

# Landscape Institute 2023 AGM held on 31 January 2024

## Report of the answers to questions raised during the open session

Questions raised during the meeting		Answer
1	Please can you post agenda here?	<p>Please see below the agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcoming address from Carolin Göhler FLI, President Elect/Acting President</li> <li>2. To approve minutes of 2022 AGM</li> <li>3. Report from Rob Hughes, CEO</li> <li>4. Presentation from Mat Haslam FLI, Honorary Treasurer</li> <li>5. To receive Trustees' Report and Annual Accounts</li> <li>6. To approve appointment of the LI auditors</li> </ol> <p>Presentation from Carolin Göhler</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Q&amp;A</li> </ol>
2	Collaboration with volunteers is essential and it is important to ensure the Branch Committees can bring issues forward through their Representatives without the representatives being told that they cannot bring an issue forward. How is this issue going to be addressed moving forward?	<p>The branch review will be a deep dive into how the LI local member networks operate and will take into consideration all key elements from purpose to processes. Branches need to remain relevant and continue to attract new members as well as retain the current engaged membership. In recent years work practices, priorities and commitment have changed substantially, and the LI needs to ensure Branches can embrace those changes to ensure we meet the expectations and requirements of the membership.</p> <p>To date Branch Chairs have been consulted on key areas of the review including financial management, events provision and communications. The next step is for all members to have the opportunity to feed back their thoughts and a member consultation will be launched once the recommendations to be consulted on have been finalised.</p>
3	Will the engagement with Branch Chairs at time limited meetings be the only input of branch volunteers and members into the review of Branches and their finances?	As in the above answer we hope to have as much engagement as possible with Branch Chairs, volunteers and members in this review process.
4	Will you be engaging with the rest of the Committee members as well as simply the Chairs? There is a wide range of experience and understanding of the Branches over the years within the Committees and it would be useful for the LI to engage with other officers within the Branches, at the very least.	We will be as consultative as possible with our branch communities and members more widely.
5	How can the current level of subscription fees be justified by the LI. As a member of two other professional bodies (IEMA & RGS) the LI	This is a challenge and we will be driving forward with plans to diversify our sources of income with new areas of activity to address this challenge and limit the reliance

	subscriptions are extremely high (3 times the amount I pay for each of these). How do the LI forecast fees to increase this year and into the future?	<p>on membership fee income. The focus will be on developing communities and partnerships to drive revenue and increase our ability to fund initiatives and programmes to support members.</p> <p>One of our key challenges is to move from the current 25:75 split of income from external and members to more 50:50 or even 60:40, by looking to challenge industry to support us more and not ask more from members. This is really important.</p> <p>Much of the money we receive goes back into running this complex operation. Project Kestrel will enable us to streamline these processes and significantly reduce our support costs as well as improve our services and offer to members.</p>
6	Given the debacle of last year's AGM, can we have assurances that the Q&A is limited to questions? Last year AGM ended in a series of speeches. Questions were not raised, but views supporting the actions of the then leadership were, to the exclusion of others. Can we have assurances that this will not be repeated today?	Within the time limit, members will have the opportunity to ask a question each, and the only request is to keep them as succinct as possible and relevant to the business of the AGM.
7	Please could the consultation with members/ branch committee make use of online forums/ workspace (eg Miro?), to allow reflective contributions to be made on proposals in volunteers own time and transparent sharing of experience and learning between different branches?	This is exactly what we hope Project Kestrel (our new digital home) will achieve and bring about more collaboration and engagement with our members.
8	The last AGM reported a disturbing amount of unacceptable behaviour by a minority of LI Members, impacting on volunteer, but more particularly staff, morale. Is it the view of the LI Senior Team that matters are improving? Do the new ways of working assist in this respect and is there cause for optimism that the LI can move forwards with its essential business?	With Rob Hughes in place as the new permanent CEO to lead the organisation and a refocus on membership we are very optimistic about our ability to move forwards and we very much hope members will see this over the coming months and feel able to engage collaboratively with us.
9	Does the agenda for Education include working closely with the Universities? This is imperative for the future of the profession.	Our partnerships with Universities are hugely important to us and to the future of the profession .and therefore we hope to work as closely as we can with them.
10	The LI website / My LI / CPD area / P2C area are all really clunky and do not function well. What is the priority to get these updated and without errors.	Project Kestrel (our new digital home) will include a new and improved website and CRM. This project is well underway and is aa main priority for us this year. It will improve our member experience and ensure members are able to utilise our systems and resources efficiently.
11	Where on the website are the published answers to these submitted questions?	The published answers will be published on our website - member lounge section - AGM page.
12	Is it proposed to commission a new Landscape Professional Practice Book as the 2018 version looks a bit outdated?	It isn't in the current business plan to update this but on the back of this question we will take another look.

13	We seem to have a top heavy LI staff team compared to most other professional bodies. Why do we not reduce the staff numbers (e.g. 6 in marketing? etc) and focus on using branches to help promote the landscape profession, support local young members, lead with real expertise on policy issues (coordinated by centre of course, etc. We are surely a membership organisation - which should actively involve our members and branches.	The staffing budget is commensurate with other membership organisations although systems that demand manual aspects and failing IT systems have an impact. We expect to make efficiencies and cost savings once improved systems are in place. The marketing and communications team of 6 staff covers marketing, communications and events.
14	When will we have the new digital home, and if it is not within the timeframe of the Branch review, can we use a freely available online platform to allow more in depth and reflective discussion among a wider group than is possible within time limited meetings	It is anticipated that the outcome of the review will ensure Branches remain relevant, meeting members needs but also enabling committees to work more effectively with less commitment requirements.
15	As a former CEO of a major professional body, I am aghast at the blase attitude to the current losses. The staffing levels are not commensurate with our size in my experience of working with many other bodies. Please can we have an open and accountable explanation of how we got into this financial mess and what we are doing about it. Do we not need to stop doing something?	The losses over the last several years were anticipated, planned for and communicated at previous AGMs. There was required investment in the Institute and whilst we are proceeding through the transformation, we are incurring losses. The aim was to get to a position of financial stability by 2025. We are robustly on course to achieve that. Staffing levels are continually reviewed by the Board, Finance Committee and People Committee and are considered appropriate to the level of activities of the Institute at the current while we are going through the transformation.
16	What are the plans within the LI to start running national conferences again? (Digital Practice Day roadshow was the last one I remember back in 2019)	We have been planning a one-day Digital Conference, which will take place in July 2024 and we will be promoting this to members shortly. A national conference is also in the pipeline for 2025.
17	Landscape architects could engage with British nurseries during their training and CPD tasks to have practical knowledge shared on plants - use and performance	We are working on next year's event schedule and this area is being considered as part of that process
18	Are we going to increase staff levels following the statement from the education lead?	We will be looking as part of business planning for next year at how we can reallocate our current resources to support our education which is a core priority for us.
19	when is Project Kestrel due to be completed?	We are hoping Project Kestrel to be completed in 2025.
20	Please can you elaborate on the investment losses? They've been referred to several times.	The Institute holds a significant part of its reserves in investments that are managed by large Investment Managers. As we all know markets can fall as well as increase. Due to market volatility in 2022/23 we incurred a loss on the valuation of our investments. We are not alone in this.
21	Universities won't close their courses if they were well subscribed. So clearly we are not doing enough outreach work to get students at the point they are making decisions on career routes. We have been asking LI for support with materials when we go to careers events and all the LI has	In the short term we have updated the Choose Landscape brochures and have developed a Choose Landscape presentation which has been sent when requested for careers events. We are also looking to develop marketing material specifically for

	<p>given us is a banner and some choose landscape postcards which means we as professionals have to put together all the material which is time consuming and also missing a trick with positive and clear messaging using the expertise of the LI machine.</p> <p>Totally agree re planting design training needing to be better covered in LA courses.</p>	<p>students that is not Choose Landscape, and this has been built into our forthcoming business plan as we recognise there is a requirement for this.</p> <p>We are looking at the resource allocated to support the careers and outreach work which is also being considered as part of business planning. This includes a review of the previous LI Ambassador scheme but more likely to be the introduction of the STEM Ambassador scheme which is UK wide and delivered by STEM Learning, providing a framework and process to get in front of young people to introduce them to the Landscape profession. They also provide free training and a free DBS check too and is being successfully delivered by other professional bodies such as CIEEM and CIHT. We are keen to work with our branches to support this process</p>
22	<p>The LI charity is about membership. For membership. It shouldn't be seen or talked about as a 'business' or is current management planning to move away from being a charity?</p>	<p>There are no plans to move away from being a charity. Our members are central to everything we do as evidenced in our 8 membership pledges. However, we also have to operate as a business to be financially sustainable.</p>
23	<p>The Public Sector Working Group has been mentioned as 'closed'. Is there any plan for the group to be opened in the coming year?</p>	<p>We are looking at ways to re-establish a community/network for members working in the public sector.</p>
24	<p>I'm keen to learn more about the new CRM / project Kestrel and happy to volunteer my support</p>	<p>We will be communicating updates throughout the project and delighted for offers of support as we will be seeking input and feedback from members throughout the project.</p>
25	<p>What consultation is going on with members about branches? I am not aware of being contacted.</p>	<p>The consultation with members has not yet been launched but will be shortly.</p>
26	<p>My chat box and ability to hold up my hand were disabled- why?</p>	<p>Hands up was not disabled, however, the Chat box was disabled for everyone to avoid confusion and streamline questions being raised.</p>
27	<p>Not really a question from me, but just to say thank you to the LI and to all those others who volunteer their time to help the LI to help us all. I guess the question is, how can we encourage more members to get involved in a positive, supportive and collaborative way?</p>	<p>We really value our volunteers. We have a volunteer strategy planned for the next financial year to try and have a better volunteer value proposition. We recognise we could only do a small amount of work without our dedicated volunteers and are always looking for more and are always welcome to join and help our great work. We are always in need of TMLI, CMLI and FLI assessors.</p>
28	<p>Why are we having to wait for a review before dropping TGNO.6/19?</p>	<p>We need an improved process to ensure we get the right final product. Reviewing the way we develop evidence based policy and guidance is a priority for me but we also need to spend time to make sure we get it right.</p> <p>That the Institute needs to set standards for landscape practice and ensure our members meet them is an important message for members to hear. It is a really important change in focus for us but will take time to put in place.</p> <p>Meanwhile it was felt that it was important to continue to make the existing guidance available.</p>

29	<p>Why are you limiting this question session to 30 min. Given that this is the very rare opportunity that any members are able to have a discussion and a dialogue within its current leadership and I also understand, is contrary to the provision of the Charities Commission, where sufficient time should be given to its members to ask questions.</p>	<p>We will be giving as much time as possible to questions but we are limited by the venue on the finish time.</p>
30	<p>Why has the Board for the past 5 years been pursuing a corporate strategy with different though worthy objectives different to the Royal Charter.</p>	<p>The Corporate Strategy themes and headings are those that were agreed by the membership and we have reported on for the last five years. They describe what the LI has spent on "...promoting the arts and sciences of Landscape Architecture and its several applications" and how we are delivering on objectives set out in the Royal Charter.</p> <p>As outlined already, we will be developing our new corporate plan for 2025 -2029 this year and will be reaching out to lots of member groups to get involved and engage in that process and help shape our next 5 years to take us through to our centenary in 2029.</p>
31	<p>As we are now 10/12ths of the way through the next financial year can you tell us what our financial position is</p>	<p>This financial year will have an equivalent deficit to the last financial year. This was foreseen and it is recorded in the minutes of the 2022 AGM and we had planned for a further deficit year.</p> <p>There's a great deal of work being done to realign the organization internally, to restructure, and to bring down that deficit position for this financial year and that work is ongoing. We're on track to reach a surplus position by 2025.</p>
32	<p>Planting plans. It's the one thing that sets us apart from all other built environment professionals and yet somehow, somewhere along the line it stopped. It therefore, isn't taught consistently in the universities. And yet people are still expecting landscape architects to be able to do that. If we can't do it. I'm not sure who will. As an institute, what are we going to do about it? Because this is something that really sets us apart as a profession? It is the one skill, and yet it's not considered.</p>	<p>We are shocked at some of the plans seen and heard about and feel we need to do something as part of our educational system. Historically there was little interest within universities, but we need to do more and find better and innovative ways to achieve that.</p> <p>With social media and other new platforms we have more opportunities to bring on to the forefront.</p>
33	<p>I really welcome the appointment of John O'keefe as of head of education and careers, some really welcoming to have him on board and we had a really useful workshop with Prg chairs that John set up quite recently and I welcome that. It's a really good step forward for engagement between the Institute practice and the universities.</p> <p>But my question is, it really became evident, during the course of that workshop, that a number of the universities are courses are threatened with closure and to my mind it represents a really existential threat to the</p>	<p>It is important that we work closely with our university partners and to expand the number of universities that we're working with. Progress is being made but we're also open to suggestions as well.</p> <p>This will be a consideration in the new business planning process to ensure, education as a priority.</p> <p>There's also a need to focus on CPD and skills as members. And that is something that we're taking a really long, hard look at for next year as well and start building much more competence around CPD project. Project Kestrel involves the relaunch of our LI campus, and that will allow us to bring in third party materials. So we will be able to</p>

	to the profession and the Institute and I want to know what the Institute is doing. I'm proposing to do to address that,	<p>start building partnership network that allow us to develop those kinds of skills and deliver those to the membership at much lower cost than you would do if you went out through partnership.</p> <p>There are 2 areas there that primary educational response up to degree level and driving the content that they're delivering, which is a harder ask, obviously, and then secondarily, picking it up through really good quality CPD. And driving through the importance of that to membership and the growth of the membership.</p>
34	Just go back to the finance question. Really, I've got 2 questions. They are very short. Please. Can you confirm total losses or deficits over the last 5 years, including those predicted figures for 23/24, and can you provide a forecast for 24/25 and 25/26, please.	<p>The Annual Reports and Accounts are public available on the Charities Commission website and also on the Landscape Institute website. I refer you to these sources for previous Annual Report and Accounts.</p> <p>We are unable to disclose specific financial information for 2023/4 and future years prior to the finalisation of the audit and publication of the accounts. However, at the AGM it was disclosed that 2023/4 will be another deficit, as has been previously anticipated and communicated to the members, and that we are on course for a surplus position by 2025.</p>
35	So the context for us is that we are in the process now of a university restructure, which means we will no longer be the only discrete department of landscape architecture in the UK. And we are going to be merging in with architecture. Fortunately, only a 2 department school. There's lots of reasons for this happening. Lots of higher education institutions are being restructured and all sorts. But one of the really key things is that the number of people applying for undergraduate courses is not increasing in the way that we have a need for every year. At our end of year exhibition we have lots of employers needing lots of graduates, and we can never have enough. So my question is for the Institute, by which I mean, as Alan Tate mentioned many years ago, when he was a member, that the Institute is all its members not just the elected officers, not just the staff, but for all of us. How are we going to promote the profession? How are we as members of the Institute, each going to raise the profile of the Institute, so that young people who are really concerned about environmental issues actually see that we are a profession worth joining. So, as I say, this isn't really a question, just for the staff or the officers. It's for all of us as members.	<p>We recognise we need to review our offer and that there is an urgent need for us to address this. It's really important that we do the best we can to address it and look at new opportunities. We need to work closer with academia to all come up with better ways of attracting younger people into this really wonderful profession,</p> <p>We recognise this and the need to review our offer. As part of our commitment to that we are factoring in extra resource to drive it forward across a wide breadth as well, but as a primary level education, fruiting to degree and discussing what that looks like in terms of broader accreditation of courses and encouraging people to move to landscape as a as a profession. That's really important.</p>
36	My question is about staffing size of the staff, the functions and the costs. There is one member of staff which I haven't met you, sir, dealing with education, which is part of our charitable purpose. However, there are 5.2 members of staff dealing with inclusivity. Admirable as this is, it is not a	<p>It is not appropriate to discuss staffing structures but to confirm that staff are engaged across the board on many activities to support the membership.</p> <p>Outside of that your question relates to a previous point, which was around the relationship of the 5-year strategy. We will be agreeing a new 5-year strategy later</p>

	<p>core function of the Landscape Institute. In the last account £800,000 pounds was dedicated to inclusion and growth as the Institute grew by 37 in the years 22/23. Each new member cost 22,000 pounds. How many of these new members fell into the category of inclusivity and does this distribution of staff and cost reflect that inclusion is 5 times more important than education, in the view of the trustees. There are 7 members of staff in marketing, whose running cost of 7 must exceed 200,000 pounds.</p> <p>How can this expense of staff be justified in the light of the recently reduced budget to the warranties of a mere 25,000 pounds?</p>	<p>this year and will be doing that in consultation with members. We have an opportunity to look forward towards our centenary and we are focused as an organisation on delivering an LI that's fit for purpose.</p> <p>We are looking forwards and wish to do that as a community of peers who respect each other all wish to move forward positively and progressively.</p>
37	<p>Mine is a rather retrospective question. I'm afraid to promote transparency in particular, to reassure members that trustees were innocent of financial or administrative wrongdoing. Can the full minutes of board meetings held between November 2021 and July 2022 currently categorized as confidential and therefore not published now be made available on the Internet for inspection by the membership.</p> <p>May I make a comment? I think that does suggest the trustees were guilty in some way of financial or administrative long doing in that period of time</p>	<p>The key word is confidentiality, and for that reason the answer is that the Board minutes referred to will not be shared.</p>
38	<p>My question is, why are the minutes of finance and risk confidential? Because in other charities they don't need to be. I understand that certain bits might be. But the minutes of finance and risk Committee are not available to the members. Why not?</p>	<p>The Finance and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of the Board and does not make decisions only advises the Board. It is the responsibility of the Board to make the financial decisions and communicate these.</p> <p>We have heard the comments about being more transparent, but some issues are confidential as being of business interest only.</p> <p>There are a number of internal review underway in relation to our committee structures and other areas which once concluded will give greater transparency. The important judgement will be the one around our performance over the next 12 months, and the changes being made.</p> <p>We are progressing and moving in the right direction and recognise the need focus on education, policy work and the national voice.</p> <p>We will though have to be very sensitive about commercial revenues and driving forward external relationships as it will require us to rebuild our reputation in many areas.</p> <p>Membership income is a challenge and need to focus on new revenue streams as outlined earlier.</p>

39	<p>So on the topic of moving forwards. How do you envision the role of, say, artificial intelligence in the future of the LI and its members. And what kind of strategic measures are you considering to ensure that profession and the Institute stays relevant and influential in that increasingly AI driven world?</p>	<p>This was discussed in detail at our recent business planning session. AI is clearly a big issue, and something that we need to get to grips to It is on the agenda and is an area that we're looking at.</p> <p>AI is a threat in lots of areas, especially to the members. And we'll have to start there in terms of what that assessment looks like and moving forward and how we respond to that. We need to reach out more into members around this critical area and look at the potential benefits.</p>
40	<p>I'm very much involved in the branch in Yorkshire and Humberside and we are very keen to be involved as much as possible in the branch review that's going on now. But we have struggled to find a way to understand what the Review is taking in what has specifically instigated the review. what aspects of the branch are being reviewed. and we are aware that there was a complete change to funding, and we are aware of the reasons for that. But we are finding it quite difficult to engage with the process to explore options, for how funding might be managed going forward. And this relates, perhaps, to the approach. And maybe this is this is really the question is in advance of Project Kestrel. Could we consider as an institute working to remove some of the broken or incorrect pages that are currently online. Could we please consider making use of some of the freely available software and platforms that there are where we might collaborate effectively? So that's the question is, could we do some things in the meantime, in advance of Project Kestrel to make communication easier.</p>	<p>The branch review is a deep dive into how LI local member networks operate, taking into consideration all key elements from purposes and to processes. Branches need to remain relevant and continue to attract new members as well as retain the current engaged membership. In recent years work practices, priorities, and commitments have changed substantially, therefore, the LI needs to ensure branches can embrace these lifestyle changes to still provide an operation that meets the expectations and requirements of the membership. Branch chairs have been consulted in key areas of the review, including financial management, events, provision, and communications. It's anticipated that the outcome of the review will ensure branches remain relevant by meeting members needs and by also enabling committees to work more effectively with less commitment requirements. This is a consultative process. We cannot tell you what is in that review yet because it has not yet been written, and at the moment we are at evidence gathering stage.</p> <p>The aim is to make branches better for members, for volunteers who are so highly valued to us and for the staff to make sure that we are working in partnership.</p> <p>With regards to can we make the web pages better? Absolutely, we are working on it. And you know we work collaboratively with the MarComms team, the membership team, and it is on a very lengthy to do list of our membership pages to do. And I can tell you that I met with one of the marketing managers on Friday to actually look at it. So it is on our list, and we will get to it.</p>
41	<p>I've asked on 2 occasions for the CEO if he would give me details of a letter that was sent posted by the Auditors. It was in the minutes that the Board were going to address points raised by the auditors. So what were these points. I've asked it twice. I haven't had the benefit of a reply.</p>	<p>A sincere apology for the delay in responding.</p> <p>It is common practice for auditors to write a letter after each audit to the client ie the Landscape Institute. There's a standard letter that goes out as part of the audit process. That letter is an opportunity for the auditors to be able to deliver what they consider value add to the process. There's no formality about it. We're not tied to any of the requests that are in there. They are typically opportunities to improve the audit process. In this instance they referred to a number of opportunities for us to address internal processes. As a result of those requests, we implemented a new purchase order system called Yooze, which allows us to be able to track things across a year much more clearly and retrieve that information for the audit process.</p>

		The letter itself just introduces their report that they send to us and it was referenced in the minutes to ensure everyone is aware of it.
42	1. 2023 Awards: what were the costs of mounting the event and what was the revenue from holding the event?	We are currently carrying out a value for money review of the awards and will be reporting to the Board shortly on our findings and recommendations for the future.
	2. Role of the CEO: As well as servicing the Board and standing committees, does the CEO have a duty to help, advise and support (1) individual members (2) groups of members	The Chief Executive is the LI's principal executive responsible for leading the staff team and the management of the Institute. They are also pivotal in maintaining strong relationships with our members, volunteers and valued sector partners and funders. A key task is to develop strong networks, maintain proactive and excellent working relationships between members and the staff team and put effective membership communication and engagement at the heart of the Institute's governance and ways of working to enable them to inform the Institute's agenda and priorities. It is not to personally advise and support individual members and groups of members.
	3. EGMs: does the CEO have a duty or a role in advising members who wish to call an EGM? Specifically (1) will the CEO advise on the wording of motions (2) will the CEO email members to inform them of the requisitioners reasons for wishing to call an EGM?	The process and documentation for calling an EGM is something the Governance Committee will be looking at this year as part of its work programme. There are some best practice examples from organisations in the sector available that the Committee will be looking at. This is a governance matter for the Board and not for the Chief Executive.
	4. Occupancy of the LI HQ: (1) what is the pattern of usage? (2) how many staff visit the office on an average day? (3) what is the average duration of a visit by a member of staff to the office?	We are currently carrying out a review of our future requirements for a Headquarters/office including usage analysis /future workforce and membership needs
	5. Do the Trustees agree that the public benefit arising from LI charitable expenditure must be "identifiable and capable of being proved by evidence"? If so, (1) what public benefits of this nature are attained with regard to the three main pillars of the Corporate Strategy? (2) How will they be identified and measured?	It is important that as a charity we demonstrate how we deliver direct public benefit. This is something that the Board in discussion with the Advisory Council will be looking at for the new Corporate Strategy.
	6. When the new Corporate Strategy is drawn up, is the LI willing to (1) set out how it relates to the Royal Charter Objectives (2) define how the objectives will be "identifiable and capable of being proved by evidence" (3) have an open discussion with the membership, both online and offline, to consider alternatives and discuss their costs, benefits, merits and drawbacks.	This will be for the Board in discussion with Advisory Council to consider following member consultation on the strategy.

	<p>7. Has the profession grown in the past year and has the inclusiveness of the profession changed since the last AGM? If so, to what extent is the growth attributable to specific actions taken during the reporting period?</p>	<p>As you will see from the Annual Report Individual members of the Institute did increase over the past year.</p> <p>Currently our IT system does not enable us to store details about the composition of our membership.</p> <p>Project Kestrel (our new digital platform) will mean we will be able to store members specialisms, experience and backgrounds and going forward this will be a KPI the membership department will be measured against.</p> <p>However. since the last AGM we have begun to roll-out new routes into membership for professionals from a more diverse background.</p> <p>We are also taking forward our work around Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion. John O’Keeffe as Head of Education &amp; Careers is the LI staff lead. The new People, Change &amp; Culture Committee is tasked with overseeing the development and implementation of a new People Strategy one aim of which is to increase both the diversity of the profession and the diversity of those who sit on all LI committees including Board and AdCo. John also represents the LI with other organisations in the built environment as part of our commitment to the MoU and Access All Areas Charter we all jointly signed to collectively address EDI issues within in the sector.</p>
	<p>8. Please supply further details relating to the purposes for which the legal expenditure was undertaken in the reporting period.</p>	<p>This line covers the advice for all our business activities. During the year we reviewed a number of our long-standing business agreements and service contracts in addition to a number of new contracts including with the supplier of our new digital platform. In accordance with their legal responsibilities the Board of Trustees also took legal advice to ensure they took informed decisions and acted at all times in accordance with our governing documents and in the best interests of the charity in relation to the ongoing correspondence about the whistleblowing process and outcome; the 2023 Officer and Advisory Council elections and the proposed EGM.</p>
<p>43</p>	<p>The minutes of the last AGM are wrong- item 6 proposes the membership agreed to an institute position when no such vote occurred. Can the institute use mutually agreed independent advice to adjudicate on the validity of last year’s EGM and can members request the removal of Russell Cooke solicitors since they racked up 200k of bills prosecuting one volunteer- not good value</p>	<p>The minutes have been on the website in draft for a year and no queries of comments on accuracy have been received.</p> <p>You asked members using Linkedin and your own landscape membership email list to vote against accepting the minutes as a correct record. However, members voted to accept the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Minute 6 is a factual report of what the whistleblowing champion said at the meeting. The Institute has never said that the handling of the whistleblowing case was agreed by the membership and this is not suggested in minute 6 of the of the 2022 AGM.</p> <p>On the question of the validity of the meeting landscape4members organised. It was not a LI EGM because it was not convened in accordance with our governing</p>

		<p>documents and that the Board decision not to call an EGM itself was the right one because the action the signatories were asking the Board to take was ultra vires.</p> <p>The Governance Committee will be tendering for a new legal adviser in the course of the next 12 months and Russell Cooke will be invited to re-tender as is custom and practice.</p>
44	<p>The Charities Commission expects (all) expenditure ( by theLI) to be measured by SMART (acronym) I.e. Specific,Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound....did/does the LI follow this procedure in all transactions ?</p> <p>I expect the answer to be yes - then...</p> <p>How come there was a financial deficit/ shortfall of£400k in our accounts? ... I can only conclude this appears not to be the case - so I ask..</p> <p>What is the reason/excuse for this incredible/ inexcusable fiscal mismanagement and..</p> <p>What step/s are being taken to rectify this shortfall? ( without having to raid the reserve created by the sale of Barnard Mews which is totally unacceptable)</p> <p>Note -the board / executive in 2009 made the same error and we lost almost all our reserves -£800k-and LI almost folded- this looks so similar and the dire consequences are looming -will the board/executives do the right thing and step down too??</p>	<p>A deficit budget was agreed as part of a 5- year plan to recover from the pandemic and enable the Institute to modernise and build a more financially resilient, more digital, operationally efficient organisation which is fit to meet the future needs of the profession. It was not an overspend.</p> <p>The five-year plan to balance the budget by 2025 and rebuild our reserves was reported to the 2022 Annual General Meeting</p> <p>As has been outlined we are on track to achieve this. Expenditure being reviewed monthly and closely controlled to ensure we do not exceed the budgeted deficit for 2023/24</p> <p>The business plan is underpinned by the following financial principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To balance budget by 2025</li> <li>2. To diversify the business to deliver new income streams</li> <li>3. To grow current non-member income streams</li> <li>4. To review our office needs with new working patterns.</li> <li>5. To make efficiencies on the back of new digital platform/new ways of working</li> <li>6. To maintain financial rigour and contain costs including staffing, consultants etc.</li> </ol> <p>and can be found on our website here <a href="https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/LI-Business-Plan-23-24.pdf">https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/LI-Business-Plan-23-24.pdf</a> . The Plan is closely aligned to our ‘new ways of working’, to be a more open, inclusive, and future-orientated organisation, as well as to our current strategic themes of influence, relevance, and inclusive growth, as set out in our 2018-23 Corporate Strategy.</p> <p>The LI’s charter objective is “to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the benefit of the public by promoting the arts and sciences of Landscape Architecture (as such expression is hereinafter defined) and its several applications”? The first part of the charitable object tells us ‘what’, and the other part tells us ‘how’.</p> <p>The Corporate Strategy themes and headings are those that were agreed by the membership and we have reported on for the last five years. They describe what the LI has spent on “...promoting the arts and sciences of Landscape Architecture and its several applications” and how we are delivering on our charter objective.</p>

It will be for the Board in discussion with the Advisory Council to agree the structure of the new corporate strategy following a member consultation. However we already have SMART objectives in place for 2023/24 and 2024/25 against which the Chief Executive is/will be reporting against to the Board each month.

On the Property Fund. It is a designated fund. The fund was generated in part from the sale of Barnard Mews and in part from the interest generated from the LI's investments.

Designated funds are earmarked formally by the trustees for a particular purpose and they can be formally undesignated by the Board and returned to the general fund or re-designated for a different purpose. It is the responsibility of the Board is to make sure the funds work in the best interests of the organisation.

We are all living in a rapidly changing world and the changes we have seen over the past 3 or 4 years have fundamentally altered the way we live and work. The shift in social practices and the pandemic have led to significant and persistent change and digital change has now reached the point that it underpins the way we work and communicate. Investment in a freehold headquarters is therefore no longer seen by the Board as in the best interests of the organisation and it consequently took the decision to re-designate it as the Strategic Development Fund and to commit £400k of that fund to deliver a modern digital home for landscape professionals and the Institute.

The Board has also agreed to make changes to the way we allocate the interest from our investments to enable the LI to restore the designated fund and at the same time support the General Fund and fund the current operational deficit through the General Fund.