

Introduction and Welcome



Hello and welcome to the latest issue of the CIHT North East & Cumbria Newsletter.

This July update provides you with an update from the CIHT North East and Cumbria Region. This edition provides a brief recap from our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May 2021, an update from our committee members, as well as an overview of our plans for the year ahead.

For those of you who were unable to make the AGM event in May, it kicked off with an interesting presentation from Fran Manancourt from the Tees Valley Combined Authority and Phil Freestone from WSP, followed by our regional annual reporting and new committee elections. Unfortunately, as a result of government guidelines and unpredictable nature of the pandemic, this was held virtually again this year however, we did not let that dampen our spirits as the event was still very well attended by our members.

The re-election of the committee followed shortly after the presentations session and saw our immediate past chair Nicola Hill from Arup hand over the baton as Chair to Peter Conlan from Cundall. We also saw a number of other executive committee appointments which include Joanne Roberts from Stockton-on-Tees as Vice-Chair, Grace Smith from Wood as Junior Vice-Chair and Anthony Robinson from Capita take on the new role as Honorary Secretary. In addition to this we have also managed to strengthen our committee and would like to welcome our two new members: Jon Collett from North Midland Construction PLC and Julie Verrill from Cundall.

Our new Chair re-emphasised the importance of collaboration and working together to support new cross working opportunities and help address the many challenges our industry faces post pandemic.

His opening speech confirmed there will be a continued commitment to align our vision and values with the CIHT's mission to "Build Back Better" going on to identify the following key themes:

- Reinvigorate and nourish new and existing relationships with other professional institutes within the construction and building environment sectors.
- Support the development and promotion of online learning and CPD events and make this content available online to our members and peers within the construction sector and building environment sectors.
- Continue to recruit, retain, educate, and develop an inclusive and diverse committee and members.

Looking forward towards the year ahead, we are still operating a digital first approach to events but we are in the process of evaluating when and how we will begin to introduce face to face events. We have also been liaising with our counterparts from various institutes including the ICE, RTPI and RICS with the plan to try and host some joint events in the months ahead. It should also be noted that our 5-a-side league has also kicked off already and a number of games are lined up over the summer months.

Since the AGM, we held a committee meeting in June and hosted a virtual event on professional qualifications, as a workshop delivered online by Sue Stevens on 14 July.

The next big event to get in the calendar will be our Annual Awards evening which will be held virtually in October with the hope that when restrictions ease, we will be able to celebrate our successes as a region and host an annual dinner in person again early in 2022.

Thank you to all our members for your continued support and input so far this year. We are still keen to get more events planned for the year ahead, so if there is anything you would like the committee to consider, do not hesitate to get in touch. I look forward to seeing you all at our next committee meeting on September 16th 2021.

Stay Safe and Take Care.

Best Wishes,
Peter
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North East & Cumbria Virtual Annual Awards



Unfortunately, due to circumstances out of our control and the prolonged outfall of the COVID-19 pandemic we have yet again been forced to celebrate our Annual Awards ceremony for the North East & Cumbria Branch online. It was initially anticipated that we may have been back to in person events by the Autumn time and been able to celebrate the very best of our people and Projects in the North East & Cumbria just like the good ole times with our winners announced at our annual dinner.

Notwithstanding, despite not being able to celebrate with large numbers in person just yet, we thought it was imperative to continue to celebrate the successes of our people and the flagship projects which we have worked on here in the North East & Cumbria over the last year 2020/2021. With this in mind we are launching our Second Virtual Awards Ceremony to be held in **October 2021**.

Following a similar format to last year's events the number of awards has been limited to three categories again this year. This includes the following:

- Apprentice Award - recognising the efforts of an apprentice who is a rising star within the Region. During their time in the industry they consistently go above and beyond their daily duties to assist colleagues.
- Young Professional Award - recognising the effort of one keen individual, who in the first 10 years of their career, have demonstrated a passion for the industry a genuine commitment to developing themselves and helping others.
- Project of the Year 2021 - to be awarded to the project which can demonstrate a positive contribution to the region. This could be showing enterprise and ingenuity in the current Covid-19 pandemic, overcoming challenges to continue operation and / or implementation, and other wider benefits that stand it out as a high-quality project.

We are accepting Expressions of Interest up until mid-September – simply email us: northeastandcumbria@ciht.org.uk, stating the category you'd like to enter.

Full entries can then be submitted until late September.

Further details will be made available on our website. Booking for the event, date to be confirmed, will be available on our website in the next couple of weeks.

Regional Committee Update

The last Regional Panel meeting took place in May 2021 and the session was opened and welcomed by our new President, Deborah Sims.

Deborah was elected as the new CIHT President at the AGM on 23 June 2021 and confirmed that her theme for the 2021 / 2022 Presidential term, will be Routes to Professionalism. It is anticipated that this will cover a range of topics including skills and career development, a focus on resources for young professionals and students, and professional ethics and behaviour.

A couple of items which were picked up from the previous meeting in March 2021, included circulating information pertinent to succession planning in the regions as well as guidance for speakers hosting CPD Seminars. This was followed by a presentation from Sue Percy who presented an update on the development of the new Strategic Plan of which all regions were actively encouraged to contribute to the consultation. Andrew Crudgington who is the CIHT's Climate Change Associate, also presented on the CIHT's Route to Net Zero project and further information can be found later in the article below.

Sue Percy also presented on the CIHT EDI Project. It was noted that CIHT has commissioned the Clear Company to review the progress of the Institution's work on EDI. The review is expected to be completed by the end of August. As part of this project CIHT will be engaging with members in 4 focus groups, including a Regions and Nations group and a group made up of young professionals. There will also be a member survey to collect wider views. The project outcomes are an EDI strategy, and an action plan including KPIs. A new EDI Manager will be appointed to deliver the plan.

Other matters to note include but are not limited to the following: Sue Stevens will be leaving her post in August as Director of Education & Membership. As Deborah Sims has become the new CIHT President, Neil Johnstone becomes the new Senior Vice President and Neil will join the next Regional Panel meeting.

National Council Update

The latest National Council meeting took place on 23 June, of which the Council received and discussed a presentation by CIHT's Climate Change Associate, Andrew Crudgington, in relation to CIHT's Route to Net Zero project.

His presentation is shown here:

www.ciht.org.uk/media/14690/council-june-21-route-to-net-zero.pdf. Andrew is encouraging your thoughts to Andrew.Crudgington@ciht.org.uk.

Council also received a presentation on the Institution's submission to the Transport Select Committee's Smart Motorways inquiry. Our submission is here <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/25643/pdf/> <https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/b4a8cfa8-5393-4703-8616-8916ca634b89> is the link to the Select Committee meeting at which Kate Carpenter presented and answered questions on CIHT's evidence.

We are also pleased to inform you that Darran Kitchener, a past Chair of the CIHT North East and Cumbria Committee, has been co-opted on to CIHT Council and appointed to the Institution's Board of Trustees.

Congratulations to Darran. This means that the NE&C Region has three members of the Council. Darran joins the other two members, Chandra Vemury and Tim Speed.

At the AGM later that afternoon, Martin Tugwell stood down as CIHT President and Chair of the Board of Trustees. Those two roles have now been separated and Deborah Sims was installed as the new President and Gordon Baker was appointed as Chair of the Board of Trustees.

CIHT Strategic Plan 2022 to 2027

The Strategic Plan 2022 to 2027 consultation closed on 2 July 2021 at 5pm. This was a chance for all members to have a say and help shape the priorities and future direction of the Institution.

The Strategic Plan is a framework that can be used to meet the challenges ahead, it sets out ambition and provides the context for future projects, initiatives, opportunities and the business plan.

The consultation was seeking feedback on CIHT's Mission, Values, Strategic Priorities and how/what resources should be used. So much has changed since the last plan was developed and it is important the Institution focuses on the Climate emergency as well as the economic recovery following Covid and supporting innovation and new technology in our industry.

It was noted at the last Regional Chairs meeting in July that the member feedback from the consultation exercise would be incorporated into the next strategic plan. Britannia Walk noted that there had been a number of constructive workshops with regional committee members and wider stakeholders which have helped shape areas of development and improvement.

A recurring theme throughout the responses highlighted that members thought we need to be bolder with our vision and should strive to set more ambitious targets should we seek to be industry leaders on all Transportation and Highway matters.

So, in terms of the next steps it is understood that the Board of Trustees will be meeting up for an away day in August to reflect on the responses of the consultation and will work collaboratively to establish a clear and cohesive strategy.

The Board of Trustees will then work with the Britannia Walk executive leadership team to finalise the content of the next strategic plan before presenting this to the Council in Autumn 2021 with the new Strategic Plan ready to be approved in early 2022.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – Strategy Update

The institution has embarked upon a reflective process to ask some of the most important questions of itself and its members and partners. This process involves assessing how the individual members of CIHT, its industrial and academic partners and other stakeholders feel about CIHT's commitment and contribution towards and delivery of equality, diversity, and inclusivity.

As mentioned above, an external consulting firm called the Clear Company (TCC) has been appointed to gather evidence through a combination of questionnaire survey, personal interviews and focus groups. TCC shall be analysing the data gathered and advise CIHT on its performance in terms of equality, diversity and inclusivity (ED&I) and recommend areas of improvement, where appropriate.

The early indicators from this process suggest that the members and partners appreciate CIHT's efforts in promoting ED&I. The CIHT Diversity & Panel is working collaboratively with the Clear Company in this review process.

The CIHT EDI Toolkit can be found here: <https://www.ciht.org.uk/about-us/about-ciht/diversity-inclusion/>

A Day in the Life of Jon Collett who has recently joined our Committee

Name

Jonathan (Jon) Collett

Title

Head of Operations at
North Midland
Construction PLC .

Terms of Reference

I left school at 16 years old, in those days you could do that!

My first job was with a Midlands based material testing company and that's when I started to realise that I wanted to be involved in making people's lives better.



(Whatever that meant) After two years of hard toil out on site, I was lucky to get a job with Leicestershire County Council's department of Planning and Transportation, as a Trainee Technician.

I did what all good Technicians did and supported various teams across the department. This gave me a fantastic grounding in to all aspects of the department and I undertook part time study from ONC to MSc level. It took me some time but at the age of 29, I finally had the qualifications to start realising my aspiration to make people's lives better.

After leaving the County Council, I had a brief but very interesting job with Birmingham International Airport, where I left to join Babbie as a Transport Planning Team Leader. Since that time and over the last 20 years, I have held 7 different roles including the post of the Chief Engineer for a Local Authority and finishing, before my early retirement, as Jacobs European Head of Local Government Services. Following 8 months of retirement I have now joined NMCN and now look after their Infrastructure Operations in the North East.

Suitability for the Job

I have two degrees and approaching 40 years of experience mixing strategy, planning and delivery. I now have a very strong drive to promote Engineering

Where Based

I'm now based in South East Durham, working from home which is such a privilege, given that up until my retirement I was working all across the UK and for significant periods of time in India, Poland and America. NMCN are based in Huthwaite, Sutton-in-Ashfield, so I look to work from home or site whenever I can.

Top of in tray

Ensuring that our people are always safe, we are having a positive impact and driving social value in its widest sense through our projects. Ooh and paying our supply chain and getting paid by our clients.

Best aspects of the job

I'm able to draw on my 40-ish years of experience and help others to deliver 'right first time' – An old boss of mine always said that "we are not clever enough to make new mistakes" and that is so true!

Worst aspects of the job

Only two months into the new role so it's all still chocolate and roses.

Most pressing issue

In the new role, this has to be the pressure that the pandemic and other national decisions have put on the supply chain, our people and the materials we need. We have the perfect opportunity to build our way out of the doldrums of the pandemic but need to be very agile. As an industry we need to accelerate the emphasis on Social Value and Carbon and stop being fixated with cost. We appear to "know the cost of everything and the value of very little". Things are changing but not fast enough.

How do you relax?

I run or jog to keep my mind and body fit so that I can enjoy good quality food. I also like a good bottle of wine or two..

Ambition

That's a really interesting one because we ordinarily associate ambition with professional lives. Having retired and come back to work, I'm not overly professionally ambitious - to a certain extent I have "been there and worn the t-shirt".

I am however, really passionate about STEM and I sit on the Board of Governors for Hartlepool College of Further Education. So I guess my ambition is for the College to be recognised as the exceptional learning establishment that it is and ensure that many more young people gain the life skills and experiences in Engineering that I have had over my career.

A Day in the Life of Julie Verrill who also has recently joined our Committee

Name

Julie Verrill

Title

Technician.

Terms of Reference

I have been at Cundall for about 4 years now and have been involved in various UK and international projects, ranging from large scale to small scale projects. My role includes writing reports, junction modelling, data analysis, CAD work and many other tasks. I am also a very keen promoter of STEM in schools. .



Suitability for the job

I have a Geography degree from Newcastle University and have just completed my HND in Civil Engineering. I actually had a short HR career before having a major career change to the dark side. I wrote a blog about it here: <https://bit.ly/3hW6Wxr>. Having these qualifications has helped to provide me with a broad understanding of transport issues, in addition to the more technical engineering aspects.

Where based

I'm usually based in the Cundall HQ in Gosforth, however my dining room in Whitley Bay has been my office for the majority of lockdown. .

Transport to work

When in the office I like to avoid the traffic, so I make use of the sustainable modes of transport and typically walk and use the Metro.

Top of in tray

I have recently been assisting with preparing the technical drawing and documentation to support a major mixed-used development in Scotland which has been very complex, but interesting.

Best aspects of the job

Definitely the variety of working on so many wide-ranging projects but I also love collaborating with other teams, as Cundall is a multi-disciplinary consultancy. I also have a very supportive team who I thoroughly enjoy working with. I am very passionate about the Cundall company culture and am part of the Social Committee, which involves organising social events each month to various different locations around the North East.

Worst aspects of the job

Separation between work and my personal life, with working from home.

Most pressing issue

Juggling an 18 month old whilst working full-time and finishing my college degree. This was challenging at times however, very rewarding too.

How do you relax?

I live about a 5 minute walk from the beach so enjoy being active, going for walks and anything outdoors. I also love reading and decided to make the most of this, starting a book blog at the start of lockdown, for which I now have over 7,000 followers. I obviously also love spending time with my family and friends.

Ambition

I'd love to complete a Masters in Transport Engineering eventually and expand my knowledge of projects around the world.

More Good News Stories.....

Congratulations to Chandra Mouli Vemury and Jonathan Collette who have both been elected as Fellows last month.

Professional Qualifications and Mentoring

Achieving professional qualifications is undoubtedly for many a career milestone. Studies have also recognised that good mentoring is important to achieving the best outcomes in gaining qualifications, especially so this year when many of us have been working remotely, away from our colleagues.

As a region we hold regular surgeries to provide overviews and tailored advice to those progressing through CEng, IEng, EngTech and TPP, including finding the right mentor. Whilst we hope to do this again in 2022 support and advice is available on the CIHT website [here](#), including access to mentor matching resources.

Please also consult the [CIHT website](#) if you are interested in becoming an accredited mentor or reviewer for all CIHT professional qualifications.



Events Programme for 2021

We have a lot to look forward to in 2021 /22, with the committee working on delivering a range of local events. In addition to our Virtual Annual Awards, we expect to bring you our annual pub quiz, a road safety event, our Young Professionals Papers Competition, and professional qualifications surgeries. In 2022 we hope to run our second Future Transport Technologies Conference in person as well as host our Annual Awards dinner and Presentation. Keep an eye on our website and LinkedIn page for further details.

Some of our scheduled and in-planning events are listed below. Given the current Covid-19 situation, these are subject to change and more will be added as plans develop. Whilst we hope to revert to some face-to-face events at some point in 2022, we acknowledge most are likely to be conducted virtually for the foreseeable future. Please check our [Events Page](#) for regular updates.

Scheduled Events

Event	Date
Virtual Annual Awards Ceremony + Guest Speaker	Autumn 2021
NE&C Annual Quiz (online!)	Winter 2021
Young Professionals Papers Competition 2021	Spring 2021
Annual Awards Dinner & Presentation	February 2022
AGM + Guest Speaker	May 2022
Routes to Professional Qualifications	Summer 2022
Future Transport Technologies Online Conference	Summer 2022

Events in Planning

Event	Type
Funding Transport Infrastructure Projects	Seminar
Building Back Confidence in Public Transport	Seminar
Road Safety Event	Learning
Further lunchtime and evening events throughout 2021 / 2022	Seminar
Young Professionals Network events	Seminar/social

Contact or Follow us

General queries: northeastandcumbria@ciht.org.uk

Regional Website: www.ciht.org.uk/ne

LinkedIn: search for "CIHT North East and Cumbria Region"

Follow CIHT on Twitter: @CIHTUK



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