



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

11th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2015 at the Bridewell Hall, Bride Lane, London

Present: Caroline Peach (CP, in the Chair), Lara Artemis, Jonathan Ashley-Smith, Pippa Balch, Penelope Bendall, Janet Berry, Iain Boyd, Derek Brain, Andrew Calver, Edward Cheese, Kenneth Cobb, Michael Corfield, Laurent Cruveillier, Jocelyn Cuming, Nigel Dacre, Alan Donnithorne, Adrian Doyle, Amy Drago, Dinah Eastop, Clare Finn, Michelle Gayle, Lynette Gill (Icon News Editor), Simon Green (SG, Business Manager), Isobel Harcourt, Monika Harter, Rebecca Hellen, Jane Henderson, David Howell, Shulla Jaques, Penny Jenkins, Dana Josephson, Christine Kelly, Patrick Kelly, Jonathan Kemp (Icon Journal Editor), Barry Knight, Verena Kotonski, David Leigh, Helen Lloyd, Peter Martindale, Clare Meredith, Shannon Miller, Carole Milner, Maria Molner, Christine Murray, Hazel Newey, Clare Prince, Elizabeth Randell, Clive Raymond, Alison Richmond (AR, Chief Executive), Helena Rodwell, Meagan Smith, Patricia Smithen, Pierrette Squires, Victoria Stevens, Siobhan Stevenson, Michael Stokes, Sylvia Sumira, Ana Tam, Nikki Tomkins, Joyce Townsend, Robert Turner, Sarah VanSnick, Valentine Walsh, Adam Webster, Jenny Williamson, Elizabeth Wooley.

In attendance: Susan Bradshaw (SB, Head of Professional Development), Julia Jablonska (Icon Administration Officer), Michael Nelles (MN, Membership Manager), Ella Swindells (Membership Officer), Patrick White (Training & Development Manager)

Apologies: Caroline Bendix, Ian Clark, Sarah Cove, Ylva Dahnsjo, Megan de Silva, Charlotte Lester, Fiona Macalister, Maria Vilaincour, Juergen Vervoorst.

- 1 Caroline Peach (CP) opened the meeting at 5.06 pm and welcomed Icon members to the meeting. She introduced herself and Nigel Dacre as Joint Chairs of Icon until the end of the meeting and outlined the order of business.
- 2 Apologies for absence had been received as recorded above.

3 Minutes of the 10th AGM on 1st December 2014

These had been previously circulated and were approved by the members with one minor change (The Heritage & Crafts Funders' Network had been incorrectly named).

4 Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive Alison Richmond (AR) said that this year we have made significant progress towards becoming a more public facing organisation. The new website was the lynch pin for communications and was state-of-art compared to the old one which was very good when launched in 2006. The project was managed very carefully and included extensive consultation with Trustees, staff and group website authors. The new site is an appealing, image-rich highly functional platform showcasing what conservators do. The project was managed by Simon Green, designed and developed by Kolab Digital and populated and kept up to date by Katie Allen. Katie has also ensured that our social media presence continue to grow rapidly.

During 2015, the Icon Conservation Awards have been prominent and have raised our profile. We are very grateful to our corporate sponsor Beko plc. Our other funding partners have been the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, the Pilgrim Trust and the Anna Plowden Trust.

2015 also saw us celebrate the end of our very successful Heritage Lottery Fund financed Training Bursary Scheme. The HLF provided £2.45m of funding over nine years and we are very grateful for the support of their team, particularly our Grant Manager, Nick Randall and Jo Reilly (who was at the meeting) . HLF also funded an excellent video featuring our entire Internship programme which is continuing with other funding, albeit at a lower level.

Tru Vue, Inc offered us funding to support mid-career conservators to attend events supporting their Continuing Professional Development. The first year was over-subscribed and Tru Vue are now funding a second year.

Our Special Interest Groups have continued to offer a very wide range of training events, ranging from regular fixtures – such as Metals Group Autumn Conference and Scotland Group's Plenderleith Memorial Lecture to the Cyanotype Workshop at the Lux Darkroom and Revolution! Technology in 19th Century Historic Interiors.

The Book and Paper Group ran a very successful major international conference *Adapt and Evolve; East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation* earlier this year which was sold out as a result of the hard work of the conference committee who also secured substantial external investment high-level funding and grant bodies. It made a healthy surplus which will be used for more book & paper CPD activities.

Icon's Conservation Register helps a wide variety of people find conservators to look after their cultural objects, benefiting them and bringing business to many conservation practices. To support the Department of Culture Media and Sport to meet their goal of providing conservation advice and at short notice we added a new section on conservators who could work on memorials as part of the First World War centenary commemorations..

The Journal of the Institute of Conservation has been published by Taylor & Francis since 2008 and we tendered for a new contract. The result is that from 2017 Taylor & Francis will publish three issues a year in full colour and will contribute more funding to cover the full cost of the editor's contract as well as continuing to pay a minimum of £20,000 a year in royalties. Our Editor Janet Berry and Business Manager Simon Green ran this tender and negotiation process. Janet has now started a new full time post at the Cathedral and Church Buildings Commission of the Church of England and we have appointed Jonathan Kemp as the new Editor.

We have renewed our efforts to find a new home for home for the Chantry Library and hope to announce good news very soon. We are also working very closely with the V&A Museum to establish a new qualification to succeed our existing Conservation Technician Qualification, to be launched in early 2016.

Icon built up its unrestricted financial reserves considerably in the previous two years and has drawn on these this year to redevelop the website. Income for advertising and internships fell slightly this year while we have started to see growth in membership and membership subscription income. Overall, Icon continues to be in good financial health and we look forward to this remaining the case in the foreseeable future.

Alison finished her speech by thanking all of the Icon office team by name as they have all worked very hard and effectively throughout the year. She invited questions.

Barry Knight enquired about the termination of ARA's and BHI's involvement with Icon's accreditation scheme. AR said that the Trustees had decided that in future the Accreditation scheme would be for Icon members only and had given notice of termination of the licence with ARA and BHI. In practice neither had accredited any new members in recent years nor had any CPD reviews. Many of the ARA or BHI accredited members were already also members of Icon. We have offered a very reduced rate of accredited membership over two years for people who are and remain accredited members of ARA and BHI. By the end of that period they will need to be fully accredited members of Icon and transitional arrangements are in place for them.

There were no other questions.

5 RESOLUTIONS

Simon Green (SG), as Company Secretary, announced that 75 members who were unable to be present had submitted Proxy Notices electronically for the first time as allowed by our new Articles of Association. This compared with 14 paper Proxy Notices in 2014.

Ordinary Resolution 1 – To receive the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015. Proposed by Penny Jenkins, seconded by Iain Boyd and passed with voting as follows:

For 131 Against 0 Abstain 2.

Ordinary Resolution 2 – To authorise the Trustees to appoint the auditors to serve until the end of the next Annual General Meeting and to authorise the Trustees to decide the remuneration to be paid to the auditors. Proposed by Lara Artemis seconded by David Howell and passed with voting as follows:

For 132 Against 1 Abstain 2

6 Results of the elections to the Board of Trustees

SG announced that there were no nominations for the reserved seat for Northern Ireland, so the reservation had been removed, increasing the vacancies for unreserved seat to two. There were only two candidates nominated and, being eligible, Rebecca Hellen and Peter Martindale had been declared elected unopposed by the Icon Trustees.

7 Joint Chairs' perspectives on the year

Nigel Dacre, Joint Chair said that "it had been a year of tangible progress and significant success for Icon. As a former journalist, he had no doubt that there have been a considerable number of 'headlines' for this year:

- The launch of the new membership renewals portal
- Growing membership numbers
- The new website
- The appointment of a Digital Content Officer, and, with it, a dramatic increase in our social media activity and profile
- Seamlessly organised Conservation Awards
- The successful wrapping up of the HLF intern scheme
- The new Journal contract
- The integration of new staff in to the London office
- And the distribution of the Icon membership survey.

But alongside these new developments, Icon has also continued to provide comprehensive support to conservators and those who work in the conservation sector.

Whether it's professional support, accreditation, the Conservation Register, the Journal, the newsletter, events, or continuing engagement with a wide range of external organisations: Icon continues to play a crucial role in the conservation profession.

As for the Board itself, there have been some important developments this year. Here is a summary:

- Firstly, Caroline and I have operated for a year as Interim Co-Chairs. We set out from the beginning to work in a collaborative and open way. Others may have a different view, but I think it's worked really well.

It has meant we have been able to bring different skills and experience to the post. It has spread the workload. And it has allowed us an opportunity to privately debate issues and problems before making more public decisions.

In my view, it has proved that co-chairing can work effectively in organisations.

I have really enjoyed working with Caroline. She has contributed a lot this year. And I have got to say: it is no small achievement to be a co-chair of a complicated organisation like Icon, run her own business, and have a baby son in the same year! So many thanks to you, Caroline.

- Of course, we have had a hard act to follow. Juergen was a fantastic chair: and there were many times during the last year, when faced with an issue, I asked myself 'what would Juergen have done'.
- At the beginning of the year, we welcomed 7 new members to the Board: Penny Bendall, Sarah Cove, Angela Currie, David Howells, Charlotte Lester, Megan de Silva, and Jenny Williamson. (Angela Currie had to retire during the years as a result of moving to California.)
- These joined 7 existing members: Caroline Peach, Ian Boyd, Ylva Dahnsjo, Penny Jenkins, Pierrette Squires, Adam Webster and I.
- As for the way the Board operated, we set out to streamline Board meetings, cut down the number of papers, and introduce a focused agenda. We also brought in public report of the Board meetings, which are emailed to members and then put on the Icon website.

Above all, in the past year, we have aimed to focus on strategic issues.

The Board Planning Day in January led to the setting up of 3 Strategic Task and Finish Groups: looking at raising Icon's public and policy profile, widening its membership and supporter base, and strengthening what it does for professional conservators.

So as I said at the beginning, a year of real progress and achievement but there is still a lot to do:

We need to work hard at supporting conservators and conservation in what could be some difficult few years of cut backs and public sector reorganisation.

There are still a range of organisational and governance issues which need updating and reviewing – such as the relationship between the Icon Groups and the Board - and how we can more effectively involve Icon members in Icon activities. I am pleased that Siobhan Stevenson, the next Chair, has already said that sorting out unresolved organisational issues is one of her top priorities.

And, of course, we must ensure that we get results from the strategic groups. I really do hope that over the next 2-3 years we will indeed raise Icon's profile, increase our membership base, and strengthen what we do for conservator members.

As a co-opted Trustee, from outside the sector, one of my roles on the Board is to bring an external perspective to Icon activities. As I see it, conservation is a really important issue and conservators, across the board, in a wide range of roles and activities, do a really important job.

It is therefore vital, in my view, that Icon continues to be highly ambitious and forward looking, so that it can grow and develop as an organisation, and be ever more effective in promoting the conservation and protection of our cultural heritage, and in supporting those working in the sector."

Caroline Peach, Joint Chair reflected on the past year, highlighting a significant change as the way in which Icon presents itself externally - to its members and to people who have a passing interest in conservation.

She pointed to examples over the past year including Icon's new website which includes content for professionals as well as those who want to know more about conservation; the HLF internship programme which has opened up the world of conservation to more people and which concluded in 2015 with the interns' end of year show and video, and the strong legacy framework that is being taken forward as the Icon Internship Programme; and the Conservation Awards, which recognised the highest standards of professional practice alongside the contribution made to conservation by volunteers and was celebrated at a ceremony in October at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Caroline thanked Simon Green, Katie Allen, the trustees and volunteers who had made the transfer to the new website a success, all those who had been involved in the HLF internship programme since it began in 2005 including Carol Brown, David Leigh, Gillian Joyce, Susan Bradshaw, Jayne Sheraton, Kath Whittam and Alison Richmond alongside the many supervisors and hosts, and the Awards judges and screening panel members as well as the formal partners and sponsors, the Pilgrim Trust, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, The Anna Plowden Trust and Beko plc.

She noted that the theme of how Icon presents itself is continued in the three strategic task and finish groups established to explore the issues of support for professional conservators, public and policy profile and growing Icon's supporter base. She encouraged members to take part in the current membership survey the results of which will feed into this work and the Board's work in 2016 to develop Icon's next strategic plan.

Observing that the environment in which conservators operate, and in which conservation is carried out is constantly changing, she proposed a need to think creatively about working with others and developing partnerships to involve more people in the field of conservation so that Icon is a strong and well-supported organisation with the resources to fulfil its ambitions.

She closed by thanking all of the Icon staff team: Alison, Susan, Michael, Simon, Lynette and Shulla, those who have left recently Kath, Janet, Jayne, Kenneth, Kat and Rebecca. And welcomed new members of staff Patrick, Ella, Julia, Katie and Jonathan.

She thanked everyone who has given their time to support Icon's activities – through groups, committees and the Board of Trustees, singling out Penny Jenkins who steps down as a Trustee after 6 years and who has made significant contributions in her role as Chair of the Finance Committee and in the latter part of this year as part of the Nominations Committee that successfully recruited Siobhan Stevenson as Icon's next Chair.

Finally, she thanked Co-Chair Nigel Dacre for his work over the past year and looked forward to his continued contribution as a Trustee and lead of the public and policy task and finish group.

Caroline welcomed Siobhan Stevenson as incoming Chair, and invited her to say a few words.

Siobhan Stevenson, Chair Designate said "I am delighted to be starting my role as the new Chair of Icon and taking over from the stewardship of Nigel and Caroline. My sincere thanks to them both for their commitment and the great job they have done over the last year.

I am not new to Icon having served on its Board in the reserved seat for Northern Ireland and as Chair of the Professional Standards and Development Committee but I am looking forward to coming back onto the Board with renewed vigour and enthusiasm and especially at this pivotal moment as we develop our new strategic direction. Icon is in great shape and I am so privileged to be able to build on the tremendous work that has been done by the current Board; the former Board, Chaired admirably by Juergen and by a hardworking and dedicated team of staff working under Alison's excellent leadership.

The profession faces many challenges with ever more stringent public finances and a shrinking public sector. We do not have to look very far to see examples of where more resources are needed or where a greater appreciation of the cultural or artistic heritage would make a difference. Looking around we see a harsher business environment for conservation practices with falling numbers of conservators in many of our museums and institutions who are facing tighter budgets and ever more demands on their time. While sources of funding are available – and we hope to hear more of this from our speakers, - conservation of the cultural heritage is competing for funding with a multitude of worthy causes with increasingly astute ways of attracting attention and support.

Although the funding environment may remain constrained for the next few years there are many reasons to be encouraged. There is an unprecedented level of support and goodwill for our cultural institutions and an ever growing enthusiasm for people to play their part. Icon must find ways to harness that support both through our membership base but also through conservation practice. Volunteering is a major opportunity which is not without its challenges but which offers us huge potential for reaching committed supporters and allies. Sensitive development of these opportunities may not only unlock funding but help us to make more explicit the connection of conservation to our creative and cultural well-being.

In developing this we must not forget that the core of our organisation is its members and that the advocacy and authority that Icon has, is based on a widely acknowledged respect for the profession. Programmes for improving the skills base, developing capacity and maintaining and promoting professional standards are bread and butter issues for Icon. Supporting our members both individually and through the specialist groups is fundamental to strengthening conservation provision, building awareness and protecting that specialist expertise.

As Alison has very eloquently outlined, this year has been a successful year for Icon, in particular the renewed website which is so much more engaging and accessible and our Conservation Awards which have been a major focus for showcasing conservation and gaining media attention. Continuing this process of becoming more outwardly focused is a key area for us, as we move forward. Individually, as conservators, we can, and do make a difference but collectively there are so many more opportunities for us to profile the skills of our members and promote the value of professional expertise and experience.

To do this, we may not only have to get better at articulating why what we do is important for the cultural heritage but why it is important for people. I hope that in Chairing the organisation through the next three years I can help Icon to communicate what this profession offers to a wider audience and to engage with our partner organisations to develop our credibility and our profile. I am really looking forward to the challenge."

CP closed the formal meeting at 6.48 pm.

Following the close of formal business, two speeches were presented:

Jo Reilly, Head of Participation and Learning, Heritage Lottery Fund, spoke on the topic of 'A lasting difference for heritage and people: HLF's mid-term review'.

Carole Milner, Adviser, Radcliffe Trust, Heritage & Crafts Programme and Co-ordinator of the Heritage & Crafts Funders' Networking 'A general perspective on grant-giving in our sector'.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting

..... Date

S B Green 10.12.2015 CP 22.02.2016

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