

MAGAZINE FOR THE RTPI WEST MIDLANDS

TRIPWIRE



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Cover image: Aurora Borealis over Shropshire, February 2023.

Credit: @alexmurison



New Tripwire Editor



—
James Hoskinson
 RTPi WM TRIPWIRE Editor

Working in the West Midlands as a planner for a number of years, you soon come to realise that the people and the profession begin to feel both familiar and familial.

Here in the West Midlands, there's a myriad of speaking events you can sign-up to, training and CPD courses to explore, and a plethora of institutions in which you can work, study or trade ideas. There are fascinating insights into the key issues facing our region and profession, expert knowledge from practitioners at the top of their field and fantastic opportunities for you to get involved in the shaping of the sector. It is through those opportunities which I now come to find myself as your editor of this spring edition of TRIPWIRE.

I would like to thank Michael Vout, who has presided as Editor since 2016 over numerous editions, with features ranging from the Commonwealth Games and designing for beauty to the COP26 Special Edition. His long tenure was driven by his good humoured passion for championing the profession over a very changeable period for planning.

I would also like to thank all the article contributors, our designer and the RTPi's regional team for bringing it all together to kick-start our 2023 publications. This edition is filled with content relating to the work the RTPi and its partners do in the region to help grow and celebrate the profession. If you want to be more involved then I would urge planners, from apprentices to retirees, to get involved in any way you can and join the family of planners giving their time by volunteering.

An Introduction from the new RTPI West Midlands Chair for 2023



“When I grow up, I want to be a town planner”. Words I would love to hear more. When I was about seven years old, all I wanted to do was drive my own ice-cream van.

By the career interviews stage of school I’d moved on to the idea of journalism whereupon I had that dream scuppered because I’d *“need to be able to type”*, and I’d chosen O level geography instead of typing (yes, sadly I am showing my age here).

Not sure our careers advisor was at the top of their game, with hindsight.

I loved geography though, but I had never heard of town planning as a career. One degree (In English Literature, from Aberystwyth) later, along with a much more interesting side-line in environmental conservation in the Welsh hillside I stumbled across a new diploma course in a new-fangled thing called an Environmental Impact Assessment, which I signed up to, largely because I fancied another year by the coast. Well, that turned out to be one of those sliding doors moments as I accidentally stumbled across town planning as a career.

I’m telling you this because I thought my story was fairly unique. But upon chatting to planners from all walks of life I turned out to be one of many who have found their calling via a number of different routes – not just degrees (a variety of subject areas are applicable) but as part of a broader apprenticeship, via a work experience placement, or through community work and volunteering – the possibilities are endless. There is always a common theme though: passion, curiosity, enthusiasm, a willingness to learn, and a love of the places and spaces which play such a big part in our everyday lives.

I feel that Town Planning as a profession deserves far more recognition. There can be very few careers which are so varied, including the types of roles (policy, DM, enforcement, specialisms), the range of sectors and the breadth of topics we cover in the name of sustainable development. Sure, there are many challenges and sometimes a nagging sense of déjà vu, but it’s a career that I am genuinely grateful to have stumbled across and have (mostly) loved ever since.

So, raising awareness of town planning as a profession is a real passion of mine and I am delighted to see that it is also a passion of many of our members across the region, and as a result much work is going on to raise awareness in schools, making sure that teachers and careers advisors know about it, promote it, help guide students to pick good options for GCSE and A levels and know where to go to find out more.

The RTPI has produced an excellent resource, **Plan your World** – please do check it out.

It’s not just about young new recruits either. Planning is an excellent choice for those want to diversify or change their career, and we want to be ready to welcome and support them with open arms. To grow them to become our leaders and ambassadors of the future. It’s why, as well as being this year’s RTPI WM RTPI Chair I am also involved as an assessor with the **apprenticeships scheme** – a wonderful programme which provides learning alongside the realities of the world of a practitioner. I am also delighted to see the launch of the RTPI **mentoring scheme** for mid-career planners so that our talented planners can share their skills with a new generation, ensuring we are resilient in years to come.

So finally, in terms of how I ended up as RTPI WM chair for 2023. Well, I wanted to give something back. I had spent many years developing a fulfilling career with the help of the RTPI WM’s CPD programme as well as a range of other regional activities and events and I wanted to ensure it continued to provide the kind of support our members need. Please do support the work we do, and maybe even consider joining us in helping us deliver even more in future years.

It’s a good job I never did follow that dream of owning my own ice cream van. I developed an allergy to dairy produce. Thank goodness for town planning!



Clare Eggington MRTPI

RTPI West Midlands Chair 2023



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- ✔ Access wellbeing resources such as webinars, podcasts, articles, videos and guides
- ✔ 4-week self-help programmes

RTPPI NEWS: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation

Members from RTPPI West Midlands have helped shape the Institute’s response to the NPPF consultation by participating in a roundtable held in February. In all, 16 roundtables were held across the English regions and with our special-interest networks.

Throughout the process we have heard a range of diverse views from across the planning profession and we thank all contributors for their input.

You can read our response to the consultation here.



Public confidence in England’s planning system is at an all-time low. Our members agree that change is needed but we’re concerned that the proposed NPPF will not deliver the homes, infrastructure and regeneration that communities were promised, and need, to level them up.

VICTORIA HILLS
Chief Executive, RTPPI



Save The Date for our Awards Ceremony and Summer Ball

We are delighted to be celebrating our RTPPI Awards winners at Millennium Point in Birmingham on 30 June 2023. Tables and individual tickets available.

Interested in sponsoring the event? Get in touch to find out more at westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk

We are grateful to our Headline Sponsor **No5 Barristers Chambers** for sponsoring the ceremony and to our Awards Category Sponsor **Tetra Tech**.

Awards for Planning Excellence – last chance to submit

The closing date for the **RTPPI Awards for Planning Excellence 2023** is fast approaching: Friday 21st March 2023 at 11.59pm. Please make sure you have got your entry together and hit that all-important submit button. This is the only awards ceremony dedicated solely to the planning profession with 15 categories that you can enter covering plans, projects and people.

Last year’s nominees or winners from the region included Birmingham City Council’s Our Future City Plan, commended for ‘Excellence in Planning for the Natural Environment’, David Lock Associates and Rugby Borough Council winning ‘Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture’ for the Houtlon School scheme, and Simeon Shtebunaev, who won ‘Young Planner of the Year’.

Event sponsors:





Celebrating Planning Aid at 50

2023 marks 50 years of Planning Aid services. This significant milestone provides an opportunity to reflect on Planning Aid England's (PAE) regional achievements over its long history, and to recognise and celebrate the impact that its volunteers have made.

As part of this celebration, PAE are collating reflections from PAE volunteers past and present in order to showcase online the difference that the service has made to people and places across the English Regions.

If you have been a PAE volunteer, or have worked with PAE, and would like to share details of particular project that you were involved in, we'd love to hear from you – and if you have a few photos, even better! Or perhaps you know of a plan or project supported by PAE that may be suitable for a site visit.

Please send your suggestions to Hayley.Shattock@rtpi.org.uk and info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk who will get back in touch to discuss these with you.



RTPI – Code of Conduct

IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

From 1 February, all RTPI members will be required to comply with a new Code of Professional Conduct. The new code sets out updated and amended ethical standards for all members of the Institute and applies to all categories of members worldwide.

[Click here for further information >>>](#)



Success on the Chartered Town Planner Degree Apprenticeship, University of Birmingham

Congratulations to Anna Harry (Avison Young), Beverley Garner (Wardell Armstrong) and Michael Brown (Warwick District Council) who are the first degree apprentices in the West Midlands to be elected Chartered Members of the RTPI. The apprenticeship is a new pathway into education with apprentices working in a professional planning role alongside their studies. The route was introduced in 2019 and forms part of the RTPI strategy to diversify routes into the profession and to grow the membership base.

Anna, Beverley and Michael completed the Chartered Town Planner Degree Apprenticeship at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham which is a leading international centre for research, teaching and consultancy in planning studies. The apprenticeship route necessitates a partnership approach to be adopted with the University working in collaboration with employers to support apprentices in achieving the MSc Urban and Regional Planning, Town Planning Degree Apprenticeship and Chartership of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). A core component is the commitment to an average of 6 hours per week off-the-job learning which enables apprentices to develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and behaviours and contributes towards their personal and professional development.

The core academic component of the programme at the University of Birmingham provides apprentices with a range of practical knowledge and understanding of core planning issues and agendas across modular topics including Sustainable Cities, Urban Property Development, Planning Theory, Research skills, and Place-making. The teaching emphasis is on participative approaches to learning that enable apprentices to reflect critically on important current debates and to provide a “real world” feel for the programme. The course leaders use Birmingham and the wider West Midlands as a “learning laboratory” with site visits and project work associated with Port Loop, Digbeth and Langley Sustainable Urban Extension to name a few.

Furthermore, apprentices are provided with additional learning opportunities in order to fulfil the requirements of the apprenticeship, with a particular focus on reflective learning, professional conduct, interview and presentation skills. Furthermore, through site visits and input from practitioner-led seminars and tours, apprentices explore important urban agendas including heritage conservation within the Jewellery Quarter and the delivery and legacy of the Commonwealth Games in Perry Barr. A European field-trip to Rotterdam is also to be introduced.

Upon completion of the taught elements of the programme, apprentices complete an independent End Point Assessment in order to gain Chartership of the RTPi. This consists of a Professional Discussion and Assessment of Professional Competence.

This new educational pathway has been hugely successful with numbers steadily increasing – at present the University of Birmingham are supporting 47 apprentices across 4 cohorts and from a range of professional backgrounds including local authorities across the West Midlands, a range of planning consultancies (from independents to international firms), house-builders and statutory consultees.

Recruitment for a September 2023 start is currently underway so if you are interested in finding out more please contact the apprenticeships team.

–

Dr Kat Salter

Associate Professor in Urban and Regional Planning and Programme Lead for the Chartered Town Planner Degree Apprenticeship, University of Birmingham

Course Information

Start date: September 2024

Duration: Approximately 36 months – 48 months (including gaining Chartership of the RTPi)

Course Type: Postgraduate Taught

Fees: The Degree Apprenticeship will be paid for through the Apprenticeship Levy

Entry Requirements: 2:1 Honours degree in a relevant subject.

Further information: Please contact Jenny Chin at degreeapps@bham.ac.uk. More information on RTPi Apprenticeships is available at www.rtpi.org.uk/apprenticeships



RTPI West Midlands Events

Socials and Networking

West Midlands Great Debate, 22 March 2023 at The Studio, Birmingham. Chair Professor Carl Chinn MBE and a panel of six cross-institute representatives will host a discussion around regional and socio-economic inequality, inclusive design and development, ongoing building and planning reform and climate resilience and adaptation, under the overarching event theme of **Making the Most of What We've Got; How to Improve the Existing Built Environment** | [Eventbrite](#).

Coventry Study Tour, 8 June 2023 at Coventry City Centre.

A walking tour discussing planning issues, regeneration and more.

NEW for 2023 - Local Authority Skills Based Training Programme

As part of our commitment to supporting Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) the RTPI West Midlands is developing some skills-based training at a significantly reduced fee for members working in the public sector. The first of these sessions is detailed below, with an additional two sessions to be released later in the year:

LA Planners on the Front Line: working with the public, keeping safe and building trust - 11 July 2023 at The Priory Rooms, Birmingham.

Up and coming CPD Events for 2023

Spring Planning Law Update

25 April – DLA Piper, Birmingham

BOOK NOW

Local Plans Examinations

in Public – 22 May 2023

The Studio, Birmingham

BOOK NOW

Heritage and Planning

12 September 2023

No5 Chambers, Birmingham

BOOK NOW

Autumn Planning Law Update

3 October – DLA Piper, Birmingham

BOOK NOW

Get in touch

Tripwire is the magazine of RTPI West Midlands, produced by our members for our members. The opinions expressed are the views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the RTPI. You can read all of our digital editions published from 2017 to the present on [our website](#).

If you would like to contribute a photo, illustration or article, suggest a theme for future editions or have any ideas for content please email the Editor at tripwirewm@gmail.com.

Contact RTPI West Midlands via email westmidlands@rtpi.org.uk.

You can also follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or see what's going on in the region on our [website](#).

