

Transport Planning Society

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 19 March 2020

Chair's Report

This year my focus has been simply on delivering against our Mission Statement – to be: “A society to facilitate, develop and promote best practice in transport planning and provide a focus for dialogue between all those engaged in it, whatever their background or other professional affiliation.”

To me, this is about offering the best transport planning skills and qualifications, so we can all develop and promote best practice in our profession.

And it's also about providing a focus and forum for dialogue between all those engaged in transport planning, particularly those with other professional affiliations but who we work closely with in delivering best practice in transport.

I think we have achieved a lot this year in working towards these objectives. I have picked out some of my highlights below.

Chartered Transport Planning Professional

The highlight of the year must be transport planning becoming a chartered profession!

Back in June 2019, the CIHT was granted an amendment to its Royal Charter to award the title Chartered Transport Planning Professional (CTPP) to those who successfully complete the Transport Planning Professional (TPP) qualification.

This was the result of many years of hard work from TPS and CIHT representatives – I would particularly like to thank our Director of Skills, Keith Buchan, and his team, for their extreme efforts and perseverance and determination over the years to make this happen – this a great achievement for the profession and our Society.

The TPP qualification has been running for ten years and is highly regarded by the transport planning profession. The qualification assesses a broad range of technical

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competencies as well as high level management skills. Entry to the qualification was previously restricted to members of CIHT and the TPS but this has now been extended to other recognised professional bodies whose areas of interest include transport planning and who meet the agreed criteria.

We are convinced that the chartered title will encourage all transport planning professionals to work towards TPP and CTPP and have already seen a strong take up of the qualification – so if you haven't got it then it's time to start working towards it!

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. Numbers are increasing through both routes, with over 400 trainees on the PDS and now with over 200 holders of the TPP. This bodes well for the future and the new opportunity to gain a CTPP title should encourage every transport planner, not just the newly qualified, to make this their goal.

A key focus for Skills has been developing and supporting new pathways for transport planners to gain the high-level qualifications they need. The apprenticeship programme has now established itself with 35 to 40 completions a year, and at the end of 2019 the first Degree apprentices started their course at Aston. TPS has been instrumental in keeping both apprenticeship routes compatible with both TPP and PDS. Students will have the opportunity to follow the PDS concurrently with their degree.

Last year 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 are working on a technician qualification: TPTech. This will be available from 2021 and will enable 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.

Finally, we are 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.

TPS Bursary

The Bursary scheme is a fantastic initiative and goes from strength to strength each year. It encourages Young Professional members of TPS to produce a piece of structured thought on a topic of current relevance to transport planning, supported by a mentor who will be a senior member of the profession. The value of each bursary is £500.

The bursaries provide a great opportunity to expand your knowledge of a chosen topic, raise your profile within the profession, promote your career development and benefit from a mentor's experience and advice. For those participating in the

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Professional Development Scheme, it also counts towards satisfying relevant proficiency and experience requirements.

Participation in the competition, especially winning the “Bursary of the Year” award, has helped previous Bursarians to attract the interest of their employer, to gain promotion, to be offered new jobs, and even to be invited to chair a conference session related to their paper.

The 2019 Bursary Competition was once again organised by Jo Ward, our Board member responsible for the competition. The topic: ‘Climate Crisis - what more can Transport Planners do to address the climate emergency?’ seemed to be one that really captured the imagination of younger members of the Society and we had a good field of entries.

This year’s finalists were:-

- Alistair Baldwin, Newcastle City Council
- Georgia Corr, Ealing Council
- Kitti Zsobrak, AECOM
- Rose Yorke Barber, Islington Council
- Liz Irvin, Atkins (SNC Lavalin)

At the beginning of January, the TPS Board was delighted to invite the finalists to London to present their papers. The judges concluded that all the five papers were worthy of the bursary award and each received £500 for their efforts. The winner will be announced at the TPS AGM in March 2020.

Following the announcement of the overall winner, all the papers will be published on the TPS website and we suggest that you take a read as there is a wealth of ideas and information within them. Jo and the Board are working with all the finalists to promote their important research.

TPS Events and Transport Planning Day

Our events are critically important for providing the focus for dialogue as mentioned in our Mission statement. In 2019, our flagship event was the second annual Transport Planning Day, which had the theme of Transport and Housing, with a focus on improved integration of land use and transport planning, and on the design of new developments to provide people real travel choices rather than simply accepting car-dependency.

We kicked off the countdown to TP Day with a high-profile debate on the new CIHT advice on Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places. This was followed in the autumn by a huge variety of activities taking place across the regions and nations, with at least 20 events, many supporting the theme of Transport Planning Day. The award ceremony in November was a success with the TPS People’s Award and a Transport for New Homes Award, raising the profile of the profession externally with government departments, local authorities, community representatives and private

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developers attending, to name a few. Thank you to all members who engaged with the campaign last year.

We also strengthened our connections to our supporting institutions, including CILT, RTPI and CIHT by sharing speakers, promoting each other's events and when requested, putting reps in touch with other local representatives. 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.

Looking forward, we have already kicked off a series of events on climate change, in the build up to TP Day 2020, and are also looking at a series of events on Accessibility and Inclusion.

We also said farewell and thank you to a number of resigning regional representatives and welcomed new reps to the team in Manchester, Edinburgh, Winchester, Dublin, London and Bangalore. The reps do an amazing job of building the TPS community; staying in touch with their local members; feeding information to and from the Board; and organising events in their areas. They are helping us deliver another international Pub Quiz next week (26 March) – which could potentially be our biggest ever, aiming to see well over 100 teams competing across 16 cities.

Policy Group

Our Policy Group remains active and is currently being reinvigorated under the new leadership team of James Gleave and Justin Bishop. In particular, its activities around Planning and Transport have made great headway.

Over the last three years, the TPS together with the CIHT and RTPI have been working collaboratively to try and improve the outcomes of development in our built environment. This started as the dissemination of the Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places advice, but during the process we have established a strong working relationship not only across the professions but also with both the Department of Transport and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This work has been led by our former chair Lynda Addison.

We are seeking to influence the National Planning Policy Framework, the associated guidance and the methodologies used and are having some great success. Given concerns about mental and physical health, as well as pollution and climate change, this work is critical and urgent. Lynda is currently in the process of appointing a team to take over this work so she can step down from the Board. I would like to thank Lynda for all her hard work and great efforts for the Society in her time as Chair and over the last year in leading this initiative.

Membership

Our membership is the lifeblood of the Society and central to all our activities. We are now at 1459 members, which is slowly growing. One of the challenges we face

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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 currently have a record 35 stakeholder members and are very pleased to have gained Transport Scotland, who now have a PDS Licence, and Lancashire County Council, who are advertising some interesting vacancies. Of these, 20 are multi-site stakeholders and 15 are single site. All except 3 have a PDS Licence. A new initiative has been launched to promote membership to local authorities with a new package of benefits. The Business Directory launched last year 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. Seven users have already signed up and further promotion is expected to generate more.

So, as you can see, we have had a very busy and successful year, delivering against our Mission to promote best practice in transport planning and provide a focus for dialogue between all those engaged in it. We have lots more activities planned for this year, so please do get involved and support your Society, we really do want to be 'the professional home for transport planners'.

Stephen Bennett
Chair, Transport Planning Society

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