

# **FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE**

## **MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT AND TRUSTEES OF THE LANDSCAPE INSTITUTE FROM SEVERAL PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE INSTITUTE AND REPLY FROM NOEL FARRER PRESIDENT**

Dear President and Trustees of the Landscape Institute,

The membership is currently being consulted about the future direction of the Institute. Looking back at our past we feel that it will be useful for us, as Past Presidents, to remind the Board of some fundamental principles which should guide our future direction.

1. "The overriding duty of all charity trustees is to advance the purposes of their charity" (Duties of Charity Trustees ICAEW2012).
2. The purposes of the Landscape Institute are stated on pages 3&4 of the Royal Charter, available in full on the internet. Some key clauses are -  
"(3) The income and property of the Institute shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Institute..."  
"(5.1) The objects and purposes for which the Institute is hereby constituted are to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the benefit of the public by promoting the arts and sciences of Landscape Architecture.....and in particular to establish, uphold and advance the standards of education, qualification, competence and conduct of those who practice Landscape Architecture as a profession..."  
To include "(2b) The planning and design of all types of outdoor and enclosed spaces; and of (2e) ...the landscapes of town and countryside..."

From the wording of the Royal Charter the following can be deduced:

3. The title 'Landscape Architect', which is internationally recognised, must be retained. A primary function of the Institute is to promote and safeguard the profession of Landscape Architecture, now and in the future.  
This is a principal duty of both Trustees and staff.
4. It would be appropriate now, it being at least ten years after the successful chartership bid, to apply to have the word 'Royal' added to our title. (Some of us would also favour adding the word 'British')
5. Landscape Architects already undertake landscape planning and urban design therefore new divisions with these titles would be mistaken.  
Membership of the Institute must be based on meeting our professional standards; there is no inherent advantage in increasing the size of the Institute.
6. Voting members of the Board, the Trustees, must be members of the Institute elected by the membership, though non-voting external Board members may usefully be co-opted. (There could be merit in reverting to the more democratic Council led structure of elected members, some of whom would then be elected by their category/region of membership; a smaller executive group of officers, perhaps with committee chairmen, would then be answerable to Council).
7. All honorary officers, including the Hon Treasurer, must be members of the Institute elected by the membership. The membership is the heart of the Institute and the profession.

8. Most, but not all, of us agree that the voting membership should be enlarged to include all landscape professionals who agree to be bound by the Code of Conduct; some may therefore be licentiates, academics or graduates, but not undergraduates. The other view is that voting rights are part of the benefits of getting qualified.

9. There is currently a problem in the Institute arising from the difficulty of members making contact with one another or being able to share opinions with other members whom they do not know. The Journal should have an active letters page and should contain a regular feature recording the Board's deliberations. It would be possible to make it easier to contact other members without infringing rules about confidentiality by drawing up a register of members with an opt-out clause for those who do not wish their details to be widely available.

We submit these points to assist deliberations about the future of the Institute.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Bannister, Richard Burden, Brian Clouston, Tim Gale, Cedric Lisney, Hal Moggridge, Alan Tate, John Whalley. (Past Presidents of the Landscape Institute)

Mr Hal Moggridge, FLI, PPLI  
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27 February 2015

Dear Hal

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and the Board in relation to the recent governance consultation. I also appreciate that you have sought to reflect the views of some of our other Past Presidents.

Your letter raises a number of interesting points and I entirely agree that as charity trustees the Board have to act at all times in a way that advances the purposes of the Institute. I also agree that the term 'landscape architect' is internationally recognised and there is no intention to stop using that term. However, there is no protection over this term, unlike for example 'architect', so anybody can call themselves a landscape architect, which can present the industry with a challenge and can confuse the public. This lack of protection also means that our members can call themselves what they like, they don't *have* to use the term 'landscape architect'. This means that some of our members (undoubtedly the majority) do call themselves landscape architects but some choose to call themselves landscape designers or landscape planners or landscape managers or urban designers, etc. Some members choose to describe

themselves in different ways, depending on the context. From the Board's perspective there is no intention to lobby the government to make 'landscape architect' a protected term and there is no intention to regulate what members choose to call themselves. There is however a desire to get a better public understanding of what landscape architects do, promoting our standards of accreditation and how varied and broad the profession is.

Regarding the name of the Institute, this is not an issue that was covered in the recent consultation although it is one I am always happy to keep under review. Your letter has led to the matter being discussed at the Board. The Board's view is that changing the name of the Institute is not a priority at the moment, given the pragmatic need to be focusing on promoting the profession. It is felt that the current name has good recognition in the UK and overseas and is applicable in various contexts. I believe the name of the Institute, particularly whether we have 'Royal' in the title can be returned to in the future after more pressing issues have been dealt with.

Regarding the use of 'Divisions' within the Institute the situation is that we have not used divisions in any practical way for a number of years now. We have five areas of practice (design, management, science, planning and urban design) and we have a comprehensive Pathway to Chartership syllabus. Our membership application forms and governance documents still make reference to Divisions so these need to be changed to reflect how the Institute now operates. We are also going to undertake a review of landscape education to ensure that there is a match between what is taught at universities and what is required to become Chartered with the needs of the profession.

Regarding the inherent size of the Institute, I beg to differ with your opinion that there is no advantage to increasing our size. Surely it is advantageous to have a larger Institute as that will give us greater profile, wider recognition, greater voice and increased resources to carry out our work. In fact the current trends in membership organisations across the related professions show largely that the Institute, like many others, will have to work hard just to retain its size, let alone grow. This is due to upcoming retirement of a large proportion of members at the same time as reduced UK students studying landscape courses at universities as well as an increasing amount of landscape work being undertaken by those outside of the profession. The Board are aware of this potential threat to the Institute and are embarking on a wide ranging set of measures to broaden and develop our membership. Like you, I believe strongly that professional standards must remain at the highest level. I can assure you that on my watch, all actions to increase membership will be mindful of this.

Regarding the composition of the Board, all those who are on the Board are full members of the Board, whether or not they are members of the Institute. A number of years ago we introduced independent trustees, who did not have to be members and who were appointed via a selection process rather than election. I am happy to report that these Board members have made an outstanding contribution to the Institute over the last 4-5 years, bringing particular skills and a valuable alternative perspective. There is no intention of reverting back to a system where only chartered members are on the Board or going back to a system where a large Council was the Board. This would be contrary to Charity Commission recommended practice. I do however agree

with you that all Officers should be chartered members elected by the membership and we have changed our proposals to reflect this.

Regarding voting rights for members in various categories, there is a mixed range of opinions on this. The issue has been well discussed at the Board, Council and at all the governance consultation roadshows with Branches. The current thinking is that members should be given the option of voting separately on each possible extension of voting rights. There is a desire at Board level to widen the franchise and democratise the Institute but ultimately it will be for the members to choose where they think the lines should be drawn.

Regarding the ability of members to contact each other, I agree that more needs to be done to allow member networking. I have asked the staff team to look at how we can facilitate more networking and contact between members in a cost effective way that also complies with data protection. We will not go back to producing the old year books but we will be creating online directories for members to access. In response to members requests, including yours, for Institute business being more widely communicated I am pleased to announce that we are also going to re-launch Vista as a member focused communication tool.

Finally Hal let me say how delighted I was to hear that the Colvin archive has gone to MERL and that there will be an article in the summer issue of the Journal that features this.

With grateful thanks for your continued support of the Institute

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Noel Farrer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Noel Farrer  
President, Landscape Institute