

## **NAPE Annual Report -2020**

This year marks my third annual report having been re-elected Chair in January 2020 as well as the London & East regional representative and covers the period from December 2019 -2020. Over the past 12 months it has again been a pleasure to work alongside fellow management committee members Craig, Dawn, Tom, John, Chris and Liam. We have also welcomed Craig Meikle to the committee having been elected as the Scottish regional representative who has been a fantastic addition to our team.

I am pleased to report that 2020 has seen a further increase in the NAPE membership with numbers currently standing at 1012, meaning we have reached the target we set ourselves for this year of reaching a thousand members and we would like to continue to build upon this number building a stronger network which represents and promotes the planning enforcement profession.

Over the past 12 months we have continued to publish our monthly newsletter containing expert opinion on relevant enforcement court cases, links to enforcement related media reports and links to enforcement training events. We have also continued with our monthly 'ask day' where each month a member of the management committee is available to answer questions from our members on enforcement issues they may be dealing with.

At the end of 2019 NAPE secured funding from MHCLG to update our Enforcement Handbook for England and put on three free launch events for this document around the Country. Going forward into 2020 plans were well underway to organise the launch events in London, Birmingham and Manchester for dates in April and May to coincide with the publication of the updated handbook. However, as we moved into March it rapidly became apparent that the launch events were not going to take place due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

However, the handbook project team lead by Max Tolley reacted brilliantly to this and plans were soon put in place to arrange a virtual launch event which took place on 18th May, during which a panel of speakers (comprising handbook authors) gave presentations and answered questions on the handbook and planning enforcement generally. The launch event had over 350 attendees and the handbook has received considerable positive feedback. The handbook was well publicised in the planning press and the document will be continually reviewed and updated by the management committee. I would like to thank the project team and all the authors of the handbook for their efforts in bringing the document to fruition.

In August the Government published its 'Planning For The Future' white paper which in part focussed on enforcement and its importance. The NAPE management committee put together its own response as part of the wider RTPi response to this document and it will be interesting to see the proposed changes to the planning

system begin to take shape and this is something that NAPE will be keeping a close eye on.

Ordinarily throughout the year members of the management committee would be speaking at various planning related conferences on enforcement, however this year saw the cancellation of all in person events, including our NAPE annual conference. However, this was seen as an opportunity to do something different and NAPE joined forces with RTPI Cymru, the organisers of the annual Wales Enforcement conference, to put on the RTPI Planning Enforcement Week which took place between 19 and 23 October 2020.

This virtual conference platform enabled us to bring put on 12 sessions across the week covering a broad range of enforcement topics, featuring speakers and panellists from each of the home nations and captured a wide range of views and experiences which is something which would not ordinarily be possible as part of a single day event. I would like to thank everyone at the RTPI, particularly Jenny Divine and all the speakers who worked together to ensure the event ran smoothly and was a great success. I would also like to thank immediate past RTPI president Ian Tant for his contributions and continued support for planning enforcement.

As we look forward to 2021, NAPE's main aim will continue to be to make progress in raising the profile of planning enforcement both at local and national level. We are pleased to have secured further funding from MHCLG to produce a 'Beginners Guide to Enforcement' which we aim to publish in the first half of 2021. Given the events of 2020, this coming year will no doubt present us all with continued challenges and with local Council budgets likely to be squeezed even tighter it is imperative that our message that planning enforcement is an integral part of the planning process continues to be heard. NAPE will be doing all it can to ensure that enforcement is kept at the front and centre of any future decisions on the planning system.

I would like to thank the members of the Management Committee for their continued input and support, in addition to their day jobs over the last 12 months. Also a special thank you to our network manager Jenny Divine, who has worked really hard this year despite the difficulties we have all faced to ensure that the NAPE wheels keep on turning no matter what. The continued support of the RTPI is also very much appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members for their continued interest and contributions in what was an extremely challenging year. NAPE is here for our members and will continue to support our members as best we can and speak up for enforcement at all times.

Neill Whittaker

NAPE Chair

Jan 21