

Welcome from our new Chair for 2022

I am pleased to introduce myself as Chair for the East of England regional committee for 2022.

I must first congratulate my predecessor Charlotte Burton for a very successful year in challenging circumstances. She has showed great leadership and represented the region in an exemplary manner; I have some big shoes to fill. The Committee has also done a wonderful job in delivering a programme of webinars and it was great to have a hybrid event meeting up with other members at the Planning Law Seminar in November and to host a Presidential visit in October.

The Committee has agreed an exciting programme in our Business Plan for this year that we hope as many members can participate in as possible. This will take a flexible approach depending on whether we can gather in person, so will include hybrid events and webinars. We are also lucky to have a series of Young Planner activities and seminars and we are very grateful to Beth Jones and the Young Planners group.

This year I have several priorities that I hope you can support. Firstly, we all recognise the challenging circumstances that many colleagues are facing, both in terms of pressures in the workplace and as we again enter into another period of having to work from home. We therefore are hoping to supplement the support already given by the RTPI to help members with their resilience with some activities in May. Please do also remember that if you are struggling with a change in your professional or personal circumstances, help is available, so please do get in touch.

We also want to give the opportunity for members to gather in the safest way possible, to reconnect with fellow members and also learn a little more about our region, so we will be hosting a series of walking tours, as part of our 'Out and About in 22' campaign. This will include walking tours at Eddington in Cambridge, Norwich and Letchworth, with others also in the pipeline.

Our CPD programme will also be looking at the emerging position regarding rural planning and challenges and opportunities arising from the Environment Act, stewardship of new settlements and how we can ensure our heritage buildings can meet modern requirements, considering the climate emergency. We will also be working with our academic partners to promote our profession to students, and I am particularly keen to see us go out to schools and encourage the next generation of planners.

If you think you can give up a little time, your contribution will be very welcome, and I am sure valuable.

We will be working collaboratively with other professional organisations and regions, particularly reaching out to those members who may be part of other regions but live or work in the East of England.

We cannot do this alone and we would like to involve as many members as possible – we need your help. This can be offering to contribute to our programme of events, maybe offering to host a members' walking tour or representing the RTPI by helping us with a presentation at a local school.

Finally, I wish you a healthy and happy 2022 and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the next year.

Best wishes

David Ames