

## Chair's column

by Emma Richman, National Chair

Our industry - our society - has been severely tested in recent years. A market crash, three recessions, Brexit, a devastating pandemic and now, arguably the most harmful of them all, a seismic shift in the global economic order.

Women in Property has never shrunk from challenges and, as an organisation, we are fitter and stronger now than we've ever been. We've done this by encouraging our members to support each other, share experiences and remember the importance of mutual trust and collaboration. And we have always aimed to deliver a service that will help our members flourish and grow.

It is in uncertain times like these when the benefits of membership really come into their own (more on this on page 2) and we are now looking to deliver even greater value. We will run more, exclusive member-only events. We

are improving our mentoring offer to give greater access to more of you. We would love you to raise your profile among fellow members and supporters through contributions for our blog page, in our newsletters, on social media and participating in our events and we will aim to give you first refusal on partnership and promotional opportunities. Remember, as members, you take priority.

If you have any thoughts or ideas you would like to share with me, on any of this, I'd be really pleased to hear from you, at [nationalchair@womeninproperty.org.uk](mailto:nationalchair@womeninproperty.org.uk).



**Emma Richman**  
National Chair of Women in Property

## #PIPbyWiP is back!



We're into one year and counting until the next People-Innovation-Place Summit hosted by Women in Property. To be held on 23rd April 2026 at the Lowry Hotel in Manchester, the focus will be firmly on all-things visionary, under the theme Inspiring Innovation.

Please head to page 6 for further details.

**National Student Awards** Sponsored by: **amazon**



# What do you value?

**Friendship, business development, CPD, great events at member-discounted prices in a warm, welcoming environment? Or the opportunity to 'give back' via our Schools Outreach programme, our very successful National Student Awards scheme, join the member-only Mentoring scheme or partner with us through your business? Everyone has a different reason for joining Women in Property, but we want to make sure that you really feel the benefit of your membership, so what is it that you value most?**

Long term members describe the relationships they have developed over the years, when business acquaintances whom they met at a WiP event, have become firm friends. They talk about community and collaboration, supporting each other through tough times and celebrating the good. And all against a backdrop of learning and discovery.

Did you know that, as members, you or your employer can advertise job opportunities on our Careers page at

a discounted rate, reaching a highly targeted audience? You can put your recent promotion or career move through for publication in the national newsletter, or submit an article or blog, for the newsletter or website, all of which are shared through our social media channels. And members receive early notification of events, before they become available to non-members.

As mentioned previously, we are looking to add more, exclusive member-only events, and we are

working to offer more mentoring places so more of you can take up this popular member benefit.

Remember, the more you put in, the more you get back, so we would really like to hear from you with your thoughts on what you like, what you don't like or how the member offer could be improved. This isn't a survey but a chance to feedback. You can do so [here](#) – your response can be anonymous if you prefer. Don't be shy.



## Why Member Only events?

While our wide range of events introduces attendees to an extensive choice and diverse audience, of all genders, we are proud to offer specially curated events for members only. These include workshops, speakers, sports competitions or exclusive site tours, and all with the benefit of networking, helping members to develop close relationships with other industry professionals.

A great example is the Easter Members Breakfast hosted recently by the North West branch at the





offices of AEW Architects in Central Manchester. National Chair, Emma Richman, brought together four speakers, each talking on very different subjects. Women in Property Board Director Siobhan Ryder, of Campbell Consult, gave a 'bitesize workshop' on preparing for bids, increasing the chances of winning, and obtaining proper feedback. Rebecca Sweeney and Lily Cassell of Real Estate Marketing Media, ran through brand identity, web design, slide decks and marketing strategy, and Lucy Hart from Sinclair Law, talked through her journey to owning and developing her own legal practice. A great way to learn, socialise and enjoy breakfast ahead of the working day!

## WiP Facts

- 539 events organised over last 12 months
- Approximately 14,000 event attendees
- 2,250 CPD hours issued
- 200 committee members across UK
- Eight Limited Board Directors (six Exec and two Non-Exec)
- 45,800+ followers on Linked In
- 142 students nominated for 2025 National Student Awards
- 62 Universities participating
- National committees for Outreach and Inclusion
- WiP People-Innovation-Place Summit #PIPbyWiP held every 18 months

## Thank you Candice

### On 1st June Candice Blackwood steps down as Chair of the Women in Property Limited Board.

Candice, a Real Estate Partner at CMS in London, has been a member of the South East branch since 1993. Over the years she has served as Events co-ordinator, South East Chair, National Chair and a mentor, four times.

Candice was invited to join the National Advisory Board (NAB) when it was set up in 2016, to help address the process of succession and future planning for the Association (with non-Executive Director input), becoming NAB Chair in 2019. In response to a full independent membership survey in 2020, it became apparent that organisational changes to the Association were needed. This led to NAB members leading four Work Groups with member volunteers to consult on a strategy review of the Association Business, Membership and USP, Student Awards and the Mentoring programme, which reported to the NSG in 2021.

Four Task Forces were then established in 2022 to deal with and implement the wide-ranging recommendations, including the transition of the NAB to the Company Board. Alongside her busy partnership commitments,

Candice became Board Chair to coordinate the three-year transition process and take WiP from an unincorporated association to a Company limited by guarantee.

There is a new Board Constitution embedded in the Company Memo and Articles. The Company now signs all contracts, has fit for purpose insurance, Money Laundering and GDPR arrangements, and an Executive Team with consultancy appointments. All Chair, NSG and Board appointments are advertised and subject to a transparent appointment process. The Mentoring and Student Awards programmes have also been updated with new coordinators. New Accountants have been appointed to assist with more regular accounts reporting, Corporation Tax and VAT returns, and the Company has an independent legal firm, as required.

We would like to thank Candice for her loyalty, commitment, patience and encouragement. Under her stewardship of the NAB and the first two years of the Company Board, she has guided and influenced the

Rachel Bell (L) and Candice Blackwood



future direction of the organisation, overseeing its growth and development, and steering the transition alongside a fantastic team of volunteers. We are delighted that she remains a member, mentor and firm advocate of Women in Property.

Rachel Bell, a director at Stride Treglown, will become Chair of the Women in Property Limited Board. Rachel is a former South West Branch Chair, was National Chair in 2021-22 and on the former National Advisory Board since 2018 transitioning onto the Company Board. Rachel has been fundamental in the redevelopment of the organisation. She was heavily involved in the Work Groups, the Task Forces and the revised strategy, working closely with Candice to form the new Company structure. Rachel will now be seeking to appoint a Vice Chair and grow the Limited Board further including greater regional representation at national level.

# Not in my name!

Emma Richman, National Chair



"I'm sure I'm not the only one who is angry and depressed in equal measure about what's going on in the US. Every time I hear a pronouncement from President Trump further denigrating diversity, equity and inclusion, my resolve is strengthened, as is my empathy for those impacted by his draconian measures.

In March the FT reported that more than 200 of America's largest companies have removed reference to DEI or related terms from their company reports, filed after Trump's election. Many have watered down or removed reference to DEI awards or initiatives. Reassuring

then that a survey undertaken by the Institute of Directors, again in March, found that "only 11% of respondents expect their organisations to scale down ED&I activities in the near future" but they cautioned that "some global employers will undoubtedly have to tread a difficult line between avoiding divergence with US counterparts and meeting the expectations of UK stakeholders."

I have heard examples of how some UK employees of US owned businesses are having to go under the radar with their DEI activity, for example avoiding noting down International Women's Day events on their

work calendar and downplaying initiatives that fall under the DEI umbrella.

So, we must rise above all this nonsense. For nearly 40 years WiP has been working towards an inclusive industry that celebrates diversity. We know great progress has been made and that society is a better place for it. We also trust those business leaders who have been championing DEI for many years, to hold fast and ensure their voice is the strongest, should their motives and aspirations be challenged."

## Let the NextGen inspire the OldGen

Sam McCabe, National Vice Chair



I am a RIBA accredited architect and Passive House designer where my career to date has focused, latterly as a Sustainability specialist. A slight change in direction now finds me working for a global engineering firm, leading on Sustainable Buildings in Scotland and Passive House across the UK. And I'm loving it. The enthusiasm among my colleagues to learn, share knowledge, and exchange ideas, at every level of seniority, is infectious.

This is also a refreshing change. In recent years I had experienced a massive knowledge gap among senior members of the construction industry on sustainability issues, and worse, a push from the industry to "just get on with it" and not to listen and learn from each other. In my opinion we need to put a financial value on the comfort of occupants and creating better spaces for us to be in. Surely COVID has given us that legacy at least? Nobody in this industry can pretend they aren't aware of environmental issues, of the need to 'build

in' sustainability at the beginning of a project, to seek out the very best in design principles from the outset, reducing materials and improving implementation, ensuring we are doing our utmost to mitigate against the impact of climate change.

You would think this knowledge would come as standard these days but, frankly, it's still too often a struggle to get the message across, in the face of budgets and bottom lines, and colleagues and clients some of whom cannot see past them.

But you can teach old dogs new tricks. We need to shift the standard Architectural voice and listen more to our younger architects and make sure they are being given airtime. Their more senior colleagues would benefit so much from the fantastic wealth of knowledge the 'new kids on the block' bring to the industry.

I know I'm making sweeping statements and that this unwillingness to learn

doesn't apply to everyone. But I do think the difference in appetite to learn, which I found to be such a positive contrast when I joined WSP, is based in the way in which Architecture is taught and practised. Architecture studios practice architecture. They will have specialisms but, ultimately, it's all about architecture. Multi-disciplinary businesses, which bring together people from different professional backgrounds and experiences, will naturally have a greater cross-fertilisation of ideas and opportunity to learn. Do we need to challenge the traditional architecture training regimen? Does it need a shake up? How can we give the younger generation the voice they need to train us, not just us train them?

Principal Architects, it doesn't have to be this way. Give the young people entering your business a voice, the chance to contribute at the earliest stage, with their new technology and brilliant ideas, and you will reap the dividends. You will retain phenomenal talent, your work will be cutting edge and you will be contributing to a more sustainable world.

# Why it's okay to 'Fvck Up'

(and feel like an imposter along the way)

Emily Coombes, Meeting Place



**According to a KPMG study, 75% of women in leadership have dealt with imposter syndrome, leading to increased stress, longer working hours and a reluctance to voice opinions.**

It's something many of us quietly carry, particularly as women in male-dominated industries like property and construction. As highlighted in a [blog I wrote for Meeting Place](#) on its IWD webinar, imposter syndrome can persist even in the face of clear success.

Nikki Davies, Meeting Place CEO, said: "Reframing those nerves as a positive rather than negative sign of what's to come can make all the difference."

To help us embrace this and inspire confidence in failure on the road to success, WiP South West is hosting an event this June with 'Fvck Up Nights Bristol'. Three speakers will share stories of professional failure with a refreshing shift in perspective – that mistakes are inevitable, and honesty helps dismantle the unrealistic

pressures we place on ourselves to always get it right.

As an industry built on problem-solving, acknowledging what went wrong is essential and ties into an often-overlooked theme in construction: emotional intelligence. Part of the [WiP Building Balance Survey](#) (led by Helen James) asked whether emotional intelligence is relevant in the construction industry. While technical skills form the backbone of the built environment, it cannot function properly without personal skills like self-awareness, empathy and communication. Emotional intelligence shapes how we lead, collaborate and bounce back, playing a major role in overcoming mental roadblocks like imposter syndrome.

A great example comes from South West Chair, Maddie Difazio-Wright. After speaking at the Women in Property National Student Awards Dinner at Claridge's – aligned with Jennifer Winyard's 2024 national theme of 'unlocking potential' – Maddie has been invited to speak at Ryder Architecture's conference and to the UK Ticketmaster team. These opportunities came because Jennifer believed in her, giving Maddie confidence to keep stepping forward, even though imposter syndrome still creeps in.

So, each time we feel like an imposter, it's important to remember progress isn't always comfortable – we must trust in our abilities, that we've earned our place in the room and know that even if things go wrong, it's okay to sometimes 'fvck up'.

Maddie Difazio-Wright speaking at the National Student Awards, Claridge's 2024





# Inspiring Innovation at the People Innovation Place Summit 2026

## #PIPbyWiP



People  
Innovation  
Place  
Summit  
Hosted by  
Women in Property



We're already looking forward to #PIPbyWiP, to be hosted by our North West branch at the iconic five-star Lowry Hotel, in Salford on 23rd April next year. If the quality and success of our first Summit, held in Edinburgh, is anything to go by, we know you will be guaranteed an eclectic mix of speakers, topics, workshops, site tours and social events.

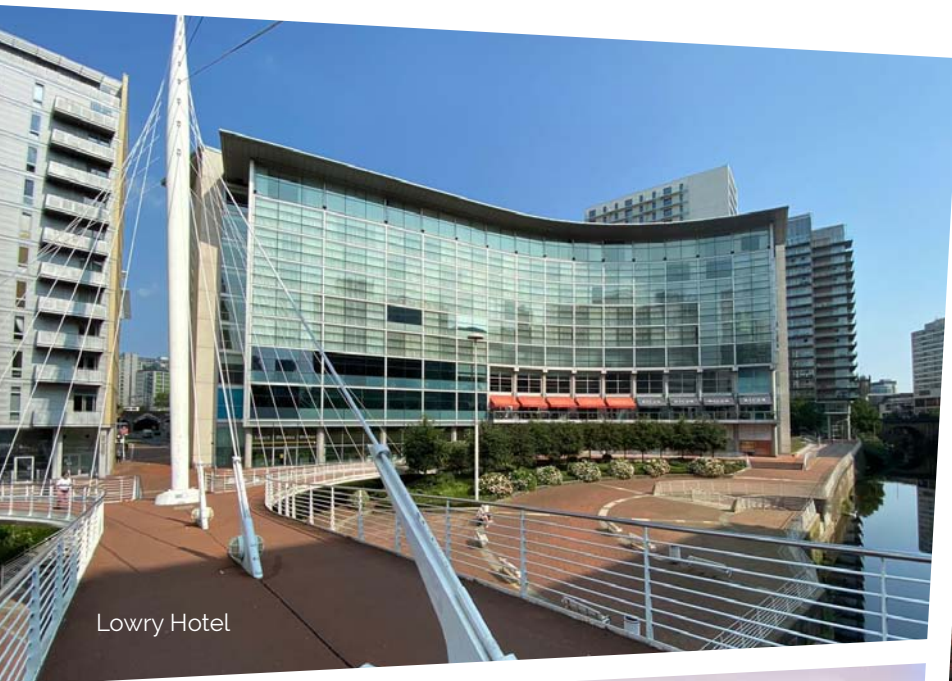
We are delighted to announce that three sponsors are returning to sponsor the Summit. Civic will this time take the Headline sponsorship, with SLR confirmed for one of the two Gold packages, and LUC will be sponsoring the Breakfast Reception, with more announcements coming soon.

Stephen O'Malley, CEO at Civic, said: "Women in Property is a positive force for inspiring change and creating opportunities, and as longstanding supporters of the network, it's a privilege to be the headline sponsor for the 2026 summit in Manchester, the city in which Civic was founded. The momentum Manchester has built over the last 20 years is remarkable, and we're proud to be part of it as system thinkers.

"Take the transformation of places like Mayfield Park and New Islington, which are just some of the many incredible achievements we've helped to deliver across the city that are setting the standard for progress, with so much

more to come. It's a fitting backdrop for a summit that will bring forward stories, drive innovation and build authentic relationships, all to advance the cause for a happier, healthier and more inclusive built environment."

Meanwhile, Team PIPNW will soon be revealing our Summit host, with speakers, panel topics and workshops all to follow over the coming months. Keep your eye on our [website](#) and social media for details and, to buy a ticket, visit our [Events Page](#). If you are interested in sponsoring the Summit, please contact Samantha Jones, Sponsorship Coordinator, at [samantha@knightknox.com](mailto:samantha@knightknox.com).



Lowry Hotel



Stephen O'Malley, CEO of Civic





# It's Student Awards Season

The regional Student Awards events begin this week, starting in the North West on 7th May and concluding in the Midlands on 23rd June. This year's programme, now in its 19th year, has seen 142 outstanding students nominated from 62 universities. The regional events serve as an excellent opportunity to acknowledge the exceptional talent emerging from universities across the UK, and to welcome these inspiring women into the industry. Employers, do consider offering a work placement or internship - you might find your future star.

At the conclusion of the regional events, 16 regional winners will progress to the


national final on 18th September, and the national winner will be announced that same evening at the Best of the Best Awards Dinner at Claridge's. The Awards are unique in the industry and the Best of the Best evening is very special so why not book a ticket or a table - it's a fabulous evening for both client and team hospitality!

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all our sponsors for their ongoing commitment and support. The Awards programme would not be possible without your contributions.

Special thanks go to our national sponsors: Amazon and Savills, as well as our regional sponsors: AtkinsRéalis, Avison Young, BakerHicks, e3p, GFW, HLM Architects, Hoare Lea, Hydrock now Stantec, Ryder, SEGRO, Stronachs, Tilbury Douglas, Vattenfall, and Willmott Dixon.

Your support is invaluable, and we look forward to celebrating with you throughout the season. We will feature the regional events and winners in our July newsletter.

## Central Scotland

 Tilbury Douglas

 AVISON  
YOUNG

 BakerHicks

## Midlands

 SEGRO

 WILLMOTT DIXON  
SINCE 1852

## South West

 VATTENFALL

 AtkinsRéalis

 Hydrock

now

 Stantec

## South Wales

 HOARE LEA

 HLM  
Architects

## North West

 e3p

## Northern Scotland

 Stronachs

 AtkinsRéalis

## Yorkshire & NE

 GFW

 Ryder



# Come and work on the National Student Awards

We're on the lookout for a brilliant Facilitator to support the delivery of the Women in Property National Student Awards 2026 – a highly acclaimed programme that's been championing the next generation of women in the built environment for nearly two decades. If you're super organised, passionate about gender balance in the property and construction industry, and want to be part of a friendly, committed team this could be your perfect role.

## What's it all about?

The National Student Awards have been running since 2007, helping to bridge the gap between academia and the workplace, and giving young women a platform to shine. It's the only programme of its kind in the sector – and it's thriving. So far, over 1,600 students have taken part, with 142

students from 62 universities nominated in 2025 alone. Just 14 finalists make it through to the National Final.

## What's the role?

As Facilitator, you'll be a key part of the Awards team, overseeing the interview days to ensure a level playing field across the UK. You'll work closely with our Awards Administrator and Regional

Ambassadors to make sure the process runs smoothly.

This is a part-time role with a particularly busy spell during the student interviews stage. While most of the job is remote, you'll need to travel across the UK to attend interview days (travel expenses are, of course, covered). Start date: Monday 6th October 2025. Want to know more? Full details [here](#). **Please note the closing date 30th May.**



2024 national judging panel



# Branch News



## Central Scotland

The Central Scotland branch hosted its sold-out annual dinner on the 7th March, the day before International Women's Day. The event, hosted at the National Museum of

Scotland, was a fitting celebration of women in the industry and in particular our members and their organisations. We are delighted to announce that the event raised over £16,500 for the branch's charity partner, Children First, which will allow the charity to continue to protect and support Scotland's children from abuse, trauma and poverty.

## Midlands



The branch hosted a very successful Mama's Breakfast, the first in a series of events focussing on those on maternity leave and working mums. There were lots of first time WiP event attendees and others who joined WiP while on Mat leave.

Andrew Bushell of MEPC Ltd hosted an exclusive members-only site tour of The Octagon. The group took a look around the tallest and newest building in Birmingham, which is also the world's first purely octagonal high rise residential building, due for handover in August.

Looking ahead, the Midlands branch Annual Dinner will again be held at the beautiful Grand Hotel in Birmingham, on Thursday 23rd October. Make sure you save the date – tickets will be available soon.

## North West

Women in Property NW partnered with Parul Singh to explore Neurodiversity with an excellent CPD accredited workshop "Exploring Neurodiversity" led by inclusion ambassador Catalina



Ionita. The branch also held an engaging panel event, "What's next for Manchester's Inclusive Growth?" with Becca Heron, Angela Harrington, Chithra Marsh and Naomi Willoughby-Foster, hearing from them

about updates on the future of Manchester's inclusive growth. Thanks to Sedulo who kindly hosted the event.

The Liverpool Event Hub organised a wonderful speed networking event. It was a great way to get to know everybody in the room, with one guest commenting, "It was a fantastic opportunity to engage in conversations with architects, interior architects, consultants, planners and solicitors.... Highlighted the

importance of cross-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration in the built environment"

Tickets will be available soon for the North West branch Annual Dinner, one of the most popular events on the industry calendar. To be held at the Victoria Warehouse in Manchester, make sure you save the date – Thursday 9th October.



## South East

WiP South East with the Chartered Surveyors Company organised a trip to Twickenham for the nail-biting final game in the 2025 Women's Six Nations (W6N). What a

great day full of excitement, networking and good rugby, with the Red Roses victorious over Les Bleues winning by one point 43-42 to take the Grand Slam and the W6N tournament. All had a great day culminating in networking, building new connections and enjoying delicious curry.



In late March, a networking drinks event was held at The Blade in Reading as part of our initiative to expand the Thames Valley Event Hub's presence beyond Oxford and further along

the Thames Valley corridor. The event was well-attended, with a strong turnout of enthusiastic new faces, and we look forward to welcoming new members in the coming months. We're also pleased to announce that Gemma Cole of Knights has joined the Thames Valley Committee. Gemma will be supporting the planning and delivery of events in the Reading area as we continue to grow our regional network.



## South West

In celebration of International Women's Day 2025, WiP held a 'Sweatworking' session. The event was guided by the inspiring female coaches of Empire Fighting

Chance, a Bristol charity that uses boxing as a tool for personal development and empowerment, and £960 was raised by WiP to support the organisation. The day concluded at Extract Coffee Roasters, where participants heard the coaches' powerful personal stories and enjoyed the limited-edition 'Betty Espresso 2025' – a Madremonite coffee supporting women farmers in Huila, Colombia.

The branch held a sold out virtual event, introducing the Fitwel® Certification Scheme operated by The Centre for Active Design, which focuses on healthy buildings, (new or existing). Fitwel® has a vision for a healthier future where every building is certified to support the well-being of its occupants and support healthy communities. The certification process is affordable and easy, aiming to add value, risk mitigation and ESG reporting. The event was led by WiP SW Committee Member George Taylor, a Fitwel® Ambassador working at Hydrock now Stantec - regional sponsors include Atkins Realis, Hydrock now Stantec and Vattenfall.

# Success Stories

Congratulations to the following members, all of whom are flying high!



**Emily Bates** has been promoted to Senior Planner at Calton Planning & Development and NJL Consulting, where she works in a hybrid role across both companies



**Lilli Marshall** has been promoted to Marketing & Business Development Manager at GLM



**Katie Corbett** (SW Inclusion Champion) has started a new role as Social Value & EDI Manager at Bray & Slaughter



**Sam McCabe** has joined WSP as Passive House Lead UK | Sustainable Buildings Lead Scotland and has been appointed National Vice Chair of Women in Property



**Shannon Conway** of Picture This, **Stephanie Cox** of E3P and **Rachael Cunliffe** of Engage5 have all been nominated for the Sunday Express Female Property Champion of the Year



**Kat McMaster** has been promoted to Associate at Enabl in the Planning team



**Julie O'Rourke** has been promoted to Senior Planner within the South West and Wales Team at Stantec



**Katie Gregory** Katie Gregory from Lambert Smith Hampton, ran the Stratford Half Marathon in memory of her treasured family friend. She achieved a personal best of 1:56:37 and raised over £600 for Sobell House Hospice



**Eilidh Robertson** was promoted to Director at Lindsay's



**Sam Johnson** of SES Engineering Services has been shortlisted for the Women in Construction & Engineering Awards



**Marie Skuce** has reached her 10-year milestone working as Managing Consultant with Beach Baker



**Kezia Smart**, Midlands branch Chair, is now a member of the RICS West Midlands Board



**Jillian Love** has joined Kier as Submissions Manager



**George Taylor** was promoted to Associate Sustainability Consultant at Hydrock now Stantec