

President's Statement to Council

As I begin my term as President, I should like to acknowledge the difficulties faced by the Landscape Institute during the past 2 years.

Some time ago, in consultation with the whole membership, we embarked on a major review of the way we manage our affairs. We did this to bring the Institute into line with what is considered to be good practice for similar professional bodies. However getting this right first time would have been an ambitious target and as you would expect, we will monitor the changes we have made to governance and to our examinations system and continue to keep a watchful eye on our finances as we face a continued period of uncertainty. It may also become necessary to review our electoral processes.

I will continue to welcome scrutiny of our affairs. Our financial difficulties rightly attracted comment from the membership, which resulted in the 2 Extraordinary General Meetings which took place last year. During this period, some extremely unpleasant and unwarranted remarks were made by some members towards other members and towards members of our staff. This was regrettable and a matter of great personal sadness.

We must strive to celebrate diversity of thought and opinion and recognise that the starting point for any debate must be a mutual respect and recognition of another's right to express an alternative view.

It is no doubt the case that some financial decisions were made which, with the benefit of hindsight, we regret. As part of the governance review we have sought to improve financial management by making changes to the Board of Trustees which now contains external Trustees with expertise in business and charity finance. We have also since put in place a Finance Working Group to assist with the work of the Chief Executive and the Honorary Treasurer.

We will now move on and draw a line under recent events. Our task is to be outward looking, seeking to engage with the new Government and to focus on the many new challenges and opportunities which face us as a profession.

Jo Watkins PLI CMLI
President

22 September 2010