

# Transport Planning Society

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 11 March 2021

### Chair's Report

This year our focus was on supporting our membership and the profession through the pandemic. It was this time last year that we had to rapidly switch our AGM to an online event as the first lockdown was announced, and that set the course for the year with virtual Board meetings to events and even Transport Planning Day all online. What has been positive is that this increased the accessibility of our events and significantly increased the numbers who were able to join us – so it's something we intend to stick with in future.

With such disruption in the profession and the wider world, we chose to invest our own funds this year to provide a range of activities and initiatives to raise the profile of transport planning and keep our members and our wider audiences engaged and informed. More details are provided below, but my highlights were the continued success of our Bursary competition, Transport Planning Day events with the Transport Select Committee, Ministers and high profile transport figures, plus our excellent State of the Nations and Our Future Towns reports.

And selecting Sally Gibbons from the Department for Transport as our Transport Planner of the Year for her work on reallocating road space in response to the pandemic was a great opportunity to show how transport planning has helped in dealing with the impacts on society. We look forward to hearing from Sally at our Annual Lecture after the AGM.

I pick out some further highlights from the year below.

### Transport Planning Skills and Qualifications

Our skills work remains at the heart of what we do as a professional society, supporting our members through the TPP and PDS. We responded immediately to Covid-19, moving our activities, including trainee and final reviews, online. Despite a slowdown in the middle of last year, numbers are stable with over 400 trainees on the PDS and over 200 holders of the TPP. Activity has now picked up and this bodes

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well for the future. The opportunity to gain a CTPP title should encourage every transport planner, not just the newly qualified, to make this their goal. Following a 10-year review process, the TPP requirements have been updated, and will be formally launched on 25 March. The PDS is being revised at the same time to ensure compatibility and will launch a month later.

Another key workstream for skills has been developing and supporting new pathways for transport planners to gain the qualifications they need. The apprenticeship programme has now established itself, both at technician and degree level. With new Government incentives it is hoped employers will continue to support this important part of skills development. TPS has been instrumental in keeping both apprenticeship routes compatible with TPP and PDS. We are offering the opportunity for degree students to follow the PDS concurrently with their degree.

In 2018 we also introduced a new title 'Incorporated Transport Planner' (IncTP) for those who complete PDS. For those at an earlier stage in their careers we have developed a technician qualification: TPTech. This will enable technician apprentices to have their own transport planning qualification, rather than having to apply for EngTech. It also aims to support and recognise the skills and experience of others in our industry for whom the PDS or TPP are not suitable. This has been complicated by new requirements for Government approval which has occupied the skills team for much of the year, but this process should be complete by summer this year.

Finally, we have been undertaking a pilot for the PDS in India, using both local and UK based mentors. This is an exciting development for TPS, which will enhance the international standing of the profession as a whole. We expect our first non-UK based PDS completion in 2021.

### **Policy Group**

2020 was another full and active year for our Policy Group, headlined by two major works. First was the [State of the Nations report](#), prepared by the University of Hertfordshire Smart Mobility Unit under a TPS Steering Group and launched at the virtual Parliamentary event with the Transport Select Committee back in October. The report reviewed the state of transport planning in Great Britain and made recommendations on how it could be improved.

Second, is our ongoing partnership with the Royal College of Art to develop '[Our Future Towns' project](#)'. This project focuses on how we can build a community together through place-making and transport planning, with people's ideas and values at the core. It's an innovative and exciting piece of work and we are currently seeking funding for and planning the next phase of work.

We continue to respond to consultations and calls for evidence. Recent submissions include to the Future of Transport Regulatory Review, the consultation on ending the sales of new petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles, the Transport Committee call for evidence around road pricing and the Planning White Paper reforms.

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Our former Chair, Lynda Addison and Skills Lead, Keith Buchan continue productive discussions with the Department for Transport, and Treasury about upcoming reforms of the project appraisal framework, with particular emphasis on the role of carbon emissions. Lynda and Stephen Bennett are also part of broader discussions with the Department and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government about the integration of transport and land-use planning.

### **TPS Bursary**

The 2020 Transport Planning Society Bursary Competition focused on the important topic: 'A transport system that is accessible for everyone – how do we make this happen?'. It's clear that this is a topic of much importance as it attracted the highest number of applicants in the competition's history.

The judges spent a lovely afternoon in January listening to the finalists present their papers and it was clear how much work had gone into all the submissions. All of the six finalists were awarded a bursary of £500.

Later in our AGM, Jo Ward, the Board member responsible for organising the competition, will announce the overall winner. In the meantime, please take time to read all the papers from all of this year's finalists available on the TPS website here: <https://tps.org.uk/bursaries>.

Victoria Heald (Atkins) - [Building barriers through bias? Establishing measures to tackle unconscious bias in transport planning.](#)

Rachel Kirby (Jacobs) - [Could a more accessible transport system be a by-product of the Covid-19 pandemic? A case study of Leeds.](#)

Ruth Carr-Gomm (Jacobs) - [Making Glasgow's Transport System Accessible for All – The Role of Driverless Pods.](#)

Lauren James (Sustrans) - [Paving the road to accessibility: A growing need for more inclusive transport policy to enable cycling accessibility for all, no matter of ability, or disability. A case study of London.](#)

Anna Newey (Mott MacDonald) - [How the use of symbol systems and nudge theory instead of written language can increase equality in our transport systems.](#)

Ruby Stringer (ITP) - [Putting our best foot forward – achieving true accessibility for everyone by prioritising walking in low-income countries.](#)

### **Transport Planning Day and TPS Events**

Unfortunately, a number of events had to be cancelled last year due to the pandemic, including our popular Pub Quiz and our Annual Dinner.

However, we did manage to hold a number of events related to the Transport Day campaign in November last year. This included the TPS South East Region online

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event on the topic of 'Tackling Air Pollution in Practice', the TPS North West Region's event in conjunction with the University of Salford's Healthy Active Cities Programme on COVID-19, sustainable freight and e-mobility, and the TPS North East Region's online discussion on Decarbonisation Challenges and Covid-19 in the North East.

In addition to that we also held our main Transport Planning Day events, all online of course. We were honoured to hold an event with some key members of the Transport Select Committee in October to launch our fantastic 'State of the Nations: Transport planning for a sustainable future' report – in which the Committee members agreed with virtually all of our recommendations.

And then we had a range of transport treats at the main TP Day event itself – this included a fireside chat with Will Norman, London's Walking and Cycling Commissioner, the results of our 'Inspiring the Transport Planners of the Future' children's poster competition, a fascinating presentation on food deliveries from our Bursary winner Georgia Corr, an address from Rachel Maclean MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, and the findings of our joint research project with the Royal College of Art on reimagining community placemaking and transport planning, the 'Our Future Towns' project.

Since then, the Events team held a successful event on 'Roads v Rail: Reducing Carbon Emissions by 2030' in partnership with PTRC and CILT at the end of January 2021. In addition, the Northern Ireland and North East regions both held events in February 2021 involving international speakers.

We also strengthened our connections to our supporting institutions, including CILT, RTPi and CIHT by sharing speakers and promoting each other's events.

We are always open to ideas for different format events or topics, and speakers - so do get in touch if there is anything you would like to see featured in our Events calendar this year.

### **Regions and Nations**

Regional and national representatives are invaluable in developing the TPS local communities. This year it has not been possible to hold regional events in person due to Covid-19, but we have brought regional and national representatives together virtually a few times to discuss opportunities. We have not done this before but will continue going forward with the aim of coordinating the promotion of events and providing support, where needed.

We are grateful to The South East, North West, and North East regions who organised and led regional events mentioned above, which were all very well attended.

We are looking to build our network of regional and national representatives so please get in touch if you would like to take on this role. We hope to be able to revive

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our famous annual Pub Quiz this year, when social distancing rules allow, and possibly even our Annual Dinner.

### **Communications**

We have made a conscious effort over the last year or so to improve our communications to members and the wider world. We have a constant flow of news and updates on the [News pages of our website](#). This is also summarised and communicated to members via the monthly Bulletin email.

We are also trying to be more proactive on our social media channels, via [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), so please do follow us, share with your networks and engage with our posts.

### **Membership**

Our membership is the lifeblood of the Society and central to all our activities. We are now at 1471 individual members, which we hope to maintain despite the unprecedented circumstances we have faced with Covid. One of the continued challenges we face is a drop-off in numbers each year at subscription renewal time, often just due to delays in members renewing their subscriptions. We have introduced a direct debit payment option to avoid this issue, and I would urge members to take this up.

We are doing more to ensure our membership is accessible for all. Most recently, we have provided our members with the option to notify us of career breaks, parental leave, or hardship so we can continue to offer membership without paying the annual subscription fee. This is a welcome initiative that reaffirms our commitment to improving equality and diversity within our membership.

We always welcome your feedback and ideas on how we can continuously improve our offering to TPS members. We are set to launch our annual membership survey with you all in due course and I strongly encourage you all to share your feedback.

We are also pleased to report that Stakeholder Membership has stood up really well despite all the challenges to organisations in the last year. We currently have 35 stakeholder members – the same as last year which is encouraging. Of these, 20 are multi-site stakeholders and 15 are single site. All except four have a PDS Licence. The Business Directory launched in 2019 and has begun to take off as it allows small consultancy firms, freelancers, providers of services and voluntary groups to advertise their services at a very reasonable rate on the website.

### **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

We have created a new role on the Board of EDI Champion, currently held by Jo Ward. The aim of this role is to promote, check and challenge EDI across all areas of TPS operation, including the Board – through review of Board papers and group activities, as well as setting EDI objectives and ensuring these are met by the TPS.

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Note also that our theme for this year's Transport Planning Day campaign is Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in both the work we do and in our profession itself. And we co-opted Jim Morey to our Board last year, a disability and accessibility planning expert, to support us in our EDI work.

So we have done our best to support the profession during turbulent times, and we will continue to do so in future, as we recover from the pandemic and aim to 'build back better' recognizing the important role of transport planners in addressing the ongoing challenges of climate change, health and wellbeing, and traffic impacts on our towns and cities.

I am really proud of all we have achieved as a Society in the past two years in which I have been Chair. I would like to thank everyone who has supported me and I wish my successor all the best in this exciting and rewarding role.

We have lots more activities planned for this year, so please do get involved and support your Society, we really are 'the professional home for transport planners'.

**Stephen Bennett**  
**Chair, Transport Planning Society**

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