

## Chairman's column

by Mandy St John Davey

At this time of year we celebrate the success of our National Student Awards and the talent of all those undergraduates who participated. What has become clear is that the Awards are not just about the winning.

The young women who have gone through the Awards process – the CVs, the judging panels, the networking, the feedback – have all benefited from the personal development and confidence-build that comes when we go outside our comfort zone. They learn this lesson very early on. Many of us don't actually have this experience until we are into our careers and perhaps learning the hard way. In short, this is about visibility. Nothing truly great ever happens in comfort zones and today our careers operate under very different rules. Improving one's visibility can be built up and, just like confidence, stretched. The more we stretch ourselves, the more confidence grows. So, how best to grow confidence and drop the invisibility cloak?

Practise visibility in a "safe environment" – offer to give presentations to colleagues in small meetings, learn to build your

expertise and be seen as the go-to person for help and support. Write blogs and articles then share, share, share – social media platforms are one of the biggest tools to becoming more visible, so ensure you are on twitter, Linked In or Instagram. Ask questions, it doesn't matter what stage of your career, you are never going to know all the answers and building knowledge builds confidence. Be curious, curiosity not only sends a message that you are ambitious and eager to learn. It also enables you to interact with more people, undoubtedly with opportunities arising. Go that extra mile – with each new project think of ways that you can take it to the next level. Suggest new ideas, new clients, and projects. And, while we're on the subject of celebrating, celebrate your achievements and acknowledge those successes no matter how big or small.



**Mandy St John Davey**  
Chairman of Women in Property

## The Best of the Best: Eunice wins the 2019 National Student Awards

Congratulations to Eunice John who was announced winner of this year's National Student Awards at the annual Best of Best Awards Dinner held in the elegant surroundings of Claridge's Ballroom. Eunice who is studying Architectural Technology at Leeds Beckett University won the top prize in the competition which seeks to find the industry's future stars. 137 students took part in the Awards this year, with 14 going through to the Final.

Eunice said, "I am so extremely grateful for the amazing opportunities and people that I have met as a result of this journey with Women in Property - it has been such an insightful and inspiring time and has made me more conscious and active about the future of my career and of those around me. Thank you to the organisation, all the sponsors, judges and Leeds Beckett University that made it possible with all their support."

Our thanks go to national sponsors Bouygues UK, Linden Homes and Savills for their longstanding support of these Awards.



Women in Property National Student Awards 2019 winner Eunice John with national sponsors L to R Carole Ditty Bouygues UK, Noel McGonigle Savills, Erica Bell Linden Homes and Mandy St John Davey National Chairman Women in Property

# The Student Awards Gallery

Members and guests from across the country came to Claridge's to honour this year's Awards finalists.



# The speeches

## From Gender Pay Gap to the "F\*\*\* Off Fund"



"All our nominees have one thing in common... they've worked bloomin' hard to get where they are today." **National Chairman, Mandy St John Davy's** introductory welcome at the 2019 National Student Awards Best of Best Dinner was greeted with an appreciative round of applause but she was soon reminding her audience of some hard facts.

"The last ONS stats showed that just 13% of construction industry jobs are held by women, who are paid on average 14% less than men doing the same job, 22% less for women in senior positions. 43% of organisations do not actively monitor pay equality. Women have been working in the built environment throughout history, they've just not been recognised for it.

"So, we can feel reassured hearing about the work Women in Property does but, quite frankly, it's not enough. We need every one of you here to make an active commitment to helping women in the industry."

Keynote speaker, **Claer Barrett, Personal Finance Editor at the FT**, has history with the Association, having attended a Women in Property Conference fifteen years ago and the inaugural Best of Best dinner in 2007 when she was a Property Week journalist. She recalled researching and publishing a feature on maternity leave, an 'exposé' that resulted in a journalism award for her investigative reporting, "...which mostly involved getting drunk with lots of women". That article was one of her proudest moments, matched only by earlier, teenage victory when she persuaded her School to back down from the banning of Dr Martens worn by the girls - "they're unfeminine and wear the carpets out" - but not the boys.

"Finance is a feminist issue. It's about the Gender Pay Gap, it's also about the Gender Pensions Gap for all those women earning less because they're working part-time or who have responsibility for children and elderly parents."

Claer shared a simple way of closing the gap: "Ask for a raise!"

She closed with some recommended reading, by US writer Paulette Perhach who advocates having a "F\*\*\* Off fund", in other words, enough money to leave a bad job or a failing relationship, prioritising saving over spending in the name of financial independence. Great advice, particularly for young women."

## How to be visible to prospective employers

Carole Ditty, Bouygues UK



We all recognise that it's a competitive market place, where academic achievement alone may not be enough to secure employment.

A lot of CVs come across my desk and I have been involved for several years in the Judging Days for the Women in Property Student Awards programme. How can industry entrants stand out from the crowd and make the right first impression? There's no magic formula but here are a few observations from my experience:

- I always look for something that stands out – someone who shows initiative and displays a proactive approach to increasing their life skills and experience:

- It's not what you know; it's who you know... Build and use network connections. Getting that foot in the door can be easier with these valuable supports:

- Interviewees should be engaging, eager to learn and show ambition, self-assured but not arrogant. Most importantly, be yourself!

I will always remember an interview I held a few years ago. The woman in front of me was confident, keen to progress her career, and yet humble in recognising she still had lots to learn. When I asked where she saw herself in her future career she told me she wanted my job! It wasn't a conceited response from someone with an excessive sense of entitlement. It was someone who was driven, determined and passionate about her career. She got the job and, as for her future career - watch this space...

# Managing Shared Parental Leave

Since 2015, under EU Law, parents/adopters can share up to 50 weeks' Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and 37 weeks' Shared Parental Pay. The Gov.UK website advises that "...You need to share the pay and leave in the first year after your child is born or placed with your family. You can use SPL to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work, or take it all in one go. You can also choose to be off work together or to stagger the leave and pay."



Rachael Sherratt,  
Vice Chairman of the  
South West branch

This sounds reasonable in principle but, in practice, how flexible is it really? **Rachael Sherratt, Vice Chairman of the South West branch** says that even if SPL had existed when her son was born six years ago, she and her husband could not have used it anyway.

"Kieran and I had supportive employers and we worked out a solution for us that allowed us both to work part time from the early days, flexing as our needs changed, thereby both maintaining a career path and also having time at home with our young family. Taking blocks of time - six weeks working full time, then six weeks at home full time would have been totally inefficient. Managing a routine for the children, or logistics like breastfeeding would have been difficult, not to mention how to get involved in work projects full-time, then disappearing for six weeks.

"I think it is great to encourage men to take more time off, this needs to become a societal norm. But the overriding consensus should be about supporting both parents to have a balance of home and work life, equally. In order to achieve this, they need to extend SPL so it can still be utilised if working part-time, rather than just in blocks."

**South East member, Natalie Mulholland**, had a very, had a very positive response from her employer. "My husband and I are both Managing Associates at Cripps Pemberton Greenish. In August 2018 we welcomed our first child, Henry. From the moment that our pregnancy was announced we opened discussions with the firm about making use of shared parental leave, a scheme that, until that point had not been utilised by any male employees of the firm.



South East member,  
Natalie Mulholland

We were pleased to be met with encouragement, advice and support from the outset and throughout the process.

For us, shared parental leave was the obvious choice. We both have an equal desire to succeed in our careers and a shared belief that raising a family should be an equal partnership.

I returned to work in June after 10 months maternity leave/ accrued holiday, with my husband taking the final three months.

From my perspective, shared parental leave enabled an earlier and smoother transition back to work. It alleviated a lot of the stresses often associated with a return from maternity leave and certainly aided in reducing the "mum guilt".

Not only did we take advantage of shared parental leave, the firm have been further accommodating in agreeing to us both working part-time, allowing me to have a more permanent presence in the office and maintain my client relationships. For us it has been refreshing to see that the legal sector can be forward thinking and flexible in its approach to maternity leave and child care.

**Shannon Conway, Vice Chairman of the North West branch** and her husband took a different approach when, in 2016, their daughter was born.

"When my husband and I told our employers we wanted to take Shared Parental Leave, neither had received such a request before. My husband took three months SPL (I took the remaining nine) and also applied for a three-month sabbatical to be tagged on to the end. The legislation allows the SPL to be used concurrently which would allow us to spend six months together.

So, with a four-month old baby in tow, we set off on an incredible six-month, motorhome tour of Europe. My husband enjoyed the time he spent with our daughter so much he put forward the notion of being a full-time dad and homemaker - an option we have embraced whole heartedly."



Shannon Conway,  
Vice Chairman of the  
North West branch

# Branch News



**Central Scotland** has been running a series based on Planning for that Promotion, a trilogy of events aimed at building confidence and skills. First was Financial Literacy when members were given a go-to guide on how to read a spreadsheet, terminology, responsibilities and what questions to ask in the boardroom. Session 2 is Building your Profile for bid preparation, guiding us on what to show, or not, on our bid profiles and CV's to give us an edge. The third session, Building your Network is aimed at teaching the confidence building skills needed to meet, greet, and make new connections in a networking situation. The trilogy will set the scene for 2020 when the branch will run a boardroom-specific series of events aimed at promoting women and encouraging them to take more board level positions.



**Branching out into the Highlands and Islands** Women in Property held its first event in Inverness on 5th September, attended by over 40 women from a wide range of disciplines. The Central Scotland branch, led by Samantha McCabe of Oberlanders Architects, organised the event to gauge interest in setting up a satellite branch to cover the Highlands & Islands.

Brenda Jones of Stornoway Port Authority and Chairman of Women in Property's Scotland Board spoke about the work of the Association and its relevance to women in the region: helping them to build a cross-discipline network,

being part of a national association and a giving them a voice.

Samantha appealed for volunteers to establish the new branch and explained the support that Central Scotland would provide. Eight women have now volunteered to join a local committee. So, the answer to the question of whether women in the Highland & Islands would like to be part of Women in Property is a definite "Yes!"



**The Northern Ireland satellite** joined Heron Bros for an exclusive tour around their £25m Andersonstown Leisure Centre project. Heron Bros is currently delivering the largest single capital contract ever let by Belfast City Council requiring concurrent delivery of 3 new leisure centres across Belfast. Guests were treated to an interesting talk by the project and sustainability team followed by a site tour.



**The North West branch** held a Members Session to seek their views on Wellbeing in the Workplace events over the next 12 months. The attendees discussed their personal experiences and put forward some great suggestions, which include a drop-in event to include 1-to-1s with a nutritionist, physio, chiropractor and dietician, a mindfulness walk, life coaching and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, yoga, First Aid training for mental health and managing the menopause. These ideas and others are being developed and will feature in the North West events calendar.

The inaugural Women in Property **South Wales** Netball Tournament, sponsored by Blake Morgan LLP, was held at the Sport Wales



National Centre in Cardiff to provide a fun team building and networking opportunity for women working in the property sector. A total of eight teams participated

including Powell Dobson, Hugh James, Bell Contracting, Eversheds, and Ince, with Cardiff based legal firm, LG Williams and Prichard, winning the trophy.



The third of the **South West** branch's soft skills workshop focussed on the topic of "challenging workplace conversations" and identified the following tips:

- Be clear about what you want from a conversation at the start.
- Be aware of the impact of body language, words and your tone – 55% of the effectiveness of our communication comes from body language and only 7% from the actual words spoken.
- BEEF (Behaviour, Examples, Effect, Future) – back up behaviour with specific examples and evidence, state the impact of this behaviour for the individual and what needs to happen going forward.
- When dealing with anger use the 3 P's – Pause, Pace and Probe. Pause for a second before you respond, slow your speech down slightly to show you are not responding emotionally and ask open questions to find out what is causing their aggression.
- BOOST – Feedback should be Balanced, Observed, Objective, Specific and Timely.

Thanks to Sarah Ward from Crisp Professional Development for running the workshops, Signature for sponsoring and Thrings LLP for hosting.

## Success stories

## Congratulations to all those who are moving onwards and upwards!



**Jo Bell**, a Finalist in the 2008 National Student Awards has been shortlisted for the 2019 UK Construction Week Role Models.



**Rachel Bell** of Stride Treglow and **Rachael Sherratt** of JLL were both recognised as RESI Trailblazers - the residential sector's rising stars - for this year's Property Week RESI Conference.



**Naomi Burrell** has been promoted to head of PR and Communications at Linden Homes, national sponsor of the National Student Awards. Naomi also recently took part in the Housebuilders Mountain Marathon Challenge, a 26-mile hike over two days across the Lake District, to raise money for the Youth Adventure Trust.



**Clare Day** has been promoted to Head of Real Estate Finance at Harrison Clark Rickerbys.



**Northern Ireland** branch Chairman, Eleanor Forrest Reid has been appointed Head of Health, Safety

& Environment for Northstone Materials, part of CRH plc.



**Rebecca Freeman**, a 2017 Student Awards national finalist, has been promoted to Quantity Surveyor with Linden Homes.



**Sasha Hinton** has been promoted to partner in the Property Disputes team at Womble Bond Dickinson, where she specialises in dispute resolution.



**Sarah Ifan**, South Wales Chairman in 2018, has been promoted to Associate for regeneration in the residential studio at Powell Dobson.



**Finola Ingham** has been awarded the EG Dealmaker Award for Bristol, for the 4th consecutive year. The competition is based on the number of commercial sales and lettings deals done.



**Louise Kirsten** has been appointed to the new post of Equality and Diversity Lead for the Natural and Built Environment at Sheffield Hallam University.



**Samantha McCabe** of Oberlanders has been promoted twice in less than a year, firstly to Associate in February and, in July, to Senior Associate.



**Kam Saini**, Midlands branch Chairman, has joined the newly formed planning consultancy, CarneySweeney Ltd, as Associate Director.



**Imogen Smazanovich** has joined SEGRO as a Project Manager.



**Ros Trotman**, Chairman of the South West branch appears in the Insider Media Property Power Top 50 of the most influential property people in the region, both for her role with Women in Property and in her professional capacity.

For further information on the Association contact Fiona Alfred OBE, Executive Director on 0207 603 4746 or email [executivedirector@womeninproperty.org.uk](mailto:executivedirector@womeninproperty.org.uk) [www.womeninproperty.org.uk](http://www.womeninproperty.org.uk) This edition of Women in Property News was compiled by Sue Maguire (Milestone PR 07739 403952) and designed by symonjames (07929 057891)