



IHBC e-letter: Issue 16

September 2013

Peripatetic Council: 19-20 September, Bristol

Each September, at our 'Peripatetic Council', the IHBC's trustees come together to hold our Board Meeting in a different part of the UK, as guests of the institute's Branches. This annual travelling gathering, the peripatetic Council, widens awareness of our activities within the Branches while also building links to help raise our profile through a training and educational event tied to the programme, led usually by the Branch.

This year trustees were hosted in delightful fashion by the South West (SW) Branch, with the local event organisation led by IHBC trustee James Webb, ably supported by the Branch Committee and local volunteers. For the board meeting, Council members enjoyed the formality of the City Hall, formerly the Council House, a grand crescent of public architecture begun in 1938 but only opened in 1956, inside which a plaque fittingly identifies the city in its role as a 'sanctuary'.

Council business: in the 'mainstream'

The Council meeting marks the start of the peripatetic programme, and here trustees were occupied largely with post-AGM business. As usual, the first meeting after the AGM sees Council appoint elected trustees to their executive roles as annual election processes are reported and acted on as appropriate: as noted previously, Mike Brown, past-Policy Secretary, is the new IHBC Chair, and Emilia Hands, well known for her role at the Winchester School, IHBC's Vice Chair, while the new secretaries were elected to their Committee Chairs and our President, Trefor Thorpe, re-elected to his post for the current year.

Reports by lead officers, as well as the national office, also were received and scrutinised, while Council also adopted that essential

annual 'control' for charitable bodies, the risk management register, as an evolving working document. Our Disciplinary Committee for the coming year was elected and the West Midlands Branch Business Plan also approved.

National office report

The national office report takes the form of the quarterly update on progress with the Corporate Plan for 2010-15, our 'CP10', with its coverage currently including most of the last quarter of the third year of the plan!

The report highlighted a number of recent achievements, many already or soon to be reported in the IHBC's NewsBlogs, and include:

- A successful conclusion of the 2013 AGM and Annual School, including the productive partnership with the National Heritage Training Group (NHTG) on the Skills Fair
- The closure of the 2013 Gus Astley Student Award, which received 43 entries, including some exceptional demonstrations of learning, as well as the publication online of the titles of entries since 2007
- The conclusion of local authority capacity surveys for England and Scotland
- The development of free tender circulars as an important new benefit for our HESPR members, to add to the offer of one free 'Jobs etc' notice per year
- More than 3000 on our LinkedIn Group, with monthly website visits at about ¼ million
- The launch of the Level 6 vocational qualification, mapping to our membership levels and criteria
- 17 recent consultation responses in addition to a number of more informal advisory activities
- Two new issues of our journal *Context* published since the last report, with one more now also online
- A skills survey of England's local authority services, now ready for promotion
- Our second research note
- Our 'Global NewsBlog tab' now operating on the home page
- IHBC 'Team training guidance' under testing with Aberdeen City Council.

Governance

In line with the plan to consolidate structures and to work to our strengths, identified in the IHBC's Corporate Plan, the Council progressed what is hopefully the concluding phases of the governance review by supporting the IHBC President in progressing his work with a group to help report back to Council on making sure that the IHBC election processes are 'fit for purpose' in the short term. His parallel mandate to advise council on the wider issues around governance and the constitution also continues.

Forward Planning

Council also considered the matter of the allocation of current surpluses identified to Council and noted in the last AGM report, remembering its duties to both the resources of the organisation and to the delivery of its constitutional objectives agreed through our current Corporate Plan, now entering its fourth year of five.

Council agreed to allocate resources to help deliver on the AGM's commitment to support those progressing from Affiliate to Full membership; to build our specialist credentials in research and guidance by mining our rich resources of data and advice and making ready for publication as IHBC papers; to develop advocacy in the sector and to extend the capacity of the national office to underpin all this by outsourcing the collation and writing of some of the IHBC's NewsBlogs. Altogether this represented an ambitious but targeted programme to address specific areas in the 5 year Corporate Plan that, to date, we have been less successful in delivering. All will be kick-started in the coming weeks and months with notices marking progress in our NewsBlogs.

IfA Charter

Council also considered the most recent developments in the progress towards a Royal Charter by the IfA, the Institute for Archaeologists. Noting that any improvements in the specification, standing and standards of bodies working in the historic environment could only be of benefit to the wider sector, and that the matter was with the IfA members as part of their AGM proceedings, Council agreed that it would review the matter with interest at the outcome of the organisation's next stage of discussions.

Annual School 2014: Edinburgh & the art of conservation

NB: ANY NOTES OF INTEREST IN OR SUGGESTIONS FOR SPONSORSHIP OF THE EDINBURGH 2014 ANNUAL SCHOOL, ON 'THE ART OF CONSERVATION', ON 5-7 JUNE, SHOULD BE PASSED TO FIONA NEWTON, IHBC PROJECTS OFFICER: projects@ihbc.org.uk

Congratulations were offered again to the North Branch on an excellent Annual School at Carlisle, while Council also looked ahead to the next challenge, in particular the School for 2014. This will take place in Edinburgh in June, and focus on the theme of 'the art of conservation'.

With the majority of the organisational arrangements concluded, notably the venue and support at Edinburgh University, Council was especially delighted to hear that a team from the Branch would pin down the programme details over the coming weeks and also turn its collective mind to encouraging sponsors.

Other Branches already committed to hosting future Annual Schools include East Anglia for 2015 in Norwich and the West Midlands in 2016. Council is now seeking Branches wishing to take part in Schools after 2016.

New members

The following members were elected for the corresponding membership categories and branches. They are noted here with attendant congratulations to all, and welcomes to new members:

Full members

Peter Boland (WM), Edmund Fox (EM)

Affiliates

Stephen Appleby (SO), Matthew Bentley (YO), Ben Bosence (SE), Peter Boyd (NW), James Davis (SW), Emily Dunning (SW), Emma Dwyer (EM), Anne Evans (SW), Alison Farrell (SC), John Hardy (SW), Chris Healey (NW), Nicholas Heath (YO), Joe Hotson (WA), Allana Hughes (SC), Tom Hunter (SC), Dan Jackson (LO), Simon Kennedy (NW), Rebecca Mason (LO), Steven McLeish (NW), Kelly Minion (SC), Herbie Mitchell (RI), Ashleigh Murray (LO), Danielle Pacaud (NW), Tom Parnell (SC), Sarah Pearce (SC), Duncan Philips (SE), Candida Pino (WM), Jo Pitt (SW), Tudor Pop (SE), Nadina Reusmann (LO), Oto Seiler (SW), Chris Smith (SO), Petra Sprowson (LO), Michael Stokes (SW), Karl Taylor (NW), Jeremy Wayman (YO), Vicki Webster (LO), Charlotte Westwood (SW), Emily

Whittredge (SE), Ashlyn Whitty (NW), Clara Willett (LO), Stuart Willsher (EA), Rosamund Worrall (EM)

Associates

Tim Strang (WA), Norman Wigg (SE)

Consultations

At the very heart of the IHBC's operations sits our work with policy and, specifically, consultations. More than 17 consultations have been logged formally since our last report in May, all benefiting from the enlightened and sharply honed hand of our consultations consultant James Caird.

These represent only a part of our advisory work supporting the sector. Through Branches, Committees, Officers and staff, we also play an ongoing role in spurring, shaping and, on those occasions where some might cause damage, challenging policies that could detract from our charitable objectives.

Please remember too that we are always in need of further capacity and support – as reported previously, for example, we have recently recruited Fiona Deaton as a volunteer to help provide additional experience in legal aspects of our policy work. If you would like to offer your skills please contact your Branch Officers, who can often offer guidance on where experience may be gained locally, or our new Policy Committee Chair, David Kincaid, who may be contacted at policy@ihbc.org.uk.

Resignations survey

Council also noted the report on resignations from the institute prepared by Fiona Newton.

This reported that:

Since the end of May 2012 IHBC Members resigning have been asked to complete a survey before their resignation is confirmed. Also Members who resigned since the beginning of 2011 were also asked to complete the survey retrospectively.

So far 86 departing Members have completed the survey. 44% of those who resigned were Affiliates, with 12% Associate, 35% Full Members and 9% did not know their membership status.

The primary reasons expressed for leaving are inability to afford the subscriptions (40%), retirement (32%) or a professional move out of conservation (35%). Those who felt

they could not afford the subscriptions did not apply for the Hardship Fund because they did not think they wanted IHBC services that badly (36%) or did not think they needed support that badly (37%).

Research and projects: from LAs to HESPR

The IHBC's research and project activities, mostly coordinated through the national office, have also been progressing well. These are especially important as they generate funding for the IHBC and our wider activities. This is a matter of direct concern to all members. Success in projects has helped keep our membership fees down so that today they remain, in real terms, about what they were in 2005, despite substantial expansion in benefits, services, public standing and, for the most needy, charitable support.

Recent projects include the Annual School as well as some Branch events where Branches have sought more substantial organisational support, alongside research work into English and, more recently, Scottish local authority conservation services. For the latter, in a report just concluding, we have benefited especially from Historic Scotland's enthusiasm for generating thoughts, discussions and opinions. We look forward to bringing that to a UK, and wider, audience on completion.

Council also has received reports on the more recent expansion of project-based services to members of HESPR, our recognition service for businesses, as these now receive digital updates on work opportunities as part of their membership benefits (see website for details). That is on top of the recent agreement to offer 1 courtesy digital job circulation per year, worth up to £400!

We have also been carrying out a skills-based survey into local authorities for English Heritage, noted on our website, while a number of other areas are under discussion for project work and development.

Branch updates and reports

Each Council meeting receives updates on circulated Branch reports, details of which may be found on the Branch pages on the IHBC's website.

Peripatetic Council: Progress beyond the Board...

As part of the two-day peripatetic programme, the IHBC's Council continued its deliberations beyond the Council meeting and well into

the evening with a working dinner at which members were required to cover three themes in our corporate forward planning, one theme to each course. Needless to say all huddled competitively and enthusiastically with their designated tablemates and produced a barrage of ideas and issues, initiatives and suggestions, all of which will help shape our forward planning.

Of course after what was for some officers a near 20-hour day of travel with detailed and strategic discourse and cogitation, some R&R was needed, and a postprandial stroll from the restaurant to join the SW Branch Committee and supporters for an informal drink was a pleasant conclusion to a long and busy day dedicated to the IHBC.

Due to the pressure of time and the need for trustee engagement with the forward planning of the Institute, for Bristol it had been agreed that there would be no public reception on the Thursday evening, so that informal meeting with the Branch became the conclusion to that long day of council. However for the Friday the Branch had organised a remarkable day of study and learning themed around the matter of characterisation – an exceptionally stimulating theme not least because of the echoes of best conservation practice that reverberated around the insights provided into practice, theory and descriptions. The programme was further enlivened by its location – a rescued Grade II Commissioner’s Church adapted as a circus training venue – while a circus performance over lunch showed the place operating under its current primary use.

The conference programme was chaired by Mo Pearce, Branch Chair, and Ian Lund, Branch Past Chair, with shepherding, admin and support by the team from the Branch and Committee. The efficient support and timely running all showed off the strengths of this most active of IHBC Branches to best effect. Furthermore, with the idea that speakers should delve so deeply into the thinking processes – from phenomenology to sociology – the event was a useful reminder of how we all must remember just how much the proper management of the bigger picture can shape the smaller detail!

Council members were hugely appreciative of the programme and the opportunities to explore issues around characterisation with colleagues from near and far. It was all the most fitting demonstration of the IHBC’s greatest strength, our volunteers, and Council’s debt and gratitude to the Branch cannot be overestimated.

Member updates: Professional updates sought!

This is a new section to be introduced to the e-letter, which is intended to carry brief news and updates on members' professional roles and related matters, though not promotional material of course. Currently we are continuing to piloting this service.

If IHBC members of any category would like news about work or related arrangements posted here please email a brief note and, as appropriate, web link to the IHBC's director at director@ihbc.org.uk. Please do note also that we do not guarantee publication.

IHBC Volunteering & Governance: A reminder

A cover note from our Chair Mike Brown:

The strength of the IHBC lies in the willingness of its members to step forward and volunteer. The trustees are always pleased to hear from members willing to contribute their skills, time and experience, either at local or national level. Council has asked our President, Trefor Thorpe to conduct a review of our governance arrangements and recommend improvements to them and our election procedures. In the meantime here is a reminder of the current arrangements:

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is a registered charity and limited company operating under the oversight of our Council, a Board of Trustees who are also the directors of the company. The IHBC's Council is supported by an executive body, the National Office, and advised by council members and volunteers operating through our Committee and Branch structures. See our website and 'Yearbook' for details.

Each year the IHBC's Council members are elected at our Annual General Meeting. Council Members are the trustees of the Institute and include elected Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary), Branch Representatives and Committee Chairs. Only Full Members of the IHBC enjoy voting rights on the Council.

All IHBC members and supporters are encouraged to contribute to the operations of the institute, locally and nationally. Such contributions serve as suitable preparation for trusteeship.

All posts are open for election each year. Anyone interested in developing skills for a post as a trustee should review the relevant job descriptions and specifications, and also consult with a relevant post-holder, Branch or Council member, or the National Office, on how to best to progress skills.

Anyone interested in trusteeship should:

- *Get involved with IHBC Branches and/or relevant national Committees*
- *Develop a strong understanding of the IHBC's national operations by monitoring regularly our membership and news information services, including the NewsBlogs, Membership eletter and our in-house publications, Context and our Yearbook*
- *Familiarise themselves with the duties of trustees in general, and of the corporate operations of the Institute (see http://ihbc.org.uk/about/corp_papers/corp_papers.html)*
- *Familiarise themselves with the duties of any particular post they are interested in, in line with the guidance provided on the website (including business plans and, where available, job descriptions)*
- *Be prepared to offer a minimum of 8 days per year in the service of the institute, typically working days*
- *Recognise that, by law, trustees are not allowed personal gain from their role, and are obliged to represent the national interests of the IHBC.*