

Landscape Institute Scotland

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Chris Sheridan
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Dear Chris

FUTURE DIRECTION MEMBER CONSULTATION

Further the useful meeting and discussion with 31 LIS members on Wednesday 3 December in Glasgow from 6.00 to 9.00 pm, I have been asked by the Committee and a number of the members attending to both summarise the key points discussed and also to bring to your attention some further comments received in discussion, by telephone and email.

In particular the detailed comments from David Wilson Dip LA, MBA, CMLI on behalf of DWA Landscape Architects Limited and Ross White, Student Representative on the LIS Committee are annexed to this letter. We will be putting our note of the meeting and this letter on the LIS website for all Scottish members to see before they complete the survey and as a record for future reference.

Key issues discussed at the meeting.

- 1 Getting licentiates to become CMLI is essential and immediate.

We note that the circumstances of each individual are often very different and the opportunity to enrol, progress or even dedicate the time required to the P2C process is not always possible. There should also be more responsibility placed on employers to support candidates, however given the current economic climate we suspect less practices will be willing to financially support candidates through the payment of P2C fees/study time/exam fees etc.

- 2 P2C Mentors find the demands on them too great

Recent experience notes that P2C mentors sacrifice a great deal of their free time and in contrast the comments/feedback from the Supervisors were often very brief and very generic. Given that the supervisor role is paid and the mentor role is voluntary this seems wrong. We are not sure if there is a limit to the number of candidates one supervisor is responsible for?

- 3 Why are all students starting on a Landscape Architecture courses not automatically signed up as student members?

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- 4 The Code of Conduct states: *“This Code lays down standards of professional conduct and practice expected of all members of the Landscape Institute, whatever their grade or level of membership.”*

The Landscape Institute’s Membership Declaration states: *“When you join the Landscape Institute you agree to terms of the Royal Charter, Byelaws and the Code of Conduct of the Institute. This continued commitment to the development of the profession, to high standards of education and conduct, to your own development and to the support of fellow professionals remains while you are a current Landscape Institute member.”*

We note that the Declaration has never been circulated to the membership just as the revised Code of Conduct was only issued to P2C students 2 years ago and not to the membership. As a result it would appear from experience that student members are not being made aware of the Code of Conduct or the Declaration when they become members. Similarly licentiates may only become aware of it when enrolling on the P2C. On this basis if these classes of membership are to be given the opportunity to vote then there must be a formal process by which they are made aware of the Charter, Code etc at the time of becoming members.

We note that there is definitely some work to be done by the LI, in partnership with accredited landscape courses, to make them aware of and sell the P2C process to students particularly during postgraduate study as the next step in their journey to professional qualification. Experience would suggest this currently does not happen enough/or early enough.

We also note that those who have Licentiate membership and have enrolled on the P2C process show a commitment to the profession and that the opportunity for these members to have voting rights may also serve as an incentive to get more licentiates to enrol on the P2C process.

- 5 There is no recognition of or reflection of the devolved status of the UK nations in the governance structure or associated representation, this is absolutely essential politically and practically to reflect local needs.
- 6 Loss of identity resulting from the expansion 20 odd years ago which only added over time 480 new members, why do we not use Royal and Landscape Architect in our titles? It is not clear how these proposals will set a direction that will re-establish the identity of 95% of current members.
- 7 The Journal. If as stated the Position Statements are the outward face of the LI and the journal is aimed at members why is it printed rather than electronic? If electronic and aimed at members could it be more frequent and have letters and discussion and save money?

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Key issues that have arisen subsequent to the meeting

- 8 If the divisions are removed is it the case that a client will be dependent on the Code of Conduct to ensure he or she is correctly informed of the design, management or science trained skills of the Landscape Architect if they all do not take the same version of P2C?
- 9 Non academic approach to membership - should we be looking at apprenticeships and external exams so that people who can not or do not want to go to college could also have a route into the profession?
- 10 Membership costs – at the meeting there was quite a bit of discussion about what membership buys - is it simply the letters after our name and the title Landscape Architect or more?
- 11 Could the LI not offer exam at discount for a limited period to encourage existing licentiates to complete P2C meanwhile highlighting the opportunities this can bring? The loss of income would surely be topped up by an increase in Chartered Members fees over time? Costs can mount up in terms of travel to London, exam fee, attending preparatory courses - not great in uncertain financial times when on a starting salary.
- 12 Fellowship - Could we increase the number of fellows by reducing the big jump in cost to fellowship. This could be more than cost neutral and would show to the outside world the level of experience if more individuals became fellows. Fellowship status is more valuable to the body than it is to the individual, so it should be in the interest of the LI to increase numbers.
- 13 Practice Registration – what do practices get value for their registration money or does it just disappear into general LI spending?

In short expansion, democracy and governance changes are considered to be a distraction from the real issue of re-establishing our identity as Landscape Architects. It is LIS's view that more emphasis should be placed on satisfying the needs of existing members and encouraging progression to CMLI by licentiate members, rather than increasing the membership from other professions.

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ANNEX 1

Comments from David Wilson Dip LA, MBA, CMLI on behalf of DWA Landscape Architects Limited

Future Direction

The following comments are in response to the Landscape Institute meeting on Wednesday 3rd of December 2014 and have been prepared following further thought and discussion. In the first instance the questions set in the Landscape Futures document are in the wrong order. Question 4 is the key issue and everything else follows from this. The order below has been revised accordingly. Before discussing the issue an objective is set out which forms the framework for the response.

Question 4: Changes to some non-professional categories

Objective

This is in three parts:

To make the Landscape Institute the recognised institute in relation to environmental matters.

This will be achieved in the following three ways:

- A. *To encourage more people to become interested in the work of landscape architects.*
- B. *To give the Landscape Institute more influence with the public*
- C. *To encourage individual members to feel that the Landscape Institute represents their views.*

To achieve this four non-chartered categories are proposed:

1. **Subscribing Member**
This is open to anyone with an interest in the environment who wishes to join and is prepared to pay an annual fee.
It allows a *Subscribing Member* to keep up-to-date with discussions and information and includes a copy of the magazine. It does not include the right to vote. (Some years ago when I took out a subscription to the American Society of Landscape Architect's magazine I was made a member of ASLA and given a badge to prove it.)
2. **Student Member**
Open to anyone who is either a student at an accredited landscape course or working for a CMLI. Acceptance would require the nomination of a CMLI (course leader). This category would require annual confirmation that the applicant still met the criteria.
It allows a *Student Member* to keep up-to-date with discussions and information and includes a copy of the magazine. It does include the right to vote on issues raised by the Board.
3. **A Licentiate Member**
Open to anyone who meets the criteria for P2C whether or not they follow the pathway.
It allows a *Licentiate Member* to keep up-to-date with discussions and information and includes a copy of the magazine. It does include the right to vote on issues raised by the Board.
4. **Honourary Member**
This is open to anyone whose membership would help advancement of the profession. It may be a politician, journalist etc but it could also be an unqualified member of staff who has worked in landscape architecture for not less than ten years.

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Membership would require nomination by three CMLIs who have direct knowledge of the individual. An annual fee would be required but it would be within the Board's remit to wave the fee.

It allows an *Honorary Member* to keep up-to-date with discussions and information and includes a copy of the magazine. It does include the right to vote on issues raised by the Board.

Note:

The right to vote will cover any matters which are passed by the Board for the membership to vote on and for specific roles within the Board including President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Only CMLIs could nominate Board members. (see question 2 below)

Question 1: Increased voting rights to all members

This question is answered above.

Question 2: Changing the composition of the Board

Objective

To ensure that the Board fully reflects the membership and does not have a southern bias.

The Board should consist of a CMLi representative of each of the various Chapters within the UK nominated by a vote of the CMLi's in that Chapter. They should stand for a three year period and then be subject to a new vote. Chairs of sub-committees should be taken from that Board without a vote of the membership. Should there be insufficient interest from any Chapter their nomination would lapse until there is. There should also be an opportunity for the Board to co-opt up to three additional Board Members who may or may not be CMLi.

Question 3: Additional route to Chartership

Objective

To ensure that all CMLIs have reached a core standard of knowledge and professional capability.

This question has three parts:

1. The standard required to start on the P2C.
2. The P2C
3. Is there an alternative?

1. The Standard required to start on the P2C

There is currently a committee who assess applicants but their requirements are not currently clear. The following possibilities are suggested:

- a. Completion of a recognised course.
- b. Part-completion of a recognised course plus three years experience, nominated by two CMLIs.
- c. Part completion of a recognised course plus two years experience backed by three CMLIs.
- d. Working in a recognised landscape role for ten years and backed by two CMLIs

2. The P2C

The current P2C has been designed for the general landscape architect but years ago the Institute was revised to include Science and Management Members. The P2C still does not recognise this differentiation and it should. It should retain its core subjects but others should be subject to reconsideration according to what part of the profession is involved.

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The current P2C is also very tightly controlled with the Supervisors playing a decisive role. It has also been suggested that numbers on the P2C will be restricted by the number of available Supervisors. If Mentors require to be experienced CMLIs then they should be recognised as such. It is possible that submissions from new Mentors should be checked for the first three quarters but thereafter their decisions should be recognised as final. It would also help new applicants to see the success rates of their Mentors.

3. Is there an alternative?

As the object is to maintain a standard there is not an alternative to achieving CMLI. There does, however, need to be recognition of those without qualifications but with a wealth of experience. That is the role of the *Honorary Member* category set out above.

Question 5: Minor changes

Assuming that these minor changes are to do with compliance, simplification and tidying up and do not relate to any of the above there is little need for a response.

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ANNEX 2

Comments from Ross White, Student Representative on the LIS Committee

I've been reading the comments about student's knowledge of P2C with interest (being a student myself!). During the course of our 3rd year studies we were given a couple of lectures by John Stuart-Murray regarding P2C and the fact that it is generally the next step on the career ladder. These were given as part of a 'Contracts and Specification' course, although they were more of an add-on and not directly related to the course.

I had no idea we had signed up to the Code of Conduct when joining the LI but then perhaps it isn't so important as a student (although it may be during the placement year).

I personally still have questions about the P2C ; can it be done with a BA(Hons) degree? Or is it only after a Masters qualification is achieved? How do you know if the company you work for will provide a mentor? (Good interview question I suppose!) Do I have to do it? Or can I wait until I feel I'm ready for the challenge?

I would imagine students who are in their first or second year of the course would have even more questions, the new 'Be A Landscape Architect' goes some way to explaining the role of P2C but not in any great depth.

I don't think personally that LI membership is pushed enough on the course.