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BUILDING · CONSERVATION

**Meeting notes of a Council Meeting of the
Institute of Historic Building Conservation
held virtually via GoToWebinar
on Friday 26 March 2021
Chair: Mike Brown, IHBC President**

Present

Kate Baxter-Hunter
Mike Brown
Nichola Burley
Paul Butler
Declan Cahill
James Caird
Des Cairns
Sylvia Campbell
Felix Charteris
Dave Chetwyn
Kate Clark
Paul Collins
John Copping
Oonagh Cranley
Sara Crofts
Poppy Crooks
Louisa Davidson
Alison Davidson
Harriet Devlin
Sarah Doherty
Alison Doran
James Drew
Stan Driver
Crispin Edwards
Grant Elliott
Diane Ellis
Jeremy Fazzaloro
Bradley Fisher
Julia Foster
Tony Garratt
James Gibson
Rachel Godden
Torsten Haak
Val Harrison

Paul Hartley
Tara Hayek
Alison Henry
James Hetherington
Neil Hewitt
Peter Hoey
Edward Holland
Michael Hurlow
Sarah Kettles
Derek Latham
Lone Le Vay
Andrew Long
Estefania Macchi
Andre Mangion
Nicola Mason
Liz Mayle
Duncan McCallum
Alison McCandlish
David McDonald
Katharine Metcalfe
Judith Miller
Rita Mullen
Eimear Murphy
Adrian Neilson
Michael Netter
Sarah Neville
Fiona Newton
Steve Norwood
Sean O'Reilly
Katharine Owen
Rachael Parry
Liz Pollard
Lydia Porter
John Preston

Fiona Raley
David Rawlins
Simon Revill
Hadas Rix
Sanne-Marie Roberts
Paul Robertshaw
Dennis Rodwell
Joanna Saady
Imogen Sambrook
Amy Saunders
Emma Sharp
Charlotte Stranks
Alfie Temple Stroud
Kevin Stubbs
Frances Swanston
Tanya Szendeffy
Ian Tan
Rebecca Thompson
Elizabeth Thomson
Carl Thorgaard
Colin Tucker
Alice Ullathorne
Ramona Usher
Ann Vanner
Emilie Wales
Mark Watson
Simon Went
Jenny Wetton
Ian Williams
Ben Williscroft
Chris Wood
Maria Yioutani-
Iacovides

Apologies for absence

Kate Dickson
Joanna Evans
Roger France

Jenny Freeman
Kate Kendall
Bob Kindred

Graham Lee
Geoff Underwood

Introduction from Mike Brown, IHBC President

MB welcomed everyone to the first Council meeting under the new governance and structure following adoption of the Articles of Association at the AGM in December 2020. What will this new Council be? The meeting had been kept as open as possible to allow members the opportunity to say what they want out of it. The Articles do give some definition including involvement of branches, as a basis for members to become involved, to develop future trustees/board members and appointment of the President. The Council is open to any member (affiliate, associate or full member) so is a blank sheet for new ideas. At this stage there is no ceiling on numbers to allow flexibility in its development and maintain continuity between previous and new.

Crispin Edwards asked if there might be a conflict for affiliates to be part of the Council which will have delegated powers from the Board. MB said in developing the Council potential conflicts will be reviewed, but IHBC is very keen for all categories of membership be involved, have the opportunity to participate and prepare policy for IHBC going forward.

Simon Revill asked what the current ideas are on communication between Council and branches, and would it be a continuation of a Branch rep on the Council? MB said the idea of this meeting was to help develop those links with branches so they can have a voice as well as for individuals.

Quick pitches on the IHBC as a resource for new members

Four recent members had agreed to tell delegates about what it was that made the IHBC their particular choice for professional and specialist support, and what they want from the IHBC to help in the future.

Poppy Crooks

Poppy, a Church Buildings Advice Assistant at the Diocese of Ely and Historic Environment Advice Assistant Apprentice, is a new IHBC Affiliate. She was attracted to IHBC because of the multi-disciplinary range of members and is hoping to build connections, find support through meeting people and getting involved. Diversity in professions as well as background makes for a richer experience for everyone. She was excited to be part of this meeting, but she wanted to make the point about attracting the younger generation who may feel intimidated by getting involved and IHBC needs to make sure there is space for them.

Frances Swanston

Frances is the Project Officer for the Historic Asset Management Project at Aberdeenshire Council and she became a full member of the IHBC in June 2020. She started her career as a planner so IHBC was not on her radar. Through a secondment to the conservation team her interest in conservation was developed

and being unsuccessful in a conservation job application spurred her on to get a conservation qualification and apply for full membership. She feels very lucky to have had colleagues who supported her, encouraged her to attend an annual school and has now joined her branch committee. She has attended both a MAGE and MATE sessions when in the process of upgrading to full membership which she found very helpful. She has found support through IHBC as members have a common interest, can network and have space to discuss issues. She would like IHBC to provide more encouragement for the public sector as line managers sometimes don't recognise the need for support in dealing with officers and management.

Ian Tan

Ian is based in Hong Kong, is a PhD candidate in Architecture and former heritage planner with the Singapore government. He has been a IHBC Full member since 2018. He knew of the IHBC as a student and participated in Gus Astley Student Awards and Annual School, likes the interdisciplinary approach, clear pathway to professional membership and keeping in touch with UK's heritage scene through the newsletter, conservation best practices and the IHBC Conservation Wiki page. He feels that there are areas for improvement including

- Ambiguity over the terms: conservation practitioners and historic environment experts - less recognition and visibility compared to professions like Architect, Surveyor, Engineer in the Asian context
- Internationalisation strategy needs to be clarified - is IHBC representing British standards and interests outside the country? Or does it want to represent professionals wanting to be accredited according to British standards?
- More opportunities to find IHBC members who could vouch for my body of work, even for those based overseas.
- More CPD opportunities online
- Can branches adopt overseas members such that we can be more involved? He is not in favour of an Overseas branch, experience with ICOMOs shows interaction remains superficial and not helpful for professional development.

Emilie Wales

Emilie is an Historic Environment Officer at East Lindsey District Council and East Midlands IHBC branch secretary who has recently completed an MSc in Building Conservation from Heriot Watt University and is an IHBC Associate Member. She went straight from University into a lone Conservation Officer role which was hard as there was no in house support, she found this via the IHBC and the local Conservation Officers Group. It was helpful to have these contacts and networks to lean on. For her IHBC could improve its outreach and inclusion, if it wasn't for the COG she wouldn't have known about IHBC and joined. For new members IHBC needs to reach out and make all feel welcome.

Discussion and open call for suggestions

- Simon Revill noted communication and the 'glue' seems central as a link between national and branches. A platform for coordination, dissemination of national aims and objectives down to branch level, and back upwards, then also cross fertilisation between branches.

- Alison McCandlish said the speed pitches are a lovely idea, great to hear people bringing in their different pathways, experiences, ideas, and insights. We are a lovely community, looking forward to Brighton Annual School and Aberdeen too.
- Alison Davidson commented that the comments made by Ian Tan regarding the adoption of overseas members by specific branches is a really good idea. The idea is something well worth following up.
- James Caird commented that he strongly supports Ian Tan's pitch. It has seemed to him for quite a while that IHBC is unusual, if not unique, and could in time become a go-to professional institute for built heritage practitioners. This is a prime candidate for a working group.
- Crispin Edwards noted the issue of diversity is key, and we do need to be actively encouraging of getting as diverse a range of views on Council as possible, so all feel represented and welcome.
- Alice Ullathorne said she's really interested in how the IHBC can help to support promote diversity within the sector. She is trying to set up an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion subgroup so it would be great to get volunteers for that and it would also be great if we could feature role models on our website, so volunteers for that as well would be great. Anyone interested please email Lydia Porter, admin@ihbc.org.uk
- Kate Clark noted diversity is not just about employment - it is about a more diverse approach to heritage. That means challenging HE on their approach to values. The issue is not diversity - the issue is why we have failed to create a more diverse workforce and a more diverse approach despite trying. We are doing something wrong - and need to examine our own attitudes and prejudices first.

MB noted on the issue of diversity that the origins of the conservation profession are largely white and male but IHBC is much more than that. However, IHBC needs to engage more as we all have heritage in our background and should tackle those barriers so that resources are available for all.

- Nicola Burley noted that the Council should reflect the public/private sector split of membership. With more than 50% of membership being in the private sector, the branches are not representative of this split. Private sector consultants are having increasing impact and influence on the historic environment and this needs to be acknowledged and supported.
- Simon Revill noted that as IHBC Yorkshire Branch chair. Branch committees can appear to be a select club. Activity of the Branch is then based on the time available by those on the committee. Something perhaps for discussion at a future committee?
- Crispin Edwards asked if our very name is part of the problem?
- Liz Mayle is a part time conservation officer and also in private practice too. IHBC being the wide body (multi-disciplinary) can't be seen as a closed shop. Many branches cover a large geographical area so in the last year going online to hold meetings was good and we need to build on that.
- Charlotte Stranks said her own experience of feeling alone with regards to people around me not being able to engage in Heritage discussion, was greatly helped by joining Twitter and finding a group other like minded people.
- Nichola Burley noted that another place to meet is in a historic building - other than a pub - when she co-ordinated the Devon Conservation Officer's

Group it became competitive and a matter of pride to see who could come up with the most interesting venue - it also raised the significance of the local group with the property owners.

- Emma Sharpe noted the East Anglia branch is always open to everyone. Dates are set a year in advance and published, anyone wanting to attend only need contact a Committee member and zoom link can be sent. The branch also switches locations between Cambridge / Norwich / Bury St Edmunds.

MB noted that flexibility is important in how to make things work going forward, both for the Council and in branches. Leading on from what IHBC does now branches must be central, with other groups, to help and inform the Council. IHBC needs to work out how to nominate and support people to Council. Written feedback can be made at any time directly to him at president@ihbc.org.uk

- Crispin Edwards asked do we have any idea of a numbers limit for practical purposes?
- Rita Mullen asked what was the hope of getting out of the Council when initiating it?
- Stan Driver suggested two or three representatives for each branch, one of whom should be full, or retired, full member. He felt it was important all branches have people with various perspectives on Council and for affiliates it will aid their professional development.
- Nicola Burley noted that as a long time member who was a conservation officer first before going into private practice was a very difficult transition. She felt that the need to keep conservation credentials was even more important in private practice. Better involvement and support for the diverse and multi-disciplinary membership is needed generally and in the new Council.
- Andre Mangion said as an overseas member today he was very glad that the issue of involvement of overseas members was raised and that UK branches offered to host overseas members. He agreed with the proposal that overseas members are involved in UK branches for the time being and he would really appreciate the involvement in a working branch.

MB said the intention of the Council was to have representation from the membership and branches and for development of future board trustees and officers. He thanked everyone for their comments and input today and encouraged any further comments to be made to him (president@ihbc.org.uk) over the next few weeks.

Presidents Presentation

The Institute was formed in 1997 so perhaps now the organisation has matured and grown the next step in its development would be to consider charter status. MB is a member of RICS so is aware of what is involved for the individual practitioner. To have a charter means recognition by the Privy Council to describe a professional body of excellence in its standards. This gives the public confidence that chartered members work to the highest standards, and lifts members to a higher level. There are basically two types of charter, charter for the institute but not necessarily its members or charter the individual members then the body is the collective of chartered members. It would bring raised status for chartered individuals with greater opportunities and gives greater

client confidence. There are also advantages to professional behaviours as it increases levels of consciousness, responsibility and ethical standards. MB said learning from other organisations who have gone down this route already he would suggest that if IHBC did go forward with this that chartership for the individual would be most appropriate. There would of course be quite substantial legal fees involved in the process (potentially £20,000 - £40,000 approx) depending on the details and complexities. The new Articles of Association are in a form that would be acceptable for chartership and new byelaws would need to be prepared but that is needed anyway following adoption of the new Articles so it would be prudent to ensure they are charter compliant.

MB has mentioned this to a number of people over recent years and responses have generally shown interest. There would be lots of consultation with members on this idea before any commitment would be made. If IHBC went down this route we would have to think about how to describe members, conservator, conservationist? A change like this would have to be put to an AGM where 75% approval would be needed to pass it, so clearly IHBC would not pursue this if the membership were not behind the idea.

Questions and comments raised were as follows

- Torsten Haak - it would be a great idea and success for the organisation
- John Preston - Great to hear the progress towards Chartered Status
- Alison Davidson - Chartered status can't happen soon enough.
- Rita Mullen - A great idea. But different professional backgrounds need the be kept in mind.
- Mark Watson – Conservators have their own organisation, ICON
- Crispin Edwards - historic environment conservationist
- Emilie Wales – chartership will be good for court appearances, but what about those who choose not to go for chartership, and will there be a higher fee?
- Louisa Davidson - agreed chartered membership is a good idea

MB said there were maybe options for crowdfunding to cover some of the costs and fees involved in the chartership route. There was no correlation between chartership and higher fees, any rise would not be substantial hopefully. CPD would need to be very robust, training would be needed to provide and maybe disciplinary if a member falls short of standards. There is an existing disciplinary process ([The Institute of Historic Building Conservation \(ihbc.org.uk\)](http://ihbc.org.uk))

- Nichola Burley - As the profession evolves - we are only still a comparatively young profession - and more of us move to the private sector a chartered institute is essential to manage the standards of the work of membership with the greatest rigour - we should be seen as a flagship in the development and conservation industries. Thoroughly support. HESPR fills the gap at present but chartered status will be of huge benefit.
- James Gibson - was concerned about professional discipline in the case of Chartered status. He had been in a contentious situation where conservation specialists oppose each other e.g. demolition of historic

buildings. The objectives of the IHBC need to be tightened with a presumption to preserve and conserve buildings.

- James Caird - On fees we have always taken the view that many or even most of our members are members of other chartered institutes and have significant membership costs already.
- Simon Went - Would existing members need to reapply for chartership?
- Charlotte Stranks - Will chartered status enable easier progression for IHBC within the professional realm? as compared for instance the RTPI, recognition in Further Education institutes for instance?
- Simon Revill - please do come and talk to us at the Yorkshire Branch.
- Liz Mayle - charter could bring equality with other chartered institutes and could bring new/more full members.

MB said the details like fees, mechanism for chartership, CPD etc would have to be fleshed out down the line if there is the appetite for chartership in the membership. Unlike the larger chartered organisations IHBC doesn't have property, has a small and efficient national office and a great range of volunteer groups which results in very reasonable subscription fees. Byelaws will have to be developed and brought back to members for input, learning from other chartered organisation byelaws don't want to be too prescriptive as these can then be difficult to amend. The other chartered organisations (including CIFA) that have offered some advice have been helpful and will continue to offer that. MB thanked everyone for their comments and thoughts both of support and concern, this will help IHBC move forward with its eyes open and with members involvement.

Any other business

John Preston asked if anyone knew of any listed market stalls (fabric canopies on metal frames, permanent, anchored to the ground) or had experience of trying to get them listed? Or anything similar? If so please send comments to Lydia Porter at admin@ihbc.org.uk

Ramona Usher noted the continuation of the membership application training events (MATE), more information can be found on the website - [IHBC MATE](#)

The 2021 Annual School will be on 17-18 June, bookings are open, all information can be found on the website - [IHBC Annual School](#)

There were several comments on the mechanism for holding Council meetings, Louisa Davidson said Council should be online for attendance issues and Nichola Burley commented online meetings are a great mechanism for greater involvement - sustainable and inclusive, it's the way to go.

David McDonald noted that CPD certificates would be available for attendance at this meeting and a survey will be sent as a follow up, he encouraged people to fill that in. He felt that the day had been very useful, interesting and challenging and thanked attendees and all behind the scenes making the online event possible.

MB thanked everyone for their attendance and input and closed the Council meeting at 3.33pm