

Chair's column

by Emma Richman, National Chair

Where did the last year go? I can't be the only one who asks this every January! For me, it was a brilliant year when, as National Chair, I visited our branches and met so many of you, in particular the fabulous committees who are the backbone of this organisation.

We say thank you to the 2025 Branch Chairs in this edition, but I would also like to acknowledge the commitment, enthusiasm and ingenuity of all our committee members – over 200 in total – who work so hard to bring us the diverse range of events we all enjoy. It is in coming together on those occasions, that we really feel the benefit of being part of WiP, the camaraderie, friendship, personal and professional development.

Last year, these events included netwalking, member-only site tours, mentoring, CPD workshops, panel discussions, golf coaching, annual dinners, industry partnerships, and good old-fashioned face-to-face networking. I have no doubt that there will be plenty more like this over the next year, so keep an eye on the Events pages for details in your area

and further afield. Remember that your membership entitles you to go to events across the country, great if you're away on business and want to meet fellow members elsewhere.

My personal highlights include the National Student Awards Best of the Best Dinner at Claridge's, the incredible North West Annual Dinner which I was proud to help organise, this time there were over 500 guests. I also loved joining the South Wales branch for their Christmas lunch and the Brighton Hub's Christmas Drinks.

I now have less than two months before my tenure comes to an end, when I hand over to Sam McCabe who becomes National Chair on 1st March. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for being part of this



Emma Richman
National Chair of Women in Property

amazing organisation. Together we still have much work to do, stories to share and barriers to break down, to ensure we achieve balance and equity in this industry. Wishing you all a happy and peaceful 2026.



**People
Innovation
Place
Summit**

Hosted by
Women in Property



**The Lowry Hotel, Salford,
Thursday 23rd April. To book, visit [events](#).**

#PIPbyWiP

Introducing your 2026-27 National Chair, Samantha McCabe

From 1st March Women in Property will have a new National Chair, Samantha McCabe. Sam, a former Central Scotland Chair, will take on the role from Emma Richman.



Sam, an Australian, lives in Edinburgh which she adopted as her home 13 years ago, and where she now lives with her family. Awarded Bachelor of Architecture and Bachelor of the Built Environment from Queensland University of Technology, Sam went on to practice Architecture and Sustainability Consulting, previously with Edinburgh-based Oberlanders Architects, before moving to WSP as Passive House Lead UK and Sustainable Buildings Lead Scotland.

Hardly surprising then, with this background, that Sam is passionate about building better and smarter. She says, "This industry is amazing in

so many ways, but it still has something of a silo mentality when it comes to how we go about implementing design and construction. I will be talking about this a lot more through my year as National Chair, under my theme 'Building more with less'. We have a fantastic multi-disciplinary network, which is a real USP for Women in Property, so let's see a cross-fertilisation of ideas."

Supporting Sam will be her National Vice Chair, Charlotte Bayliss, who also takes on the role on 1st March. Charlotte is a former Midlands branch Chair, and is Associate Director of Deloitte Legal, in Birmingham where she specialises in advising investors



on acquisitions, disposals, re-financing, development schemes, strategic land transactions and property management matters relating to their portfolios.

Together Sam, Charlotte and Emma will form the National Team overseeing Women in Property across the UK.

Meet our Branch Chairs 2026

On 1st March we welcome our new Branch Chairs, who will lead their committees over the following twelve months.

They take over from the 2025 cohort, who have done a fabulous job. Our thanks go to **Laura McGuigan (Central**

Scotland), Kezia Smart (Midlands), Stephanie Cox (North West), Caroline Allen (South East). Donna Griffiths

(South Wales), Maddie Difazio-Wright (South West) and Zoe Murphy (Yorkshire & North East).





**People
Innovation
Place
Summit**

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Women in Property



Join us at the Summit

#PIPbyWiP

Block out your diary. Book your delegate place! The People-Innovation-Place Summit returns on 23rd April, this time at the Lowry Hotel, in Salford and we're looking forward to seeing you there.

Delegates from all over the country - members and non-members alike and of all genders - will come together for this, Women in Property's third national conference. Hosted by the North West branch, the Summit follows the theme Inspiring Innovation. And we know you'll be inspired!

The PIP team have got everything covered from content to site visits, networking to catering and marketing, all in close collaboration with the National team.

What's in it for you?

Lots to learn and all CPD-accredited.

Engaging speakers, inspiring presentations, challenging discussions.

The latest thinking on emerging issues from industry professionals.

Ample networking opportunities, for social and business development.

Panels, workshops and walking tours

On 23rd the Summit explores the theme 'Inspiring innovation', with a great line-up of panels and workshops, all CPD accredited. We have already secured some fabulous panellists, with more to come. Here is an outline but keep an eye on the website for further details.



Our Host

Dr Ria Meera Munshi

Our host Ria is passionate about inspiring and celebrating cultural fusion, identity, and heritage, together with innovative entrepreneurship.

Morning Sessions:

Working in Harmony: Innovating for Dignity, Difference and Nature

Panel led by CIVIC

This panel explores innovation in its broadest and most impactful sense — not as new technology alone, but as a fundamental shift in how we design, deliver, manage and care for places. It asks how innovation can help us move beyond static, one-size-fits-all environments towards places that are adaptive, inclusive and resilient over time.

Cultivating Inclusive and Green Transport

Presentation from Susan Leadbetter of WSP (Gender Inclusive Design team – National Lead)

Transport is foundational to creating thriving communities, but too often it is not designed to work for everyone. Women's experiences, in particular, continue to expose persistent shortcomings in how inclusive our transport systems really are.

PLACED

with Jo Harrop, Director

Joining us at the Summit is PLACED, champions of innovative engagement working with the faces of the future. PLACED will deliver an inspiring morning presentation, followed by an interactive afternoon workshop exploring how innovative design can be placed directly into the hands of the next generation.

Afternoon breakout sessions

In the afternoon delegates have the opportunity to join two out of a choice of three workshops, or a walking tour.



Coaching with Anne Hughes

Creating a culture of innovation by empowering your colleagues to voice their ideas. This workshop will provide you with the tools and techniques to embrace a challenger mindset and welcome challenge as a force for good, foster multi-generational collaboration to stay ahead of your competitors and spark innovation to build a more efficient and profitable business and a happier engaged workforce.



Design Charette

with Dr Catalina Ionita of Champman Taylor and Katie Rudin of Akerlof



An interactive workshop with a design brief to reimagine a well-known place. During the workshop, participants will reimagine a familiar location through a fresh and future-focused lens, exploring how innovation, creativity and design can reshape a city, challenging assumptions about what the City is today and what it could become in the future, whilst considering social cultural and environmental impacts in placemaking.



PLACED

An interactive afternoon workshop exploring how innovative design can be placed directly into the hands of the next generation.



CyanLines

An opportunity to walk a section of CyanLines, the bold plan to link and transform Manchester and Salford's green and blue spaces to enable residents and visitors to enjoy, understand and better connect with nature and each other by connecting existing and proposed linear parks, green corridors and traffic-free walking or cycling routes and, where needed, bridge gaps by building new connections across Manchester and Salford city centres.



The Networking

The #PIPbyWiP Summit attracts members and non-members from across the country so you'll meet new contacts and make new friends, as well as catching up with people you've maybe not seen for a while.

The night before: On Wednesday 22nd April we partner with Insider Media at their Spring Social, hosted at Campfield, a recently regenerated historic landmark, now a unique campus that drives regional regeneration, business growth and workforce development. This is a great opportunity for those who are travelling from afar to mingle, meet old friends and make new connections.

During the Summit: As well as meeting over breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea, you can get together when the main Summit closes for a drinks reception kindly sponsored by WSP. And, from 7pm we are arranging a series of Fringe 'socials', as well as Fringe sessions on Friday 24th April. You can expect a Run club on the morning of the Summit, Rum tasting and Sip and Paint after the Summit and a tour of Sister, a Next Gen panel and an Invisible Cities walking tour on Friday morning, rounding off the Summit experience.

Getting there: We're compiling a guide to accommodation and transport. This will be available via the website soon.



Thank you to our sponsors

We celebrate our sponsors who are demonstrating their commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion through their support of Women in Property. Thank you!

Headline sponsor

CIVIC

Gold sponsor

SLR

Breakfast Reception

LUC

Drinks Reception

WSP

Remaining sponsorship opportunities – don't miss out!

The People-Innovation-Place Summit provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase your brand and products to conference attendees. We still have sponsorships available, as well as exhibition stand opportunities. If you'd like to hear more, please contact samantha@knightknox.com

Quality spaces: prioritising people in our climate response

Leah Stuart, director of Civic's North Studio



Inclusivity is critical as we redefine our towns and cities. Climate change impacts everyone, but societal inequalities mean more vulnerable groups face disproportionate risks.

Women, minority communities and older people often experience greater exposure to climate-related threats like flooding, due to caregiving responsibilities or lower incomes that limit their adaptive capacity.

As we build climate resilience, we must design our built environment and transport systems with these realities front of mind.

Delivering climate commitments fairly

Tackling climate change is now a national investment priority. In Yorkshire, where I lead Civic's Leeds studio, the Mayor of West Yorkshire and regional leaders declared a climate emergency setting an ambitious Net Zero target for 2038 - ahead of national timelines.

West Yorkshire's decarbonisation strategy is extensive, and such significant infrastructure investment offers opportunities to deliver a just, equitable future. Central to this is adopting inclusive approaches to public spaces and transport while ensuring climate responsiveness.

Creating well-lit walkable pathways, open gathering spaces, and safe cycling routes improves accessibility and safety for everyone. Stretford Kingsway in Greater Manchester is a brilliant example. We were lead designers on the project to transform a four-lane, vehicle-dominated dual carriageway into a people-first, green street. The scheme provides wide surface level pedestrian crossings to replace dark subways which were accessed by awkward stepped ramps.

Crossing the road is now significantly safer, easier and specifically benefits those people relying on wheelchairs or pushing buggies, as well as women and others who reported feeling unsafe in the underpass.

New planting and play features bring fun, beauty and interest, as well as introducing nature and managing local flooding. These more attractive physical connections between the town centre and surrounding residential communities will benefit local businesses because the experience of

walking and cycling to the shops is now more attractive. We know this because, since opening in 2024, the number of cyclists using this route has increased by 725%. The scheme has gone on to win multiple awards for its positive impact on the community.

Community-led solutions

Stretford Kingsway shows how improving routes for shorter micro-journeys can deliver social, economic and environmental benefits. But these can be delivered on a smaller scale too, and in schemes instigated, designed and delivered by communities. In Manningham, Bradford, teenage girls from Hollings Youth Association are collaborating with social enterprise Street Space to create safer snickets - an excellent example of community engagement in action.

However, we must do more to embed personal safety and inclusivity into transport network design. Bus routes should accommodate school runs, and winter gritting must be extended to pavements to ensure people can walk and wheel in all weathers.

Asking thoughtful questions, deconstructing barriers and genuinely exploring accessibility, safety, and inclusivity are key to ensuring sustainable transport becomes the natural first choice and everyone feels safe enjoying outdoor spaces.

By integrating climate action with social equity, we create stronger communities prepared for the challenges ahead.



Conference Season

The Autumn was a busy season for conferences, with National Chair Emma Richman and former National Chair, Chithra Marsh, out and about representing Women in Property at key industry events.

Emma, a housing specialist, spoke on panels at UK Construction Week, the Social Housing Conference, National Housing Federation Audit and Risk Conference and the Homes Conference in London, as well as taking part on an Inside Housing Magazine Round Table, Repair, Regenerate, Replace and RIBA JEDI talk on the Government's 1.5 million homes target.

Meanwhile, Chithra spoke on three different panels at London Build Expo, held at Olympia, covering topics ranging from Social Value to retaining talent. Women in Property is a partner with UK Construction Week and London Build Expo.



UKREiif 2026



WiP is returning to UKREiif in 2026, with our popular official fringe breakfast panel, kindly sponsored by RSM. This will again be held at Harvey Nichols on Tuesday 19th May and tickets will be available shortly.

We are also collaborating with Women in Architecture for a 'fishbowl' panel discussion, under the heading **"Saying the wrong thing: rebalancing the working world"**. Further details coming soon.

Women in Property Sweatworking: London to Paris 2026



Get ready to swap the office for open roads and adventure - Women in Property is cycling from London to Paris in September 2026 for an unforgettable, empowering challenge designed to bring women in the property and construction industries together. You don't have to be a member to join us!

This is networking reimagined - connection through courage, camaraderie, and a shared sense of achievement. It's not about who's the fastest or the fittest; it's about showing up, supporting each other and finishing

as one united team of strong, inspired women.

The event is being delivered in partnership with Discover Adventure, a specialist endurance event company with more than 30 years of experience running safe, fully supported challenges around the world.

No previous cycling experience is required - just enthusiasm, determination and a willingness to train - a comprehensive training

plan, kit list, and itinerary will be provided along with guidance and encouragement to get you ready for the challenge.

PLEASE NOTE, registration must be completed by end of January 2026. Sign up [here](#)

A huge thank you to our London to Paris 2026 sponsors, MUSE and Highgate Transportation, without whom this adventure would not be possible.

MUSE

Highgate *Transportation*

Beyond the Miles: The Transformative Power of a Shared Challenge

Judith Caddick, Highgate Transportation

It's not about speed. It's not about competition. It's about connection, courage, and the confidence that comes from doing something meaningful, together.

Over the years, I've learned that some of the most meaningful growth doesn't happen in meeting rooms or

performance reviews. It happens when we step outside our comfort zones, alongside people who lift us, steady us, and remind us of what we're capable of.

That's exactly what the upcoming Women in Property London to Paris ride represents. It's not just



a physical challenge; it's a shared experience built on encouragement, resilience, and quiet (or not so quiet) courage; the kind that emerges when we move forward together.

As a former English teacher and Royal Australian Air Force veteran who recently made the leap into business development, I've always drawn strength from the women around me - colleagues, mentors, and friends who challenge with kindness, speak truth with compassion (mostly), and celebrate progress in all its forms. Research echoes what many of us instinctively know; time spent in supportive peer spaces boosts confidence, reduces stress and strengthens our sense of belonging and purpose.

At its core, this ride is about more than women supporting women; it's about the strength we find in collective effort. Whether in the Defence Force, in the classroom, at home as a parent of three, or now in the development sector, I've seen how working together, especially in moments of doubt or fatigue, helps people of all genders build resilience, self-belief and emotional courage.

Women-only spaces amplify this in a unique way. They create room to speak openly, to take up space with confidence, and to stretch ourselves without fear of judgment. These lessons ripple outward into our teams, workplaces, and communities. Such experiences embody connection, interdependence, and shared growth, values which deeply align with the womanist tradition, a term introduced by Alice Walker, acclaimed author of *The Color Purple*, to celebrate women's strength and collective care as a force for community empowerment.

I've been especially inspired during my transition into the Transport Planning industry by Fiona Bennett, Director and sole owner of Highgate Transportation; a mother, CIHT committee member, and leader carving out space in a predominantly male environment

while championing opportunity for others. Highgate Transportation is proud to be one of the first sponsors of the Women in Property London to Paris Cycle Challenge, reflecting its values around active travel and sustainable infrastructure. Working alongside Fiona has shown me what modern leadership looks like: resilient yet human, commercially sharp yet principle led, and proof that thriving isn't about fitting in, but about standing firm and lifting others as you climb.

perspective gained. And those lessons speak beyond gender. They speak to leadership grounded in compassion. To workplaces where vulnerability is seen as strength. To cultures where collaboration, solidarity, and wellbeing benefit us all.

As a parent, educator, teammate, and now industry professional, this is the message I've always tried to pass on to my children, my students, my colleagues: failure is not a verdict but

“...Thriving isn't about fitting in, but about standing firm and lifting others as you climb.”

Women in Property South West Chair Maddie Difazio-Wright captures the spirit of the ride perfectly when she reflects on past expeditions: it isn't about speed or competition, but “shared effort, shared laughter, and the confidence that comes from doing something meaningful as a team... showing up, supporting each other, and pushing a little further than you thought possible.” In that sense, the ride is less about miles travelled and more about

a beginning; courage can be quiet; and we grow stronger not by going it alone, but by surrounding ourselves with people who want to see us rise. The London to Paris ride is, at its heart, a celebration of that shared humanity; a reminder that resilience is strengthened in community, confidence is built through challenge, and the journeys we take together often carry us further than we ever imagined.



Building Passivhaus Skills for Northern Ireland's Future



To celebrate the National Passivhaus Conference in Belfast on 8th October, Women in Property's Northern Ireland Committee held a breakfast panel discussion debating the challenges, opportunities and benefits of Passivhaus (PH) design and construction techniques along with success stories and live examples.

The event was well attended by over 25 people, many of whom were architects, legal teams, contractors and engineers across the construction industry of Northern Ireland.

Our thanks to the panel, Sam McCabe Director at WSP, Ann-Marie Fallon of Architype and Co-Director of the Passivhaus Trust, Andrew Cunningham of Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Katie Hall of Atkins Realis for their time and expertise.

Big take aways from the event included the need for more knowledge-sharing between the public and private sector along with upskilling of supply chain and more products certified. There is also a disconnect between public perception and reality concerning the health and wellbeing element – it was

mentioned that PH comes with a 60% less biohazard risk in terms of air quality. Planning policy also needs to change to accelerate the process and there need to be defined metrics around the benefits. What was encouraging was news that a mortgage provider in Northern Ireland is incentivising buyers of Passivhaus homes with a £200 pm saving on mortgage payments.

Since attending the conference our Northern Ireland committee have reached out to the South West College who are running essential training through GRASP, the Green Accelerator Skills Programme - a project supported by PEACEPLUS and managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). South West College is supporting the growing demand for Passivhaus expertise across Northern Ireland and

the border regions of the Republic of Ireland.

Since the first course commenced in October, South West College as lead partner has trained 27 people in Passive House, delivering accredited Passive House Designer and Tradesperson training aligned to real industry need. With major Passive House and low-energy projects underway – including leisure centres, student accommodation, social housing and one-off housing – these courses equip professionals and trades with the practical skills required to deliver high-performance, low-carbon buildings to Passive House standards. We encourage our WiP Members to find out more [here](#).

Christmas Celebrations

WiP members and their guests were out there making the most of the festive season, with cocktail parties, Christmas lunches, dinners and networking drinks and, judging by the number of wreath making events, you are clearly a creative crowd! Thank you to all those businesses who sponsored and hosted us this Christmas.



Success Stories

A new year begins and our members are stepping up and making moves. Congratulations all!



Emily Coombes has joined JBP as Account Director



Martha Parkinson has been promoted to Associate Building Physics Engineer at Method LLP



Congratulations to **Amy Dougan**, Responsible Business Manager at McLaughlin & Harvey, who was awarded the prestigious Local Hero Award for Scotland, at the CITB Top 100 Most Influential Women in Construction Awards.



Beth Pritchard joined 299 Lighting Ltd as Business Development and Showroom Manager.



Amy Evans has joined Knights plc as Knowledge Lawyer specialising in Real Estate Litigation.



Jennifer Winyard has been shortlisted in the Diversity and Inclusion Leader category, for the Yorkshire Leadership Awards.



Samantha Fortune celebrated one year being fully self-employed at her business Fortune Business Development Ltd

Want to help build a WiP Hub?

Women in Property is growing all the time and we now have eight Hubs affiliated to our main branches. We are now looking to launch in Dublin, so are keen to understand the level of interest. If you are keen to get involved or know someone who might be, please get in touch with Sam McCabe sam.mccabe@wsp.com



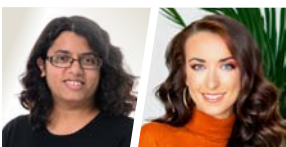
Rebecca Humes MRICS has been promoted to Associate Director at Savills in the Birmingham Development team.



Chloe Llewellyn joined Gleeds as Assistant Project Manager



Fin Maguire of Greengage is now a Practitioner Member of the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals.



Congratulations to **Coralie McKeivor, Emily Coombes** and the **South West branch!** All have been shortlisted for the Bristol Women in Business Awards 2026

