

## Chair's column

by Chithra Marsh, National Chair

It's amazing what you can pack into a couple of months!

Since becoming National Chair on 1 March, I have had the privilege of welcoming many of you to our National Conference (lots more on that on the next couple of pages), I've enjoyed a virtual discussion with former Women in Property National Chairs Nicola Jones and Rachel Bell and National Vice Chair, Jennifer Winyard, for a webinar marking International Women's Day, joined an industry panel discussing a fair, inclusive and respectful built environment sector at UK Construction Week, met with the Scotland Board and attended the Central Scotland Annual Dinner.

All of this has been amazing and is very much about representing and celebrating the external face of Women in Property but I'd like to take this opportunity to recognise the people who do so much behind the scenes. Thank you to all our former Branch Chairs who did a stellar job last year and, with their committees,

have done so much to nurture and grow the membership.

And a warm welcome to the new Chairs who, like me, took on their roles from 1 March. This organisation is founded on the strength, professionalism and friendship of our members, in particular those who volunteer to take on committee roles, organise events, get involved in Schools Outreach, are Ambassadors for the Student Awards programme, become mentors and help keep our profile high in their regions. I know all this is done in addition to the day job, which can be challenging but, for the majority, it is also brings immense satisfaction and pride. I look forward to working with you this year and, for our wider membership, I very much hope to meet some of you in the coming months - if you'd like to contact me, do get in touch via [nationalchair@womeninproperty.org.uk](mailto:nationalchair@womeninproperty.org.uk)



## The first national conference for twenty years

Jo Williams, Conference Lead



Eighteen Months ago I got together with a few fellow members of the South West branch, to explore the potential for a national conference. Could we do it, would there be an appetite for it? We needn't have worried. The conference, held on 20th April in Bristol, was a resounding success and my thanks go to all who were involved in making it happen. Members came from across the country, to learn, engage and network and we were delighted

to welcome many non-members too. The comments we have received have been, almost without exception, positive and enthusiastic.

We are currently reviewing delegate feedback and will then finesse our plans for the next Property Conference. Our intention is to invite the Branches to 'pitch' for the opportunity to run it in their area so watch this space! Could you be involved in organising the next one?

# National Conference 2023

"My brain is buzzing!"...that was just one of the enthusiastic responses overheard as the day's sessions drew to a close. At the outset we wanted to ensure that the content had a natural flow, while taking delegates away from the more 'standard' conference subjects, so our speakers discussed topics ranging from designing inclusive public realm, to why people choose to live differently in different cultures, the role of leadership, and the value of mentoring. As one delegate said, "All the speakers were from parallel industries so were philosophically relevant and really interesting to property professionals."

Keynote speaker, **Jaya Chakrabarti MBE** engaged us from the start, introducing us to her city, Bristol, "...if Bristol were a woman she would be self-deprecating, non-conformist, she gives as good as she gets, but is warm and friendly". She went on to explain the ethos behind her business TISCreport.org, with its focus on transparency in supply



Jaya Chakrabarti MBE



chains, stating there is no good governance without transparency and that business must be a force for good, rather than adopting the tendency towards corporate bystanding and a wilful blindness to change. We can all drive forward change, rather than leaving it to others. Jaya left us with a few tips – find out what it is you care about, choose your battle, use your network (you don't have to be on your own) and be the 'mosquito in the room'.



Did you know that there are 1,500 monuments dedicated to animals in London and only 50 to women? In his talk exploring inclusion in the public realm, **Chris Stanton, Director of Landscape at BDP**, noted that statues are a useful tool to illustrate the lack of inclusivity in our public spaces, asking what form this representation takes and how do we respond to them? Public realm pressures all need to be choreographed into something attractive, useable and inclusive but first, we must set the right foundation





by finding out who the user groups are, particularly those who aren't represented. If their voices aren't heard, how will they be included? Using examples of projects BDP has worked on, Chris explained how barriers can be removed, reducing areas that can be 'territorialised', for example by groups of boys, allowing space to be occupied by more than one user group, while at the same time enhancing biodiversity, expanding green space and providing places to sit and speak.



Dr Camilla Morelli,

The majority of us had no detailed understanding of Social Anthropology until **Dr Camilla Morelli, Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Bristol** enlightened us. It is the discipline that examines how people in different places, and different parts of society, give meaning to the place in which they live. Camilla's work in the Amazon was the focus for her fascinating talk, as she explained how the people of the Matsigenka have a shared economy, nothing is entirely your own, you share everything with others, everyone has a right to ask for an item, and everyone is obliged to give it. A shared economy and shared living is entwined with a shared understanding of what a person is.



Chithra Marsh

Joining Camilla in the conversation, **Chithra Marsh, National Chair and Director at Buttress Architects**, described Social Anthropology as a 'lightbulb moment' for her, in her work as an architect. Everything we learn is based on western culture, all our decision making is based on a western capitalist system. How can different voices be included in the conversation, particularly those who might be underrepresented but are not



necessarily a minority in the area they live in? Social Anthropology is missing from Social Value. We need to try hard to include people in what we do, rather than modelling on one set of people and one set of values.

After a wonderful vegetarian buffet lunch, the afternoon sessions turned to our own personal development. **Business Psychologist, Caroline Gourlay** focused on the leadership role, noting that one has to get comfortable



Caroline Gourlay





with ambiguous situations, with no easy answers. Is it the right question, let alone the right answer? She explored whether it is ok not to want a leadership role and talked about the difference between technical and organisational leadership, the dangers of promoting the wrong people into management roles too soon and the impact of poor leadership. Notably, she referred to the power vacuum created by the 'absent leader' who physically occupies a leadership position but abdicates responsibility. Finally, Caroline gave us a couple of points for women leaders to look out for; firstly the one word that weakens our impact – "just" – "just a thought but..." and secondly, the 'glass cliff', an 'opportunity' that's probably impossible!



Many of us are familiar with the Women in Property Mentoring Programme but it was refreshing and moving to hear from **Cathy Stewart, Workplace Coach** and our own **Mentoring Consultant**. Cathy told us how, 20 years ago, she had felt isolated in her job but heard about Women in Property and realised this was the tribe she had been looking for. Although an architect, Cathy's role evolved through Women in Property and she has since trained



as a workplace coach. She explained the differences between a sponsor, a coach and a mentor and the different styles of mentoring, in particular cascade mentoring, when mentors and mentees "share the knowledge down the chain" passing on to others. Everyone has something to offer and the learnings from a good mentoring relationship last a lifetime, something that applies as much to the mentor as the mentee. Mentoring helps the art of delivering feedback and asking questions, developing leadership skills, paying it forward and taking delight in the success of mentees.



The day's session concluded with a Q&A panel discussion, expertly chaired by former National Chair Nicola Jones who skilfully encouraged further comment from the speakers.





## Conference Celebration Dinner



That evening, many of us got together again at the Conference Celebration Dinner, with reception drinks, live band and, the highlight, a keynote from **Sallyanne Short, former Olympian and Managing Director of contact centre and cloud technology business, Avaya.** Sallyanne's story reflects our own 'keywords' – aspire, succeed, inspire – which she did brilliantly with anecdotes of her time as an athlete, leading to the development of her career in STEM.

## Main take aways from the Conference day session?

**Our delegates said it all in their feedback:**

"How enjoyable the event was overall, the 'vibe' in the room on the day of the conference was wonderful"

"Supportive energy, collaborative rather than competitive"

"To think beyond the 'Western' construct and cultural norms; to give a voice to the underrepresented; to follow my aspirations. A wonderfully inspiring event."

## Make Space for Girls: Parkwatch



Make Space for Girls need your help! They campaign for parks and public spaces to be designed to include teenage girls – but at the moment there's a real shortage of data. It's pretty clear that teenage facilities in parks are dominated by boys and young men but there aren't any numbers which prove this. Which is where you come in.

They're asking people to go down to their local park for just five minutes over the late May Bank Holiday weekend and count who's active on the fenced pitches or cages, the skate park or the BMX track,

and how many of them are girls. Then input your answers on a simple web form. It's like the RSPB Great Garden Birdwatch only quicker, because it's a spot count.

With the data you collect, Make Space for Girls will be able to tell councils, developers and policy makers what's working for girls – and what isn't. Data which will in turn help them to create change and make parks and public spaces more inclusive for girls.

All the details and a set of FAQs are on their website: [makespaceforgirls.co.uk/parkwatch](https://makespaceforgirls.co.uk/parkwatch)

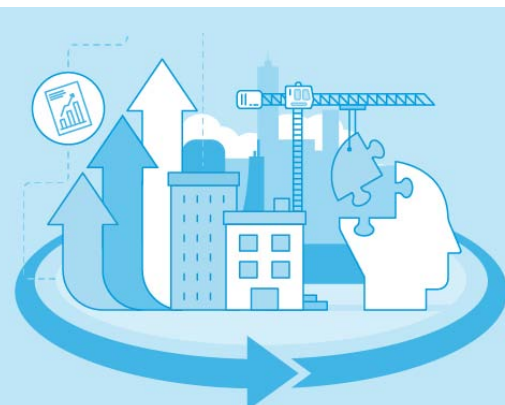
## Conference Site Studies

The 2023 Conference was fully CPD accredited, and the learning continued the following morning with a series of five Site Studies. Open to both non-attendees and delegates, the sites included one of the UK's most sustainable office buildings, Halo in Finzel's Reach (pictured), the Amazon fulfilment centre at Avonmouth, The Sheds at Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus, SAP 3 student accommodation at University of West of England and One Portwall Square, a new build office development. Our thanks to all the developers and consultant teams involved in showing us round.



## New research report reveals the extent of progress in D&I in real estate businesses

A recently published research report from RSM represents the views of over 200 real estate experts and pinpoints the challenges and opportunities UK real estate is facing. Headline findings include sector progress towards key people matters, and the investment and economic outlooks. On ESG it reveals that a fifth of commercial landlords will fall foul of new EPC rating deadlines in April 2023. [Click here to view the report.](#)





**Toni Riddiford**  
South West Branch Chair



**Karl Brown**  
Clarke Willmott

## The UK's first city-wide Property Inclusion Charter

The South West branch recently became the 88th signatory to the Bristol Property Inclusion Charter, founded by Karl Brown of Clarke Willmott in 2019, the first of its kind in the UK. Toni Riddiford, branch Chair, asked Karl to explain how the Charter evolved.

### **TR** Why the Charter?

**KB** Based on figures obtained from RICS in 2019, 97% of its membership in Bristol in 2019 (who declared their ethnicity to RICS) were white. The sector offers amazing career opportunities, and these should be available irrespective of someone's background. The Charter is a vehicle to help promote inclusion and diversity in the Bristol property industry.

### **TR** What are your objectives?

**KB** There are seven objectives including raising the aspirations of local entrants particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, setting and reporting on D&I business objectives, and encouraging suppliers and contractors to create an inclusive workforce. This is about having an industry that is reflective of 21st century Bristol.

### **TR** How did you get your signatories?

**KB** I had 16 founder signatories and, through encouragement and collaboration, word spread. This works really well from a regional perspective. It brings together key players in the region, they have local knowledge and intel and have real influence. It makes the whole situation very relevant.

### **TR** Do you think this is why it is so successful?

**KB** Yes, the Bristol Property Inclusion Charter is reflective of its location, it is representative of the local area and there is a real sense of pride and passion. It will only work if it is 'owned' by the local industry. It would be fantastic to see it replicated in other cities.

A great way to summarise is this quote, based on an African proverb, "If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together".

To find out more about the Charter, click [here](#).

## Networking through Netball



Each year in January, Women in Property Yorkshire & North East host an annual netball event at the English Institute of Sport, in Sheffield. The event was born out of an idea to focus on wellbeing and active events for members in the new year following the winter rush of networking, deadlines and home commitments.

It has grown each year and, now in its 6th year, 100 players attended. The branch has been heartened to hear that the annual event has led to some companies, individuals and teams taking up netball again in their local mid-week leagues. The positivity, friendly buzz and kindness displayed at the event demonstrates the power of the WiP network. Stories of this event helping members to reassess their work-life balance, is certainly something to shout about.



# Malawi - The warm heart of Africa



A group of ten women, have returned from a trip of a lifetime. The Women's Partnership Challenge is run by [Orbis Expeditions](#) and brings together like-minded people looking for adventure, plus that bit extra from their travels. These trips offer to challenge you both mentally and physically as well as rewarding you by staying in the most incredible places. In turn, the trip supports local tourism - trade not aid.

As the WhatsApp group from the 2023 trip buzzes again, ten ladies who didn't know each other at the start now have this shared experience.

They collaborated to create a programme of workshops for both business women and secondary school children in Malawi. They have shared lots of laughter and supported one another when the situations were

challenging, no more so than on the epic mountain hiking days. The group is bound together by this shared passion and experience across the recent trip. Rachel Bell, former National Chair, led this adventure and is happy to talk to anyone wanting to hear more. There are spaces available in November 2023 and Rachel hopes to return next year and lead another expedition.

## Success stories

**Congratulations to members across the country, who have moved onwards and upwards**



**Faye Durkin** has been appointed Head of Ecology and Natural Capital at Greengage Environmental



**Emma Jewson** has been promoted to Group Partner at Carter Jonas



**Chithra Marsh**, National Chair, has been promoted to Director of Buttress Architects



**Francesca Naddafi** has been promoted to Senior Architect at JPT Architects



**Helen Randerson**, Chair of the Yorkshire & North East branch, has been promoted to Group Partnerships Director at Gleeson



**Kira Swannell** who has been promoted to Investment Manager with social impact equity investor, Housing Growth Partnership (HGP).



**Aurora Tallon**, Chair of the Central Scotland branch, has joined the Scotland Construction Forum, working on the National Equity and Inclusion Plan for Scotland



**Sophie Thomas-Lacroix** has been promoted to Senior Architect at JPT Architects

## CPD success

Since we started running CPD events on 30th January this year, we have issued 600 CPD hours. This doesn't include the hours accrued at the National Conference, or four further CPD sessions to the end of May. Thanks to all involved!



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