



MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday 24th April 2025
TIME: 11.00 am – 3.00 pm
VENUE: OGP OFFICES, BIRMINGHAM (HYBRID)

PRESENT (In person (13) and online (11))

First Name	Surname	Officer	In Person/ Virtual
Dan	Meek	ACES President	In person
Alan	Richards	ACES Senior Vice-President	Virtual (Part)
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	Virtual (Part)
Chris	Rhodes	Member of Council	Virtual
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
Chris	Bandy	Member of Council – Eastern Branch	Virtual
Kevin	Moore	Member of Council - Heart of England Branch	In person
Helen	Stubbs	Member of Council – North East Branch	Virtual
Paul	Edgeworth	Member of Council – North West Branch	In person
David	Baird	Member of Council – Scottish Branch	Virtual
Gerry	Devine	Member of Council – Welsh Branch	Virtual
Julie	Blight	Member of Council - Co-ordinator for Commercial, Strategic & Agricultural Asset Management	Virtual
Daniella	Barrow	Member of Council - Co-ordinator for the RICS	In person
Andrew	Stirling	Member of Council	In person
Sarah	Varley	Member of Council – South East Branch	In person (Part)
Neil	Simon	Member of Council – London Branch	Virtual (Part)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Neil McManus, Gillian Boyle, Malcolm Williams, Sam Partridge, Marie Percival, Vincent Guz, Sara Cameron and Charlie Field.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 31st January 2025 in London (and online) were read through and approved as a correct record.

ACTION POINTS

The Action Points arising from the last meeting were displayed for the information of members as a device for keeping track of items and responsibilities for actions.

MATTERS ARISING

Covered by Action Points.

Keith Jewsbury asked about item 1556 in the January Minutes regarding a proposed annual grant to Branches which he felt should be on the Action Points. The Assistant Secretary advised it would be covered under the “Delivering Priorities” Agenda item, which would include how ACES supported and worked better with Branches.

1560 PRESIDENT’S REPORT

The President reported on his activities since the last meeting.

He referred to the work he had undertaken in progressing the 2025 Conference and the visit made by Marcus Perry to Bath with a view to exploring hotels, social programme options etc.

It was noted that productive discussions were in hand with JLL and that Hartnell Taylor Cooke were keen to support the Conference this year. Discussions with the other Corporate Members confirmed their willingness to also support the Conference. A good number of key speakers had also already been assembled. There was discussion on practical matters as the date for the Conference approached and there was general agreement that the bookings should be done through Eventbrite again this year as it worked well in 2024.

The President referred to Branch matters including visits for the year and recently working with Marcus Perry on solutions for the problems in the South East Branch. He also mentioned a number of key issues being dealt with in the Rural Branch.

It was acknowledged that the Junior Vice President had yet to be identified and the President had been working closely with Sara Cameron and it was hoped that a positive update would be provided shortly.

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

1561 SECRETARY’S REPORT

The Secretary reported on matters arising during the period since the last meeting. He provided the latest statistics on membership which showed a continuing increase in membership numbers which had reached **431** at the time of reporting. This was in the context of a number of members resigning upon receipt of membership invoicing but countered by new members. It also took into account a number of memberships that had recently been terminated due to persistent arrears.

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 for 2025 and reported good progress with this. 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 Assistant Secretary reported on a number of tasks that he had been charged with since his appointment and was pleased to say he had been kept busy. He referred to some ideas he had in order to streamline some processes and improve efficiency and he was pleased to report that the NE Branch provided very good feedback on a Branch Member Survey he had arranged in conjunction with them.

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

1562 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. This was in a slightly different format to previous reports as it had been generated in Xero. He talked through the detail in the report, particularly providing an update on the new membership subscription invoicing process, and the bottom line was that, again, there were no concerns to report about our underlying financial performance.

The statement of bank balances was next displayed indicating again a healthy closing balance for the association.

A number of queries were raised from the floor and responded to accordingly. Keith Jewsbury asked about the quantum of subscription arrears for invoicing prior to 2025. The Treasurer agreed to advise on this later in the meeting (later confirmed at around £6,800 for arrears including those going back a number of years. Action - More detailed paper to be prepared). Jeremy Pilgrim asked about our position with VAT and the Treasurer reported that the Accountants recommendation not to register for VAT still holds. Agreed to review annually.

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

Under this item, reference was made to the idea of generating more income from the website for job advertising. The Assistant Secretary talked through a paper on this matter with proposals for compiling a list of agencies who were interested in working with ACES and a number of recommendations (detailed in the report) for taking matters forward, in conjunction with the Head of Engagement, as follows:

1. Make contact with Short-Listed Recruitment Agencies and see what they say too.
2. Collate responses and agree preferred Agencies with which to progress discussions.
3. Report back to July Council with results and options offered by respective Recruitment Agencies.

These were approved by Council. Other potential agencies to speak to were tabled at the meeting. It was further agreed that the Agencies be approached with a view to securing preferential rates for ACES members seeking to use their services.

1563 REPORT OF HEAD OF ENGAGEMENT

The Head of Engagement talked through his detailed report on matters arising during the period since the last meeting including the Public Sector Forum, Public Sector Challenge, Year 9 Initiative, Corporate Membership, FACES (upcoming meeting in London), LocatED events, RICS and Government Property Function. Neil specifically asked for topics from members for the next RICS Public Sector Forum, to be chaired by our President.

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

1564 CONSULTATIONS

The Senior Vice President reported that responses to requests for members to comment on consultations was very limited but it was acknowledged that many members were under severe pressure on other matters. He will explore the option of working with Branches to see if this could help raise response rates.

1565 ACES' TERRIER

The Editor, Betty Albon, referred to the latest edition of the Terrier (Spring 2025) 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 referred to a good number of articles from ACES members this time and thanked those that had contributed. Her next task was to enter into advertising agreements for the year from July (for those firms that were not corporate members) and she advised members that the advertising rates had been kept the same as last year with a view to adding in more buyers. **This approach was endorsed by Council.**

The Editor referred to the latest quote from Marcus Macaulay for photography and recording at the Conference and AGM at £500 for each event. Again this was considerably less than the market rate and the Editor confirmed that she had agreed the appointment of Marcus on this basis. **This approach was also endorsed by Council.**

1566 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:

ACES Terrier Dedicated Website:

Betty Albon has presented a report to CMT on the proposed Terrier Website together with the quotation from Marcus Macaulay which it is pleasing to see has not been increased from last time. Report and quotation on the website. **There was general consensus from the CMT that this was a good step forward for the Terrier and Council is asked to endorse the CMT decision to enter into a contract with Marcus as proposed and quoted for as follows:**

- Initial set up of the website, which includes uploading the current issue and creating a media pack with examples of advertising space web banners etc £2,500.
- Hosting and maintenance of the website, so the articles get out on to the search engines and LinkedIn. £280 per month.

- Uploading future issues £500 per issue, this is because each article gets uploaded separately and summarised, and has keywords added, which takes a bit time.

It is noted that there will be a resource implication for the Association with regard to maintenance and advert invoicing which needs to be monitored. Link to draft website here: <http://marcusm82.sg-host.com/> . **Council approved proceeding with the proposals.**

Social Media Manager:

Neil Webster submitted a report to CMT setting out ideas discussed with Sara Cameron with regard to the Social Media Manager role.

A meeting had been held with Sara Barton, who is known to Neil and others (Neil declared a personal interest). She is an ex journalist now undertaking portfolio work. Her last big role was marketing and social media for the South of Scotland Destination Alliance. We have her CV and this is her on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sara-barton-tourism-copywriter-b2b-communicator/>

As a result of the meeting there is confidence that Sara Barton is capable and well suited performing the role and should be offered a position. CMT has agreed to take this forward as a recommendation to Council. The position will be subject to the previously approved JD, the current officer hourly rate and an indicative four hours a week. The appointment will also follow the standard approach of a fixed term subject to an initial probationary period of 3 months.

Linked to this is the request from Jacqueline Cumiskey to have access to the main ACES LinkedIn account so she could post Eastern Branch (EB) items and whether this should be extended to other Branch Secretaries. It is proposed the new Social Media Manager addresses this request.

Council approved proceeding with the appointment of the Social Media Manager.

2025 Junior Vice President:

The President and Immediate Past President have reported to CMT on a number of suggestions and approaches with regard to filling the vacant role of Junior Vice President. Discussions are ongoing and the latest position will be reported to Council accordingly. The President confirmed he will raise the issue at his trips around Branches. Discussion took place on offering the position to a retired member and the question of whether the Presidential role should be for two years, which may or may not be consecutive years. **Council noted the position and requested that an item on the Presidential role be brought to a future Council meeting.**

Proposals for South East Branch

Following the decision of the January Council, Marcus Perry, in consultation with the President, held a number of meetings with SE Branch members and presented his proposals to CMT for approval. Details of the proposals are contained in the report published on the website and CMT has approved the proposed way forward.

Corporate Membership 2025/26

CMT was given authority by ACES Council in April 2024 to approve packages for existing and new Corporate Members (CMs) for the next 3 years. In the light of experience gained and ongoing relationships with the existing CMs it has been proposed and agreed by CMT that the packages remain the same as those agreed for 2024/25. Discussions are now in hand with the four main CMs and progress is being made with signing up additional new CMs as

interest in the 2025 Conference begins to strengthen. ACES Council is asked to note actions taken. **Council noted the position.**

Priorities, Timescales and Resources for 2025

CMT re-affirmed that the Constitution Review, Membership Review and Data Management should be the immediate and core priorities for 2025.

The issue of progressing matters through volunteers when they are already burdened by heavy full-time job demands was considered again by CMT. As a result, it has been agreed with Assistant Secretary, David Pethen, that he looks to extend his current role to take a prominent lead on the priorities and to explore the mechanisms for further paid external support.

In response to this, David has developed, as requested at January Council, thinking on the impact of LGR/Devolution on the Association. CMT has agreed for a paper on this, and the consequences for the Constitution and Membership Reviews, to be presented to Council.

1567 IMPACT OF THE LGR REVIEW AND DEVOLUTION AGENDA

The Assistant Secretary, David Pethen, reported on the potential impact of imminent changes and measures the association should consider.

He talked through a detailed Presentation giving an overview of Local Government Reform (LGR) and re-organisation over the years and then described the current proposals for a smaller number of large scale authorities in the context of a number of changes in Estate and Asset Management.

It was noted that the long term impact on the association was uncertain but the expectation was a potential reduction in membership in the six or seven Branches considered likely to be directly impacted. In this context, David considered it was important that we need to think centrally about how we can support our members in Branches going through LGR. This raised the question of a detailed survey of members to explore what was working well now and what needs to change. It was also clear that the impact of LGR and devolution should form a key part of the review of the Constitution and Membership Review.

David proposed a number of actions including the appointment of a lead member to co-ordinate our response to LGR/Devolution, delegation to CMT to progress a survey of members and include the LGR/Devolution impact in our Constitution/Membership Reviews.

David Baird provided some useful insights following his own experience of LGR in Scotland and noted that we should be aware of the scope for opportunities emerging out of re-organisation for members.

Commented that LGA should also be consulted as part of CMT actions and it was noted that we should not exclude Health colleagues in our review as they will also be impacted. Equally it was recognised that consulting the Branches was a key element of gaining knowledge on the impact of LGR/Devolution.

Council approved the proposed actions in the Assistant Secretary's report. Set out below:

- Note this initial Presentation outlining the potential impact of LGR on ACES
- Nominate an ACES Member to be the ACES Lead/Coordinator for LGR
- Delegate to CMT to undertake a Survey to:
 - o Identify LGR related issues affecting ACES Members
 - o Timetable for LGR impacting on Members' Local Authorities
 - o What support ACES Members would benefit from

- o Prioritise Survey & Support identification for those Members included in Devolution Priority Programmes
- Include LGR as a factor for consideration in the ACES Membership/Constitution Review
- Receive regular Update Reports on LGR Implementation.

Copy of Presentation now uploaded with ACES April Council Meeting Papers.

1568 ACES CONSTITUTION/MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

The Assistant Secretary talked through his second Presentation entitled Delivering Future Key Priorities. This built on the theme of “change” identified in the report on LGR and other external factors impacting on the membership and their workload.

It was noted that organisationally ACES is currently well positioned/respected in the Public Property Sector and well-resourced physically & financially. A centrally coordinated approach is required to deliver ACES’ previously identified “Key Priorities” & Corporate Objectives and the overriding Corporate Objective is to support ACES Members. In this context, a draft “Corporate Objective” was tabled, being “To support ACES Members to maximise their full professional potential & to enable/share Best Practice in all aspects of Public Sector Property Asset/Estate Management”. This could only best be implemented by knowing member’s needs through effective consultation.

It was recommended that Council to agree to:

The proposed Delivery Recommendations outlined in this Presentation:

- Establish a small Delivery Working Group
- Scope identified “High Level” Issues
- Consult existing and potential ACES members and stakeholders.

With a Working Group to report further to July Council.

Council approved this course of action.

Copy of Presentation now uploaded with ACES April Council Meeting Papers

1569 ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

The President referred to the update he had provided earlier on the Agenda under his President’s Report item.

Marcus Perry gave an update on his proposals for the social programme with a number of local visits planned. He was also helping with choice of hotel which are inevitably expensive in Bath but is working on a discounted rate in a nice Georgian style hotel.

1570 NATIONAL AGM 2025

The Senior Vice President briefly reported on progress being made with the arrangements for the national AGM this year and confirmed he is aware of things that need to be done. David Pethen provided an update on the venue which is confirmed as Cardiff Castle. There may be an issue with maximum numbers which may impact on the catering arrangements but David is looking at options.

1571 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. There will be five categories: FACES Award, Team or Branch of the Year, Climate Resilience, Community Impact and President's Award. The Awards Pack had now been prepared and details are planned to go out in June (via email and website) with a deadline for nominations in late August. Council members were asked to contribute towards pushing out the Awards to members.

1572 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. CIPFA had been informed of ACES approval in principle to extend the collaboration and Malcolm Williams had followed this up in discussions with Mark Poppy and a "wash up" meeting was scheduled for June. Malcolm's detailed report is posted on the ACES website.

The Secretary then made a couple of recommendations for Council to approve:

1. An honorarium for Malcolm Williams for the year to April 2025 in the sum of £650.
2. The gifting of a half case of wine for Richard Wynne (or, subject to Richard's personal preferences, a financially equivalent gift) for his valuable contribution to the SAM Diploma course and following his need to step back from his role.

Council approved both recommendations.

1573 BRANCH LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Branch Liaison Officer Marcus Perry reported on activities and notably the proposals for the South East Branch following discussions with key personnel.

He referred to the finalisation of the ACES new publicity / recruitment tri-fold handout which had now been widely distributed. Marcus thanked Betty Albon and Marcus Macaulay for their support in producing the document.

At this point Sarah Varley was asked to leave the room whilst discussion took place on the proposals for the South East (SE) Branch, which included financial proposals affecting Sarah Varley. Marcus talked through the details that had been provisionally agreed with Sarah in order to encourage her to take the role of Chair at the Branch (possibly for two years) with a view to putting things in better order over time. In particular, it was noted that none of the large counties in the SE were represented by ACES members and this needed to be tackled. Marcus noted that the financial package agreed with Sarah was significant but there was absolutely no interest at all from any other member of the Branch to take things forward. It was also commented that the appointment in part would take a lot of additional work away from Marcus so he could move back onto other key elements of his role.

More details are provided in the Branch Liaison Officer report on the website and **Council noted and endorsed the approval by the CMT of the agreed package.**

Marcus concluded with an update on his activities with the rest of the branches and getting around them gradually. He was pleased to report that all seemed to be doing well and in good financial health.

1574 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 all those who had submitted detailed and topical reports which are appreciated by members.

Lee Dawson and Jeremy Pilgrim gave a verbal update on the Commercial Asset Management item which had been delayed following recent changes in personnel at Carter Jonas. Iain Mulvey had left the company and Lil Houghton has stepped up to a more senior role. The undertaking to work with CJ and produce an article for the Terrier was still in place but would be delivered later in the year.

Daniella Barrow reported that the scheduled Liaison Meeting with RICS didn't go ahead for various reasons but contact had been maintained with the RICS on a number of fronts and the next meeting is in July so a report will follow all being well.

Steve Littler gave a verbal report on activities in the NW Branch and in particular the ever popular CPD Event in May, which the President had kindly agreed to attend.

1575 FUTURE MEETINGS

ACES Council	24 th July 2025	Manchester
Annual Conference	24 th /25 th September 2025	Bath
ACES Council Meeting	15 th October 2025	Online Meeting
Annual Meeting	20 th November 2025	Cardiff

1576 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

On behalf of the Senior Vice President, the President reported on the Public Sector Challenge for 2025. Approval was sought to carry over underspend from 2024 and to commit to the event in 2025 with a budget limit of £5,000. ACES to be a corporate sponsor and provide a team of ten members to participate. **Council approved the proposals.**

Jeremy referred to a document from RICS on Careers Guidance which he distributed. It was noted, however, with disappointment, that there was no reference to the public sector.

No other matters raised.

CPD: 3 hours informal.