



MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

DATE OF MEETING: Friday 31st January 2025
TIME: 11.00 am – 3.00 pm
VENUE: THE GUILDHALL OFFICES, LONDON (HYBRID)

PRESENT (In person (12) and online (11))

| First Name | Surname | Officer | In person/virtual |
|------------|------------|---|-------------------|
| Dan | Meek | ACES Senior President | In person |
| Alan | Richards | ACES Senior Vice-President | In person |
| Trevor | Bishop | ACES Secretary | In person |
| David | Pethen | ACES Assistant Secretary | In person |
| Betty | Albon | ACES Editor | Virtual |
| Chris | Hewitt | ACES Treasurer | Virtual |
| Neil | Webster | ACES Head of Engagement | In person |
| Neil | McManus | Member of Council | In person |
| Chris | Rhodes | Member of Council | In person |
| Keith | Jewsbury | Member of Council for Retired Members | In person |
| Willie | Martin | Member of Council for Retired Members | In person |
| Jeremy | Pilgrim | Member of Council – Strategic Asset Management | In person |
| Lee | Dawson | Member of Council – Strategic Asset Management | In person |
| Marcus | Perry | Branch Liaison Officer | In person |
| Simon | Hughes | Member of Council - Co-ordinator for MHCLG/ACES Working Party | Virtual |
| Chris | Bandy | Member of Council – Eastern Branch | Virtual |
| Kevin | Moore | Member of Council - Heart of England Branch | Virtual |
| Helen | Stubbs | Member of Council – North East Branch | Virtual |
| Paul | Edgeworth | Member of Council – North West Branch | Virtual |
| Marie | Percival | Member of Council – North West Branch | Virtual |
| David | Baird | Member of Council – Scottish Branch | Virtual |
| Ben | Winstanley | Member of Council – Welsh Branch | Virtual |

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| Gerry | Devine | Member of Council – Welsh Branch | Virtual |
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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Andrew Stirling, Chris Brain, Malcolm Williams, Sam Partridge, Neil Simon, Vincent Guz, Daniella Barrow, Simon Cartmell, Sara Cameron, and Julie Blight.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12th July 2024 in Preston (and online) were read through and approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Noted that ACES will not now be attending UKREiiF in 2025. Minutes to be amended.

No feedback received from letter to Deputy Prime Minister.

The Secretary reported on the Terrier website proposal by Marcus Macaulay. Secretary proposed to revive the proposal with updated costings and, if below £5k, Council agreed to refer the matter to CMT to consider and make a firm recommendation either back to Council or the full membership by way of online voting. Noted that the ever changing technology such as AI needs to be kept in mind in deciding upon the suitability of Marcus Macaulay's product.

The President mentioned the issue of accessibility to future Council meetings and it was proposed that the July meeting be held in Manchester rather than Preston. **This was approved by Council.**

1542 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President reported on his activities since his installation at the 2024 AGM.

He referred to the wonderful AGM hosted by Fieldfisher in November 2024 and the President requested that formal thanks to Antony Philips be minuted.

The President referred to his visits to the SW Branch and Rural Branch as well as the RICS Public Sector Forum and later the inauguration of the new RICS President.

A detailed report from the President is published on the ACES website.

1543 SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary reported on matters arising during the period since the AGM. He provided the latest statistics on membership which showed a continuing increase in membership numbers which had reached **429** at time of reporting. This was in the context of a number of members still in arrears with their subscription which may result in a fall off at some point. On this, Keith Jewsbury requested information on those members in arrears and actions proposed and the Secretary undertook to provide this. It was pleasing to report that the increase in membership included some organisations new to ACES. Charts were displayed showing the increase in membership over the last 5 years and the number of members by category, showing a corresponding increase in full membership.

The Secretary referred to the subscription invoicing and thanked the Treasurer for all his hard work in dealing with the transition to a new invoicing system and getting the bulk of the invoices out. The plan remains that those members who are not invoiced at the beginning of

the calendar year will be brought into line with an aim that all members are invoiced from 1st January 2026.

The Secretary reported that he was very pleased with the appointment of David Pethen as Assistant Secretary and that David had been kept quite busy since his appointment with the secretary confirming that he had taken to the tasks quickly and professionally and had been great support.

A detailed report from the Secretary is published on the ACES website.

1544 FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Treasurer presented his report on the financial position of the Association.

He tabled an updated management accounts document which showed a Statement of Receipts and Payments on a quarterly basis together with a Statement of Financial Position and a summary document showing the totals for the year. The bottom line was that again, there were no concerns to report about our financial performance.

A number of queries were raised from the floor and responded to accordingly. Alan Richards raised the question of income from job vacancies. It was noted that this was currently well below the market figure for non-members although very infrequently used. Neil Webster and David Pethen agreed to do some market research for further consideration.

Simon Hughes raised the issue again about how we use the excess reserves and that action should be taken to review this and make sure matters are progressing. The secretary referred to the recent decision of Council and AGM to concentrate in 2025 on the key priorities of the Constitution and Membership Reviews and a review of our Data Protection policy and actions.

The latest accounts from the Treasurer are published on the ACES website.

1545 REPORT OF HEAD OF ENGAGEMENT

The Head of Engagement talked through his detailed report on matters arising during the period since the last meeting.

Neil referred to a number of issues and partners he was currently engaged with including the EG Public Sector Forum (now changing following the sales of Estates Gazette), the Year 9 Initiative, Corporate Membership, Local Partnerships, FACES (now passed the 200 cohort milestone), RICS and Government Property Function.

Full details of ongoing and future issues are published in the Head of Engagement report on the ACES website.

1546 CONSULTATIONS

The Senior Vice President reported that he had picked a good year for consultations as there was a good number of important ones coming out of central government and others.

Key consultations are posted on the website forum and other means. The SVP reported little response so far and requested all to keep pushing for responses.

It was noted that RICS had now published the new Red Book and Jeremy Pilgrim offered to feedback on the RICS seminar that he will attend.

Suggested that notification of consultations might also be specifically pushed out to the branch secretaries so that they could be raised and discussed at branch meetings thus providing more feedback for the SVP.

1547 ACES' TERRIER

The Editor, Betty Albon, referred to the latest edition of the Terrier which had now been published online and noted that the hard copy of the journal should be arriving with those that had requested it shortly. She reminded members that Marcus Macaulay had now relocated to Malta but there was no impact on service delivery and Marcus also benefitted from a much cheaper postal service on the island!

The Editor put out a call to branches to continue to provide articles/reports for the Terrier as it had been a bit thin on the ground last time.

Dan Meek commented that the Terrier was one of the association's greatest assets and was so well received and we remain eternally indebted to Betty for all her hard work in consistently producing an excellent journal.

1548 CORE MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Secretary reported that the Core Management Team had met from time to time to discuss items to bring forward to Council for notification or for approval as necessary.

The following actions and decisions had taken place requiring endorsement or approval of Council:

- The CMT confirmed support on behalf of ACES for the Institute of Clerks of Works and Construction Inspectorate's application for Royal Charter, and wished the Inspectorate well in its application.
- The CMT finalised the detailed Job Description and terms of the appointment of the Assistant Secretary, arranged advertising of the post and agreed a recommendation for the appointment of the Assistant Secretary. The AGM subsequently approved the recommendations.
- Due to tight timescales, a decision had to be made outside Council on supporting further involvement in the Public Sector Challenge by way of participation in the London Bridges Walk at a cost of £310. The previously approved balance available from PSC funding was up to £1,695, so it was decided that that £310 entry fee was within the gift of CMT. It was noted that, under the ToR approved in April 2024, the President and CMT in consultation with the Treasurer, can approve expenditure up to £5k. Subsequently CMT approved participation of an ACES Team in the London Bridges Walk. (The SVP provided a detailed update on the Challenges, the many benefits gained and proposals for the main 2025 event for subsequent approval).
- CMT considered that the Constitution Review, Membership Review and Data Management should be the immediate priorities for 2025. It was important to protect the association and its members and officers. It was also recognised that there was a need to understand how we are storing and saving data, what we are doing with it, and how we are managing existing and increasing risks such as cyber-attacks.
- In view of the importance of the Constitution, Membership and Data Protection, the CMT decided that these three items should be the core priorities for 2025. Depending on the progress with the actions required to address these priorities it was agreed to review future items later in the year. CMT also considered it was appropriate to seek external support on the Data Protection review and the Assistant Secretary will explore availability of consultants.
- CMT noted that it was probably necessary to seek volunteers again for the key priorities if they were to be delivered in a timely fashion. It was agreed, following the appointment of David Pethen, that he be brought in to assist if he was able to take on extra tasks and it was considered that an extension of his role could be looked at subject to Council approval. Further paid external support also to be considered. Branch Secretaries to be asked to seek support from branches.

- CMT discussed a recent offer by Sara Cameron to continue to deliver part of the Social Media Manager role on a temporary basis. Sara had taken a lead on LinkedIn posts and related matters during her presidency and CMT agreed to have further discussions with Sara to develop an agreed specification and role.
- CMT agreed that the President, the Senior Vice President and Past President, Sara Cameron, should set up a conference call as soon as possible to accelerate progress in identifying and agreeing a recommendation for ACES Junior Vice President. It was also proposed to develop a “pipeline” and appointment of JVP in waiting at an early date.
- The Treasurer raised a question on the approval of ACES Officer invoices. CMT felt it was not appropriate for the President to get heavily involved in this and should only cover off the Secretary and Treasurer. The Treasurer to review the policy.

Council noted and endorsed the actions and proposals.

1549 ACES CONSTITUTION – PROPOSED CHANGES

Helen Stubbs, provided an update report on the proposed changes. She began with an apology that she had not been able to make substantial progress due to other commitments.

She referred to her report intended for the 2024 AGM seeking professional advice on the suitability of the current constitution for the next 20 to 30 years. Helen requested that Council now take her AGM report, which was not formally tabled, by way of a verbal report from Helen together with recommendations.

Following detailed discussion, Council considered we should further explore the pro bono offer by Fieldfisher. It was noted that the Constitution needs more than tinkering. Are we fundamentally structured in the right way as a “Learned Society”? Should we consider incorporated company, limited company, registered charity, or something else etc. Is this something FF could look at before we make further changes to the Constitution?

Jeremy Pilgrim advised that initial discussions had been had with Fieldfisher to look, on a pro bono basis, at how ACES should be structured prior to any wholesale re-writing of the Constitution. If Fieldfisher say this was not in their pro bono offer then it was further recommended and agreed that a budget of £5,000 be set aside to cover this initial work and agreement on the terms of Fieldfisher’s advice be delegated to CMT, together with authority to seek advice from elsewhere if Fieldfisher said they were not able to give the required advice.

Need to then get full April Council to sign off on terms of reference for an appointment for more detailed advice on the re-writing of the constitution depending on the initial advice on the structure of the organisation.

1550 ACES MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

It was noted that the membership review would need to run alongside the constitution review and be subject to the same recommendations referred to in the final paragraph of minute 1549 in terms of external advice and cost limits.

The President noted that at CMT David Pethen was asked to look at the potential impact of LGR on membership. **Council approved this course of action.**

1551 FORWARD PLAN 2024

The Secretary advised that this was work in progress and that he and the Head of Engagement would continue to develop the graphical representation and ensure the key priorities were appropriately positioned in the plan, on track and adequately resourced.

1552 ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

The President advised on the latest position with regard to the 2025 Conference to be held on 24th and 25th September.

The proposed financial plan was displayed on screen and the President talked through the assumptions and estimated numbers as well as confirmed costs.

Whilst the costs of the Gala Dinner were unsurprisingly high (with or without sponsorship), the Conference day itself was based on more reasonable costs and there was more scope to produce a net profit depending on delegate numbers and rates and the level of corporate sponsorship applied. Therefore, combining the two sets of numbers, potentially resulted in a moderate loss of around £3,000. This was considered acceptable in view of the importance of this event and ACES delivery of value for money to members.

Council approved the financial plan and gave the go ahead to the President to book the venues and proceed with further planning.

1553 NATIONAL AGM 2025

The Senior Vice President briefly reported on progress being made with the arrangements for the national AGM this year and will give a more detailed update at April Council. David Pethen provided an update on the venue. Cardiff City Hall was unavailable due to essential repairs so David is in contact with the Castle. He hopes to have a firm date, preferably not a Friday, in the course of the next week or so.

1554 ACES AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE 2025

The Senior Vice President reported on progress. He will follow the pattern of previous years and is considering a modest change to the award categories. He noted that nominations were on the low side last year and he will look at how this can be improved. He will report in more detail at April Council but proposing to put the award details out in June with a deadline for nominations in early September. Council members were asked to contribute towards pushing out the awards to members.

1555 ASSET MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The Secretary updated members on the SAM diploma course which continued to go very well with the help of the ACES members carrying out the presentations in a professional manner. The current iteration of the course was now taking place and it was noted that the number of delegates had reduced.

A joint wash up session took place in Chester earlier in the month and demonstrated that CIPFA were very happy with ACES input and were keen to explore further collaboration.

These involved the CIPFA Property Network “Lunch and Learn” sessions where it was considered ACES members could contribute on a voluntary basis.

Collaboration on the Valuation Certificate was discussed and as this was considered to be a more detailed input by members this should operate in a similar way to the SAM Diploma course with ACES members being remunerated for preparation and presentation work. Furthermore, because of the potential for enhanced input by ACES into the overall delivery, an improved profit share of 50/50 was offered by CIPFA.

Council debated the pros and cons of the proposed further collaboration and the potential impact on ACES purpose and objectives which might compromise the constitutional and

membership reviews. Caution was also raised with regard to tax implications of extending the collaboration arrangements both for the individual members and for the association (potentially VAT).

Further clarification on these matters was needed before formal approval. **It was agreed to confirm to CIPFA that ACES were minded to approve making progress in principle subject to due diligence to gain a detailed understanding of the further implications for ACES. Further considered that Fieldfisher might include this in their work.**

The Secretary raised the issue of the honorarium for Malcolm Williams that has previously been paid for his services. He noted that previous payments of £500 per annum had been made to Malcolm to April 2023. The Secretary proposed to Council that a further honorarium payment of £500 be made to Malcolm to April 2024 and asked that Council consider at its April meeting a payment to April 2025 of £500 plus the increase in officer remuneration rates approved at the 2024 AGM. **Council approved the proposals unanimously.**

1556 BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Branch Liaison Officer Marcus Perry raised two items.

The first was the production of a Trifold Brochure designed for handing out to prospective new members which needed revival and updating. He tabled mock ups of the work so far and the document was also displayed on the screen. It was intended that branch secretaries distribute to organisations in their patch not currently represented and was, as a hard copy, less likely to get swamped in the usual email traffic. Marcus thanked the Editor and Marcus Macaulay in helping to produce the format and samples and requested funding from Council to progress to full publishing. It was noted that any agreed amendments to the brochure would also need to be reflected on the website where appropriate. It was also agreed to look into producing a pdf version of the brochure.

Marcus then gave an update on the state of the branches which in his view were being managed well with one exception being the South East Branch. Notwithstanding best efforts by the Chair, David Kemp, to keep the branch active, the engagement of members was very poor with minimal attendance at meetings whether in person or online. David Kemp was proposing to retire and there was no replacement. Marcus requested Council approval to put the branch into special measures and be given a temporary role to keep the branch ticking over while new officers were identified. Assistant Secretary David Pethen, to liaise with Marcus and David to contact two SE Branch Members he knows re Branch attendance. The President thanked Marcus for his efforts in keeping the branch going and **Council approved his proposed actions with authority to report actions to CMT for approval.**

Keith Jewsbury raised an issue about the healthy financial position of the national organisation and requested Council to consider an annual grant of £500 to each branch to be used to support a range of branch activities and thereby give more back to members. It was noted that some branches were better off than others and may not need additional funds but would rather have more engagement from branch members. Suggested that the proposed grant (equivalent to £5,000) might be more effective if used to support the national conference and encourage better attendance by branch members. Also any central funding could be used towards helping to raise the profile of surveying in the public sector to indirectly help authorities with the current recruitment challenges.

It was proposed that CMT give further consideration to the proposals and the many options raised by Council members in terms of using central funds and bring a detailed paper back to Council with a menu of ideas for approval.

1557 CO-ORDINATORS, BRANCHES & EXTERNAL WORKING GROUPS

Liaison Officer and Branch reports were received, and these have been published on the ACES website for the information of all members. Once again, thanks went to the Liaison Officers for their efforts in producing detailed and topical reports which are appreciated by members and to the Branches for submitting reports on their activities.

Lee Dawson and Jeremy Pilgrim gave a verbal update on Commercial Asset Management in which they undertook to produce an article for the Spring Terrier and they also referred to their recent work with Carter Jonas from which they are aiming to come forward with a topical and detailed paper on the subject matter.

1558 FUTURE MEETINGS

| | | |
|----------------------|---|----------------|
| ACES Council | 24 th April 2025 | Birmingham |
| ACES Council | 24 th July 2025 | Manchester |
| Annual Conference | 24 th /25 th September 2025 | Bath |
| ACES Council Meeting | October 2025 | Online Meeting |
| Annual Meeting | November 2025 | Cardiff |

1559 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Senior Vice President briefly referred to emerging details of the 2026 Presidential Conference to be held in Southend in September. Further details to be brought forward to the April Council.

No other matters raised.

CPD: 3 hours informal.