



RTPI South West
Royal Town Planning Institute

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Picture
Cranbrook Country Park
(as part of the Clyst Valley Masterplan Awards Entry)

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BRANCHOUT NEWS

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Message from the Chair

This is my last article that I write in my year as Chair of the RTPI South West, and what a year it has been!

The year started with another lockdown across the UK which saw the continuation of working from home and, of course, the continuation of our virtual meetings and webinars. Whilst this was not how I ever thought my year as Chair would turn out, it has still been what I consider to be a success, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. The embracing of virtual meetings and webinars have enabled our activities to be more inclusive and reach out to members beyond our region, drawing in cross regional views and experiences.

My motivation for becoming Chair was to inspire others to think more about how we, as planners, can make the environments in which we live more inclusive, thereby enabling access for all individuals. I cannot emphasise enough how passionate I am about this, nor how important it is for us planners to take this on board and continue to ensure that we are thinking of everyone when we plan our villages, towns, and cities.

We become planners to plan for all, and that includes our families, our friends, our colleagues and all those that engage in our natural and built environment. Everyone should have the ability to go where they want when they want, as well as have the opportunity to make decisions for themselves, and stay independent for as long as possible. We can help make this happen and I would encourage all of you to keep this message in mind no matter how big or small the project that comes across your desk.

My year as Chair saw the introduction of having what I called 'a personal touch' added to our CPD meetings, which involved seeking out individuals that could tell their side of a story and how they have been impacted by planning, and how we can improve it. This began in one

of our first webinars where we looked specifically at creating inclusive environments and heard from an individual that has dementia, and another that has dyspraxia. Hearing how we as planners can help change the world for the better for people like this was both eye opening and heart-warming, and whilst my year as Chair may be coming to a close, inclusive environments is something I will continue to champion.

This year also saw the introduction of 'The Chair's page' where we have been able to signpost readers to interesting resources and case studies which have been considered to achieve inclusive design on a very high level. This theme was also strengthened in my selection of who received the RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence 2021 Chair's Award which you will read more about later on in this issue.

We are slowly beginning to see a touch of normality again in terms of how we live following the tragedy of the pandemic, but we are not out of the woods yet. The key messages that have come out of this year again, are never take the ones you love for granted, and continue to make positive changes each and every day.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all committee members of the RMB and RAC and also to our Regional Co-ordinator, Charlotte Daborn, without whom, the region would not be as fantastic as it is with the events we are blessed to hold, and the time and effort that is put into organising each and every one of them. I'd also like to take this moment to recognise and thank all the volunteers we have here in the region, from the committee members to Young Planners to our key contacts through the South West Engagement Network (SWEN) and our Universities. Engagement through all these volunteers highlights what a strong bond we have here and the drive to continue to support our members and colleagues and raise the profile of planning. If you are interested in volunteering, please do consider joining, it's

rewarding, broadens your career development and you meet a great cross section of members.

I would like to wish the incoming Chair, Julie O'Rourke, all the very best, and I just know that her passion and enthusiasm for bringing private and public sectors of planning together will be a huge success.

As I close of my year as Chair, I would like to leave you all with one message:

Keep going, keep inspiring, and remember that small changes, can make a big difference.



Angharad Williams
RTPI South West Chair
2021

Editor's blog

Tempus Fugit. Time flies.

It only seems like yesterday that I took over the helm of Branchout for 2021 and here ends my trilogy. I'll let you decide if my run was the Godfather Trilogy or the Harold and Kumar Trilogy. But like Pierce Brosnan became Daniel Craig and Jon Pertwee became Tom Baker I too will be recast for 2022. I'd like to give an advance welcome to Alexis Edwards who will be taking over the mantle from the next issue. I wish him all the best in the role and know he will deliver to you some great articles for next year.

We turn to our final issue for 2021 and we have articles from our regular contributors including the South West Young Planners; the University of Plymouth and Planning Aid, we get to know Regional Activities Committee Member, Harry Quartermain and we have details of upcoming events in the region including a special date for your diary; the return of the annual dinner in 2022.

We have pieces from guest writers that cover a variety of topics that are on the minds of those in our profession. The first is about a return to planning for sport in light of the pandemic, what impacts did the outbreak have on public sector sport and what does its future hold? Jacqueline Bennet shares her thoughts.

Place making and regeneration then comes to the forefront as we consider two projects of vastly differing scale but doubtless with a number of common goals. We start with Yeovil Refresh, focussing on the regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre before hoping over to Germany and the city of Freiburg. If you know nothing of Freiburg then this taster by Hugh Barton should be enough to peak your interest and encourage you to look at Freiburg as a case study with many examples of good practice for creating successful places.

If you are starting to feel a little gloomy by the change in weather and the earlier nights then the article on Rewilding may help raise your spirits. Aside from the lovely sunny photographs you will hear from Simon Roper of Ambios and their work in bringing part of the Sharpham Estate near Totnes back to nature. Rewilding will undoubtedly become more and more accepted as a means to manage our landscape and environment, particularly in light of need for biodiversity net gain.

From one hot topic in the form of ecology to another, renewable energy. As many sites near the end of their time limited planning permission read about the future of onshore wind farms and what options are available. It's not as simple as remove or keep the sites; learn about repowering and life extensions as well as some of the challenges for those involved in these projects.

We have seen prices of petrol soar at the pumps, we have the constant reminder that we must move away from fossil fuel driven transport but yet the allure of an electric car is still cost prohibitive for many, so what can we do? Cycling can be a viable alternative which provides lower costs for users, brings with it health benefits and has a lesser impact on the environment. Professor John Parkin considers planning for cycling.

RTPI President Wei Yang visited the South West recently, read about her visit in our Chair's report before celebrating the work of our peers in the region with the highly anticipated results of the RTPI SW Awards for Planning Excellence. Congratulations to all our winners and thank you to all that participated. The awards will be back for 2022 so please keep an eye on Branchout and the RTPI SW website (RTPI | RTPI South West) for details next year and get your thinking caps on; which schemes or people will you nominate?

Please feel free to get in touch with us if you have any suggestions for future articles or would like to contribute then contact us via email at southwest@rtpi.org.uk.

I'd like to finish by thanking all those who contributed to Branchout over the course of what has been another difficult year for many; hopefully next year will see the continuation of a return to more familiar working practices. A special thank you to our regional co-ordinator, Charlotte Daborn, who keeps us all out of trouble and on track with what we should be doing! I am also very aware of the immense pressure many in the profession are under, certainly I can vouch for the public sector being incredibly stretched at this point in time. I know everything will work out in the end and the position we find ourselves in will not be forever. In the meantime though keep trying, do not give up, be there for your friends and colleagues and do not be afraid to speak out or seek help if things start to get too much for you.

Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.



Ian Perry
RTPI South West
Junior Vice Chair

Planning for Sport Post Lockdown

What is the picture looking like for sport after lockdown?

It is good to think that sport, like many other aspects of our lives, is returning to 'normal' now the worst of the Covid pandemic appears to be over. However, it is not yet clear when, or if, activity will return to previous levels, despite the fact that the benefits of being active are known by all. The scale of the disruption has been so great that many of the gains achieved in participation in physical activity (including sport) over the last five years have, according to Sport England's monitoring, been badly hit. In the South West, overall levels of activity have declined slightly, although the picture does vary across the region.

There is widespread agreement that the availability of appropriate facilities will be key to the restart process and fundamental to delivering sport and activity. It is heartening to hear that the Government and Lawn Tennis Association have just announced a £30 million package to refurbish more than 4,500 public tennis courts, including those in a poor or unplayable condition at more than 1,500 venues... but do we have to wait for more home grown sportswomen (and sportsmen!) like Emma Raducanu to become world beaters before the Government escalates provision for sport up the health and well being agenda and commits further to 'levelling it up' across the nation?

The LGA states that the pandemic hit public sector sports and leisure provision hard, compounding existing challenges facing the sector, including an ageing leisure estate for which it has called for £1 billion in capital investment in the next Spending Review to bring it up to modern design and environmental standards. Educational establishments host at least one half of all sports halls, playing pitches and swimming pools. There are great examples of the community use of school facilities in the South West, but new forms of school ownership and management are bringing about reductions in community access to some facilities, which have been exacerbated by closure during lockdown.

Patterns of participation were changing even before Covid. Over the last thirty years or so, Sunday football and cricket for adults has diminished considerably in many areas and participants are having to travel (drive) ever greater distances to where teams play. Despite many encouraging initiatives, participation by women and girls in football, cricket and rugby remains much lower than by men and boys, although other sports which have traditionally attracted greater numbers of female participants, such as netball, have experienced growth. Small-sided soccer has increased, encouraged by the growth in the number of artificial grass pitches and there has been a great boon in sports such as running and cycling. It is vital to understand these trends as they have major implications for the protection and provision of facilities going forward.

Tim Hollingsworth, Chief Executive of Sport England states: 'We want grassroots sport not just to survive the pandemic but to thrive as we start to adjust to a different way of living.'

But Nicola Walker, CEO of SportEd (a charity that promotes grassroots sport) highlights that

'... those who have struggled through most of Covid - those living in areas of poverty, young people with a disability or those struggling with their mental health - are proving the hardest to connect with the benefits of sport and physical activity'.



KEVICC, Totnes

Planning for Sport Post Lockdown cont...

Why is it important to plan for sport?

The benefits of sport to both physical and mental wellbeing and the contribution sport can make to a healthy lifestyle as 'preventative medicine' are now well documented. Sport is an important part of regular physical activity, which is proven to reduce the risk of serious illness and disease. However, in planning terms, it doesn't seem that the links between sport and health are being made strongly enough. Planners' efforts around 'Healthy Communities' often focus on access to active travel, natural greenspaces and healthy foods. The provision of 'sports facilities' per se is often not referred to directly - and planning for sport suffers as a result.

Sport takes place in a range of settings, each with different ownership, access and management arrangements. Such 'Active Environments' include dedicated sport and physical activity facilities (such as pitches, courts, pools and leisure centres); other community spaces (such as parks and open spaces, village halls, community centres and schools) and the wider built environment (streets, housing estates, tow paths, footpaths and cycleways). The list is virtually limitless and part of the great attraction - that potentially there is something for everyone. However, it is very difficult to write a coherent set of guidelines which apply to all aspects of planning for them and added considerations such as different sized facilities for youth and adult sport and different surfaces for artificial grass complicate the picture still further.

Through visiting sports locations around the South West for many years, I have seen many excellent facilities. However, I still come across shortcomings in planning and delivery:

- artificial turf pitches that are not an appropriate size for recognised matchplay.
- changing facilities that have insufficient/inappropriate space for women and girls.
- sites for adult football with just one pitch and/or without changing facilities, both of which will render them of very limited value.
- playing pitches located on floodplains.
- playing fields allocated for housing within local planning documents without any alternative, acceptable sites being considered and agreed.
- sports facilities on new estates with inappropriate or no provision for ongoing maintenance, no ancillary facilities, and no management/access arrangements.
- multi-use games areas denied floodlighting on amenity grounds (when a slightly different location would have enabled them to be used all year round).
- pavilions/changing facilities provided to accommodate one sport rather than a range of sports and - if possible - other community requirements.

These all represent missed opportunities to 'build back better'. Unfortunately, we are still putting things in the wrong places and many facilities are still not fit for purpose or do not do all that they could to meet a range of diverse community needs.

It is vital that we elevate 'planning for sport' as a specialism and discipline in its own right and ensure at least a baseline capacity in local authority planning teams to avoid wasting (increasingly scarce) resources and to ensure that facilities will be fully used and encourage everyone to become more active.

It is vital that we elevate 'planning for sport' as a specialism and discipline in its own right

What can planning do?

As we enter a new period of living alongside Covid, we should be working towards developing multi sports environments that can provide opportunities all year round with facilities that can also be used by the wider community wherever possible. We should be planning environments that create opportunities for sport for all age groups, men and women and which respond to the needs of diverse communities and are as inclusive, accessible and affordable as possible. And we should be responding to climate change including the impact of sports facilities on carbon emissions and biodiversity.

So when we are thinking about land for sport (retaining or planning for new and/or enhanced facilities), it is important to consider the following:

- Future proofing: planning for current and future needs, leaving room for expansion and intensification of facilities should it be required.
- The scope of s106 requirements at an early stage; ensure land availability and commitments and plans for maintenance and management (developer and LA) are agreed. Implementation on large housing

Planning for Sport Post Lockdown cont...

developments can take many years and should be rigorously monitored and followed through to delivery.

- Is floodlighting required? If so consider lighting impacts in design from the outset.
- Have community halls been sized/designed for sport (e.g. badminton)? Ensure detailed fit out (e.g. light fixtures) are compatible with sport.
- Are there adequate ancillary facilities (changing rooms etc.) to meet everyone's needs and could these be easily adapted to cater for other community purposes (café, shelter, toilets, activity rooms etc.)?
- At the neighbourhood level, can new sport facilities be linked to existing healthy places and active travel networks to the site be planned in?
- How does the proposed provision relate to existing facilities - does it complement rather than duplicate them? What opportunities are there for jointly providing and/or linking with facilities on education sites?

Conclusion

Funds for maintaining and providing sports facilities at all levels are declining, many voluntary sports clubs are struggling, and patterns of use and participation are changing. If we are to encourage more people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and become fitter, the provision of facilities to enable them to do this becomes of paramount importance.

Planners have an increasingly important role to play in ensuring the right facilities are provided in the right places at the right time. Good design and planning at the outset ensures facilities will be well used and reduces the need for further alterations in the short term. To paraphrase from 'Field of Dreams', it is not enough to 'build it and they will come'.

Planning for sport is a specialist field and there is an enormous amount of advice and expertise now available. Ongoing engagement with Sport England (www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport), with national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) and other local and regional sports organisations and clubs can be very useful especially when there is limited expertise within planning teams.

In addition, working closely with other professionals in the health and wellbeing field - whether in public health, social care, the environment or education and designers - will facilitate better integrated planning processes and procedures and be key to 'building back better' for sport and active environments after lockdown.

Jacqueline Bennett

belap - bennett leisure and planning



Taunton Vale Club



Tennis courts near Berkeley Glos

Yeovil Refresh - Regenerating a place

Adopting the scheme

Yeovil Refresh was adopted by South Somerset District Council (the council) and its partners in 2018. This created a themed approach to regenerating Yeovil town centre with a focus on four key areas. These are broadly speaking: tackling and delivering major development sites; improving and enhancing the transport network; and, regenerating and reinventing the public realm- all underpinned by activities to animate the town centre, tackling anti-social behaviour and generally providing an environment that allows the town to thrive.

The Refresh was adopted following consultation with partners and residents helping to inform town centre policies and support change. As schemes have developed further consultation work has been undertaken to help deliver these schemes.

Securing the funding

As a part of its strategy the council sought to provide funding through a range of sources either generated from its own investments or from work with partners. This enabled a strong bid to be made to the Future High Streets Fund securing £9.75 million worth of funding. The funding award provides support in three of the themed areas.

Public Realm Works

In the first area of the public realm the bid made the case for the regeneration of public spaces as a lever for improvement in the town centre. Significant funding was provided via the fund creating an overall capital budget for fundamental changes amounting to £8.3 million. This will provide streets which are accessible, with reduced traffic levels, increased planting of trees and other species and providing space for a range of activities. These streets have at their heart two new public spaces. At the Borough the space will be enhanced to provide Civic space centred on the war memorial. The second space,

known as the Triangle, will provide a new entertainment space with amphitheatre style seating, water feature and a big screen, enabling the hosting of a range of events. In creating these spaces, the topography of Yeovil has created many challenges, especially around accessibility to the areas. The mix of uses with the existing transport system - which is dominated by vehicles - has proved a real challenge especially around the balanced provision of spaces for those with disabilities.

As an initial step the council created and adopted a Supplementary Planning Document which deals with the quality of the public realm and has an associated shopfront guide. Construction recently started in Westminster Street with all sections scheduled to be completed by June 2023.

Developing the sites

The Development sites within the town present major opportunities with a current focus on the Old Cattle Market which occupies 10 percent of the town centre; Glovers Walk a 1960/70's shopping centre with high vacancy rates and the creation of bespoke employment space. These two sites will provide a mix of residential premises and commercial space which would fundamentally change the nature of the town centre. This moves towards the general concept of diversifying the town centre uses. In tandem with these sites the aim is to compact the retail area within the town which is currently threaded across the whole town centre. The employment space would see the council securing an existing underutilised retail/commercial premises to create co-collaboration workspace.

Improving transport links

The council is also seeking to improve the transport network. A strategy has been adopted which provides a holistic approach to the transport network. This covers highways, cycling and walking network, bus routes and links to railway stations. Design work is well underway on the Cycling and Walking network which will extend new links into the town centre and it is hoped will commence construction in 2022.

Steps are now being taken post pandemic to draw together animation plans working with cultural providers, event organisers and existing partners.

Ian Timms

Yeovil Refresh Project Manager
at South Somerset District Council



Bandstand aerial

Westminster street

Learning from Europe: FREIBURG

The historic city of Freiburg, in south-west Germany, has become a place of pilgrimage for planners across the world. It exemplifies an integrated approach to spatial planning, encompassing all aspects of urban development and regeneration, driven by a political consensus that values sustainability and quality of life. Peter Hall called Freiburg 'the city that has done it all'! New neighbourhoods are planned as integral to the city, with a balance of social groups and facilities. Old neighbourhoods are renewed with full community involvement. Streets are dominated by walking and cycling not traffic. This is a green city, offering a healthy living environment.

How it started

In the 1970s Freiburg was much like most other European cities: planning for full motorisation. Then two crises caused a change of heart: the gradual destruction of the adjacent Schwarzwald (Black Forest) by acid rain from the city; and the German government's plan to construct a nuclear power station near the city. A group of young Green Party councillors got elected and set the city on an environmentally sustainable course, cutting traffic pollution and reducing the need for fossil or nuclear electricity.

Alliances were forged between city, university, business and people. The city became known as the solar capital of Germany, with new industries making photovoltaic panels which were then installed on roofs. The city became a net exporter of power. Changing the travel mindset of residents and businesses was begun by building out the tram system and the pedestrianisation of the city centre - only bikes and trams allowed.

Integrated transport/land use planning

Freiburg's urban form combines compactness, ideal for active travel, with linearity, ideal for public transport. The phrase often used by Wulf Daseking, the inspirational chief planner for 20 years, was the city of short distances.

- The integrated system of tram, bus and rail services reaches all parts of the city and surrounding settlements.
- Commercial, institutional and residential redevelopment and new-build projects are directly linked to the tram system. The vast majority of journeys can be made by tram.
- Permeable pedestrian and cycling networks allow safe, pleasant, efficient trips, often through green surroundings.
- Residential environments are traffic calmed and very green, encouraging social interaction, recreation, children's play.

Economy, ecology, efficiency, egalite, environment

Freiburg has succeeded in lining up all the critical urban goals, so that they reinforce each other. The economy has boomed as links between university and commerce have flourished and the city has invested in an attractive, unpolluted environment. Housing, transport and regeneration policies have delivered a fair level of environmental equity, promoting active travel and contact with nature. The very low level of obesity is an indicator of a healthy city. The determination to tackle global warming has benefitted industry, energy bills, air quality, biodiversity and the green environment.



Greenways, apartments and balconies in Reiselveld

Learning from Europe: FREIBURG cont...

New neighbourhoods

Vauban and Reiselveld have won widespread praise. The latter is a new suburb to the east of the city that will soon be complete, home to 12,000 people. It has been constructed on brownfield land (an old sewage works) as a large unified neighbourhood with one dominant centre. Because net and gross densities are relatively high, all residents are within easy walking distance of the centre, which includes a secondary school, leisure centre, all local services and a superstore. It is structured around an extension of the tram system that gives a reliable, frequent service to Freiburg centre. Employment is also in immediately adjacent localities, accessible by foot and bike.

Housing is mainly in the form of 3 and 4-storey perimeter blocks with car parking underneath buildings and semi-private courtyards. Reiselveld caters for everyone: a mix of co-operative self-build, market, rented and social housing. No one developer is permitted to have more than a certain proportion of units in a block. The whole feel of the place is green and peaceful, with children on bikes and scooters, playspaces in and around the development, multiple use health centre/library/hall and multi-faith 'church' that is also an events venue. Small-scale shops and offices sit near the superstore, which has flats above and car park below. The streets and public have low traffic volumes because the alternatives are so attractive. Reiselveld is a delight.

The secrets of success

- Cross-party consensus over goals and professional clarity about how best to achieve them
- A high level of municipal autonomy and an ability to raise low-interest loans from a regional not-for-profit bank
- Ability of the city to purchase development land at below market rates, lay down infrastructure and sell plots at a profit, paying for the initial outlay
- Extensive and on-going public engagement in planning decisions, with very high officer commitment
- Effective partnerships between city, university and business
- Strong and sustained leadership over the decades

Hugh Barton is Emeritus Professor of planning, health and sustainability at UWE, Bristol.

He is author of *City of Well-being* (Routledge 2017), and co-author of *Shaping Neighbourhoods: for local health and global sustainability* (third edition, Routledge 2021). This article is derived from a case study in 'Shaping Neighbourhoods'.



*People, bikes and tram lines
in a city square - no cars*

'Rewilding' - what's all that about?

'Rewilding' turns out to be a complex and sometimes controversial word. At first, the more you work with it, the more complex it seems to become and added to this, it can be partnered with terms such as Ecological Restoration (or Ecological Recovery). At its core, however, Rewilding is about allowing space for nature to take the lead and to return and thrive. We are living in a period of mass extinction and global climate change; something needs to change in order for human existence to continue on this planet. Rewilding is an essential part of the solution to reverse the already significant losses our natural world has experienced.

Rewilding Britain, a charity set up to foster a community of interest, defines rewilding as the large-scale restoration of ecosystems to the point where nature is allowed to take care of itself. Rewilding seeks to reinstate natural processes and, where appropriate, missing species – allowing them to shape the landscape, learning from the past and looking to a new future. The term 'rewilding' is used to describe large scale projects such as those in Yellowstone National Park in the USA (reintroduction of wolves) and Oostvaardersplassen in the Netherlands (establishing large herds of grazing herbivores). Closer to home there is the 23,000 acre Alladale Estate in Scotland and the 3,500 acre Knepp Estate in Sussex. From Knepp came the seminal book 'Wilding' by Isabella Tree which has done much to bring these concepts into popular and political consciousness. There are also a growing number of much smaller scale 'rewilding' ventures (in the 10-1500 acre range) that are 'rewilding' in the context of their local environment. Mammal species reintroductions might not be possible, but the creation of smaller scale spaces where nature can return and thrive most certainly are.

I am part of a small team running Ambios Ltd, a 20-year old not-for-profit organisation offering nature conservation training to the next generation of wildlife professionals. We help those that come and train with us achieve their own goals for nature, science, education and/or employment. We are a small team of six running 8 or 12-week intensive residential training programmes (<https://www.ambios.net/spend-winter-rewilding/>) from our farm in South Devon as well as distance learning courses (<https://www.ambios.net/distance-learning/>) all of which help people gain the practical skills associated with wildlife monitoring, land management and audience engagement with nature.

We've been based on the Sharpham Estate (which is run by an educational charity offering mindfulness retreats) since 2012, managing 80 acres of land for wildlife. We co-tenant with United Response who support people with learning difficulties and provide a day-service on our farm that provides real work experience. By sharing experiences between our residential trainees and the people supported by United Response we help to break down barriers and promote understanding. Together we are working to embed rewilding into that work experience through joint programmes of wildlife monitoring, surveys and land management across our rewilding site. This includes putting camera traps out to help us determine what species are around, conducting earthworm surveys, building bird and bat boxes and planting trees. A Conservation Group and an Animal Care Group help with tasks around the farm. Our residential trainees are part of these groups and lead or help with the tasks at hand. Working together in this way helps to break down barriers and foster mutual understanding which can be life changing for all involved.



Rewilding at Sharpham

‘Rewilding’ - what’s all that about? cont...

In April 2020 we took on an additional 50-acre tenancy adjacent to our existing area specifically to rewild it, to let nature take the lead. Eventually we hope the two areas will come together as a single 130-acre site. Our form of rewilding requires a degree of human intervention because the site is relatively small.

Rewilding starts from what has been happening on the land over recent years. In our case the 50-acres had been intensively grazed with a milking herd of cows and their slurry had been sprayed across many of the fields. While this produced good grass for grazing (and therefore milk production) it was species poor with a highly compacted soil surface from years of cow movement.

We began by withdrawing all grazing to let the vegetation grow, flower and fully reveal its character. We removed all internal field boundary fences to allow free movement of a small number of grazers in the future. We introduced pigs to break up some of the surface, giving a ‘turbocharge’ boost to surface disturbance to release the seed bank in the soil and create new micro-habitats beneficial to plants and insects. We undertook wildlife surveys to establish a baseline of species and diversity over the site and we started to plant some native parkland trees. 18-months on (September 2021) and we can see the change; taller plants, more seeds and insects, more seed-eating and insect-eating birds, more small mammals, more birds of prey. Slowly the soil is beginning to change. We can see that this landscape will provide a home to more wildlife and it will ultimately capture more carbon. We are addressing the ecological crisis and climate emergency – now we need to scale up/join with others and move this forwards!

One outcome that surprised us was the delight expressed by our trainees that they can be a part of this positive future. Talk of ecological and climate emergencies can be deflating, talk of wildlife successes on our rewilding site is uplifting. Our rewilding gives them hope, a tangible and visible reminder that we can change things for the better. We are one of a growing number of sites of different scales where rewilding is happening across the UK. As more and more sites engage as ‘core sites’ they could become a network across which we might be able to establish corridors of connection, making more space for nature and allowing natural processes to occur.

We have witnessed an increased level of interest in what we are doing at Sharpham and we’ve started leading specialist guided walks for small groups interested in learning more (info@ambios.net for details).

One of the great things about rewilding / ecological restoration is that everyone, no matter your background or past experience, can help. From catering to accountancy or planning to brick laying, it is all useful to someone, somewhere who is trying to rewild a site or undertake an ecological restoration project. There are many new jobs being spawned by rewilding and new volunteering programmes and countless opportunities to use your existing skills or learn new ones. Whatever happens, rewilding seems set to stay.



South West Young Planners Round Up

Devon, Cornwall & Somerset Young Planners (DCSYP)

Young Planners South West CPD Event

On Thursday the 9th of September the Devon, Cornwall and Somerset Young Planners Steering Group held their Public Speaking and Planning Committee CPD event. Despite still being confined to the virtual location of Microsoft teams, the session was a big success. The sell-out event saw a range of planners from across the region come together to enhance their presentation skills, engage with a very realistic mock deputation, and listen to the presentations of some fantastic guest speakers.

The session started with a 30-minute webinar style talk from Will Grover of Simply Amazing Training, on presentation skills, an attribute that dissects so many areas of a planning professional's work. Will delivered a confident, clear, and compelling presentation on how to improve the way in which we come across to other people, be it through a physical presentation, written communication, or even our body language. Through-out the presentation, Will tailored his points to the planning profession making the seminar rich in advice for planning committees, public consultation, and just about any other situation where one may be required to forward ideas to people... sounds good right?

After becoming presentation gurus, the delegates were then faced with 2 deputations from our very own Chair and Vice-Chair. Using the knowledge from Will's presentation the delegates managed to pick apart the deputations, quickly noticing elements of good presentation technique and highlighting where our Chair and Vice Chair could have done better. Needless to say, the latter was a shorter list!

Finally, the delegates had the opportunity to hear from our guest speakers, Councillor Patrick Nicholson of Plymouth City Council and Ros Eastman of Teignbridge District Council. Each guest speaker offered invaluable information, built up over years of experience, to our delegates on how to best approach presentations at planning committee, including some essential dos and don'ts.

In summary, in the space of time it would take one to have lunch (and make a brew), our delegates had received a wealth of knowledge on presenting, sourced from several perspectives and many years of experience. They were inducted into the art of presenting by Will Grover, they critiqued deputations by our Chair and Vice Chair, and finally heard from two esteemed guest speakers in Councillor Patrick Nicholson and Development Manager Ros Eastman on how to approach planning committees.

Plymouth University Graduation

The Devon, Cornwall and Somerset Young Planners Chair (Keegan Ferreday) and Vice Chair (Opani Mudalige) were thrilled to be invited to attend Plymouth University's graduation ceremony on behalf of the RTPI SW, handing out awards to two very deserving graduates including:

- **Cherry Wren (for the best part time planning student)**
- **Josephine Maddick (for the best part time planning dissertation and excellence in her studies)**

Congratulations to everyone else who also graduated from the Plymouth Planning MSc class of 2020/2021!



Cherry Wren with Opani Mudalige



Keegan Ferreday with Josephine Maddick

South West Young Planners Round Up

Dorset Young Planners

CPD and social event: Kingland Crescent - Re-imagining the high street

The Dorset Young Planners hosted our first in-person event since the pandemic, based around the Kingland Crescent scheme in Poole Town Centre on Thursday 23rd September 2021.

Kingland Crescent is an exciting initiative seeking to re-imagine the high street. By offering zero rent and business rates, it aims to encourage a creative community and local start-up businesses to an area which was previously vacant and derelict. The local businesses at Kingland Crescent now include a fishmonger, coffee roaster, design studio, surfboard shop, zero waste grocery store, art gallery, gin bar and store, home interiors specialist, restored second-hand furniture shop and perfumer. The regeneration of Kingland Crescent is part of a long-term plan to invest in Poole Town Centre.

The event began with two presentations, firstly we heard from Hollie Newton who is the Creative Director of the Kingland Crescent initiative. Hollie explained how the initiative came about as Kingland Crescent was like a ghost town with vacant shop units, shutters down, it looked dated and unattractive. However, they saw Kingland as an opportunity and a blank canvas to turn the entire street to the best homegrown brands, businesses and startups in the local area by making the units rent and business rates free. Furthermore, Kingland Crescent is situated in a highly accessible town centre location directly adjacent to the Dolphin Shopping Centre and a 3 minute walk from the train station, so has plenty of opportunity. Hollie said that 10 units have now been occupied by local businesses, all picked through an application process to ensure that the target audience was being

met, giving them the opportunity to occupy a retail unit which otherwise they would be unable to afford. So far the initiative has been a huge success, with the local businesses on Kingland Crescent thriving post-pandemic; 'long live local'!

Next, Alison Broderick who is the lead Planning Consultant from Savills gave an interesting presentation where she covered the planning related aspects of Kingland Crescent. Alison firstly discussed the implications of the recent changes to the Use Classes Order in September 2020 which allows a greater degree of flexibility to commercial use classes through the creation of Use Class E. This new use class removes barriers to businesses who may wish to occupy retail units on high streets,

which encourages a range of new businesses (not solely retail) to empty former retail units. Alison continued to discuss the Kingland Crescent branding, in particular the distinctive painted mural. There were discussions with BCP Council around whether the painting would be classified as an advert and would therefore require advertisement consent. However it was agreed that as the mural was not advertising any company, only signposting the name of the road – Kingland Crescent – it would not require advertisement consent. Alison continued to explain about the future plans for Kingland Crescent, in particular the opportunity for public seating, to create outdoor space which is now more highly valued to maintain social distancing due to the Covid-19 pandemic. So there is lots more exciting work in the pipeline!



South West Young Planners Round Up

Before we retired for pizza and drinks at the Viper Gin Bar on Kingland Crescent, we went for a walking tour with John Grinnell, the Centre Manager for the Dolphin Shopping Centre. John explained the story behind each shop on Kingland Crescent and talked us through the external painting design by Paintshop Studio, who occupy one of the units on Kingland Crescent. We then ventured into the Dolphin Shopping Centre where John continued to explain about the new and upcoming plans for the centre, including the provision of affordable market-style stalls for small businesses, a shared workspace which is being designed by the same company who designed the Google and Facebook offices, and also one of only 40 new walk-in NHS diagnostic clinics in the UK to help tackle the backlog in hospital treatments.

Overall, the event was a great success with 30 attendees. We are very much looking forward to our upcoming events and our renowned Christmas Social and Quiz.

This event was kindly sponsored by Savills.

Jess Glover
Chair of the Dorset Young Planners Committee



Forthcoming events:

RTPI Dorset Young Planners Annual Christmas Quiz & Social

The OX 2, Poole

Thursday 9 December 2021, 06:30 PM until late

Cost: £7.50+ vat and includes food and a soft or alcoholic drink token

Come and join the Dorset Young Planners for their popular 5th annual Christmas Quiz and Social at The OX 2 in Ashley Cross, Poole.

Join us for a merry night of quizzing, eating, drinking and socialising!

Tickets are limited due to venue capacity so based on the popularity of previous event please book on ASAP to avoid disappointment!

BOOK NOW

www.rtpi.org.uk/dorsetchristmasquiz2021

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

South West Young Planners Round Up

West of England Young Planners

Steering Group update

The West of England Young Planners Steering Group has welcome three new members to the Steering Group, Laura Laius (AECOM) Natalie Atkinson (YTL Developments), Isabelle Leekam (Cushman & Wakefield) and Robert Palmer (Mendip Council). We are looking to host a number of events in the new year, and as always looking for enthusiastic planners to join the steering group - if you would be interested, please contact Charlotte Daborn or the Chair of the Steering Group, Emily Johnson.

“Tamsin Sealy (Arup) has also made the decision to step down from the Steering Group. On behalf of the West of England Young Planners Steering Group, we would like to thank Tamsin for her amazing contribution over the past 5+ years. Tamsin was the Groups longest standing member and we would like to give a special thank you to all her hard work into the Group over those years, we will hopefully see you around at future events.



Tamsin Sealy

Recent webinar review

The session was chaired by Monica Forde (Town Planner at Arup and West of England Young Planners Committee Member) and speakers included Nick Thursby (Chapman Taylor Architects), Marcus Allen (link city) and Emma Sparkes (Arup).

The webinar provided a useful insight into the development of Castle Park View; which is a landmark development scheme in Bristol city centre which has drawn much attention over recent years as the soon-to-be tallest residential building within the city. The speakers focused on the design evolution of the scheme in this prominent city location; impacts of recent planning and building regulations (including in light of Grenfell); development and viability considerations and how this informed the optimum height; and, considerations and challenges from an engineering perspective (including how in structural terms the building is not that tall at all!)

Watch the webinar

<https://www.bigmarker.com/rtpi-enterprise/RTPI-Tall-Buildings-Castle-Park-View-in-Bristol-Webinar-94e9eb9b4753def45c6bacb1?bmid=778b58a3c492> 

Placement Experience During Covid-19 from steering group member Raephella Da Silva

After doing my second year at university, I was told the following year I would have the chance to take a year out for placement to gain some work experience, which I was very keen on as I was unsure which role within the sector I wanted to pursue. Plus, it would be a great addition to my CV, and the fact I would be earning an income while learning from mentors and professionals seemed ideal for me. Thankfully after some interviews, applications and decisions, I had the amazing opportunity to work at the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) as an Environmental Impact Advisor (EIA) from August 2020 to 2021. As an EIA, my duties included screening planning appeals to see whether they needed to add an Environmental Statement (ES) to their applications. We would do that by assessing how much impact a development would have on the existing infrastructures and residents as well as other factors like nearby nature. In addition to assessing the ES, I assisted in National Significance Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and had the opportunity to assist in hearings as a case officer which I really enjoyed and that is a role I would love to explore in the future.

Since my placement was during the Covid-19 pandemic peak time, I only worked from the office for one day before we all had to work remotely. At first, that was strange, but it slowly became the new normal. At PINS, we used technology that allowed me to integrate with the team smoothly. As expected, there were a few setbacks such as the weekly battle with the WIFI and technology betraying me, but thankfully I had the best manager who would always find solutions and do her best to assist me from afar. Throughout my time working at PINS, I was warmly welcomed and had a lovely time learning from the team. I was constantly given the opportunity to work in different cases, assist and observe hearings, and enjoy some team online socials. In addition to doing my placement, I also

South West Young Planners Round Up

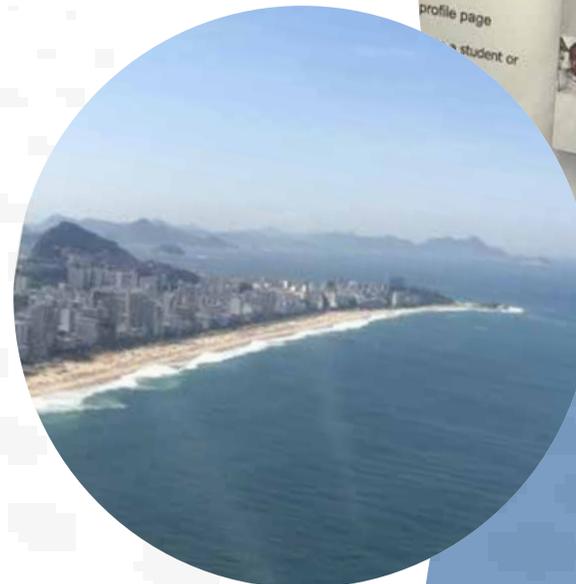
took some courses. The course about flood risks and resilience by Ciwem was very interesting and I would highly recommend.

In December 2020, I decided to visit my family in Brazil for the holidays. Since we were working from home, I asked for permission to work from Brazil for one week so I could stay and enjoy the sun a little longer. However, when Covid-19 restrictions got stricter and all flights got cancelled, I got “stuck” in Brazil. Thankfully, I was in contact with PINS about my situation and they were very accommodating and understanding. Working from Brazil for so long took some getting used to because I had not been back there in three years and because there was a pandemic going on. The most challenging part was working in the UK time zone from Brazil.

After seven months and six cancelled flights later, I was able to return to the UK. When I arrived in London, I had to stay in a UK Government quarantine hotel for fourteen days which wasn't too bad. When I was done and headed back home, I thought things would be smoother. Well, someone on the coach I took home was detected with Covid-19 leading me to isolate for another ten days.

Even with all the challenges, I can't complain as it all worked out well in the end, thankfully. I certainly will never forget my placement during Covid-19. Even though I couldn't experience the ordinary office work life, I still benefited immensely from this experience, learned so much and acquired skills that I will be using for life. Best of all, I met the most wonderful group of people, and I am grateful to have had Emily Park and Richard Hunt as my managers and mentors. A year it is not that long in comparison to a lifetime, but a lot can be learned and done in a year. Knowing what I wanted to accomplish, allowed my work to excel as I would attempt to achieve my goals every time. All that I could be do was to learn from my mistakes and try my best while continue trying until I succeeded. There are endless benefits on doing a placement such as developing a range of skills like professional skills, networking, work experience, gaining a better insight and I would highly recommend it for all.

Raphaella Da Silva



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

University of Plymouth Graduation Ceremony 2021

The graduating cohort from the MSc Planning programme at the University of Plymouth on 20 September, 2021 on Plymouth Hoe:

(left to right): Dr Stephen Essex (Programme Leader), Opani Mudalige (RTPI SW), Justine Rolfe (Cornwall Council), Cherry Wren (Plymouth City Council), Fletcher Robinson (CPRE Somerset), Rebecca Dickson (South Hams District Council), Angelo Massos (Torridge District Council), Josephine Maddock (Plymouth City Council), Keegan Ferreday (RTPI SW) and Dr Olivia Wilson (Lecturer in Spatial Planning).



Also graduating in 2020-21 were:

Holly Beale, Lucy Downey, Matthew Heynes (Cornwall Council), Jack Dyer (Malvern District Council), Oreoluwa Emmanuel Olateju and Scott Wilson (Laurence Associates, Truro).

Holly Beale was awarded the RTPI SW Prize for best full-time student and the Cornwall Council Award for best full-time dissertation.



Josephine Maddock (Plymouth City Council) was awarded the RTPI South West prize for best overall student and the Cornwall Council Award for best part-time dissertation presented by Keegan Ferreday (Avalon Planning and Heritage, Exeter) on behalf of the RTPI SW branch.



Cherry Wren (Plymouth City Council) was awarded the RTPI South West Prize for best part-time student presented by Opani Mudalige (LRM Planning Exeter) on behalf of the RTPI SW branch.

University Research Repositories

Almost all Universities now have online research repositories, which provide public access to staff publications (usually in pre-publication format or as abstracts), unpublished PhD theses and some Masters thesis. These repositories might be of interest to some members of the local planning profession searching for information on particular topics, although please note that not all sites provide access to full text versions or include dissertations at Masters level.

The sites for the institutions with Planning Schools in the region are:

University of Plymouth

 <https://pearl.plymouth.ac.uk/>

University of the West of England

 <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/>

The following websites provide access to the repositories of other universities based in the South West:

University of Bournemouth

<https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/>

University of Bristol

<https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/>

University of Exeter

<https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/>

University of Falmouth

<http://repository.falmouth.ac.uk/>

University of Gloucestershire

<http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/>



MSc Planning dissertation summary

Name: Scott Wilson

Degree programme: MSc Planning

University: University of Plymouth

Current employment: Graduate Planner, Laurence Associates, Truro

Dissertation title:

The potential benefits and conflicts arising from the requirement for development to provide a minimum ten per cent biodiversity net gain as a condition of planning permission and the provision for the local nature recovery strategies.

What was the planning issue and research question that you addressed in your dissertation research?

The research sought to identify the potential benefits and conflicts arising from the requirement in the proposed Environment Bill, 2019-2021 for development to provide: a minimum ten per cent Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG); for Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to be material considerations; and for an enhanced duty placed on public bodies to conserve and enhance biodiversity. In addition, the research considered what overall effect these mechanisms might have on the connectivity of natural land in England. LPAs are already introducing policies to require ten per cent BNG in advance of the legislation.

How did you set about investigating this issue (methods and study area)?

The research project was undertaken within the UK, with a focus on England and a specific focus on Cornwall, partly as the county has been part of Natural England's pilot and partly because of the necessity created by the pandemic. The method of data collection and analysis was by semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

Seven semi-structured interviews were undertaken, lasting approximately one hour each. The interview participants were selected due to their expertise of town and country planning and/or biodiversity; of operating a business that will be directly affected by the enactment of the Environment Bill; and Local Government officers that will be tasked with implementing the policy and regulation.

What were your main findings?

The research discovered that, as off-site provision is permitted, the provision of on-site BNG for development is not sufficiently legislated. The relationship between development and the locality of any off-site provision will contribute to the legitimacy and credibility of that option and that the current mechanisms for facilitating local provision are insufficient. Furthermore, the calculator to measure the amount of pre- and post-development biodiversity has flaws that require monitoring and review.

The proposal for LNRS has the potential to connect protected wildlife sites across each Local Planning Authority (LPA) and therefore support strategic objectives for biodiversity at a local level as well as Government objectives at a national level. It is clear that the recent legislative proposals have the potential to positively reshape the natural environment of England and will enable a significant change to the rural planning system.

What implications do your results have for planning practice and policy?

A significant benefit to the planning system will be from the introduction of the requirement for a LNRS framework, which is likely to increase the connectivity of wildlife sites whilst providing a coherent and regulated framework to enable development to contribute to both centralised and decentralised strategic goals. The coherent framework should provide the certainty necessary for private investment to create a viable market in the provision of registered biodiversity sites and the legislative backing for LPAs to implement their duty to enhance and conserve biodiversity through their Local Development Plans. The provision of spatial maps through the LNRS will allow planners and developers alike to identify areas of biodiversity and utilise the mitigation hierarchy to target their decision-making towards best benefiting, or indeed avoiding damage to, identified areas.

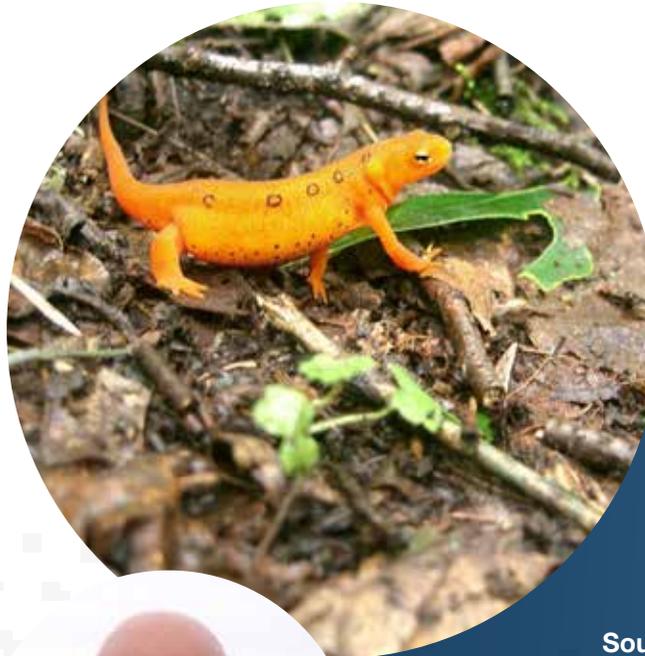


MSc Planning dissertation summary

An overall minimum ten per cent BNG requirement, without legislative direction as to where and how it is achieved, allows for flexibility, but effectively grants developers the ability to negotiate offsite provision for reasons of viability. Negotiations centring on viability will invariably lead to more off-site provision, because it is more cost effective. It is difficult to envisage how future development sites will benefit from more biodiversity on-site. The associated well-being and mental health benefits that more biodiversity should create may be lost if there is no on-site mandatory amount specified. The current method of calculating the value of domestic gardens in the Metric 2.0 is likely to lead to a reduction in private defensible garden space and an increase in provision of ambiguous public space, because public space is easier to manage through a management plan and generates potentially more BNG credits.

For further information,

please contact: scott@southwestnaturalcapital.co.uk



Southwest Natural Capital Ltd has been formed on the learning achieved during this research. The company aims to provide habitat banks that deliver registered and accredited biodiversity and carbon credits by working with landowners to develop and implement projects. The company is currently seeking landowners within the Southwest who are willing to commit areas of land to the provision of these credits. The benefit to the landowner will be an annual return in excess of the average profit per hectare per annum in the southwest, simply by allowing the land to be used for biodiversity and carbon credit creation. There is no further capital investment required and the landowner retains possession of the land.

Virtual Work Experience

I didn't know what planning was when I was at school. In fact, I only discovered it when I was 32. I love my job and how planning can really make a tangible difference to our lives and the environment in which we live. My aim is to make sure the next few generations are aware of planning from an early age, to tell them how fantastic and varied a career it can be. That way, if they're interested, they can make informed choices about their study early on, and hopefully we can inspire the chief planners of tomorrow.

Back in February of 2021 I was approached by Speakers for Schools and Dorset's Local Enterprise Partnership to see if I was interested in hosting some virtual work experience. I jumped at the chance as it was an opportunity to help secondary school children from across the country who had missed out on work experience due to Covid-19 lockdowns.

I didn't want to put the young adults through listening to my dulcet tones all day, so I asked my colleagues if anyone else wanted to be involved. Amelia Rose, a brilliant young planner at Dorset Council and never one to shy from a challenge, said she wanted to help too. Together, we started brainstorming ideas. We wanted to create interesting content; nothing too complicated, and something that would work in a virtual environment. We wrote a bright and punchy advert and asked students to apply for their placement.

We planned on holding two Virtual Insight Days. These would be held virtually and would a glimpse into the world of planning. Applications kept coming in from a range of different schools over Dorset and we ended up with around 50 students applying for places! So, we increased our capacity to 50 students on each day. We had about 30 attend the first event and 25 attend the second.

The applications we received were inspiring, almost every single one talked about mitigating the effects of climate change or helping protect the environment or tackling social issues like equality. It was superb to see so many young adults interested in these important topics.

The day was structured around the designing of an extension to #YourTown, a made-up place with considerable flood risk, conservation areas and beautiful landscapes. We began the day by introducing them to place making and discussing the three pillars of sustainability . We encouraged them to think about social, economic, and environmental factors and constraints to development, explaining how they needed to consider these aspects. Following this, we talked about 'Building for a Healthy Life', a Homes England design tool for creating places that foster strong outcomes for people and nature. This prompted them to think about transport methods, green and blue infrastructure, the design of homes, healthy streets and spaces and facilities for their town extension.



Our virtual insight day advert dashboard on Speakers for Schools website.

A section of a group's work on a virtual whiteboard which was presented to Councillors, where they considered issues like transport, flooding and mixing uses to ensure a variety of facilities and services within walking distance of homes.

Virtual Work Experience cont...

The students then worked in small groups, each facilitated by a Planning Officer, to design their town extension and put everything they'd learnt so far to good use. We hosted this event via Google Classrooms, which the students were able to access from their school classrooms or at home, and enabled us to share PowerPoint presentations and maps with all students. They were then able to work collaboratively in 'breakout rooms', where they could all discuss ideas and design their town extension on a virtual whiteboard. They quickly began discussing and formulating ambitions for their town extensions, and drafted up impressive town structures and ideas for creating healthy streets, sustainable transport modes and a variety of homes, intertwined with blue and green infrastructure. They cut and pasted maps of their extension, decorating the slides with photos of desirable design features they sourced from the internet and annotating their thoughts in their display. For a group of 14-16-year-olds who didn't know each other, and had no prior knowledge of planning, this was really encouraging to see.

Following a short design session, the students listened to another presentation on public speaking. As well as knowledge, we wanted them to practice using skills from this experience that they could use in their daily lives, so to this end, we set up a fake planning committee and asked our students to present their town extensions to some of Dorset's councillors. The councillors listened and then asked questions on parts of each group's design. This encouraged students to think about how their design would work in the real world and prompted some interesting discussions. Our councillors had a fantastic time and were fascinated by the types of things the young adults prioritised.

At the end of the day, we finished by talking about desirable skills to develop for life as a planner and potential routes into the planning career. To our delight, several attendees were interested in becoming planners! We also thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We had fun but not only that, because we were going back to the basics of planning and taking our heads out of the detail of our daily work, it reinvigorated us and brought us together stronger as a team. We were reminded of why we got into planning, and we felt a sense of achievement because we had hopefully empowered the next generation of planners!

The schools involved gave us excellent feedback, as did the students, saying things like 'I will be building in time to the curriculum next year' and 'such a great thing to do'. As the virtual days were such a success, we want to host more events in the future. They'll be a mixture of in person and virtual and they'll do much of the same thing; they'll help people understand planning, and the diversity of careers involved in the subject, by getting people to 'do' planning. We'd like to focus on safety for women, healthy placemaking and climate change as they are a few of the big issues in planning. We'd also like to extend our offering to more age groups.

We hope other councils and consultancies do the same. It's reinvigorated our passion for the profession but also hopefully encouraged some more talented, enthusiastic people into the planning profession.



A slide from our presentation teaching students about creating healthy streets and spaces, inspired by Homes England 'Building for a Healthy Life'.



Frances Summers
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Economic Growth and Infrastructure
Dorset Council



Amelia Rose
Planning Policy Officer
at Dorset Council

RTPI President's Visit to the South West

by Angharad Williams, RTPI South West Chair

In October, I joined RTPI President Wei Yang on her visit to the South West. Wei has a particular interest in data sharing as well as sustainability and climate change. A two-day visit was arranged to showcase excellent examples of planning and engagement within these themes with a visit to Plymouth and then onto North Devon with a particular focus on the Biosphere. Unfortunately due to a tragic loss within the Planning team, this second part of the visit to North Devon will be rescheduled with an event or visit in 2022. Our thoughts are with the team, family and friends.

Plymouth

Having already held a number of webinars and discussions about 'The Digital Taskforce', Dr Wei Yang was keen to meet with Plymouth City Council to explore how they have managed to become successful in data sharing and the benefits this has for the Council as a whole as well as in planning.

Starting with the Market Hall, a former market for the historic area of Devonport, the Market Hall has now become an extensive co-worker facility which provides an informal place to meet and greet friends, as well as home to the 'Dome', a 15m dome which transports you to explore immersive realities. Here, the President was greeted with a networking lunch where discussion around the table was held informally regarding the development of the Market Hall and how it became the success that it was. The President was accompanied by the City Planning Manager Rebecca Miller, together with the Case Officer of the project, John Fox; Dan Thorning, Plymouth's Housing Delivery Officer; Louis Dulling from Devon and Cornwall consultants; Sarah Lee from Stride Treglown;, and, Gareth Pinwell of Ashfords. Young Planners, Cherry Wren of Plymouth City Council and Toby Clayton from the local Young Planners Steering Group. were also in

attendance. and discussed research with the president and how in future we as an organisation can make more use of the research that is undertaken as part of student's dissertations. It was recognised that this is an opportunity to invest more in the time that students take to complete their dissertations.

From here the President visited 'The Box' in Plymouth City Centre. This is the City's brand new museum which has been architecturally designed to symbolise Plymouth holding all of its history and culture at the heart of the City, with 'The Box' being the tallest part of the building which contains all of the City's archives. Here, the President met with Plymouth's Chief Executive, Tracey Lee, Rebecca Miller, the City's Planning Manager and Tim Binding the City's Data Analyst. Following a discussion on Digital Taskforce and Plymouth's journey through data sharing, the President was then taken on a tour by Kate Farmery, Head of Business at the Box, where we explored the different designs and elements of the museum, including the magnificent gallery spaces of the Church immediately opposite The Box.



Tim Binding (Plymouth CC), Jon Shaw (Plymouth Uni), Rebecca Miller (Plymouth CC), Cllr Patrick Nicholson (Plymouth CC), Olivia Wilson (Plymouth Uni), Angharad Williams (RTPI SW Chair) and Wei Yang (RTPI President).

As the day began to draw to a close, the President and I ended the day at Bistro Pierre at the Royal William Dockyard. It was here that we were joined by the Young Planners including Toby Clayton, Jozie Bannister, and Keegan Ferreday, and Plymouth University lecturers, Stephen Essex and Olivia Wilson. A warm and fun evening was had, with lots of new and inspiring ideas discussed amongst friends and colleagues.

The President's visit for me was also a fantastic opportunity to discuss my thoughts and aspirations with Dr Wei Yang and it was a privilege to be able to accompany her on her visit to the South West. My thanks to Plymouth City Council, especially Rebecca Miller for the organisation and time put into arranging the visit, and also to all those that attended. It made for a successful event and gave an insight into the work that we do as planners across the region.

I would also like to thank North Devon District Council and Torridge District Council for their time into organising the second day of the President's visit, and hope we can meet again soon and showcase the excellent work in this part of the region.



(From left to right: Top row: John Fox (Plymouth CC), Toby Clayton (Bristol CC), Gareth Pinwell (Ashfords), Louis Dulling (Devon & Cornwall Planning Consultants), Dan Thorning (Plymouth CC) Bottom row: Sarah Lee (RIBA SW Chair, Stride Treglown), Rebecca Miller (Plymouth CC), Wei Yang (RTPI President), Angharad Williams (RTPI SW Chair), Cherry Wren (Plymouth CC/Plymouth Uni)

RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence 2021

Awarding projects & people who have
helped create exceptional places

Results



Sponsored by **STRIDE TREGLOWN**



And the winner is...

The **CLYST VALLEY REGIONAL PARK MASTERPLAN** has been declared the overall winner of the RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence 2021.

Entered by East Devon District Council and judged as an excellent project setting out a framework for action on the ground, the Masterplan was also the winner of the Awards Category 'Excellence in Plan Making'.

The multi-disciplinary team from East Devon District Council have transformed an ambitious green infrastructure policy into practice, giving the fledgling Clyst Valley Regional Park wings! Starting small, sharing resources across local authority boundaries, they have now grown into a partnership of seventeen organizations. Their springboard 'Great Trees' project won Pride of Devon for its practical engagement of volunteers and focus on wellbeing. With a strong brand, clear vision and action plan, defined in a 25-year masterplan generated through open dialogue, they have demonstrated the impact that planners can have on sustainability.

It was evident to the Judges that Planners are leading and working with the local community and other public and private sector bodies, to deliver on the care and maintenance of the Clyst Valley as a valuable asset. 'Soft engagement' is going hand in hand with 'hard' infrastructure delivery in what East Devon Council sees as 'planning beyond planning'. The Judges concluded that this is an excellent project; as one of the Judges stated

“ *this is what master planning is for- setting out a framework for action on the ground”*

CONGRATULATIONS
to East Devon District Council and the wider project team for their Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan entry.



RTPI SOUTH WEST
AWARDS FOR
PLANNING
EXCELLENCE 2021



AWARDS for
PLANNING
EXCELLENCE

Full results of the **RTPI SW AWARDS FOR PLANNING EXCELLENCE 2021**

The Awards champion the very best examples of planning and planners in the South West. They aim to demonstrate the positive impact planning has on the quality of life and celebrate professional expertise. Entry is open to all planners, both Institute members and non- members, and all other built environment professionals and community groups. Winning an award, or being shortlisted, is a clear demonstration of high quality work and professionalism.

2021 was the 29th year of the RTPI SW Awards competition which has now been successfully completed with 16 entries in five categories being received by the July deadline. Of those 16, 10 were shortlisted for further assessment by a panel of appointed judges during August and September.

The presentation to the winners took place in a virtual ceremony on YouTube on 23 November at 14.00.

The results are as follows:

EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING DELIVERY

(ie. completed or virtually completed physical buildings, structures etc.)

Commended:

Millbay Boulevard and Associated Works, Plymouth

(Entered by Plymouth City Council)

The City Council has commenced work on a redevelopment scheme for the Millbay area of Plymouth. The Submission relates specifically to the Millbay Boulevard which is providing an essential new, primarily pedestrian, link between the Millbay area and the city centre. The term 'Associated Works' relates to the mainly underground infrastructure such as 5G cables and pipe work for a District Heating scheme and drainage to serve the proposed new housing and business development alongside the Boulevard. The Submission states that "This innovative urban streetscape just keeps giving to its people, providing not just a wonderful environment, but provides future answers to some of the toughest climate change challenges the world faces. The reimagined street which connects Plymouth's city centre to the sea has transformed what was a dark and narrow back-street into one of the city's best addresses. In achieving this the city has put planning at the fore and trusted its policies to deliver a holistic set of sustainable and low carbon technologies into a scheme which is a living example of how we approach tomorrow.

The judges said that "The overall Millbay redevelopment is a potentially exemplar scheme that could demonstrate how Plymouth is responding to the challenge of climate change and a catalyst for the overall redevelopment of Millbay. At this time the judges concluded that the entry should be commended recognising the planning input to the design and implementation of the Boulevard".



Full results of the **RTPI SW AWARDS FOR PLANNING EXCELLENCE 2021**

EXCELLENCE IN PLAN MAKING PRACTICE

(i.e Local Plans, Strategies, Neighbourhood Plans, Local Plans)

Winner in category:

Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan (Entered by East Devon District Council)

As described on page 23.

Congratulations East Devon District Council.



Highly Commended:

Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026 (Entered by Torbay Council)

Torbay Heritage Strategy is the result of a significant review of heritage in the Bay. It was conducted throughout the course of 2020 and involved extensive consultation and consideration of the changes in local and national plans and policies. The Strategy is rooted in the needs and aspirations of Torbay and its residents. It provides a pathway for Torbay's fascinating and significant heritage: A chance to be more ambitious about how Torbay's heritage can be at the heart of the visitor economy, used - and re-used - by local communities, and renewed in a responsible and inclusive way.

The judges said that "This is an innovative example of the planning and heritage /culture professions working together to maintain and enhance the natural and built environment of a major settlement. The Judges were also pleased to receive evidence that the work was already feeding into the up-dating of the Local Plan, complementing the area's three Neighbourhood Plans and contributing to the up-dating of the Urban Design Guide and Conservation Area Appraisals. Also an important issue is that work so far on the Strategy has raised the profile of heritage both locally in Torbay and externally with bodies such as Historic England."



SOUTH WEST PLANNING TEAM OF THE YEAR

This award recognises the achievements of planning teams working within the public, private or third sector. This includes consultancies and in-house teams.

Joint Winners:

Sedgemoor District Council Development Management Service

Sedgemoor District Council has worked positively and pro-actively to continue to deliver an outstanding planning service evolving their approach throughout lock down, maintaining collaborative working to enable the progression of significant major development and investing, supporting and developing staff throughout. Planning remains critical in the delivery of development and infrastructure to enable growth and has to serve the needs of the community as a whole. Sedgemoor has sought to be innovative in addressing barriers and building relationships to engage and progress strategic, multi partnership issues whilst engaging through 'Enabling development' to challenge norms and realise wider improvements.

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The judges said that: “there is clear evidence in this Team of a ‘can do’ attitude; an aim for continuous improvement going over and above their mandatory duties; and a willingness to learn from others’ experiences, as well as to generate local improvements. The team’s positive attitude to change is reflected in the realisation that there will soon have to be joint working across the current Somerset Districts following reorganisation in 2023.”



Feria Urbanism

Feria Urbanism is a dynamic, award-winning design studio. We deliver local change by making community aspiration the foundation of our activity. This is enabling and gives people a voice in the design of playful, multifaceted places that enhance local ecologies and community life. We use a range of digital and real life tactics to learn from local knowledge, hopes, and collective dreaming. We have an active interest in playable cities and urban ecology. Feria Urbanism is a small agile team. We love to collaborate and feel comfortable leading projects or working as part of a larger team.

The judges said that: “Feria Urbanism is an impressive, very small consultancy clearly operating as a team, with a ‘people focussed’ approach, effectively using innovative techniques. The strong urban design focus, the links with academia and work/leadership on community engagement are particular features”



SOUTH WEST YOUNG PLANNER OF THE YEAR

This award seeks out the brightest RTPI members in the early stages of their careers. Potential candidates can work in any area of the industry.

Winner:

Frances Summers Dorset Council

Frances is an enthusiastic, Senior Planning Policy Officer at Dorset Council who is genuinely passionate about place making. Leading on big issues such as housing, she has presented successfully at a Local Plan examination and strives for social equality. Her innovative thinking resulted in a unique consultation that was inclusive and fully accessible, with huge numbers of visits to the webpages, webinars, podcasts associated with the plan. She passes on her enthusiasm through work experience to large groups of young adults. They learn through doing and as such, she captures their interest in this unique profession.

Read more about all the entrants and their entry form at www.rtpi.org.uk/southwestawards

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The judges said that: “Frances has great confidence and impressed the judges with her grasp of issues facing planning and planning professionals and how she saw a role as being a ‘digital champion’ for Dorset Council. Particularly impressive was her involvement with the Dorset Young Planners network and her work in ‘Speakers for schools’, in which she has been supported by the RTPI nationally. Congratulations Frances, you are and will continue to be an outstanding ambassador for planning and an inspiration to other young planners”.



Highly Commended:

Emily Johnson AECOM

Emily is a conscientious young planner who shines as a leader, particularly in her role as the chair of the West of England Young Planners steering group where she leads by example. She is an intelligent and greatly skilled planner which is demonstrated by her recent appointment to Senior Planner at AECOM. She is passionate about the work she produces both within her role and as part of the Young Planners where she has recently been engaging with education institutions and networks to support future young planners.

The judges said that: “Emily is an impressive Young Planner actively involved with Young Planners and supporting APC Candidates. Emily is an excellent ambassador for planning”.



Commended:

Christopher Lee Dorset Council

Chris has experience in both strategic planning and development management and as such has a great overview of the planning system. He leads on a range of projects from renewable energy, to housing allocations and new settlements. He is an asset to our team and always helps others. He is calm, always thinking critically and committed to his work.

The judges said that: “The judges were impressed with his interest and expertise in streamlining processes through digitalisation especially in the Local Plan consultation process”



Full results of the RTPI SW AWARDS FOR PLANNING EXCELLENCE 2021

CHAIRS AWARD

This year's Chair's Award will championed those projects, plans, people or teams that have or are clearly demonstrating how planning can have a positive influence on health, wellbeing and/or inclusivity.

Winner

Feria Urbanism

The Chair said that "The team demonstrated throughout their presentation their sheer commitment to developing relationships within the community and with people of all ages and abilities. The extensive range of projects takes inspiration from an art and design background, involving the community within their work demonstrates their passion for inclusive design on a personal level and their ambitions for creating future dementia friendly design is commended. I am excited to see what future projects are developed and encourage others to continue being passionate about the importance of inclusive design".

Highly Commended

Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan

The Chair said that "I was impressed by their consideration of inclusive design in their fantastic drive to consult with the community and consider the need to widen footpaths and make them accessible for those with wheelchairs and others"

Sponsored by **STRIDE TREGLOWN**



With thanks to the 2021 Judging Panel and Sponsors

The Judging Panel for 2021 was as follows:

Geoff Walker (Head Judge)

Consultant & retired Principal Lecturer in Planning UWE

Mike Oakley (Judging Panel Secretary)

Retired former Avon County Planning Officer

Neal Jillings

Partner Place Land PLC, Exeter

David Lowin Consultant

Lowin Associates & RTPI SW Chair 2017

Rebecca Miller

Principal Planning Specialist, Somerset West & Taunton Council

Julie O'Rourke

RTPI SW Senior Vice Chair 2021 & Senior Planner Tetra Tech Planning

Rachel Tadman

Senior Team Leader Development Management, Mendip DC

Graham Stephens

Director Stride Treglown

Robin Tetlow

Founder Tetlow King Planning Ltd - retired from practice

Jo Widdecombe

Freelance Planning Consultant & Associate with Creating Excellence

Stuart Wingfield

Strategic Growth Manager, Plymouth City Council

Planning Aid England - Regional Update

Organised by Planning Aid England South West Task Force

Members of the SW Planning Aid England (PAE) Task Group recently organised a webinar concerning Engagement in the Planning Process for Elected Members. Whilst this event was designed primarily for councillors, it attracted a cross section of local councillors, local authority planning officers and planning consultants, so clearly a topic of interest for planners and elected members alike! The event was chaired by Katie Graham, PAE Representative for the SW and Chair of the Regional Task Group, and speakers included Tim Burton MRTPI (Tim Burton Planning Ltd), Stuart Todd MRTPI (Director of Stuart Todd Associates), and Councillor Rebecca Smith, Chair of Plymouth City Council Planning Committee.

Tim Burton spoke firstly about good elected-member practice in planning, highlighting the various councillor roles that are available and how these each engage with the planning system in different ways. Tim noted that good decision making is about enabling good development to come forward. The development plan is always the starting point for decision making and it is often in the plan making where elected members can have greatest influence – a strong local plan will reflect the council's wider priorities and its other strategies. Tim then considered some of the components of an effective planning committee, stressing the importance of teamwork and positive officer-councillor relations, and the value of a skilled clerk and chair to support a clear, consistent process and good debate. Tim concluded by noting that there is a lot of good practice taking place and that live-streaming and recordings of virtual committee meetings enable both councillors and officers to view and learn from what others are doing.

Stuart Todd discussed the councillor's role in neighbourhood planning, firstly with reference to parish and town councillors, and secondly for local authority councillors. For the former, Stuart noted that it is key for councillors to understand 1) the process – including the council's role as the qualifying body; 2) their part in driving and supporting the neighbourhood plan steering group (made up of councillors and local community members); and 3) their two-way 'link role' communicating back to the town or parish council, who will sign off key decisions. At the local authority level, Stuart noted the role for councillors in providing advice/guidance (including on the limitations of neighbourhood planning); a route to officer contacts; information on key planning processes and relevant planning issues and proposals; and data that may form useful evidence. County/Unitary authority councillors can also provide a link to strategic tier services. Looking to the future of neighbourhood planning, Stuart suggested elected members keep a look out for any changes to the devolution of responsibilities to town/parish level.

Councillor Rebecca Smith began by sharing what it's like to engage with planning as a ward councillor, emphasising the importance of talking to officers where there are concerns on applications to see if there is a way forward before calling in an application to committee. As a planning committee member, Rebecca noted the challenge of being on a committee where politics is very live and the need to balance this with the committee's role to deliver the guidance that is given for planning and delivery of the corporate plan. She also noted the opportunity for planning committee members to represent the community in ways that also take account of wider impacts and the local plan. As chair of Plymouth City Council Planning Committee, Rebecca discussed her role in setting up a "pre-application member review" (working

with the service director of planning) as a mechanism for members have an impact on landmark building in the city and large housing developments so that final applications are more likely to be supported by the community and councillors. The review asks questions specifically about design, sustainability and environment, and community amenity, each of which relate to a point on the joint local plan.

Thanks to the chair, speakers and delegates for a rich discussion on the different ways in which elected members can engage in the planning process.

Author

South West Planning Aid Task Group



Planning Aid

England

Engaging Communities in Planning

How Councils are engaging in more direct delivery of housing in the South West

In 2021, with the help of the SW RTPI, Ben Clifford and I have been able to undertake another round of research reviewing how local authorities are engaging with the direct delivery of housing. The three rounds of research - 2017, 2019 and 2021 have all been undertaken in the same way - a desk survey, a direct survey, regional and specialist round tables and case studies. In the 2021 research, we were very pleased that SW RTPI could support the research again through the provision of a round table to discuss the issues which are now critical for the direct provision of housing by local authorities and we have included two SW case studies - Cheltenham and Cornwall - in the main report. Other SW authorities are mentioned in the report (web link below) including Exeter, Plymouth, Mendip and BCP. This information is invaluable to inform the research and also to provide examples of experience to other councils. It also enables Ben and I to make recommendations to Government following the research which we have done again in this report. We continue to press for a removal of Right to Buy, the opportunity for councils to bid for five year housing programmes from Homes England and allocation of local plan housing sites by type and tenure to meet local housing need.

[Read the report here](#) 

Before giving you some feedback on the evidence from the SW, it is useful to put this into a national context. Here we have found that in 2021, LA commitments to direct delivery of housing have accelerated during the pandemic with a focus on internal space, expanding programmes and retrofitting. We also found that 80% councils are identifying priority for providing affordable housing in their corporate plans and 207 councils are engaged in using housing as an anchor for place based regeneration – a regular rent roll from affordable housing is now seen to be more secure than space set aside for retail or commercial uses. The pandemic has also seen a much greater focus on homelessness solutions, something that has been strong in SW councils including Cornwall.



Across England, the level of council targets for direct delivery have increased over the period since 2019 and the desk survey sets these out as extracts from council documents. It also includes details of council company names and activities, JV names and projects together with other forms of housing delivery. In the direct survey, 194 councils responded and we found that 73% were considering the use of MMC (Modern Methods of Construction) and 27% were using Passivhaus or higher environmental standards in their own housing delivery. In terms of planning, there was a lot of discussion at round tables on the negotiation and delivery of homes using s106. In particular, councils are now requiring the identification of the ultimate owners of affordable housing in pre-application discussions so that design and maintenance standards that affect issues such as service charges can be identified from the outset. Also we found that 70% of councils are specifically including the delivery of their Council's own housing in their Local Plans implementation plans which has increased from 61% in 2019. In s106 negotiations, some councils are taking land or setting upper size limits to manage local issues and conditions. Land is still identified as a barrier to housing provision although councils are buying more land for housing development or working on specific JVs with partners across the public and private sectors. While the generation of income is still important since 2017, we have noted a switch to providing housing to meet need as being more important. There is a lot more information and detail in the report which we hope that you will find useful.

How Councils are engaging in more direct delivery of housing in the South West cont...

In the SW, many councils are very active in the delivery of housing. Those that have been active longest such as BCP, Plymouth, Exeter and Bristol have expanding programmes – both in numbers and type of development delivery. In this year's survey, we have provided some focus on Cheltenham with its level of need together with its strategic land purchase for housing and economic development in the Golden Valley. Some councils, like Mendip are providing a range of housing initiatives and like Bath and North East Somerset operating a lettings service. The SW round table had discussions on the challenges of procurement to achieve higher environmental standards and the relationship between this and MMC. The work in Exeter on delivering to Passivhaus standards has been included in the report together with a link to their business case which demonstrates that they are achieving lower rent arrears, less domestic violence and lower maintenance costs as a consequence of using higher environmental standards. The report also mentions the role of the Social Value Act 2012 in supporting these kinds of outcomes in procurement. A number of councils are working in partnership including East Devon with Exeter, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire and Tewkesbury and Cheltenham. Also in the SW, many councils are working with Community Land Trusts including Mid Devon and North Devon. Some councils like South Devon are exploring establishing JVs with private sector and housing association partners. In Taunton and West Somerset and Stroud there is some experimentation with MMC and in North Somerset, the council has received support funding from Government to deliver homes constructed off site.

From the desk survey, all the SW councils have been extracted and can be viewed alongside each other as well in the context of the English results in the main table by following this [link](#).

This research would not be able to go ahead without your support and contributions and we hope that you find the research useful and valuable in your work.



Professor Janice Morphet
Visiting Professor at the Bartlett School
of Planning

Considering the future of our onshore wind farms

In the context of the UK's Net Zero 2050 targets and the more ambitious Net Zero 2030 targets being declared across our region, expanding energy output from renewables is increasingly important. However, space for renewable energy infrastructure is limited and our existing wind farms are beginning to reach the end of their operational or consent life. In the UK wind farms have often been granted a 'temporary' planning consent of 25 years. Many sites are now reaching the end of this period and we have to make decisions about the future.

Given tightening planning and land restrictions, keeping our existing wind farms in place is likely to form a key part of ensuring that renewable energy targets are met. Existing wind farms are often located in sites with the best wind resource, have established grid and site access and are proven to work well, therefore keeping the sites in the same location may seem like a sensible approach. There is also potential to significantly increase the energy generated from existing sites through repowering with new technology. However, decision making is not so straight forward, particularly as many communities were assured that the turbines would be removed after 25 years. Additionally, many sites will not have stayed the same over time, as there may have been changes in surrounding land uses, land designations and potentially in the opinions and preferences of local communities. There is thus a need to carefully consider how we make decisions about the future of our existing wind farms, including how local communities are involved in such decisions.

I have spent the last few years researching how decisions are being made for wind farms that reach the end of their operational or consent life. In this article I will discuss the options for existing sites as well as some key challenges and opportunities for our region.

Why are temporary 25-year planning consents used?

This is usually one of the first questions that I get asked when I tell people about my research. 25 year consents are not legally required in planning policy; however they have become commonly used. A time-limited consent was placed upon some of the oldest wind farms as a way of providing an opportunity to review the technology and 25 years was the expected lifespan of the turbines. While the infrastructure is now often capable of working for longer (particularly with ongoing maintenance and replacement of parts), this period has become the norm and continues to be used. We are only just beginning to see some developers push for longer consents of 30 – 35 years. It is also worth noting that some (but not many) of the oldest sites have no time limit attached, instead requiring removal when the turbines stop working.

What happens when wind farms reach the end of their 25 year planning consents?

There are three key options for sites that reach the end of their operational or consent life: decommissioning, repowering or life-extension.

Decommissioning involves removing the infrastructure from the site and returning the land to its previous use, as set out in the conditions of the planning permission. Whilst most modern wind farms are likely to have conditions requiring the complete removal of all infrastructure (including the removal of the foundations to a set distance), this may not be the case for all sites. I have come across cases with inadequate decommissioning conditions such as only requiring the removal of the turbines themselves and not the associated infrastructure such as substations and cables, in such cases there are difficulties surrounding the potential for infrastructure abandonment.

Repowering involves removing the existing wind turbines and replacing with new and requires a new planning application. Currently across England, Wales, and Scotland, 23 wind farms have been granted permission to repower of which 18 have been implemented. Two schemes have been refused permission to repower. The situation has revealed a high success rate for applications, irrespective of levels of opposition.



Considering the future of our onshore wind farms cont...

Repowering usually results in a smaller number of taller and more efficient turbines. On average repowering has decreased the number of turbines on a site by 41% but increased the height of turbines by 98.8%. The average increase in installed capacity (MW) of a site is 143%. Despite the significant increases noted here, in some locations land restrictions may create potential barriers to the scale of repowering due to the increased space requirements of larger, more efficient turbines with greater rotor diameters. Furthermore, the greatest increases are likely to occur from upgrading the earliest sites due to the substantial improvements in turbine technology.

Many sites have been repowering at approximately 20 years of age, providing an opportunity to sell the original turbines. However, sites may choose to repower earlier or later than this. Decisions to repower early are usually associated with the significant increase in energy generation that can be achieved. Decisions to repower later are often linked to the financial subsidies attached to the original turbines (many older turbines will continue to benefit from this subsidy until 2027, and there is no subsidy for new turbines). However, it is also important to consider that not all sites will be suitable for repowering due to changes in nearby land use or designations, changes in community preferences, or due to poor performance of the site.

Life-extension involves increasing the duration of the planning consent of the original wind farm (usually for a period of 5-10 years) through altering the planning condition. Some of the components may be replaced but the overall height and layout of the wind farm stay the same and thus compliant with the original consent. There have also been recent cases such as Cold Northcott wind farm in Cornwall where applicants are seeking to replace the blades and hub through a variation to a condition (in this case replacing two blades with three blades on each turbine).

Why aren't we building new wind farms?

Since 2016 it has been very difficult to get planning consent for new wind farms in England. This is due to the NPPF policy change and a removal of financial support that came as a result of the 2015 Conservative Government Written Ministerial Statement on onshore wind. The NPPF requires new wind farms to meet two requirements, it needs to be in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan; and additionally it must be demonstrated that 'the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.' Meeting these requirements has proven to be difficult. Just 16 new turbines were granted planning permission across England between 2016 and 2020, in seven separate locations, this is a 96% decrease from the period 2011-2015 when 435 turbines were permitted. Since 2018 repowering has been exempt from these policy constraints. However, there is a lack of detail regarding how repowering applications should be assessed.

What are the key challenges and opportunities for our region?

Challenges

If existing sites don't repower and new wind farms are not built then there is a risk that our supply of onshore wind energy will decrease. Despite the exemption of repowering from the constraints placed on new sites, the lack of policy or guidance for repowering has created challenges for local authority planners. We are also faced with the challenge of ensuring that communities are properly involved in the decision making process regarding existing as well as new renewable energy sites.

Opportunities

According to the UK Government database there are 32 operational wind farms in the South West region. This includes four repowered wind farms at Delabole, St Breock, Carland Cross, and Goonhilly Downs. No wind farms in the South West have been decommissioned without repowering.

There are numerous opportunities to increase our renewable energy output in the South West in a way that ensures that communities and the environment benefit. In terms of repowering our existing wind farms this involves working with communities to consider which sites are suitable for repowering and involving local people in the design of repowered sites. It may also involve looking for opportunities for co-location with batteries or solar technology. In the current policy context there is also an opportunity to allocate suitable sites for new wind energy developments and to support community groups that want to develop community-owned projects on these sites. One of the most successful examples of this in our region is the Ambition Lawrence Weston community-owned wind turbine which was granted planning permission in 2020 and aims to help address fuel poverty in the local community. Our region is also increasingly diversifying our energy supply, there are now 383 solar farms in the South West and 19 Anaerobic digestion projects. There will also be opportunities to develop newer technologies such as geothermal projects and offshore wind energy, floating turbines and tidal energy.

Dr Rebecca Windemer is a lecturer in Environmental Planning and Design at UWE, and is a chartered member of the RTPI.

How to consolidate our planning for cycling?

Cycling is generally seen as a beneficial travel mode to promote, yet there remains much legacy infrastructure that is patchy and of woeful quality. This results in cycling's contribution to sustainable travel remaining limited. This article explores the nature of infrastructure to make cycling's benefits widely available, and the ways to plan for that infrastructure. It then despairs at the realities of trying to 'get things done'.

Efficiency: the main benefit

The benefits are well-rehearsed: cycling is energy and space efficient and causes no carbon emissions, air pollution, noise or severance. Its intrinsic 'transport efficiency' is often oddly overlooked. In more detail these efficiencies are:

- **Speed:** it is often the quickest means of travel over typical urban journey lengths;
- **Cost:** much lower than a private motor vehicle or public transport;
- **Versatility:** with passenger and load carrying capabilities now being more widely recognised;
- **Accessibility:** it is accessible across the age spectrum, including those too young to hold driving licences, and for disabled people (sometimes with cycle adaptations).
- **Space:** moves more passengers per metre width than cars, and 8–10 bicycles can park in one car parking space.

While the initial four efficiencies benefit the traveller, it is the last that is arguably a primary and important benefit for transport and spatial planning.

Widening the benefits

The proportion of younger and older cyclists is low in the UK compared with other European countries. Also, the proportion of females who cycle is around 30%

compared with 45%–55% in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands (Pucher and Buehler, 2008). Higher absolute numbers of cyclists in a city leads to higher proportions of female riders. Similarly, disabled cyclists are few in number, but again are better represented when cycling is more common. Suppressed levels of cycling by disabled people is because of the particular ways that poor quality legacy cycle infrastructure creates a disabling environment; the worst example being barriers that require riders to dismount.

The challenge is to improve infrastructure for all cycle users

Infrastructure for inclusivity

Cycles themselves are varied. They are defined as carriages, and, unless specifically prohibited, are permitted on all highways. A cycle can be a unicycle, bicycle, tricycle, or cycle having four or more wheels. They can carry passengers and/or freight. Electrically assisted bicycles are also treated as cycles (if under 40 kilograms, with power limited to 200 watts, and no electrical assistance above 15 mph). Cycles can also use bridleways, where they must give way to pedestrians.

Table 4.1 of the Department for Transport's (2020a) Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design helpfully indicates that the carriageway is not suitable for most people cycling where the two-way flow is greater than 500 passenger cars per hour with a 20 mph speed limit.

It suggests few people would cycle in these flows with a speed limit of 30 mph.

There are two ways of achieving conditions within the carriageway that are suitable for cycle traffic. One is to reduce motor traffic volumes through area wide traffic management, and the other is to build separate infrastructure for cycle traffic. Neither is technically difficult, but both rely on reducing in some way the 'free reign' given to motor traffic. This is seen as difficult by many local politicians, sometimes influenced vociferous naysayers wedded to the current norm of motor traffic.



Cyclists are permitted on all roads, though many are unwelcoming

How to consolidate our planning for cycling? cont...

The planning of networks

For the UK's full potential for cycling as an everyday means of travel to be achieved, comprehensive networks need to be planned and implemented. These networks will use carriageways, separated facilities within the highway, and routes, such as bridleways and other permissive routes, away from the highway. The Department for Transport's (2017) Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (LCWIP) guidance for planning cycling infrastructure summarises the process in six stages, as follows:

1. determine geographical scope;
2. gather information on existing conditions and potential usage;
3. develop a network plan for cycling;
4. develop a network plan for walking;
5. prioritise improvements; and,
6. integrate outputs into local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans.

There is nothing novel or unusual about this staged approach: it is simply an application of transport planning practice. Adopting the five Dutch (CROW, 2007) principles for cycle network planning and design (now also in LTN 1/20) will help achieve suitable quality to attract large sections of the population to cycle for many everyday trips.

References

CROW (2007) *Design manual for bicycle traffic*. (Dutch version April 2006, English version June 2007). Ede, The Netherlands: Centre for research and contract standardisation in Civil Engineering.

Pucher, J and Buehler, R. (2008) *Making cycling irresistible: Lessons from the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany*, *Transport Reviews*, 28:4, 495–528

Department for Transport (2017) *Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans: technical guidance for local authorities*. Department for Transport, London. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/607016/cycling-walking-infrastructure-technical-guidance.pdf Accessed on 17th August 2021.

Department for Transport (2020a) *Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design*. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>. Accessed on 18th August 2021.

- **Coherence:** The network needs to be a coherent whole, and provide connections that link origins and destinations.
- **Directness:** Routes need to be direct, and ideally shorter than the equivalent motor traffic route.
- **Attractiveness:** The route needs to be well designed, fit with the surroundings, and create feelings of personal security.
- **Safety:** The routes need to minimise all potential risks.
- **Comfort:** Routes should have smooth surfaces.

These principles recognise that the cycle rider is exposed to the environment. A car passenger is cocooned in an attractive and comfortable environment, and so should a cycle rider.

Embedding in wider planning

So, the processes and guidance exist for planning and designing for cycle traffic. What is a little more challenging is to embed the needs of cycle traffic more widely within the planning process in order to lead politicians at every step along the way towards implementing sustainable travel to create more liveable neighbourhoods. Planners need to be making the case to politicians, based on the benefits of cycling. The sixth step, noted above, of ensuring that LCWIP outputs are integrated into local planning and transport policies, strategies, and delivery plans is important. It is also important to prioritise cycling investment on Community Infrastructure Levy Regulation 123 lists, and design cycle parking into all new developments.



Professor John Parkin

Professor of Transport Engineering, Deputy Director Centre for Transport and Society University of the West of England

Regional Management Board & Activities Committee Up-date

There are two joint meetings of the Regional Management Board (RMB) and Regional Activities Committee (RAC) to report: 9 July and 24 September. July's meeting was held virtually, but for September we were back in Taunton with the option to meet in-person or use the video-conferencing facility.

Chair's Report

Reports from the chair update the RMB / RAC across a number of matters relating to the running of the region so they have a heavy focus on 'business of the day'. They can also address issues of concern to members, as was the case in July when Angharad updated the meeting on how the RTPi was responding to the public criticism of planning staff by the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Chief Executive. They're also an opportunity for the chair to add their flavour to how business is run. So, for example, Angharad has continued to highlight action relating to her theme for the year - health and wellbeing - including the development of the Chair's Page "Let's talk health, wellbeing and inclusivity".

Corporate Activity

At the July meeting, David Lowin our representative on the RTPi General Assembly (GA) provided feedback on the GA held in June. He updated us on the proposed changes to the Institute's constitution and governance, noting the proposed changes had been the subject of considerable debate and consultation with regions and nations, and some of the points raised by the RTPi SW had been reflected. In his feedback, David also observed that GA's purpose seemed unclear, as did the impact of its contributions. This echoed by other members of the joint committee who were on GA and by previous attendees. We raised this with Sue Bridge, Chair of the Board of

Trustees, and are pleased to say Sue advised us that the role of GA was to be considered at its October meeting. David also updated on the One Institute Project. We have welcomed the initiative, but have also commented that one institute should not mean one-size-fits-all. Regional initiatives, skill and expertise, together with regional differences should be given weight.

In his Honorary Secretary's report for the September meeting, Peter Ellis provided an update on this year's elections for the 2022 RMB and RAC. He explained that following the receipt of nominations, two RMB posts - Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer - had no nominations and were vacant. Peter highlighted that both posts would provide opportunities for insight into the working of the Institute and would also provide excellent experience for those thinking about standing for a national position. As with membership of the RAC, being a committee member was a very useful networking opportunity. We are now hopeful of both posts being filled.

Peter also explained there was a significant number of members stepping down from the RAC, although several had committed to contributing to working groups. A common reason for standing down was work pressures. It would be helpful to know whether there were other reasons too and whether a different way of organising business could mean colleagues were less likely to step down (and / or more members would be keener to put themselves forward). In discussion, a number of options for holding the meeting were aired, including different locations, days or time of the day such as the evening. Julie O'Rourke kindly stepped in to cover the Nations and Regions Panel meeting held on 22 June. In her report to the joint meeting Julie highlighted a number of matters including Tim Crawshaw's overview of his 2022 Presidential year. Tim has said his focus would include climate change; nature-based solutions to climate change; health and well-being and a focus on places that help / keep us well; levelling up through tackling inequalities;

bridging the gap between RMBs / RACs and universities; increasing opportunities to talk about planning at the global scale; more engagement with Young Planners; and, having fun as a profession.

In his Treasurer's updates Alexis Edwards has underlined that the ongoing pandemic had proven challenging for the region's finances for a second year, finances remained very tight and with sustained pressure in a number of areas. Alexis summed up the situation as being bad, albeit not as bad as it might have been. Alexis also advised that it could get worse so the need for prudent management remained in place. Looking ahead to next year, the 2022 Business Plan has been submitted to HQ for approval. This includes an exciting range of activities of interest to all members.

We welcomed Machel Bagues, the RTPi's new Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager, to the July meeting. Machel gave an insightful presentation covering what is meant by equality, diversity and inclusivity including the legal framework; implications for RTPi SW; and, the opportunities for the branch to take positive action (which we have reflected in our business plan).

Reports from working groups

The region's working groups provide the impetus for a broad range of activities, including our social and CPD events, and report back to RMB / RAC at each meeting. Because of the amount of ground to be covered reports are largely taken as read other than where there are specific matters to discuss and recommendations to be agreed. So, for example, we have had updates on this year's RTPi SW Awards for Planning; heard about the excellent work of the International Group and success of the walking events; and been advised about the delivery of the South West Engagement Network.

RTPI South West Engagement Network (SWEN)

Is your authority, organisation or consultancy represented?

In March 2021 we launched the RTPI South West Membership Engagement Network (SWEN). The purpose is to create a network of key contacts in both the public and private sector to provide a more effective 2-way communication between RTPI members and the Regional Management Board and Regional Activities Committee.

The network would have a dedicated link to the Regional Coordinator to share any opportunities and listen to feedback members would like to raise with the RTPI regionally or nationally.

Benefits

- A dedicated contact/ more direct link to the RTPI at a regional /local level.
- A conduit to pass feedback and queries back to the RTPI from colleagues. This could then feed into business planning.
- To have the knowledge to encourage colleagues to become involved with regional activities.
- An opportunity to put forward ideas for speakers, topics and articles to showcase their organisation's work and achievements in planning.
- Networking opportunity with dedicated events for the SWEN - 'Meet the Regional Chair/RTPI President' and Q&A sessions with RTPI staff in policy, membership & education
- Opportunity to network between private and public sector organisations

- Opportunities to hear about how to promote careers in planning and the current routes to membership e.g. apprenticeships
- Contribute towards CPD
- Dedicated newsletter / communications



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

If you want to check who your representative is or volunteer, please contact
Charlotte.Daborn@rtpi.org.uk

Getting to know... Harry Quartermain



Tell me a bit about yourself

I grew up in North Yorkshire and then studied English in Manchester at undergraduate level. After university I spent a year or so living in Bristol and running the British University Snowsports Committee before moving to London to continue working in snowsports, and producing live music, sports events and festivals. In 2010 I completed a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Westminster, but struggled to find work following the 2008 recession. I jumped on a plane headed to Sydney with a one-year visa and a hope of finding work in planning. I arrived into a massive property boom and spent the next nine years working on some of the biggest and most exciting planning projects around, first for a large engineering firm, then for a top-tier urban services firm. Working overseas, and in an unfamiliar planning system, was fantastic because it forced me out of my comfort zone and helped me learn about disciplines that we don't have to contemplate to the same extent in the UK (like water scarcity and bushfire) and also to grapple with some of the more universal issues in planning (such as car dependency, the impact of tall buildings, and the perceived need for planning reform). It also allowed me to live on the beach in Bondi, and get in the sea every day. I returned to the UK in 2019 with my wife and two kids in tow and have spent the last few years working on a broad range of planning projects, including development management, EIA, and the preparation of planning policy.

Why did you choose a career in planning?

Despite growing up with a planner in the house, a career as a planner wasn't always obvious to me. Although 9% of the UK economy comes from the built environment sector, a career in built environment is often hiding in plain sight for those in school and most of university. Before I settled as a planner, I dabbled with a career in TV production; and was even a licenced publican at one point. For me, being

a planner allowed me to take the things that I enjoyed about running live events and festivals, such as designing the way people move through a space, and deliver it in a more permanent and positive way.

Since a young age, like most people of my generation, I've been concerned with climate change, being a planner allows me to find purpose in my work by delivering spaces that help to manage and mitigate our impact on the planet, and it on us. I enjoy the public good in being a planner, delivering spaces and buildings that improve people's lives. Good urban planning is a primary health care service; giving people good quality homes and habitats, with access to active transport, fresh food, and fresh air helping people live longer and healthier lives. I'd like to think I'm helping with this.

What does your current job involve?

I'm a planning associate at Barton Willmore. As a private sector planner my role is to help my clients navigate the labyrinthine and ever-changing planning requirements that stand between them and the aspirations for their sites. One of the things I like about being a planner is the fact that you have to be an expert generalist and an adept communicator. Place-making is full of specialised silos. A planner should be able to know a little about all of these specialisms, and be able to facilitate clear communication between them.

Why did you become involved in the Regional Activities Committee (RAC)?

I have always believed that you get out of something what you put in; this includes your profession. This belief has led me to value the time-contribution involved in organisations like the RTPI. When I moved to Sydney I knew no-one in an environment where most people in the industry had graduated from the same planning course. I got involved in the Young Planners of the Planning Institute of Australia, then in the Divisional Committee. During this

time, which included one year as Vice President, I was responsible for two of the national congresses, numerous subject-specific CPD sessions, and for establishing a national mentoring programme.

On moving back to the UK in 2019 I once again found myself with a limited network and wanted to find another suitable outlet for my voluntary work, so I joined the RTPI General Assembly from 2019 – 2021, and the SW RAC from 2020 onwards. My hope is that I can bring something useful to the RAC from my time overseas.

What do you do when you're not planning?

Two young kids take up a lot of my time. When I was living on the beach I was a volunteer life guard, now that the pools are opening back up and the kids are in school I'm finding more time for running and swimming again, which I'm enjoying. I'm also looking forward to getting back out to the mountains in the winter.



RTPI South West forthcoming events

A full programme of events for RTPI South West members is currently in development. We are aiming to offer a mix of webinars, in-person seminars, site visits and walks.

The following is a draft programme of in-person seminars

Housing and Housing Delivery 5 April 2022, The Hilton Bournemouth

A full day seminar exploring the subject of housing. The seminar will cover five year housing land supply and the 'tilted balance' and the issues around delivery of much needed housing. The seminar will explore how five year housing land supply is calculated, identifying issues around past shortfall or over supply following the Tewkesbury Borough Council High Court challenge, appropriate buffers and identifying realistic and deliverable supply. What are the other ways of Council and developers to deliver housing? Is custom and self-build, prefabricated housing the way forward? How do we address the issue of inclusivity in our housing, how do we plan for the young, for older populations and for affordable housing?

Early bird rates
(15%) off
ends 28 February
2022

Details of these and all our events will soon be listed on the RTPI website

BOOK NOW



Climate Change 10 May 2022, Somerset County Cricket Ground, Taunton

This one day seminar invites you to be part of the discussion about how planning can lead and make a difference to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the outcomes of COP26.

Planning for the Natural Environment 7 July 2022, The Rougemont, Exeter

This one day seminar invites you to explore the increasing emphasis given to the natural environment in national and local planning policies following the publication of the Environment Act in November 2021. This seminar will explore the legal perspectives of the Environment Act, biodiversity net gain, phosphates and nitrates. What are the examples of good practice and what are the obligations on local planning authorities and developers in terms of delivering housing and other infrastructure whilst protecting and enhancing our natural environment?

Heritage 13 September 2022, The Guildhall, Bath

This one day seminar invites you to explore the importance of heritage assets and how we can protect and enhance heritage while delivering housing and meeting the Governments climate reduction aims. Furthermore, this seminar explores how can we use heritage to revitalise our high streets and businesses.

Planning for the Rural Environment 12 October 2022, Devon/Cornwall (TBC)

This one day seminar invites you explore the range of competing interests facing rural areas. How do you deliver housing, both market and affordable, rural employment and community facilities and sustainable energy, which is sustainable while maintaining the intrinsic qualities of the countryside? How can we deliver innovative housing whilst protecting the rural environment?

Planning Law Update 10 November, Bristol (venue TBC)

This annual update will look at the latest law and case law relevant to development management and planning policy. We hope to offer this event as a hybrid event inviting you to either join in person or virtually.

Webinars

We are developing a mix of webinars for 2022 on topics such as

- The Environment Bill
- Gypsy and Travellers
- Planning for Sport and Recreation
- Planning for Public Art and Controversial Historic Figures
- Transport



Walking Event Reports

GETTING OUTDOORS - WALKING EVENTS

In a desire to broaden the range of events for members. We recently held a selection of walking events for members. They were great opportunities to network, whilst also discussing planning and the challenges and opportunities this presents.



Walking events

A variety of walking events have taken place over the last few months:

BRISTOL

The good, bad and ugly of Bristol planning

Put 12 planners (plus their planner tour guides) together and you are always going to get a healthy range of views and that was certainly what Julie O'Rourke and Kath Haddrell had when they led a walking tour of parts of Bristol on a very hot and sunny day in September. We could obviously only cover a small area of the city, but one of the very best things was that even those of us who have lived or worked here for 30 or more years learned of at least one place or fact. The second-best thing was the opportunity to talk about what we can technically call "planning stuff" in a really informal environment with other like-minded souls who were all ready to chip in. We did point out that neither of us are professional tour guides, but nobody seemed to mind too much.

The tour started in Queen Square, 2.4ha of listed houses (now offices) a now fairly tranquil setting with mature London Plane trees providing much needed shade for the groups of young people, parents and office workers enjoying the sun. But only 30 years ago, it was a very different environment, with a dual carriageway cutting through the square. In 1991, there were apparently 20,000 vehicles per day using the road, which is unimaginable now.

The removal of this road was one of the most important decisions Bristol City Council has taken, creating a well-used and much-loved urban space with (pre-pandemic) 100% occupancy rates that has revitalised this part of Bristol with the pedestrian links across Pero's Bridge, on to Wapping Wharf, and now the advent of the Brunel Mile. It took 20 years from original concept to completion and shows the importance of a good long-term vision.

The square was built between 1699 and 1720 on the old marsh - those of us who remember traffic running through the square might remember the ground reverberating. Named after Queen Anne, it was, allegedly, the first residential square outside London. The houses were built for the city's merchants, which of course means that at least some of the buildings have links to the slave trade. Now the square is home to approximately 70 businesses. We moved on to the Quakers' Burial Ground, a less tranquil space which most of us had never been into before. In the immediate setting of Grade I listed St Mary Redcliffe, the Burial Ground contains approximately 180 small headstones (from babies to someone aged 99) that are stored in the Hermit's Cave which was occupied from 1346 until the 17th century. The Quakers were persuaded to give the burial ground to the city for the construction of a roundabout on Redcliffe Way. In the 21st century, the use and layout of the land seems very unsatisfactory; a neglected, unloved space with traffic noise and poor air quality and somewhat disrespectful to those buried there. We wondered whether there was a way to enhance the space and pay better tribute to the lives of those buried there? A big thanks to Robert Chapman for his litter picking efforts.

We then walked via Redcliffe Backs, admiring the old warehouses and some public art which is all that's left of the grain chute at the Grade II listed Buchanan's Wharf but was once over 80 feet high and used for moving tonnes of grain and flour around. From Buchanan's Wharf we had a quick look, but sadly did not have time to enter, the Seven Stars (circa 1590) on Thomas Lane. A planners' love of a good pub is not news, but this pub is not only known for a decent pint but because of its role in the abolitionist movement, when Landlord Thompson arranged for Thomas Clarkson to meet sailors, including a surviving Black sailor, from the slave ships. The evidence Thomas Clarkson gathered was used in parliament and helped gather momentum for a mass movement against slavery. Sometimes, a pub isn't just a pub.



Walking Event Reports cont...

Our walk then crossed Bristol Bridge and ended up near the footbridge from Castle Park to The Galleries, affording views of the now vacant Debenham's building, The Galleries (late 1980's/early 1990's) and Cabot Circus (2000's). We had the chance to look at place making and begin a debate the future of town centres but since we were running out of time, the bigger questions had to wait for another day. We briefly also discussed the placemaking and urban design qualities of Finzels Reach and Castle Bridge and of the new residential development of Castle Park View.

We could have talked for hours about the importance of green and blue infrastructure; making the most of assets such as the New Cut and the River Avon; about using our heritage as an asset and about memorialisation and street art.

It was wonderful to meet up with like-minded colleagues and explore a place most of us thought we knew well, but to all learn something new, to be able to exchange views and to share knowledge felt like a breath of fresh air after the last 18 months. So, if you like the sound of this and would like to join one of our walks or, even better, would like to lead one around your local patch, please get in touch.



Julie O Rourke

Tetra Tech and RTPI SW Senior Vice
Chair

Kath Haddrell

The Planning Inspectorate and
RTPI SW Regional Activities Committee

Walking Event Reports cont...

COTSWOLD

The Cotswold Way

“The inaugural rural walking CPD event commenced on the 14th September with some sixteen participants gathering on a very misty, raining very Autumnal morning at the starting point of the walk, the Royal William pub, adjoining the A46, between Painswick and Cranham and situated on the Cotswold Way. The two leaders Paul Baxter, the leader of the Painswick Conservation Group and also a part time employee of English Nature, together with Dr Gareth Parry of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust hosted the introductions, and an overview of the event. Paul was to concentrate on what we were going to observe on the walk, and Gareth to set those experiences in a planning context.

The conservation challenges of this part of the Cotswold Way are significant, the Beacon is a golf course, it's the route of the Cotswold Way, intensively used by walkers, and the local population for recreation, very extremely intensively during COVID, its also used by horse riders and mountain bikers.

To say that the beechwoods, the habitats for insects and particularly butterflies are under pressure is an understatement.

The walk of some four miles was punctuated by frequent stops where the use of a small herd of dexter cattle owned by Paul's volunteer group to graze thus improving the endangered upland limestone grassland was explained. Technology was newly employed, with temporary electric fences being replaced by GPS collars being deployed which controlled via audible warning and electric shock the grazing area, allowing public access without fences. Several of the pauses in the walk demonstrated the dilemma of public access, human users of the beacon had made new 'desire' line paths. Existing stoned paths and steps up to the scheduled ancient monument, the Neolithic

Fort had become enlarged by human use, to the detriment of habitat, and visual amenity. At another stopping place a new car park had been created by human use, affecting the shallow routing systems of beech trees.

The ensuing debate by the participants on the need for open recreational space versus conservation and preservation was instructive. Open access was detrimental to habitat, but to remove the human use defeated the idea that in a populated country green space was, as everyone agreed, necessary for good mental health and fitness. The overall conclusion was that open space needed to be carefully managed, with human use guided to areas where impact was least, encouraging and explaining why unrestricted roaming by humans away from marked paths and parking areas was detrimental.

The final matter was the role of the local community as exemplified by Paul's conservation groups activities. The clearing of invasive species of plants, cutting and or felling volunteer trees to allow the 'natural' varied grassland to thrive, being important and the use of cattle to assist this process.

The event, despite the weather was judged a success, despite the mist never really lifting to allow the beautiful views over the Severn Vale to be revealed.

This new form of event for the Region, occasioned in part by COVID restrictions, together with the recent Bristol City Centre walk, mark a new type of CPD, one which the Region is keen to replicate, with further walking and cycling events, providing insights to participants whilst assisting with achieving health giving outcomes. If regional members have ideas for further walks, cycling events we would like to hear them for future events.”



David Lowin
Lowin Associates and RTPI SW
Regional Activities Committee

Walking Event Reports cont...

PLYMOUTH

Regenerating Plymouth

After the all-important pasty to keep us well fuelled for the walk, we set the context for the city centre regeneration. The city centre masterplan sets out 5 priority themes which were evident throughout the tour:

- **Intensify city centre**
- **City centre living**
- **Re connect city centre with neighbours**
- **Re animate public realm**
- **Smart and adaptable city centre**

After acknowledging the tallest building in SW, 21 storey Beckley point, the first main destination was the Station, which is a major £80 million redevelopment site in Plymouth. The redevelopment of the station site is already under way with the conversion of Intercity Place to a medical education use for the University of Plymouth. The redevelopment of the Station involves various different stakeholders including GWR, Network Rail, Plymouth City Council and the University of Plymouth.

The tour then moved along Armada Way where there was the unavoidable challenge of vacant buildings and we discussed the challenges of delivering some sites.

Public realm schemes were a key element of the tour, including schemes at Market Way, Frankfurt Gate, New George Street/Old Town Street and the most recently completed boulevard scheme. This allowed us to talk about new coastal and tree planting, the use of rain water gardens and specialist tree pits to link with a new city centre SUDs scheme, as well as boreholes and district heating infrastructure in the boulevard scheme. The public realm schemes fall under Better Places Plymouth project which is a long term programme of investment to transform the city centres streets and spaces, using investment from Transforming Cities Fund.

Then moving back to the city centre and into the conservation area which was designated in 2019, there was more of a heritage focus. The conservation area is the first post war conservation area in Britain and Plymouth has the highest number of post war listed buildings outside of London. It was great to hear attendees own experience and memories. This included seeing Tom Jones, the Beatles and PJ Proby (not a name I was aware of previously) at Reel cinema and a previous leader of the council abseiling from the Civic Centre.

UPDATE: The City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan consultation is now closed but may still be viewed here: www.plymouth.gov.uk/planningandbuildingcontrol/designconservationandheritage/highstreetheritageactionzone



Katherine Graham

Plymouth City Council

PAE Volunteer

RTPI SW Regional Activities Committee

Walking Event Reports cont...

The conservation area and city centre will benefit from funding through the Heritage Action Zone. The Plymouth City Centre High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme - 'reinvigorating the Abercrombie Estate' is a four year programme about celebrating, enhancing and adapting the City Centre's post-war heritage and making it a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time.

In addition to this, the Grade II listed Civic Centre and Guildhall will benefit from approx. £12 million funding from the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). The Civic Centre has consent for conversion to 144 residential units along with commercial within the podium of the building, and it is hoped that the FHSF will enable the delivery of this extremely prominent vacant building in the city centre.

The next stop was Pilgrim Court, which won the RTPI SW award for excellence in planning delivery in 2020. This is a 12 units affordable housing scheme, part of the Plymouth Plan for Homes scheme, and located in a challenging brownfield site, in a conservation area along with the setting of listed buildings. The development provides a specialist housing facility allowing adults with learning disabilities to gain independence and confidence whilst remaining within or close to their families and local community. Other benefits of the scheme include improvements to an adjacent park which has allowed community access to the park. Pilgrim Court has been designed with fabric first principles incorporating high levels of thermal insulation, installation of PV panels and a range of highly efficient energy saving techniques which will result in cutting water and fuel bills which in turn reduces fuel and water poverty.

Nearing the end of the tour, we walked through the new Barcode development which is a 12 screen cinema, including 15 restaurant units and parking. There was some honest discussion on how the scheme has affected heritage assets within the area.

Finally we finished the tour at The Box, Plymouth's new major heritage attraction, our "archive in the sky". This has combined various major collections under one roof, home over to over 2 million items. It is believed to be Europe's largest unsupported double cantilever. The new floating archive element is clad in 2,500 panels, with four finishes of white, grey, black and mirrored stainless steel, and the lower levels of the façade feature 82 tonnes of locally quarried Plymouth limestone. The scheme also included the conversion of St Luke's to a large contemporary art space with new stained glass artwork by Leonor Antunes and a large area of new public realm.

Overall, there were lots to talk about, and I am excited to see how these projects progress over the next few years. Massive thanks to Martin Ivatt City Centre Regeneration Coordinator for his support with the tour.



2022 WALKING & CYCLING EVENTS AND SITE VISITS

We are currently planning for more events like this in 2022, but we need volunteers to help.

If you can help arrange an event in your area, perhaps to visit a project on the ground you have been working on or a local walk or cycle ride, then please get in touch.

southwest@rtpi.org.uk

RTPI South West Dinner 2022

Our annual dinner will be back in 2022 and will take place at @Wethecurious a venue which celebrates science and innovation and invites you to think about how we can influence the future.

Taking place on the top floor, the balcony provides impressive views over Millennium Square and Bristol City.

This dinner is a great opportunity to Network, Reward and Celebrate great planning with colleagues and clients



Charity raffle
in aid of:-
Fare Share South West
Mind
Alzheimer's Society

**Network, Reward
& be Inspired by the
RTPI SW Annual Dinner**

@Wethecurious
10th June 2022
6.30pm - Midnight

.....
**Featuring the Food Scientist,
Judge the Poet and much more!**

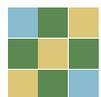
Tickets £60 +vat

www.rtpi.org.uk/swdinner2022

ARUP

**BARTON
WILLMORE**

**Burges
Salmon**



COTSWOLD
TRANSPORT
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