

Landscape Institute Future Directions

Vote to support the changes to our regulations, by-laws and charter

Background

Just over a year ago, Noel Farrer, president of the Landscape Institute made a commitment to changing the way in which the LI is governed in order to make it more democratic and more accessible to a wider range of landscape practitioners. In a letter to members, he explained:

'The LI aims to be a democratic organisation but some of our structures make this difficult to achieve. The Institute needs a strong, large and diverse membership. We need to bring people into the Institute at the start of their careers, as well those who are now working at a professional level, and those working in other countries. We need greater democracy within the organisation, enabling everyone with a stake in the Institute to participate and have a say. I want to ensure that any systems or requirements we have in place that in effect discriminate on the basis of age are removed. And we need governance arrangements that are fit for purpose now and in the future, reflecting the world we operate in and demographic factors shaping future membership levels. The suggested changes reflect a direction of travel that is supported by the Board and Council.'

The past few months have seen a lot of people demanding your vote both in the LI and elsewhere. You may say, why bother with yet another vote. Yet this vote will have a hugely positive impact on the future development of the LI, opening up new routes to participation in the running of the organisation and further opportunities for a range of people to get involved.

The average age of a Chartered LI Member (CMLI) is currently 47, the average age of a Licentiate (non-chartered) Member is currently 37 yet a Licentiate is not allowed to vote on any aspect of the LI's work or in any of the LI's elections for board or council members. In addition to this, Licentiates cannot serve on the LI board of trustees – these are just two examples of changes we are making so that the LI better represents many of its members.

At an EGM held in July 2015, eleven of twelve motions debated received a high level of support from members. On the basis of this vote of confidence, the board undertook a detailed analysis with the help of three member-led working groups to work out exactly how to implement these important changes.

We are now nearing the end of this important process. The EGM in 2015 was designed to see which changes members supported in principle and the subsequent working groups have been looking at the detail of how to make the changes happen. We have now drafted new governing documents that reflect the changes members have already shown they support. We now need members to formally pass motions that approve the new documents. The Privy Council will then give formal approval as we are a Royal Chartered body.

Full details of all the new by-laws, regulations and the slight changes to the royal charter can be viewed in the member website.

Here is a brief summary of the key changes that we are making.

1. We will extend basic voting rights to Academic Members, Academic Fellows and Licentiates.
2. We will include a clear obligation for all corporate Members to comply with the Code of Conduct.
3. We will increase the number of Members required to requisition an EGM to 3%.
4. We will provide a place for an additional Trustee to serve on the Board who will be a non-Chartered Member (a Licentiate or Academic).
5. We will change references to 'Landscape Architecture' to 'Landscape Practice' throughout the by-laws and regulations, to reflect the language that is used in practice.
6. We will create a new individual category of membership which will be referred to as 'Affiliate' membership designed for people with a professional interest in landscape. People in this category will not have voting rights.
7. We will remove the prohibition on individuals who are engaged in landscape practice from being admitted as Honorary Fellows.
8. We will make new provisions to allow Corporate Members to appoint a proxy electronically and to enable Corporate Members to vote electronically or by post on resolutions/motions at a General Meeting.
9. We are updating our disciplinary procedures to ensure they demonstrate best practice and comply with current legal requirements.

To look at the formal notice of the EGM as well as to inspect all of the proposed changes, please go to the Member website.