

# Yorkshire & North East Branch Newsletter

Summer 2026

The 2025 Yorkshire & North East Student Awards are sponsored by

**Ryder**

## Student Awards success

Ashleigh Jones, who is studying MEng Structural Engineering and Architecture at the University of Sheffield and Leoni Francis (pictured below) who is studying BSc Real Estate and Property Management at Leeds Beckett University are the two winners at the 2026 Women in Property Yorkshire & North East Student Awards.

Now in its 20th year, the programme aims to identify and support talented students while helping to address skills shortages and improve diversity across the built environment industry.

Ashleigh Jones was recognised for her good breadth of experience and drive to seek extra knowledge, while judges described Leoni as "a star performer. Her delivery was exceptional, very clear and concise."

Kelly Brown, Chair of Women in Property Yorkshire & North East, and a Senior Associate at CMS, said: "The quality of this year's finalists was outstanding, and Ashleigh and Leoni should be immensely proud of their achievements. They demonstrated not only strong technical ability but also the confidence, professionalism and enthusiasm that employers across our industry are looking for."

Sophie Walker from sponsors Ryder Architecture added: "The candidates this year were excellent and the winners are brilliant representatives for the region. We wish them all the best with the remainder of their studies and future careers!"

Ashleigh and Leoni each win £500, a year's free membership of Women in Property, and the opportunity to take part in a Winners Training Day in September, allowing them to spend time with peers from across the UK, whilst engaging in sessions such as mentoring, networking skills and market updates.



**Left to right:** Emma McCutcheon, Architect from sponsor Ryder Architecture, Student Award winner Leoni Francis, Pip Hunsworth, Vice Chair of Women in Property Yorkshire & North East and Associate Director at Buro Happold, and Dr Isabel Williams, Associate Learning and Development Lead at Ryder Architecture.



The student finalists from across the region's universities

## Events

- [Forest Therapy](#)  
Sheffield, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 4pm
- [Leeds Summer Drinks](#)  
Leeds, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 6pm
- [Members' Networking Breakfast](#)  
Leeds, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 8.30am
- [Members' Networking Breakfast](#)  
Sheffield, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 8.30am
- [Pride in Property Brunch](#)  
Leeds, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 3.30pm
- [Workplace Wellbeing Fitness Session](#)  
Sheffield, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 4pm
- [Hourglass Makeup Masterclass](#)  
Leeds, 13<sup>th</sup> August, 6pm
- [Paddle boarding](#)  
Leeds, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 4.30pm

## Got an idea?

We're always keen to ensure you get maximum benefit from being a member of Women in Property.

If you've got an idea for an event or webinar, would like to sponsor an event - or simply have a great idea that you think will add value, then please get in touch with a member of the committee.

[Visit the branch page of the Women in Property website.](#)

## Property futures

A team of volunteers, led by our Outreach Committee, held a series of sessions at Collingwood Primary School in North Shields and Corpus Christi Catholic College in Leeds, aimed at inspiring the next generation of property professionals.

In North Shields, pupils were introduced to a range of jobs in property before being mentored by experts including Olivia Clark from RLB and Fran Thornley from Greengage Environmental. Working in teams the children designed and built freestanding structures using different materials including plastic bricks and magnetic blocks. These included hotels, castles and a bakery.

Amy Whiteford from Devonshires, Debi Lindsay from Gleeson Homes and Rachel Barker from Twisted Logic met over 130 Year 8 students in Leeds to highlight the different ways to enter a career in the property sector.

Suzanne McDonald, KS2 Leader at Collingwood Primary School, said: "The pupils love it when the team from Women in Property come into school, as they know it will be a fun and inspiring session, where they'll learn about the different opportunities to work in the property sector when they're older!"



## UKREiiF Breakfast

Our official UKREiiF fringe event – Drivers and Barriers Market Update 2026, sponsored by RSM - was a superb start to a wonderful packed three days in Leeds!

Jennifer Winyard MRICS MRTPI chaired a panel of expert speakers: Gareth Harrison; Shannon Conway; Eleanor Judd and Stacy Eden - and they had a lively debate following a summary of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Report. They went on to explore recent developments arising from the current Middle East situation and UK political landscape.

The panel discussed residential delivery, market demand, and the broader challenges facing the housing sector as well as impact on commercial valuation and significant barriers to investment across the real estate sector. The debate rounded off with an assessment of where the opportunities for growth are across all the sectors.



## Member news

Pip Hunsworth, Associate Director at Buro Happold, has been named as one of the Top 20 Women in Ground Engineering 2026. Kelly Brown has been promoted to Senior Associate in the CMS Planning team. Samantha Jevons (pictured) has been promoted to the role of Associate Director at Bowman Riley. April Marsden also from Bowman Riley was a Finalist in the 2026 Women in Construction and Engineering Awards, Architect category.



## Sponsor Profile

# Ryder

Ryder is more than an architectural practice – we're a team of teams with diverse and extensive expertise. We lead projects in our unique integrated way, delivering exceptional value and a positive impact for our clients and communities.

Founded in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1953, we now have teams collaborating across the UK and internationally, with a shared commitment to our ethos of Everything architecture – to improve the quality of the world around us and, in doing so, improve people's lives.

We are proud to have been at the forefront of supporting young people into the construction industry for many years, and we are delighted to support the Women in Property Yorkshire North East Student Awards once again. For our colleagues who take part in the judging days, it is an inspiring experience to engage with a range of promising students from all across the industry and to see the strength of talent continue to flourish in our region.

