

# Chairman's column

by Mandy St John Davey

The start of a new year for so many might be a clean sheet, a brand new page to accelerate the successes of the previous year. As my tenure as National Chairman comes to an end I have reflected back on the year and my personal highlights.

Being elected as the first National Chairman from Wales, in Women in Property's thirty years, was one. Another, being invited onto the Board and expert panel of the Welsh Government's "Supporting Female Entrepreneurship in Wales".

I have seen the membership grow in what has been a difficult climate. The launch of a new satellite branch in Lancashire and Cumbria and a new satellite in Scotland, the Highlands and Islands, our profile continuing to grow throughout. The squeals of joy that echoed around the glittering ballroom at Claridge's as we announced our winning student, Eunice John, at this year's National Student Awards. Being part of a team that attended the APPG at Westminster, giving evidence on a paper we submitted on "Attracting and Retaining more Females into Construction" and attending the Institute of Economic Affairs, contributing

on behalf of Women in Property to the Gender Pay Gap Report.

Needless to say, the connections and contacts I have made have been of considerable value and I will continue to use these contacts to promote the organisation. However, this would not have been possible without team work and the support of the branch Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen around the regions who have shared my 360 vision and strived to filter it through their branches and make them the success they are. If there is a downside at all to my year it would be "so little time".

I would encourage you all to push yourselves out of your comfort zones, be more visible and use your voices wisely to support and encourage other women to achieve. Above all remember to always leave your ladder down.

Best wishes for a great new year all.



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

## We've got the power

Monica Green, incoming National Chairman



**Monica Green,**  
Director, The Partners Group

As incoming national Chairman, I firmly believe that the power to change behaviour and attitudes lies in our own hands.

Last year saw the ultimate girl power group, the Spice Girls, reunite and perform their sell-out Spice World tour, and one of the best-selling books this Christmas was The Book of Gutsy Women by Hillary and Chelsea Clinton. These are just two examples of women supporting other women.

In the property and construction sectors – and in business in general – we must encourage, support and mentor each other, in order to effect change. I joined Women in Property seven years ago because that's exactly what the organisation stands for and achieves, with the support of enlightened businesses within the industry.

I have taken on the national Chairman role because I believe there is still lots of work to do to challenge stereotypes, celebrate diversity, champion role models, embrace flexible working (amongst many other things) and achieve a more balanced workplace. Women in Property gives women in this industry a voice and the power to make change, and by working together we are even more powerful.

# It's a 'no brainer'

Sandi Rhys Jones



Recently I chaired a small panel discussion for Women in Property at the UK Construction Week exhibition, held at the NEC. The topic was to discuss how managing wellbeing can make a significant difference to people and businesses. On the panel were Shazad Ahmed, Social Value Manager from Bouygues, Steven Jenkins who is Leader of the Personal Injury Support Team at lawyers Irwin Mitchell and Kam Saini, Associate Director from planning consultancy CarneySweeney and Midlands Chairman of Women in Property.

It was clear from the start that the panel share a deep commitment to nurturing a healthy, happy workplace and it was very encouraging to hear how their own organisations are working to improve wellbeing. Irwin Mitchell has recently launched a wellbeing calendar and an Intranet-based Wellbeing Hub where key events such as World Mental Health Day are logged. Stress awareness weeks have been introduced, with subjects including alcohol management and work life balance. "We ran a survey asking what people want from mental health support and I was taken aback by how openly people shared their issues" said Steven Jenkins.

Bouygues is preparing the global launch of Harmony, its wellbeing strategy. Developed in France and now to be rolled out across 100 countries, the strategy combines the corporate and the individual. For example, it addresses

changing management attitude and behaviour and introducing firm rules for meetings to make them more efficient and productive. "We have also introduced an email management charter," explained Shazad. "This seeks to stop work correspondence at weekends, so the system literally asks the user 'Can't this wait until Monday?'"

While our panellists had different experiences and anecdotes, a number of important themes were common to all: encouraging trust, transparency and awareness of those around us. Kam Saini said, "I've always had a fully committed employer who has consistently supported flexible working, based on trust and balance. We always work on the basis of 'look at the problem and provide the solution'. If you prepare the ground, which includes managing client expectations, you will build trust," she says, neatly dealing with the familiar

response of those organisations who claim that flexibility is very difficult because clients demand 24/7 service.

The flexible working ethos is very important to so many people, whether it's to leave early to pick up the kids, get to the gym, care for an elderly parent or spend time in pro bono activity. One of the most time-consuming aspects of achieving this, which can be so important for wellbeing, is getting access to senior management and securing their buy-in. Overcoming the 'permission culture' was agreed to be an issue for many of us. Yet, even with senior buy-in in place, it was also agreed that, in fact, working flexibly can be a bigger issue with peers, particularly for those who haven't yet taken up the opportunity but might quietly resent their colleagues 'disappearing' early.

The conversation moved onto the importance of listening. "Taking time out for people is critical" said Kam. "Listening to them, ensuring they have the resources to do the job. Just ask someone if they're ok. Be aware. At home or at work, if one of us falls apart, there is a knock-on impact."

The discussion really hit the spot with our audience but one particular 'stand out' contribution came from Stuart Smith of Seddon Construction, who described an initiative – Jordan's Conversation - launched in memory of a young apprentice who tragically took his own life. Stuart explained, "Suicide is particularly high in the construction industry, made even more poignant to us when Jordan passed away. So Jordan's Conversation came about to get people talking about mental health. It was launched during International Mental Health Awareness Week in 2018, to help normalise the subject of mental health, let people know it's ok not to be ok and to make sure people know they can ask for help if they need it."

The subject of wellbeing in the workplace is complex but critical. Women in Property is keen to hear more about our members' experiences, advice and support so please get in touch with me at sandi@rhysjones.com.

## From Japanese canapes to Cuban Mostrador buffet, this was Christmas with Women in Property



# Introducing Women in Property's Advisory Board

In 2017 Women in Property established an Advisory Board to offer strategic guidance on the running of the Association. With members drawn from external organisations, as well as former National Chairmen and representatives from our branches, the thirteen strong group meets four times a year to discuss matters as diverse as profile/brand, membership, budget and strategy. We have also formed a Scotland Advisory Board, which will be profiled in the next newsletter.



**Fiona Alfred OBE** Observer Executive Director, Women in Property, leads the executive team in managing the business and its activities. Instrumental in liaising with Higher Education on the Student Awards and Outreach programmes, co-leads on Mentoring training.



**Rachel Bell** is an Architect and Business Development Director at Stride Treglown Architects. She has been a Women In Property member since 2006 and is a former South West Chairman.



**Candice Blackwood** is a Real Estate Partner at CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP, where she specialises in large scale real estate transactions, acting for private investors, developers and occupiers and the public sector. Candice is a former National Chairman and will chair the Advisory Board from March.



**Keith Clarke CBE** retired from WS Atkins in 2011 after leading the business to considerable growth. His current roles include Chairman of Forum for the Future and the Active Building Centre and Non-Executive Director of Sirius Minerals. He is also a Member of the Advisory Board, Environmental Change Institute, Oxford and a Director of Constructionarium.



**Julie Fawcett** is Head of Facilities Management for Marks & Spencer, a former National Chairman of Women in Property and an ambassador for the Chartered Management Institute.



**Brenda Jones** is Development Manager for Stornoway Port Authority, prior to which she was a director at WSP. She is a former National Chairman and Chairman of Women in Property's Scottish Board.



**Simon Marks** is Arcadis City Executive for Birmingham and the Midlands. He has led and delivered a range of projects across the public, private and infrastructure sectors and has a deep understanding of the housing and regeneration arena. Simon is a member of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Board.



**Hannah Richardson** is a Chartered Town Planner with Spawforths in Leeds, where she is part of the Senior Management Team. Hannah is a former Yorkshire & North East branch Chairman.



**Iestyn Roberts** has been Chief Executive of Freeport – a specialist outlet centre management company – since 2006. Prior to that he was Commercial Director at McArthur Glen and has held senior management positions at Barclays Bank, Sears plc and BHS plc.



**Lisa Jane Risk** is Estates Management Director for Transport for London, with more than 25 years' experience working client side for owners and occupiers of large complex portfolios. She is a former National Chairman of Women in Property and currently chairs the Advisory Board.



**Gail Robson** is a Chartered certified accountant with many years' corporate, property and hospitality sector experience. In addition, she is currently a Non-Executive Director of the British Volleyball Federation.



**Monique Royle** is a Registered Valuer and Director at Christie & Co. She is on the RICS Governing Council, prior to which she was Chairman of the RICS West Midlands Regional Board. Monique is a former Midlands branch Chairman and former National Chairman of Women in Property.



**Mandy St John Davey** is a property developer and professional mentor. She sits on the Welsh Government Board Expert Panel Supporting Entrepreneurial Women in Wales, is a former South Wales branch Chairman and is National Chairman of Women in Property 2019-20.



**Jo Williams** is a Chartered Surveyor and partner at Sanderson Weatherall based in Bristol. She has been a member since 2007, is a former South West branch Chairman and a former National Chairman.



Northern Scotland



Sheffield



Solent



South West



South Wales



Thames Valley



Yorkshire

## Success stories

Congratulations to these members who are flying high...



**Claire Beaumont**, an existing partner at Gorvins Solicitors, has been appointed co-head of commercial property in the firm.



**Rachel Bell** has been promoted to Board Director at Stride Treglown.



**Chloe Brownlee-Chapman** has been promoted to Regional Director at Wardell Armstrong LLP.



**Naomi Butler** has been promoted to Senior Associate at Thrings.



**Shannon Conway** has been appointed as Residential Director at Glenbrook Property.



**Natasha Cottell** has been promoted to Senior Business Development Manager at ISG.



**Kal Gill-Faci**, of Pledge and **Lindsay Fallon** of innov8 Development Solutions have



both been nominated for an Innovation award in the Northern Power Women Awards.



**Kirsty Gordon** has moved to CBRE to bolster the Rating team in Aberdeen.



**Michelle Kershaw**, former Chairman for the South East branch, has launched MKER Consulting, offering real estate advisory and legal services.

**Hannah Lloyd** has been promoted to Associate Director at GLM.



**Zoe Price**, has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer of ISG, sponsor of the Midlands Student Awards.



**Emma Richman**, has been named as one of Insider North West Magazine's Top Ten Property Disruptors of 2019.



**Ros Trotman** has been made Partner at Thrings.

## Growing food for community use



North West committee member, Kal Gill-Faci, ably assisted by her two children and her nephew's son, works her allotment and an additional half allotment for local charities. The "Plot for Poverty" grows fruit and vegetables exclusively for donation to the homeless and those in food poverty. With donations from other members at Humphrey Park Allotments, the plot produced enough for 500+ food parcels during the five-month growing period in 2019. Want to know more? Contact kalwant\_gill@hotmail.co.uk

## Branch News



**Central Scotland** has been working with Morrison Construction to inspire and excite second year pupils at Greenfaulds High School, Cumbernauld about the industry. Over a period of seven weeks, volunteers from major local businesses gave their time to tell the youngsters what they do and how they do it.

The young people learned how to 'think construction' with the ultimate aim of building a community hub, so thinking about the design, what needs to be included, what about the engineering, the environment, working out what materials are needed, managing the job and the huge importance of great team work.



It's been a busy first six months for **Lancashire and Cumbria** since their official launch in July 2019. The committee started its breakfast series, hosted by Kate Willard of Stobart Group, at Carlisle Airport, to be followed by talks from Cumbria LEP, Lancaster University and Story Construction, in the coming months. A recent site visit with Wardell Armstrong was very popular, so the 2020 focus will be on site visits and CPD style events, splitting them 50/50 across Cumbria and northern Lancashire. Members from across the branches are invited to do some Netwalking in the Lake District in April.



The **Midlands** branch annual dinner was held at the Hyatt in Birmingham, attended by over 120 members and guests and with a keynote speech from Victoria Brambini, managing director of Perfect Circle. Thanks to sponsor Pegasus Group.

**Northern Scotland** was delighted to be involved again in the Build-It Aberdeen Property and Construction conference, attended by over 150 delegates. The Northern Scotland Branch has been on the conference committee since its

inception and, with a focus on the promotion of diversity in the property and construction industry, many of the key messages and themes of the conference are aligned with Women in Property objectives.



The **Northern Scotland** branch took part in the Gender Balance in Construction conference held by The Robert Gordon University in collaboration with St. Margaret's School for Girls in Aberdeen. The event focused on women in construction and architecture and saw schoolgirls from Aberdeenshire join for a full day of workshops. Women in Property was there to provide inspiring presentations and support with the workshop and activities throughout the day.



The **North West** branch had an exclusive tour of Alderley Park, a development by Bruntwood SciTech. After a light breakfast there were talks from Nick Hynes, Development Director and Rachel Webster and Stevie Leigh of Fairhursts Design Group. The group was then given a guided tour with Jamie Bottomley, Head of Commercial, Alderley Park.



A lucky few from the **South East** branch were given a tour of Google's new HQ building, KGX1, at King's Cross, hosted by Lendlease. More than 4,500 employees are expected to work in the development which has been designed by Heatherwick Studio and Bjarke Ingels' practice, BIG. BDP is executive architect on the scheme.

The 11-storey building's width varies from 60m to the north to just 20m to the south over its 330m length. The building will run alongside the railway lines into and out of King's Cross station. Some of the cores are already up to the roof structure, which will house planting, trees, amenity space, a multi-use games area and 25m pool.

Joining forces with the Bristol Property Agents Association, the **South West** Branch organised its largest event of the year, the It's A Wrap Cocktail



Party, at the Bristol Harbour Hotel. 400 guests enjoyed an evening of indulgence and networking whilst allowing them to 'pick their favorite movie theme.' Thank you to sponsors Burston Cook, The PG Group, Stride Treglown and Fulkers Bailey Russell.



The **South West** branch and Bristol Housing Festival organised "Lessons Learnt from Modular Construction" at Simmons and Simmons. Panellists Ben Adams, Jez Sweetland, Rosie Toogood, Oona Goldsworthy and Mike De-Ath had a thought-provoking discussion on the challenges they have encountered in the delivery of modular construction, which must not be seen as a passing trend but a permanent solution that is here to stay.



**Solent** recently visited PMC Construction's East Street residential project, the second large scale PRS scheme in Southampton, which will include 132 high quality apartments. PMC were excellent hosts and did a first-rate job of the site tour, followed by a talk given by MLM Building Control which gave an insight into the changes in the sector, following Grenfell.



The **Thames Valley** branch hosted its first mentoring training session, run by Sandi Rhys Jones and kindly sponsored by Freeths LLP. Sandi facilitated an engaging discussion between attendees about career challenges and the role of mentors in helping us to overcome those hurdles.



Bat ecologist Faye Davies from Ecus in **Sheffield** led a guided bat walk through Millhouses Park. Using bat detectors, which turn the bats' echolocation into a sound that humans can hear, the group could hear the bats feeding on insects (up to 3,000 midges per evening!) and watched them flying over the river.