and other services. If you would like to donate space, medical supplies , operational support or volunteer please email: volunteer@do-some-good.co.uk.

deverellsmith

... THE RIGHT PEOPLE ...

About deverellsmith...

With offices in London, New York, Houston and Dublin, deverellsmith works in partnership with the international real estate industry to optimise human performance, offering experience and insight through our strategic consultancy and international network. Our services range from executive search and interim talent solutions to HR services, leadership and organisational design, business consultancy and market intelligence.

For more information visit www.deverellsmith.com or for the latest news and views from the industry where property meets people: ds.deverellsmith.com

Laura Croggon currently holds the position as Communications Manager at deverellsmith, covering market trends, opinion pieces and hosts industry interviews on devcast...

CPD in the era of covid19

It goes without saying that it's important throughout our professional lives to maintain and where practical update our technical knowledge. It's the reason why the Institute requires Members to maintain an up to date Professional Development Plan.

Updating and maintaining one's technical knowledge is to ensure that wherever we are employed, in the private or public sector, the advice and actions we take are guided by the best knowledge available. That produces confidence in stakeholders and the public alike in the profession, and is likely to produce better outcomes.

The sources of continuing professional development are varied, but all produce some value to the learner. The most common are courses, such as those provided by the Institute, both nationally and regionally. Attendees at those events also have the advantage of networking with fellow planners, exchanging experiences, 'war stories'. The speakers papers are most often published and provide a useful aide memoir for reference purposes. A good practice to reinforce those learnings is to circulate the papers to non attendees, with notes, or alternatively, if allowed by employers, to conduct an event, such as a lunchtime seminar to inform others of the learnings.

In this time of restricted movement keeping up to date with fast moving changes to planning statute and regulations, both temporary and permanent, is more difficult. Attendance at courses is for a while not possible, however there is considerable distance learning being undertaken. The Institute has a considerable range of courses available. Various sets of Counsel's Chambers as are solicitors firms, specialising in planning, providing video conferencing, dealing with aspects of both the temporary regulations and also contemporary planning issues. These events are very often recorded for later viewing, so missing an event is not a problem.

The growth of technological solutions to having meetings and communication, or at least the planners knowledge of them is growing in this emergency. Until some weeks ago who can honestly say that we were familiar with Zoom or Powwownow, except as a descriptor for movement! or a Native American term for a meeting. Yes we all previously have utilised to some extent virtual meetings, but normally set up by IT colleagues. Now we are gaining expertise in being able to set up meetings, and have more confidence in the technology. That is CPD, though whether we recognise it as such is moot.

This emergency will of course end, but many of the changes that it has brought about will change the way we work forever. Employers in both the public and private sector will be more confident of achieving good productivity than previously with home working. Employees will also be more confident adopting it, especially those to whom responsibilities as carers are part of their lives. CPD will be less about big gatherings of fellow planners, more about planned distance learning. I do see some dangers in this if extended too far. Face to face CPD allows for the development of soft skills with respect to interpersonal relationships that virtual meetings and courses cannot do as well. Face to face events enhance confidence in public speaking to a greater extent than within the virtual world. Finally face to face contact adds to professional and personal sense of 'belonging' that virtual communication cannot.

David Lowin MRTPI

Lowin Associates

Member of the RTPI SW Regional Activities Committee
RTPI APC Assessor



Changes to RTPI Events and how to access CPD

Changes to all RTPI Events

In a recent RTPI announcement it has been agreed that, in order to provide absolute clarity to our members and other professional colleagues, to cancel all RTPI in-person events, meetings, training and travel for volunteers and staff until the end of 2020, in light of announcements by UK Governments recently.

We understand that this will be very disappointing news for those of you who have placed bookings with us for this year. However we have to prioritise the health and safety of our staff and volunteer members and as yet there are no indications that social distancing will end any time soon.

Which RTPI South West Events are cancelled?

(date in bracket was the previous date the event was set for, was then rescheduled and now is cancelled)

- a. **24-26 September, Channel Islands, Jersey**
- b. **28 September - Design, Exeter**
(previously 23 June 2020)
- c. **7 October - Housing, Bournemouth**
(previously 22 April 2020)
- d. **8 October - Community Planning, Eden Project**
- e. **20 October - Natural Environment, Exeter**
(previously 15 July 2020)
- f. **20 October - CPD Day, Exeter**
- g. **11 November - Transport, Swindon**
(previously 26 March 2020)
- h. **18 Nov - Planning Law, Bristol**
- i. **3 December - Infrastructure, Bath**

How can I still engage in CPD?

Although we have had to cancel physical events, this doesn't mean that we will not be providing CPD for our members and professional colleagues. We are working hard to ensure that our delegates can continue to access a full programme of CPD for the rest of the year, albeit in a virtual format. We will be providing delegates with access to our free online events – some of which will have a regional slant, others which will be co-curated with the support of speakers and experts from across our Regions and Nations and beyond.

In addition, we are now piloting our exceptional RTPI Training Masterclasses online, which offer delegates a highly valuable training and learning experience to really boost their understanding of specific topics with expert trainers in small groups. These courses will replace the RTPI Training courses and will be offered at a lower cost than the scheduled in-person RTPI Training courses.

There is also lots of learning opportunities on our online training site, RTPI Learn. It offers FREE modules for planners. The modules are a mixture of text, web links, video clips and diagrams as well as interactive quizzes with instant feedback.

Keep a
lookout on
[www.rtpi.org.uk/
online-events2020](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/online-events2020)
and keep your
CPD up to date

Forthcoming online webinars:

- 16 June** Bird Aware Solent
- 23 June** Nutrient Neutrality and the Planning Regime
- 26 June** Inclusive Economies
- 29 June** The Planner Live Online - COVID-19: The risks exposed to neighbourhoods, equality and climate change
- 30 June** The Planner Live Online - Transport for green recovery, active and mass transport - impact and implications for transport infrastructure planning
- 1 July** The Planner Live Online - New priorities for health and wellbeing – a function of place?
- 1 July** RTPI Dorset YP - How to Build a Town Square and the Implications of Covid-19 on Public Space Design
- 2 July** The Planner Live Online - Climate action and environmental impact – the role of the local planning authority
- 3 July** The Planner Live Online - Planning for Post COVID-19 economic and social recovery and planning's contribution
- 8 July** RTPI APC Webinar: EP-APC
- 10 July** PlanTech

A whole diverse programme of topical and technical subjects are already in the planning and launching imminently!