

NOMINATIONS FOR TRANSPORT PLANNER OF THE YEAR 2021

1. Stephen Bennett, Arup Consulting

Nominated by Andy Costain, Freelance Consultant

As past Chair of TPS Steve needs little introduction. Few could match what he has done this last year in promoting transport planning, raising the profile of the profession and in his leadership of TPS.

The Award of TPOY would give recognition to the enormous contribution he made during a very challenging year. When the pandemic hit Steve, immediately took steps to make sure that TPS could adapt under all the constraints imposed, taking the unparalleled decision that the AGM and Guest Lecture would be held virtually just days before the announcement of lockdown. He ensured that it would be “business as usual” and that TPS would meet the challenges head on, continue to deliver services to our members and be at the forefront of the way COVID has impacted on transport. His restructuring of the Board to empower groups to deliver the TPS Mission resulted in a more professional organisation delivering across a wide agenda.

Steve was the founder of Transport Planning Day now one of the highlights of the TPS annual calendar and despite going online ensured that the campaign was the most successful to date raising our profile by engaging with Ministers.

His monthly newsletter provided an optimistic, motivating message on how transport planners can help Build Back Better and meet the challenges of decarbonising transport.

As Director of Arup’s transport team he has a specialism in developing multi-modal transport strategies and delivering major transport projects. He led the production of a recent publication titled **You’ve declared a climate emergency... Next steps: Transport** which provides practical advice for local authorities.

What a great ambassador.

2. Mat Bonomi, Royal Parks

Nominated by Mark Frost, Fern Consulting

Mat joined The Royal Parks in late 2018 and led the organisation of its first ever Transport (Movement) Strategy, covering all 8 Royal Parks, which was formally adopted in Feb 2020.

This strategy set out a series of strategic principles for how The Parks plan for current and future movement of visitors to, within and through the parks. A key pillar to this strategy was that “Park roads should not be commuter through routes for motor vehicle

traffic". This led the implementation of eight transformative road closure trials across six different parks, including:

- Complete seven day a week removal of cut through traffic in both Greenwich Park and Bushy Park.
- Extending the weekend closure of the one of the most iconic roads in central London – The Mall in St James Park
- Three separate interventions in Richmond Park including the full weekend closure of the link between Roehampton Gate and Richmond Gate.

Community engagement was key to the success of the Strategy and Mat led a huge public park visitor and resident consultation in late 2020, receiving more than 18,000 responses with every scheme receiving more than 55% support rate, with some as high as 78% (Greenwich). These successful trials led to the Board of trustees of the Parks taking the decision to continue with measures in place whilst they undertake further analysis to understand the longer term implications of the changes.

Reflecting on his achievements of the last year, Mat told me:

"Whilst none of these measures may be world leading or all that innovative, traffic restriction in the parks has been a pipe dream for many years and have featured in park management plans and landscape reviews since the late 80's. The thing I am most proud of is how we were able to give the organisation confidence to turn these long time goals into real life projects that I knew would garner high levels of support and create an appetite for further change. "

"Bushy Park has been my favourite project – the closure has created a traffic free heart in the centre of the park, which is extensively used by parents walking prams, children on scooters, running clubs and many many first time cyclists. You can hear the difference the park is distinctly quieter and calmer due to the elimination of cut through traffic.

3. Aya Collins, Interim Head of Transport Projects and people-friendly streets), London Borough of Islington

Nominated by Rose Barber Yorke, London Borough of Islington

Aya Collins deserves to be transport planner of the year because of the exceptional calibre of her role managing Islington Council's People-friendly streets (PFS) programme. This ambitious programme includes low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), school streets and cycleways, and has contributed both to the profession of transport planning and to improving residents' lives.

The success of her skilful design, management and delivery of the PFS programme has furthered the cause and reputation of LTNs, particularly as a feasible transport planning approach in responding to Covid-19 and avoiding a car-based recovery.

The 7 LTNs and 22 school streets she has overseen the delivery of in the last year have positively affected Islington residents' lives through making it easier, safer and more attractive to walk and cycle.

Aya has supported a comprehensive monitoring approach from the start. Her appreciation of the importance of data-driven decision-making, especially in this experimental programme, has allowed Islington to understand the impacts the LTNs have had and to communicate them to residents.

The impact of the programme she has overseen is already tangibly evident in the results from interim monitoring of the first three LTNs. Across all three, there has been a 61% reduction in motorised traffic counted on internal roads, translating to 33,908 fewer vehicles, and a 17% reduction in traffic counted across internal and boundary roads – 42,643 vehicles!

Finally, Aya has achieved all of this through creating a strong sense of team spirit and passion amongst team members to deliver an excellent programme, all while working remotely.

4. Fred Ewing, Recruiter

Nominated by Tom van Vuren, Veitch Lister

Putting a recruiter forward as Transport Planner of the Year may be unusual, but there is method in the madness. Fred is one of the few recruiters in the transport planning field who thoroughly understands our profession – he is an ambassador and by supporting individuals to achieve their ambition in their careers he has supported staff retention and helped stem the brain drain to other fields.

Responding to the chronic lack of skills in our industry, but also the lack of awareness outside of transport planning of what we actually do, Fred has successfully brought expertise from other industries into ours, so that individuals and organisations continue to grow the skills that we need to ensure that the profession can deliver but also innovate. As he says himself: “I throw stones into what might have been a fairly still mill pond”.

Recruitment is only one element of what Fred does. Retention strategy is just as important and Fred has advised consultancies, academia and public sector bodies such as the DfT on how their salary and benefits fit not just within the industry but also with competition from outside; what they can do to entice people into their organisations, but more importantly, retain the staff and skills they have invested in.

Individuals and organisations benefit from Fred's enthusiasm and professionalism. Recognising the continued struggle for excellent resources in a competitive world, we need to value professional recruitment making a substantial contribution to transport planning success.

5. Matthew Harrison, RLRE Consulting Engineers

Nominated by Nick Smith, RLRE Consulting Engineers

Matthew Harrison has constantly proved himself not only to be an excellent transport planner but someone who uses transport planning to improve the world, whether that is

delivering projects that focus on improving sustainable transport modes or creating jobs for local communities.

As the lead on the Derby Becketwell project Matthew has not only dealt with complex issues to ensure that this major regeneration scheme has been approved at planning but his eye for detail has led to a scheme that is not only viable from a client perspective but also is somewhere that locals and visitors will enjoy.

Matthew is also pushing clients and local authorities to move away from predict and provide assessments and into more of a holistic view of transport and how it can improve lives. This is often a losing battle on a site by site basis but he spends his own time pushing this approach in the hope that over time he can encourage all parties that this approach is best for local residents, employees and the client.

Matthew spends many hours of his own time encouraging members of staff to improve their understanding of transport planning and the impact our profession can have on the wider world.

6. Mairi Joyce, Mott MacDonald

Nominated by Annette Smith, Mott MacDonald

A transport planner for 20 years, Mairi is experienced in a diverse range of traditional transport planning and traffic engineering skills but has evolved her expertise towards transport and the role of transport in meeting our net zero targets. During 2020 Mairi created a series of LinkedIn videos to promote the link between transport planning and the Sustainable Development Goals ([Mairi Joyce | LinkedIn](#)).

In the last year Mairi has taken on the challenging and new role of Net Zero lead within the Integrated Transport Division of Mott MacDonald. Without a blueprint she has made the role her own, creating a culture change within the Transport Division and providing support to colleagues to embed net zero thinking into their projects. Mairi's role also sees her working across divisions to share her learning about decarbonisation of transport into other projects. She is currently developing tools that will enable decarbonisation of transport to be measured.

Shortly following her appointment as Net Zero lead, Mairi secured a project with Rail Safety Standard Board (RSSB) to deliver a recommended set of options for mechanisms, including policy, regulatory, standards, funding, contractual, economic and performance management, that may be applied within the rail industry to incentivise whole-life, whole-system decarbonisation and how they should be implemented.

Mairi is at the forefront of the nexus between transport planning and net zero. She is self-motivated, keen to learn, creative and passionate about transport planning. Mairi has recently become a Chartered Transport Planning Professional (CTPP) and was commended for her excellent portfolio.

7. Simon Pope, Technical Director, WSP

Nominated by Adrian Hames, WSP

Simon is a Chartered Transport Planning Professional who has made an exceptional contribution to Transport Planning over the past year through project delivery and leading transport decarbonisation. Simon led the collaborative delivery of the Leeds Passenger Transport Investment Programme to enable successful implementation of £200m of bus and active travel schemes that will lead to an emission reduction of 23,000 tCO2e (removing 13.4 million car trips) as part of the commitment to deliver net zero by 2030. He is also leading the £315m West Yorkshire Transforming Cities Fund programme, the largest of its kind across the UK. When combined, Simon has been instrumental in championing a programme that will ensure more people use public transport, undertake active travel journeys as an essential part of helping to tackle the city's climate emergency, transforming Leeds and the West Yorkshire City Region into a greener and more attractive place, with fewer vehicles and cleaner air. Simon also leads WSP's pioneering research and development of a Carbon Zero Appraisal Framework. He is passionate in his belief that this is needed to support informed decision making early in the project lifecycle that contributes to net-zero and is a basis for achieving reductions in carbon footprint throughout scheme development and delivery. In this capacity he has supported a diverse range of clients in developing robust, credible Net Zero strategies including TfGM, WYCA and Leeds CC helping demonstrate to stakeholders and the public that each organisation is taking the necessary action to deliver on net zero commitments.

8. James Shanks, WSP

Nominated by Rehan Mian, WSP

James has risen to the challenge of maintaining team cohesion and wellbeing during the Pandemic. He has implemented an interactive wellbeing log that provides a weekly check-in for colleagues to register their current state of health, relating to their workload and home-life, using a traffic-light system. We have rolled this out across the Transport Discipline of more than 500 staff giving anyone who is struggling the opportunity to flag a concern anonymously and have one-to-one discussions to explore ways to improve their personal position. This has benefitted many colleagues during this difficult time.

At the same time James has used a virtual secondment to embed collaborative working practices at Transport for the North. He has helped to break down the boundaries between consultants that has contributed to a joined up delivery of an analytical framework comprising innovative tools from across the supply chain. This includes WSP's own delivery of the Northern Highway Assignment Model which has been specified in an innovative manner to enable access to all users with open source coding so that the product is entirely transparent and can be enhanced and improved by others.

It is the welfare of colleagues together with the prioritisation of client needs over and above his consultancy work that make James a worthy candidate for the award and puts him on the path to being a future leader in Transport Planning.

9. Annette Smith, Mott MacDonald

Nominated by Mairi Joyce, Mott MacDonald

Annette has made a exceptional contribution to the transport planning profession over the past year through her application of Mott MacDonald's and University of West England's Future Uncertainty Toolkit for Understanding and Responding to an Evolving Society (FUTURES). FUTURES is a new approach to transport planning that enables our clients to decide on their direction of travel and provide measures to set the course, rather than attempting to predict the future. It is designed to support decision making in the face of uncertainty – particularly at the strategic planning stage.

Annette has been championing FUTURES with clients since before COVID-19, but the pandemic has really brought the need for uncertainty planning to the fore. Annette has applied the FUTURES toolkit to multiple projects and clients over the past year resulting in ongoing improvements and development of the process. Projects have included multiple applications through the DfT Futures programme, MaaS consultancy support to South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SESTran)and Local policy development support to local authorities. More recently Annette has been working on how FUTURES can be used to help clients plan for net zero and climate change in general, providing clients with a process and tool to guide them through uncertainties.

"I am pleased to be working with Mott MacDonald and their approach is strongly supporting DfT plans to improve the resilience of our decision making in the face of uncertainty. This will ultimately help us to realise the opportunities, and avoid the risks, associated with the Future of Transport". Mike Pittman, DfT Office for Science

10. Joanna Ward, Freelance Transport Planner

Nominated by Kirsten Galea, Architect, Inclusive Design Advisor, Proudlock Associates

I'm nominating Jo Ward because I believe she is a great ambassador for the profession. I know Jo from [Women in Transport](#) (WiT), as she is an active member and is also a volunteer mentor on the [WiT Advance mentoring programme](#). This is not a small commitment which makes a big difference to our members. Mentoring allows the mentee to develop greater self-awareness and take responsibility for the direction of their careers. Jo has also written and presented extensively on the need to have more diversity in transport planning and governance.

Jo is also an elected board member of TPS since March 2016 and has been representing TPS in the All Party Parliamentary Cycling and Walking Group since Nov 2018. She is also a

strong advocate for walking and cycling. In fact she is an Ambassador for [Cycle Live Nottingham](#) and has co-author a book '[We all ride bikes now](#)', with all proceeds from the book going to the charity [Ridewise](#).

Jo is an experienced and motivated Transport Professional with a special interest in Sustainable and Active Transport solutions. She has more than twenty years of experience, having worked at a variety of companies including City Science, Morgan Tucker, Sustrans, AECOM, BWB Consulting Ltd, Atkin, Hyder Consulting and West Sussex County Council. She has a proven track record working across the public, private and charity sector for a wide client base. This year she has also taken an important career choice and decided to become a freelancer Transport Planner.