

LINI AGM, 7 May 2015 co-Chairs' Report

A year at breakneck speed as LINI co-Chairs... Again, whilst LINI committee held only 4 formal meetings during the year, these have been amply supported by frequent subgroup meetings attended by a variety of LINI members – both on and off the Committee – depending on the matter in hand. The co-Chairs depend on our hard-working and critically supportive colleagues on the Committee (Donna Fletcher, Darren McKinstry, David Watkiss, Gary McNeill, Bill O'Donnell, Ryan Hood, Barry Craig, Raymond Ronaghan, Kieran Culleton) to assist us through, out of, and into our various adventures along the way (we all have our particularly endearing characteristics no doubt...) and also constant liaison with Pete Mullin, our impressive LINI Policy Consultant.

1. LI Gold Medal award to Robert Carson, 29 May 2014.

Our year started with the award of the Landscape Institute Gold Medal to Robert Carson, MBE, by LI President Noel Farrer, in the presence of many LINI members and friends. A founding member of the Landscape Architectural profession in Ireland (as the Society of Landscape Architects in Ireland formalised in 1966), Robert's leadership here through his own practice and as Partner in Ferguson & McIlveen (since Scott Wilson, URS and now AECOM) stimulated three generations of landscape architects (and planners, architects, engineers and others) throughout the province and beyond. Robert's projects, often firsts for Northern Ireland, and largely still functioning and appreciated today as originally design include: the M1 motorway, a Roads Design Guide for the Ministry of Development, the Lagan Weir in Belfast, Carrickfergus Marine Gardens, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Ulster American Folk Park, Carfunnock Park, Antrim Hospital, University of Ulster Jordanstown, Newtownards town centre... his work is evident throughout the province: indisputably, we are all enriched by Robert's presence and his work. In Robert's words, he hopes that the archive publication of his work, created in 2012 with LINI, "will allow others to see and understand how my ideas have taken shape, with some of them becoming reality, and how landscape design can ensure that the built environment and the natural environment can be brought together".

2. Heritage of the landscape architectural profession in Northern Ireland.

The appointment of Dr Susan Wilson to work with LINI on matters relating to the Heritage of the profession in Northern Ireland, came to an end in October 2014. Susan worked prodigiously throughout her LINI appointment, pulling together various strands which LINI is still progressing. The questionnaire, which was sent to all members, was completed by 30% of our membership. If you didn't complete it, access it on the LINI website and do it now. Filmed interviews were carried out with Flo and Brian Woods, Bill Cairns and also latterly with Peter Hutchinson (specific to Craigavon). Portraits were taken of 28 members at the 2014 AGM. Susan assisted with the preparation and submission of funding applications to Invest Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Environment Link, and to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and whilst none were successful, the objectives and methods of the project were refined with each reiteration. HLF have expressed support in principle and given advice regarding how to proceed.

In October 2014, LINI committee sought member assistance specifically relating to coordination of activities relating to Local Government Reform in Northern Ireland taking place in April 2015. No responses were received. However, with LI confirmation that Policy Consultant hours would increase from 30 days per year to 45 days, it was agreed that these matters could be covered by Pete Mullin. Assistance to the Policy Officer and for other matters was still required, and following further advertisement to LINI members, Susanna Best was appointed in January 2015 as LINI Development and Project Coordinator, with Lowell McCreadie in an assistant role. Susanna is progressing the HLF application, and with Ryan Hood and Lowell McCreadie progressing heritage matters for the 1st June conference. The HLF application relates to the creation of a Digital Landscape Platform for Northern Ireland. This is to be a map-based digital resource for those responsible for 'place-making', to permit review of how existing NI places have been created, procured, designed, implemented, managed, evolved, replaced etc. The platform will include interviews (not just landscape architects –all involved

professions etc), materials, costs, comments from the public etc. An overview of the Landscape Platform will be introduced at the conference on 1st June. LINI committee were unable to muster a representative to attend the AGM of the Friends of the Landscape Institute Library and Archive at the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading University in March 2015, at which the archive of Brenda Colvin was on display at MERL, but our Heritage Project is reported in the 'Folar' newsletter.

Peter Hutchinson, with the assistance of Lowell and Ryan has drafted the evolution of the landscape architectural profession in Northern Ireland over the past 50 years. This is a 'timeline' presented in 3 layers: practices, projects, and people. Practices have been contacted to complete a list of significant projects over the years, and provide key details. If your practice has not yet returned this information, please do so as soon as possible, so that an approximately accurate timeline may be presented at the conference on 1st June. Bill Cairns participated in a PLACE-coordinated panel discussion on the development and legacy of Craigavon New Town (with which the establishment of our profession in Northern Ireland is entwined) in the British Council 'Absorbing Modernity' event at the Ulster Museum in October 2014. Peter Hutchinson, Bill Cairns, Flo and Brian Woods and Emily Smyth participated in the publication by PLACE of a booklet, 'Creating Craigavon', for Craigavon Borough Council in March 2015.

3. Landscape Institute Northern Ireland conference: Future Places and Spaces, Belfast 1st June.

A series of open member meetings were held from June 2014 to December 2015, and a LINI Event Team brought together comprising Peter Hutchinson, Emily Smyth, Bill O'Donnell, Paul Tully and Susanna Best. Theme, date and venue were fixed, and speakers invited in December, and the event launched in January 2015. Following local government reform in April 2015, the conference specifically aims to inform those who commission, deliver and manage Northern Ireland's places and spaces, by providing a critical review of practice and processes in design, implementation and management of our places, and a vision and ambition for the future. The event is also an opportunity to mark 50 years of the landscape architectural profession in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Main speakers: Andrew Grant, Sheffield City Council Regeneration Team, and Jason Prior, with supporting LINI speakers: 50 year review of landscape architecture in NI (Peter Hutchinson), the strategic place of landscape architecture in NI planning and development (Emily Smyth / Pete Mullin), and introduction to the LINI Landscape Platform (Peter Hutchinson & Ryan Hood). Programme and further information accessible from LINI website and LI website events page.

LINI member support is required: please register without delay, and also invite your clients, colleagues from other professions, and suppliers (the event includes an exhibition for suppliers). A personal invitation from the members of our profession will be more welcoming. The event also includes an exhibition of the evolution of the landscape architectural profession in Northern Ireland over the past 50 years (see Heritage project above, and with republication of all Perspective articles in a single volume, and of the Robert Carson archive), and an exhibition of LINI practices and members work (don't miss this opportunity to present your work to prospective clients). Further information from Susanna and on LINI website.

4. LINI address and Communications

The LINI website has been relaunched: <http://northernireland.landscapeinstitute.org/>

A long time promised and a long time coming (2 years approx....), the new LINI website designed by LI went live on 9 April 2015. Problematically, LI would only transfer information from the old website to the new one without updating it to current and 'good-to-go', despite LINI committee providing full amendments and new content information. We are grateful to Happening Event Management Team who brought the website up-to-date at a basic level. Ryan Hood has been uploading all new information since then. Still plenty to be done. It has the same address as the previous website: make it a favourite...!

Since relocation of PLACE built environment centre in August PLACE is no longer able to act as mailing address for LINI. LINI's contact details changed to the office of Pete Mullin, LI Policy Consultant for Northern Ireland: LINI, 559 Ormeau Road, Rosetta, Belfast BT7 3JA. Tel: 0777 575 2010. The LINI email address (mail.northernireland@landscapeinstitute.org) has been managed by Susanna since her appointment. LINI has been investigating means to provide adequate storage for the information and activities of the committee, and is grateful to MWA and Park Hood for providing physical storage space. Most Committee activity is coordinated digitally, and LINI struggles to maintain order without access to centralised storage. This matter is ongoing.

Seven LINI Newsletters (collective endeavours by Emily Smyth, Darren McKinstry, Damien Nevin and Ryan Hood) detailing news and events relevant for members have been emailed to LINI members throughout the year, using LI Dotmailer system, which appears to be more reliable in reaching LINI members than it was this time last year. If you know of LINI members not receiving LI or LINI communications by email, tell them to contact Becky Brewis, LI Communications Officer and Jac Harris, LI Head of Membership, to check that their membership and communications details are synchronised. There are about 5 LINI members without email, and LINI committee is aware that they are not included in Dotmailer newsletter communications. Appropriate action should be taken to ensure these members receive sent paper copies of all communications sent out by Dotmailer email.

5. LINI member representation on other bodies.

LINI is a Board Member of Construction Industry Group Northern Ireland Professional College, represented by Bill O'Donnell. CIGNI's role is to promote a strong united voice focusing on key strategic issues for all representative organisations within the construction industry. CIGNI offers the most effective platform for working with central and local Government through Construction Industry Forum NI, MLAs through the All Party Working Group, and networking and partnership among the CIG family.

LINI is also a member of the Land Matters Task Force.

LINI members are additionally members of DCAL Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and the Built Environment (Andrew Haley), Land Matters Task Force (Pete Mullin is Chair), EPLANI (Andrew Bunbury) and DOE Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (Emily Smyth). Representing the University of Ulster, Emily presented a Strategic Landscape Approach for Northern Ireland (April 2015) in the Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series at Stormont. Representation on other bodies by members of our profession is a highly beneficial means of promoting the practice and understanding of landscape and landscape architecture. Please contact LINI committee if you are a member of a similar organisation.

6. LI Office Relocation Working Group.

At the LI AGM in October 2014, two member motions were voted on. One related to how LI budget is allocated to branches (and members) throughout the UK (Not carried: For 118, Against 119), the other related to the appropriateness of consideration of locations outside London for LI headquarters (Carried: For 126, Against 113). The second motion stated that a Working Group comprising representatives from each branch be set up to report back to the Board within 9 months. In January 2015 LINI members were invited to put themselves forward, and Peter Hutchinson was appointed by LINI committee to the LI Office Relocation Working Group, which also includes two Board Members. In the interim, LI has availed of a lease opportunity to move to an alternative address in London.

7. LI Governance Roadshow.

A member consultation proposed by LI Board was undertaken in winter 2014/15, relating to member voting rights, changes to Board composition, changes to membership categories, and the possibility for an alternative route to Chartership. All members were posted a consultation document, and LI secretariat carried out consultation events in each branch. Comments from the LINI event, 24 November 2014, indicated acceptance for voting rights and Board presence to licentiate but not student members, high level of confusion about the rearrangement of member categories, and serious concern on opening up an alternative 'experienced' route to Chartership, rather than better facilitating the progress of licentiates to Chartership. The other matters of the consultation, not disclosed in the printed document, related to the number of members required to request an EGM, inconsistencies between 'Divisions' and 'Specialisms of practice', and the use of the term 'Landscape Architect'. LINI members were not given specific clarity on these issues at the consultation event. The results of the Consultation (10% of total LI membership responded – ie. including licentiates and students) were processed by the CEO and recommendations that all matters progress were presented to the Board (even those matters which were not disclosed in the consultation process). These recommendations have since been voted on by Advisory Council.

8. CPD.

LI has held a series of high quality and highly beneficial multi-speaker CPD events throughout the year, all in Britain. LINI members have regularly enquired about these events being provided in Northern Ireland, and LINI

committee was advised that LINI members must make their requests directly to LI secretariat, so that demand can be gauged and CPD events scheduled accordingly. No CPD events in Northern Ireland have been forthcoming. LINI committee has since learned (subsequent to LINI's budget application) that LINI committee should apply for funding to have LI CPD events provided in Northern Ireland. Urgent clarification of this conflicting information is required. LINI members are disadvantaged in always having to spend additional time and money to attend CPD events in Britain.

LINI held a CPD event relating to Acheson and Glover products in December 2014 (approximately 16 attended), and followed by a social walking tour of central Belfast.

9. LI Nations / Devolved Nations.

The annual LI Devolved Nations Chairs' meeting between the Chairs of LI Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and LI President and CEO was established in 2013, to discuss matters relating to differences between the UK nations which are beyond the branch representation system of the LI Advisory Council. (These include definition in all LI activities between national and English or local issues; LI recognition of the different policy structures and manner in which landscape issues are dealt with in each government nation, and increased distance from LI HQ in terms of member support; equal engagement with assembly Ministers of all four UK governments; adherence to the stipulations of the European Landscape Convention (includes education); and appropriate representation of the UK nations in LI structure (Board and Committees etc)). The 2015 meeting is due to take place as a teleconference call on 19 May 2015. It was agreed at the 2014 meeting to invite representation of England at the Devolved Nations meeting, however LI Advisory Council overruled this decision. It was also discussed that a Vice President representing the nations should be considered, but this was not approved by LI Board, and CEO suggested discussion at Advisory Council. Between each Advisory Council meetings, a teleconference call is held between all LI Branch Chairs and Branch Representatives to Advisory Council.

LINI Co-Chairs met with Tony Williams, President of the Irish Landscape Institute in April 2015, and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to meet on a regular basis and cooperate in matters relating to the landscape profession on the island of Ireland as a whole.

10. Promotion.

LINI banner was designed (by Damien Nevin) and produced, but due to last minute glitches was unfortunately not ready for the LI Gold Medal Award in May 2014. LINI requested to also have LI banner for use, but while initially refused, LI have now committed to providing an LI banner for all branches as well as branch banners. In the interim, LINI had a second LINI banner produced, and a tablecloth printed with the LINI logo. LINI also has a Spaceframe display and hopes to have this updated for the conference on 1st June 2015. The LINI brochure (produced in 2010) is to be updated for use at the conference.

The conference includes an exhibition for LINI practices and members – an opportunity to promote your work to clients and other professions. The LI Rethinking the Urban Landscape exhibition is travelling to all branches. Programmed for Northern Ireland in Spring 2016, LINI intends to show the LINI exhibition and an ILI exhibition in parallel.

11. Education:

LINI attended 3 Schools events: Methodist College Belfast (a 2 day event which included schools from across the province), Victoria College Belfast, and Royal Belfast Academical Institution. Thank you to Catherine Adams, for assisting the two co-Chairs at these events. LINI did not participate in any Summer Schools in 2014.

A proposal underway at the University of Ulster for a new Master's level Landscape Architecture degree programme was withdrawn in November 2014 due to staff departures. The University has stated that it intends to recommence work on the proposal and work towards launching a programme in September 2017.

Emily Smyth and Peter Hutchinson
LINI co-Chairs
28 April 2015