

Chair's column

by Rachel Bell, National Chair #StandTall

Where did 2021 go? I asked myself that a lot recently. For me, it was a year guided by my one word: courage. So how did that go down? It turns out I had to reach for this word many times - especially in the face of so much uncertainty. But then I counter-balance those feelings of uncertainty with thoughts of what we achieved, and it's truly remarkable.

We saw over 260 events bring our communities together across our regions - a heartfelt thanks to our regional committees and all our members for your hard work and passion. We stepped away from our desks and into summer, walking the Mediterranean coastline together for two brilliant charities - Women's Aid and Girls Out Loud - and laid the groundwork for a national golf tuition programme (starting this year!). The Stand Tall Podcast launched, sharing insights into the mindsets and habits of people who push away from their comfort zone - look out for the [latest episode](#) with Chris Brown of Igloo. Our Claridge's National Student Awards dinner returned, to host a new generation brimming with professionalism and positivity, and we saw progress in how businesses talk about and acknowledge both the

menopause and inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic.

There's still so much more to do but we can be proud of how we all summoned up the courage to weather the storms of the past year.

If 2021 was my year of courage, 2022 is my year of joy. I resolve to seek out the joy in my every day - in the little moments - and fully celebrate the joy of the big, stand tall moments.

Which brings me to next month, when, with a deep sense of pride and joy, I will hand over to our incoming National Chair, Nicola Jones. I wish you, Nicola and all our members the very best for 2022!

@Rachelj_Bell
#StandTall



Rachel Bell
National Chair of Women in Property

National Student Awards 2022 underway



As soon as the winner of the National Student Awards is announced in September, the process for the following year's programme whirrs into action. Awards coordinators seek nominations from Universities, sponsorships are agreed, nominations are received and processed for student candidates, industry professionals are invited to judge and judging panels organised. The first of the judging days have now been held and will continue through until early March, after which the branches organise their regional Awards events, in

May and June when we find out who the regional winners are. This year, we are hopeful these will all be in person. We are delighted that, this year, our two long standing national sponsors, Bouygues UK and Savills, have been joined by Amazon, who were South East regional sponsors in 2021, and tp bennett. We are extremely grateful to all of them, for their support. Thanks too, to all those who are putting so much time and energy into making the Awards happen and good luck to all our candidates - 116 to date.

Pride and prejudice

Nicola Jones, incoming National Chair and Senior Project Manager, Gleeds



I have the honour both of taking on the National Chair role on 1 March, and of picking up where Rachel Bell left off, a hard act to follow! Will this be the year that our lives start to return to normal, with Covid a shadow rather than a presence, flexible working a permanent and welcome reality and a little less of the "you're on mute"?

Over the past few years, the conversation has evolved and is now less about gender specifically, than about inclusion. To achieve diversity in an organisation, you have first to be inclusive. This has been the Women in Property ethos since its inception back in 1987 and our work continues with this at our core. In particular, I want to explore the meaning of prejudice, the preconceived ideas that still make it difficult for many people to break through the barriers, whether gender, race, disability or social mobility.

It's an interesting fact that where I come from – a former coal-

mining area in Wales – there remains to this day a different social structure. Women are higher up the foodchain in the household, based on the days when the men went off down the mines and the women were responsible for everything else. This engendered great respect, their position unquestioned, no prejudice but a great deal of pride. In my experience, this is true of my sector too; I am proud to have reached my senior role through a non-cognate route. I'm a mother and a grandmother. I have never experienced anything but respect from colleagues.

So, I have a mission to encourage this in the industry, irrespective of 'background'. There is still a long way to go to break down the little prejudices that creep into every working day, but I know Women in Property members will join me in doing their utmost to achieve diversity through inclusion. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the months ahead.

Executive Director Fiona Alfred OBE to step down after 25 years



It is impossible to talk about the ethos of Women in Property without referring to Fiona Alfred, who has been a driving force of the organisation for 25 years.

Although she has been planning to step down for some time, she stayed with us as we responded to the pandemic, helping to take our events online and continuing to support members during a difficult time. We are hugely grateful to Fiona for all her hard work and dedication to Women in Property over the past 25 years. Fiona is now handing over her responsibilities to members of the National Executive. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with Fiona at an event planned for later in the year.

Success stories

Congratulations to Women in Property members who are moving on and up, across the UK!



Kate Girling has been promoted to Associate Director at Rural Solutions



Hannah Lloyd has moved to Scottish Land and Estates as Business Development Manager



Finola Maguire, previously a graduate member, has joined Turley as Assistant Sustainability Consultant



Samantha McCabe, has been promoted to Director at Oberlanders



Helen Randerson has been promoted to Land Director, West Yorkshire at Gleeson



Sophie Smith of Spitfire Homes has been highly commended for the Housebuilder Star Award 2021



Clare Stokes has joined Whiterock Finance as Head of Property Finance.

Strategic thinking

Women in Property was the first group of its kind when it was launched back in 1987 and, over the years, has evolved and adjusted to the changing needs of our members and the business environment. Keeping the organisation relevant and dynamic is of the utmost importance.



To make sure we keep our eyes on the future we started exploring the way in which we operate, how we add value, what stands out as great and what could do with a change. This process started in mid-2020 when we conducted a member survey, followed by a strategic review of the Association during 2021. Response from members indicated the value of Women in Property for networking, personal development, mentoring, and the encouragement and retention of more women in the industry.

However, we are keen to constantly improve how we operate and deliver value to our members, so we have established four Task Forces. These groups, comprising volunteer members from across the national organisation and with members of the National Executive team, will deliver on the changes requested through the strategic review.

The Task Forces will cover:

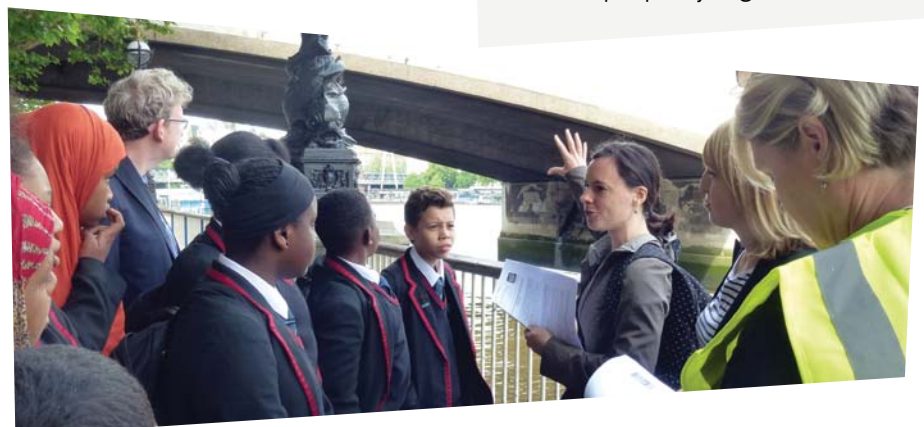
◆ **Business:** improving the administration and structure of the Association, the National Executive and the Branch Networks,

◆ **Membership:** creating a more flexible offering for businesses and individuals

◆ **Mentoring:** Developing the current programmes and processes

◆ **Student Awards:** updating the programme and Awards Dinner for 2022/23

The work of these groups has already started and, as it is developed and concluded over the next few months and beyond, we will share more information with you. The ethos of Women in Property will not change and our focus remains on delivering value and support to our members, whilst championing diversity and the role of women in the sector.



Partnerships and collaboration

Much of the work Women in Property does is based on teamwork and collaboration, from members coming together on our branch committees, volunteering for our Outreach activity or supporting the Mentoring programme. We are fortunate in that the membership is multi-discipline so we have an established network of professionals, all ready to offer support.

However, we also relish the opportunity to work with other organisations, drawing in valuable expertise and sharing experiences. Many of our branches run events in partnership with others, both virtual and in-person, we have a special discounted rate with Women on Boards, and always endeavour to secure discounts on conference rates for members.

All of this is part of our wider and ongoing commitment to inclusion. The more we can learn from our friends, colleagues and counterparts, the more we can give back. If you have any suggestions for partnerships and collaboration, please contact publicrelations@womeninproperty.org.uk

Celebrating the Festive Season

December was a whirlwind of festivity across the branches, with members and guests enjoying cocktails and mocktails, canapes and Christmas wreaths. From Devon & Cornwall to Northern Scotland, you entered into the spirit of things!



Branch News



The **Central Scotland** branch was *In Conversation With...* Nicola Barclay of Homes

for Scotland, who spoke about her career and the paths that led to her current position as Chief Executive, as she drives forward the housing agenda at a pivotal time for housing and the economy. The branch also hosted *An insight into the UK Space sector* with Gardiner & Theobald which is leading teams to deliver two of five proposed spaceports in Scotland. The discussion included the opportunities for property and construction, town and country planning and the challenges faced in delivering spaceports in the UK.



The **Midlands** and **North West** branches both launched Book Clubs last year, which are proving very popular. The Midlands group is currently reading *You've Reached Sam*

reached *Sam* by Dustin Thao while, for the North West, it's *What a Carve Up!* By Jonathan Coe. Look out for details of future Book Clubs on the events pages.



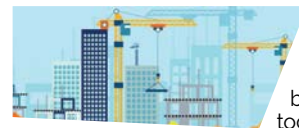
The **Northern Ireland** branch ran a three-part series of

webinars, *Visible Women: Connections – Sustainable Journeys*, featuring leaders from the built environment sector discussing place making and the importance of connectivity. The series was hosted by DWF and most recently included speakers from Translink.



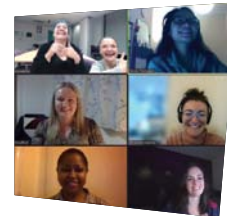
One of the benefits of Women in Property membership is access to

exclusive site visits. The **North West** branch recently organised a tour of the £324 million refurbishment of the Grade 1 listed Manchester Town Hall, due for completion in 2024. The careful repairs and interventions will bring the Alfred Waterhouse building up to modern access and safety standards and transform its visitor experience.



The **South East** and **South West** branches got together to

host a three part webinar series, *"Cladding Challenges: An Industry Perspective"*, when industry specialists gave advice on the Construction, Financial and Legal aspects of the cladding issue post-Grenfell, and discussed how the sector is adapting and navigating through the challenges. Thanks to our speakers, from **Blick Rothenburg, Burges Salmon, Chapman Taylor, JLL** and **Ramboll Group** who explained the practical challenges the industry is facing with retrofitting high-rise buildings, regulation and enforcement of building safety legislation and the financial support available and cost implications.



Members were given the opportunity to *Learn to Sign*, in a series organised by the **South West** branch with The Deaf Academy. The four-part educational series was run on Zoom

and featured an introduction to alphabets and terminologies.



Interested in playing golf?

Look out for details of a new partnership with *Women in Golf & Business* who run golf workshops and networking events, with the aim of bringing the wider benefits of golf to professional women, broadening their networks, while realising the internal benefits of the game increased focus, self-

confidence and overall wellbeing. Women in Property members will be offered 20% discount. Visit the [WIGB website](https://www.womeninproperty.org.uk) for information on the current schedule of events, with further venues around the UK coming soon.

Sinking House

Anyone who was watching the media around COP26 will no doubt remember *Sinking House*. Robert Delius, Head of Sustainability at Stride Treglown, created this striking installation, a visual symbol of the implications of climate change. He says,

"Our mission with *Sinking House* was to get a message across to people that we're in a climate emergency. Yes, climate change, net zero and sustainability are all such big

topics in the construction industry now and everyone's much more clued up than they were a few years ago. But, there's still a lot more awareness that we can share generally and we have a responsibility to do that.

I like that the installation itself was more art than architecture. Architects should be exploring how our work can embrace art more as a means of communication, to connect to people in a different way."

