

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Landscape Institute

Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 18:30 (UTC)

A Hybrid meeting held in Cardiff and via Zoom

### Present:

### Board of Trustees:

Chair: Carolin Göhler President Elect / Acting President	Mat Haslam FLI Hon Treasurer	Jane Clarke Independent Trustee
Mark Smeeden CMLI Hon Secretary	Christine House CMLI Chair, Education & Membership Committee	Deborah Nagan Independent Trustee
Noel Farrer FLI PPLI Vice President	Ian Phillips CMLI Chair, Policy & Communications Committee	Marc Norden Independent Trustee

### Staff:

Rob Hughes CEO	John O'Keefe Head of Education & Careers	Naomi Taylor Head of Membership Services
Ruhela Begum Event Lead	Karen Rogers Membership Engagement Manager	Joe Thomas Head of Finance (Interim)
Yvonne Matthews Executive Assistant to the Leadership Team	Neelam Sheemar Head of Marketing, Communications & Events	Emma Wood Governance & Regulations Manager

### Members:

Total Members Attending: 109 and therefore meeting quorate and able to transact business.

## 1 Welcoming Address from Carolin Göhler, President Elect / Acting President

Carolin Göhler (CG), Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced all the Trustees in attendance and confirmed that:

- i. All members eligible to vote had the opportunity to do so in advance and that online voting for those in attendance at the meeting would remain open until the conclusion of the main business of the AGM.
- ii. This is the first pilot AGM of the LI held in a hybrid format.

## 2 Approve the Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting held 13 December 2022

The members voted to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the AGM held 13 December 2022 with a summary vote as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
257	51	47

### 3 Report from Rob Hughes, CEO Landscape Institute

The meeting noted a presentation from Rob Hughes, newly appointed CEO of the Landscape Institute, on the progress over the last year and the future focus and priorities of the organisation moving forward.

A full recording of the presentation and slides is available online and in summary outlined that:

Over the last year the LI has been taking positive steps to becoming a more open, inclusive and future orientated organisation - one that puts members at the heart of everything.

Collaboration is key to this and to building the partnerships across the industry, government and public that are needed to raise the importance and value of landscape.

The 2023/24 business plan focused on a positive and progressive agenda, based on the strategic themes of membership, people and systems:

- Membership – enhancing our value proposition for all existing and new members.
- People – re-valuing, enhancing and stabilising our organisation to meet the needs of our members and stakeholders now and in the future.
- Systems – refreshing, improving and implementing new operational systems and processes to enhance members and staff experience.

The aim over the year was to stabilise and future proof the organisation by building discipline and capability around finance and commercial sustainability along with new ways of working to build and enable the collaborations and partnerships needed.

To deliver this ambition, transformation has been needed and the 2023 / 24 business plan focused on achieving this through the following 8 business objectives:

1. Launching the Embodied Carbon Report
2. Building on Skills for Greener Places Report
3. Conducting a review of the CPD offering
4. Embedding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion across the organisation
5. Conducting a critical Branch Review
6. Ensuring a new focus on people, culture and change with a new Board Committee
7. Implementing digital transformation through Project Kestrel.

The need to continually listen and engage with members is fundamental to the future of LI along with building a more collaborative decision-making framework to underpin our new ways of working moving forward. To achieve this, the LI has made the following 8 pledges to the members to be:

1. Engagement focused – to engage with current and future communities and be an inclusive and progressive organisation.
2. Service led – to provide a consistently good service.
3. An organisation that values its membership – to enhance the membership offer.
4. Skills centred – look to address the landscape skills shortage.
5. A proactive communicator – communicate our industry's value with pride.
6. Future proofed – work towards delivering a fit for purpose operational structure.
7. Supportive – support the continued professional development of our members.
8. An organisation that recognises volunteers – recognise, reward and appreciate our volunteering community.

We have made significant progress toward achieving these pledges this year, with achievements including:

- Responding to 8 policy consultation to ensure the views of our industry are represented and heard.
- Publishing key reports into Skills for Greener Places and Safer Spaces to highlight the focus and skills of our sector and what is needed.
- Stabilising the LI workforce and filling key roles with a new focus on people, culture and change.
- Implementing the New Ways of Working programme to transform our infrastructure and engagement with members in decision making.
- EDI partnerships and joint events.
- The launch of 5 Level 3 Landscape Technician Apprenticeship.
- The LI Awards programme along with 15 CPD events and 9 roadshows across the UK.

The work started in 2023/24 will continue in 2024/25 with a stronger emphasis on implementation in order to drive towards the establishment of a new 5-year strategy. The priorities for this year are based on the needs of the organisation and external drivers and focused on:

- Policy
- Transforming LI and our digital transformation
- Our membership and the communities of landscape professionals across the UK.

Our commitment to transparency and openness threads through all our work and member engagement activities.

Community is at the heart of landscape practice and is therefore at the heart of LI's future. The future success of the organisation is contingent on the ability to engage and collaborate with members and stakeholders to ensure they can change the lives of communities around the UK and across the world.

#### **4 Presentation from Mat Haslam, Honorary Treasurer**

The meeting noted a presentation from Mat Haslam, Honorary Treasurer on the financial position of the organisation and the future picture. At the beginning of his presentation the Honorary Treasurer explained that the purpose of the Finance & Risk Committee is to help ensure the Trustees meet their legal responsibilities in respect of managing the charity finances and ensure that the right financial policies, procedures and controls are in place.

He went on to outline that:

As with all other charities the LI is still navigating the impact of the wider financial environment – rampant inflation, the impact of Brexit particularly on staffing and the cost-of-living crisis that has significantly impacted on expenditure levels and ability to maintain vital services.

These impacted on the position reported for the year 2022/23 and will continue for the next 18 months at least and the management of finances and risk moving forward.

In order to achieve all that we want to, it is vital that the LI diversifies income streams to ensure future financial sustainability and resilience.

Overall, the last year has been one of increased rigour in managing finances and ensuring accurate financial records are maintained, any financial risks identified early and addressed quickly, whilst modernising governance. The aim is to achieve a healthy financial position by 2029 and in time for the 100th centenary.

There is a new focus on driving growth, through sponsorship, advertising and recruitment income, as well as developing new income streams and increasing discipline around expenditure to reduce staffing, consultancy and support costs.

Reserves are reviewed constantly along with cash and market investments position, to ensure funds are working in the best interest of the organisation and deliver on our aims.

The financial performance highlights for 2022/23 as outlined in the Annual Report and Accounts are:

- A clean audit report with no significant adjustments.
- Income at £2.6m - a 7% increase on the previous year.
- Expenditure is at £2.9m - a 16% increase on the previous year as a result of increased investment in people, systems and members with a planned operating deficit of £309K as part of the organisation's growth strategy.
- The financial performance is on track to reach a surplus position by 2025/26.
- The profits from the trading subsidiary increasing by approx. £25K over two years.
- The operating deficits and loss on investments are due to the unstable global market.

The focus now is to keep on track, reduce the deficit and move to a surplus position in 2025/26 with healthy reserves.

Investment in education, green skills and public policy will continue along with a focus on growing and widening income from outside of the membership e.g. through recruitment, website advertising and sponsorship. Alongside this we will be reducing expenditure, investing in the staff team and reducing reliance on consultants with better use of office space and IT infrastructure.

More details about the financial position of LI can be found in the summary produced in response to the questions asked at the meeting.

A lengthy and robust tendering process has been completed which resulted in a final two shortlisted firms. Kingston Smith being successfully selected and recommended to the membership.

## **5 Receive the Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts of the Institute for the financial year ended 31 March 2023**

The members voted to receive the Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts of the Landscape Institute for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 with a summary vote as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
274	54	27

## **6 Approve the appointment of Moore Kingston Smith as the Landscape Institute's auditors**

The members voted to approve the appointment of Moore Kingston Smith as the Landscape Institute's auditors for the year 2024/25 with the summary vote as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
280	39	36

## **7 Presentation from Carolin Göhler, President-Elect/Acting President**

In her first address to the members as the new President-Elect Carolin Göhler pledged to do all she can to be an ambassador for the landscape profession and to represent members in the press, at conferences and events with partners and in Westminster.

A full recording of the presentation and slides is available online. In summary the President-Elect emphasised that:

Her vision is to do as much as possible to impact the combined emergencies faced in climate, biodiversity and health.

There is currently a real opportunity for the profession to make a huge difference. The plans set out in this meeting will put the Landscape Institute on the best course of action and build a shared vision.

The LI must champion the landscape profession wherever and whenever it can, and continue to focus attention on education, skills and opening more routes into landscape.

The industry's expertise and projects will continue to transform lives for current and future generations.

To make a difference the LI must recognise a balanced approach to make the most impact with the resources available through:

- Operational reporting in line with today's standards.
- Better two-way engagement with our much-valued branches and registered practices both online and in person.
- Setting ourselves up to deliver a new corporate strategy aligned to the challenges of the day and to take the LI to its centenary year in 2029.

Our shared vision is focused on:

- Promoting and championing the profession.
- Education - training routes and apprenticeships.
- Climate change and resilience needs.
- Transforming the LI - fit for current and future generations.
- Balanced approach as resources are limited.
- Closer operational reporting and working relationships.
- New Corporate Strategy.

Underpinning this is the new ways of working that will aim to:

- Provide a louder voice for landscape.
- Treasure our members.
- Work more efficiently and respect the work of others.
- Advance our profession for current and future generations.
- Build partnerships with other institutions and organisations.
- Provide tools and resources to our members for outreach activities.

## **8 Members questions and answers (Q&A) session**

The Chair declared that the voting would close at the end of the Q&A session and invited members to ask questions both digitally and in the room. Questions had also been received in advance and the responses were available online

A wide ranging and in-depth Q&A session was co-ordinated by Naomi Taylor (NT), Head of Membership Services. The questions and responses both written and verbal are published in full online

## **9 Meeting closed**

There being no other business raised and all notified business concluded the Chair closed the meeting at 20:07 (UTC).

The following will be available on the [LI website](#): video link, presentation, Q&A live channel report, questions received in advance & LI Responses