



**Meeting notes of a Council Meeting of the Institute of Historic Building  
Conservation held virtually via GoToWebinar  
on Wednesday 13 October 2021, starting at 1.30pm  
Chair: Mike Brown, IHBC President**

**Present**

Ataa Alsalloum  
Kate Baxter-Hunter  
Michael Brown  
Des Cairns  
Jill Channer  
Dave Chetwyn  
Paul Collins  
John Copping  
Oonagh Cranley  
Louisa Davidson  
Christopher Dingwall  
Hettie Dix  
Sean Doran  
Stan Driver  
Crispin Edwards  
Robert Eldridge-Redford  
Jo Evans  
Aimee Felton  
Michael Foley  
Jenny Freeman  
Anthony Garratt  
Phil Godwin  
Stephen Gray  
Tony Gwynne  
Paul Hartley  
James Hetherington  
Neil Hewitt  
Judy Hewitt  
Ruth Hitchen  
Sharon Kelly

Jillian Kerry  
Bob Kindred  
Liz Laycock  
Lone Le Vay  
Ellen Leslie  
Daniel Longman  
Eline Malleret  
David Mcdonald  
Sarah Mcnamee  
Rita Mullen  
Eimear Murphy  
Adrian Neilson  
Fiona Newton  
Cormac O'Sullivan  
Lydia Porter  
David Rawlins  
Stuart Robinson  
Paul Roddy  
Joanna Saady  
Arash Samiei Esfahani  
Emma Sharp  
Sheila Stones  
Kevin Stubbs  
Colin Tucker  
Daniel Wallington  
Mark Watson  
James Webb  
Ben Williscroft  
Paul Zochowski

**Apologies for absence**

Maria Calderon  
Charles Shapcott

## **Introduction from Mike Brown, IHBC President**

MB welcomed everyone to the second Council meeting under the new governance and structure following adoption of the Articles of Association at the AGM in December 2020. The Articles give some definition of how Council should be made up 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 and the meeting had been kept as open as possible.

## **Challenging the IHBC: Responding to priorities in support, learning and skills**

Dave Chetwyn, Communications Secretary

A new communications strategy had been developed and approved this year developing on from the previous one and taking into account changes particularly over the past 18 months - [Item 5.a Communications Strategy May 2021 V2.3.pdf \(ihbc.org.uk\)](#). Many of the objectives in the previous strategy had been achieved or were under way.

One of the most important achievements has been the creation of the Conservation, Places and People All Party Parliamentary Group - [Conservation Places and People APPG – All Parties Parliamentary Group](#) for which IHBC provides the secretariate. This allows issues affecting the sector to be communicated directly to MPs through briefings. Another recent development has been the formation of a diversity and inclusion group. This has initially made contact with other heritage bodies to look at how positive steps towards diversity and inclusion can be taken.

Jo Evans, Honorary Secretary and Fiona Newton, Operations Director

As the membership of IHBC covers a broad spectrum of heritage work and specialisms this is recognised in the membership areas of competence. The process for full membership has been developed over a long period and there is lots of guidance on the website as well as within the full membership form itself. The process shouldn't be painful, but it does have to be robust and reflect the eight areas of competence. Feedback is given to applicants.

In addition IHBC offers MATE sessions to help applicants understand what is required and how to go about making a full member application - [Home \(ihbc.org.uk\)](#). The sessions have continued over the past 18 months being held virtually which has worked well. Recently priority has been given to holding Branch MATE sessions, which also help maintain and build Branch networks. MATEs have been held with a single employer or body. If you are interested in attending or arranging a session please get in touch using the information via the link above. IHBC is also looking at providing CPD sessions around the different areas of competence so please do let us know what you would like.

Applicants are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and experience against the areas of competence with the professional competence sections being very important as the basis for how an applicant approaches their work.

The relatively recent development of Associate membership represents conservation accreditation for practitioners who have demonstrated their general awareness along with specialist skills and experience in their primary discipline. This can be a stepping stone towards full membership or it can be an end in itself.

Recently the Board discussed a member status that recognises some basic a basic knowledge rather than the current affiliate which carries no accreditation and simply requires sign up to the code of conduct and payment of fees. This is the very early stages of development

Analysis of skills, knowledge and geography of the current volunteer membership assessors has identified gaps in assessor profiles which would be helpful to fill. Assessing is a challenging but very rewarding task for mid-career Full members to take on. Especially looking for volunteers to become assessors in Wales and Northern Ireland and new assessors with skills in engineering, fundraising and quantity surveying. Please do get in touch with Fiona Newton ([operations@ihbc.org.uk](mailto:operations@ihbc.org.uk)) if you would like to know more.

#### Roy Lewis, Policy Secretary

The policy committee meets about every 4 months, there are regular attendees as well as corresponding and topical attendees who join if there is a particular issue where they can provide knowledge and insight. One important part of the committee's work has been in developing the Toolbox which aims to fill gaps and provide a different approach where there are controversies - [IHBC Toolbox \(ihbconline.co.uk\)](http://ihbconline.co.uk). It is important that information in the Toolbox reflect the UK wide nature of the IHBC and its members so information is clearly marked if it relates specifically to one of the home nations. Additions to the Toolbox in 2021 have included guidance on alterations to listed buildings, retrofitting of traditional buildings and most recently principles of cultural heritage impact assessments in the UK. Items in the pipeline include design sources for the development of skills in relation to the IHBC areas of competence and amendments to listed building consents. If you can suggest gaps in existing information where guidance is needed, please do get in touch.

The committee routinely receives reports from panels and groups, including legal, consultations, green, and Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA). The work of the consultations panel is an important part of the committees work and all responses are posted on the website - [The Institute of Historic Building Conservation \(ihbc.org.uk\)](http://The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (ihbc.org.uk)).

#### Bob Kindred, Vice Chair Education Training and Standards Committee and Michael Netter, IHBC Professional Services Officer

The committee helps to make and maintain standards it also deals with CPD which is an important part of every career path and in widening knowledge. A regular CPD circular which collates sector wide CPD events and opportunities in a digestible format is sent by email to members on a monthly basis, if you don't already get this you can sign up via the website link below.

Since 2006 accredited members (full and now associate) are required to carry out 50 hours of CPD over a 2 year period and it's not just a case of counting

hours but recording the time when you actually learn something. All categories of membership are encouraged to maintain CPD records by evaluating your own situation, setting goals and regularly assessing how you have progressed against those targets. Each year a percentage of eligible members and associates are called on to produce their CPD records for checking. This helps members and helps the IHBC understand how members are achieving their goals, which competencies are being concentrated on most and what else IHBC might do to help members. Information, guidance and CPD forms can be found on the website - [The Institute of Historic Building Conservation \(ihbc.org.uk\)](http://The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (ihbc.org.uk)), although a new format is being developed in excel which it is hoped will make it easier for members to maintain and analysis their progress and for IHBC in checking CPD returns. If anyone would like to help with the development of the new format to fill in the form and give feedback, please do get in touch with Michael Netter ([services@ihbc.org.uk](mailto:services@ihbc.org.uk))

IHBC provides CPD itself in a number of ways and has been developing different formats to allow more accessibility through virtual means. The annual school for the past two years has been virtual online events, but for the 2022 school in Aberdeen it is hoped that this can be in person as well as having opportunities to attend virtually, a hybrid event, to allow access to those who would not necessarily be able to attend in person. Sessions on individual subjects are being developed, so far topics covered have been retrofit and conservation engineering which seem to have done down well with attendees. For the upcoming COP26 climate change conference IHBC will be doing a series of podcasts on related subjects that link to building conservation and hopes to offer a conservation helpdesk information on which has been circulated via a NewsBlog - [Support conservation as a climate solution: Volunteers and hosts for IHBC@COP26's Zoom 'Conservation Helpdesk+' still welcome, with guidance now out | IHBC NewsBlogs](#)

## **Modernising the IHBC: Single issue summary updates**

### Board – Lone Le Vay, IHBC Vice Chair

Section 19 of the Articles of Association detail the Boards constitution. It is the main decision making body of the institute, interacts with Council, Committee etc. It is made up of the main roles (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer etc) and up to 8 other members 3 of whom should be from each of the home nations (Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) and these trustees are elected at the AGM.

The Board has corporate responsibility for the institutes accounts and finances, good governance, general management and its legal operations. Within the board there needs to be knowledge and understanding of the sector, including national and local policy, practice in its various forms (public sector, private, urban, rural etc) what issues face the sector, technical skills including legal, information technology, communications and advocacy. Risk management a requirement for the institute and this also falls within the Boards remit.

### Council – Mike Brown, IHBC President

The aim is for a balanced and co-operative arrangement with between the Council and the Board, which is open, transparent and co-operative hence

keeping this meeting as open as possible to allow members to make their feelings known. There has been early discussion with the board and others to check evolution of the Council to make sure changes are along the right lines. Council also plays its part in reflecting members wishes, giving an opportunity for more involvement, training and talent spotting for succession planning.

#### Committees – David McDonald, IHBC Chair

The committees have had to adapt to the torrid times of the past 18 months but have managed to meet virtually and get through that particular learning curve to continue their work. It is hoped they will get back to some in person/hybrid meetings in due course. The 4 committees are Education, Training and Standards (ETS), Membership and Ethics(M&E), Policy and Communications with the former Finance and Resources committee now being included in the work of the Board under the new Articles. The work they do is as their names suggest each having their own remit although there are areas of overlap, for example the Toolbox and preparation of guidance although falling primarily under Policy also has input from ETS. M&E committee has overview of processes and assessments, but not of individual applications which is carried out by the assessors, it also looks at categories of membership and the potential for change in those. There is a lot going on and opportunities to get involved.

#### Branches – Fiona Newton, Operations Director

Branches are central to the IHBC's operations and integral to its success. They provide local CPD, career support, information, networking etc and do rely completely on volunteers to function. To help branches new and expanded guidance has recently been published and is on the website - [The Institute of Historic Building Conservation \(ihbc.org.uk\)](https://www.ihbc.org.uk), and covers a host of topics including a list of who branches can contact for different queries. Any feedback on the guidance would be very useful in helping the institute help you.

An important addition to this guidance is information on insurance. This includes and what might or might not be covered when branches arrange and event or site visit and the need for risk assessments. These events must be notified to the national office and if there are any queries these can be dealt with.

Following the difficulties experienced by many branches as a result of the pandemic special financial support is being made available to help and proactively support branches. This will be detailed in the forthcoming branch re-connection day scheduled for 11 November and which branch committees have been contacted directly about.

#### Working Groups – Sean O'Reilly, IHBC Director

These are a relatively new model of support and are intended to focus on particular issues, they are referred to in the Articles and so are formally recognised. For example a group on Diversity and Inclusion has been formed and is lead by Alice Ullathorne and in reaction to the COP26 climate change conference the institute aims to do podcasts and have a helpdesk. Anyone interested in helping with this later group please contact Sean O'Reilly ([director@ihbc.org.uk](mailto:director@ihbc.org.uk)).

#### Governance next stages – David McDonald, IHBC Chair

This can be dry subject! It has been an evolutionary process that has taken many years to get to this stage and has been a case of trying and testing formats before finalising changes. Now with the new Articles in place the next stage of discussions and decisions are underway for example looking at the skills and diversity of the existing board, how these can be developed and if there are gaps to fill. This is something other organisations are currently reviewing too as IHBC was invited to a meeting held by ICON around these issues. Developing the role of Council and branches is also part of this process. Under the new Articles there are options for delegation and devolved decision making, again this is something that will be tried and tested before fixing on a particular process. Mechanisms for dealing with any problems that arise from these delegated and devolved powers will be developed so that they would come back to the Board as the final decision making body.

There is a Governance Stage 2 Working Group that has been set up to take these things forward, as well as including key officers it has drawn on skills of members (Mark Douglas, Lynda Jubb and Rebecca Thompson) who have involvement at the top level of other professional bodies and can bring their knowledge and experience to these deliberations.

The potential timescale for bylaws to be ready for adoption/approval would be the 2022 AGM, but this depends on what progress can be made in the coming months.

### **From the floor: suggestions, opportunities, queries etc**

Question from Antony Garrett - could we consider adopting some national guidance on a method for describing where a proposal sits within the spectrum of less than substantial harm. We had the applicant, Historic England and ourselves all using different words for what was probably common ground and wasting time at appeal. Thanks.

Roy Lewis answered – This is certainly a contentious and tricky issue and applies to England only, the fact that policy guidance is inconsistent does not help. The policy suggests incremental stages of harm but that is not what the policy guidance says. At a seminar in the South West a couple of years ago Charles Mynors was put on the spot about the distinction between substantial and less than substantial and in a very diplomatic way he said the wording of the policy was not particularly helpful. This has been tested by case law (Bedford Case). It is not beholden on the institute to bail out the Government by trying to define this or creating a further level of guidance, better to lobby the Government about removing or at least clarifying its policy.

Sharon Kelly commented - This is particularly problematic as there is no definitive PPG or HEAM guidance on the matter. I try and stay clear from any arbitrary words which are not utilised in the NPPF. This ends up being an exercise in slicing and dicing the degree of harm. To conclude - harm is BAD and should be afforded and only where it is demonstrated as necessary and 'clearly and convincingly justified' then you attribute the degree of harm. This is also born out of recent case law (Whitechapel Bell Foundry) which seems to have

spearheaded a number of responses by Historic England to dice the harm further!

Mike Brown commented that interestingly Wales (and Scotland) didn't go down this route when preparing its policy and guidance, something that perhaps the English policy makers should have taken notice of. Rather than trying to define such things in policy it would perhaps have been better left to the expertise and discretion of the professionals on the ground.

Question from Mark Watson - COP26 Help desk: is there a rota for the helpers, and any timetable for subjects to be aired over that fortnight?

Sean O'Reilly answered – IHBC is looking to encourage involvement and support from partners (BEFS, STBA etc), and arrange times to be involved in the COP26 Helpdesk, which will have themes throughout the days. Mark is already working in partnership with SPAB and SPAB in Scotland. These threads are being pulled together with information being included in a recent NewsBlog - [Support conservation as a climate solution: Volunteers and hosts for IHBC@COP26's Zoom 'Conservation Helpdesk+' still welcome, with guidance now out | IHBC NewsBlogs](#), but please do get in touch if you would be interested.

Question by Stan Driver - Will the Board be elected by all full members, or by the Council? Will the Board be elected from members who have already had experience of the Council?

David McDonald and Sean O'Reilly answered – the Board members will be elected by accredited members (full and associate) via the AGM and this is written into the constitution. The Council will elect the President who is its de facto chair and has the right to attend the Board meetings as the Council's representative there.

Question by Rita Mullen - Is there a list of current working groups that volunteers can join, and where can one find it?

Sean O'Reilly answered – they are very few so far because they are informal, but now we have a constitutional structure for them via the new Articles. So far there are just the one mentioned previously lead by Alice Ullathrone on diversity and inclusion and the Governance Stage 2 Working Group. Another possible one is for churches and others that have moved on were for Islands and Harbours. As you can see it is very much a scattergun approach. David McDonald suggested the is of the existing and embryonic groups could be circulated, maybe as an appendix to the meeting minutes (see below).

Question by Emma Sharpe - Many Councils are pausing their pre-application services. There is concern that this may seriously affect conservation advice. Particularly with those Councils who sub-contract conservation out and its therefore difficult to seek LPA advice. What are IHBC's thoughts on this? Q2 - Also on this subject, some conservation teams are not undertaking site visits. There is significant concern around this especially when considering detailed LBC applications. Is there any good practice advice IHBC can provide?

Roy Lewis answered – the institute doesn't have a formal view or advice on both parts of your question. However personally he felt site visits are important to get a feel for the project and to see the full picture, that you don't quite get from photos or streetview etc. Pre-application advice can be very useful to get a general steer on a project, however with this being more formalised it is now less useful as conclusions are very guarded or noncommittal.

Crispin Edwards commented - should the institute put something out to the effect that site visits are important and should be allowed, for members to use when battling with superiors to be allowed to visit?

Mike Brown answered – In local government it seems that chief executives are very concerned with liability and putting staff at risk, hopefully this will ease in time. Pre-application advice is good in places, but this is a discretionary service and very often these will be first to go if there is pressure on meeting statutory duties.

Question from Paul Roddy - When considering individuals who already hold accreditation in conservation with their own institute, has IHBC got a set procedure for this category of people who wish to go from affiliate to full member? Thank you.

Fiona Newton answered – the institute welcomes applications from affiliates that have accreditation from other bodies. IHBC has a competence based assessment so no other circumstances other than the application can influence the assessors, accreditation with another body is not a consideration for assessment. Having said that accreditation with another body will help applicants in knowing their strengths.

Question from Adrian Neilson – are we going to try and achieve chartered status and could this be by way of joining the IFA?

Question from Michael Foley - Is the IHBC planning to offer chartered membership?

Mike Brown answered – the institute is on that journey working slowly by incremental levels but nothing is decided yet. Currently IHBC is working on stage 2 of governance evolution to produce bylaws, but we need to be very careful to make sure they are charter compliant. Whether the institute does apply for chartership down the line will ultimately be a decision for the membership, although personally he feels it would be a logical step in the institutes growing maturity. If an application for chartership is made it would have to go to the Privy Council which will scrutinise Articles, bylaws and regulations to ensure they are robust. When considering governance, the institute has been using the model for chartered organisations to ensure good governance and structures, so that should the membership decide that IHBC should apply for chartership we have the grounding in place.

With regards CIfA, there have been attempts in the past to suggest union of the two institutes but that has not found favour with IHBC. As an alternative the institute does work with CIfA via a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work on issues that are mutually important and for the wider sector and this also includes a reciprocal option for 1 year free taster membership and member rates



for events. There are regular meetings as part of the MoU to ensure that this is still on track and working for both organisations - [The Institute of Historic Building Conservation \(ihbc.org.uk\)](http://The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (ihbc.org.uk))

CPD certificates will be sent to attendees, we hope you have got something out of attending.

Notice of the 2022 Annual School from Mark Watson - Annual School 2022: Scotland branch hopes to see a good turn out of people in Aberdeen, not only online. To give confidence to hosts and fellow attendees it will be necessary to observe Scottish gov guidance (currently, wearing of masks indoors and on buses etc. soon to come a vaccine passport/ evidence of vaccination or recent infection status). Covid19 is not going away so I expect these rules in 2022 too, whatever UK government might wish to be the case. If there is a protest that this discriminates against anti-vaxxers I say that is absolutely what we require in the risk assessment in order to deliver the school.

MB thanked the speakers and everyone for their attendance and input, then closed the Council meeting at 3.30pm

## **Appendix to minutes**

IHBC Working Groups

<b>Group Name</b>	<b>Led by</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Diversity and Inclusion	Alice Ullathorne	alice.ullathorne@heritagelincolnshire.org
Governance Stage 2	David McDonald	chair@ihbc.org.uk
Finance	Jill Kerry	treasurer@ihbc.org.uk
Islands	Tom Hunter	
Harbours	Hilary Wyatt	
Churches	Yet to be confirmed	