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Chief Executive, Institution
of Structural Engineers

The Institution in 2023 – a hive of activity

As I write this annual update as Chief Executive of the Institution, I find that I am not only optimistic but also enthused by what the future holds for the IStructE.

It has been six months since I started in my role, and I am struck by how quickly time has flown by and what an exciting time it has been. Looking at everything we have accomplished in 2023, I am incredibly proud of the way we have supported our members and the profession.

Technical expertise: RAAC

As a professional institution and a learned society, we pride ourselves on our technical expertise applied for public benefit. With reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) grabbing headlines in every UK news outlet in late August and September this year, our expertise came to the fore.

CROSS and the Institution's RAAC Study Group have been central to dealing with the RAAC matter. A detailed update, including information about our guidance, was provided in the October issue of *The Structural Engineer*.

If you would like to join the RAAC Study Group and contribute to the vital work that we are undertaking, please email technical@istructe.org.

Implementation of Building Safety Act

The Institution has been active in preparing the UK engineering and wider built environment industry for the implementation of the Building Safety Act, the most important piece of construction legislation in this country in the past 30 years.

Our web portal (www.istructe.org/resources/building-safety-act/) provides wide-ranging advice covering the scope and impact of the Act and the legal implications. Following the recent publication of secondary legislation, we are currently drafting further detailed guidance on safety cases, the golden thread and gateways.

Appointment as Voluntary Reporting Service provider

CROSS has been appointed by the Building

Safety Regulator as Voluntary Reporting Service (VRS) provider in England and Wales. Vital to the work of CROSS are submissions to its confidential reporting system – a way for professionals to anonymously share safety concerns and insights. The CROSS VRS accepts safety reports on structure- and fire-related issues and provides advisory notes to industry. All are made freely available on the CROSS website (www.cross-safety.org/uk) to help make structures safer.

Sustainability focus

Staying true to our mission of public safety, we continue to focus rightly on creating a world that uses resources appropriately and addresses environmental and societal challenges.

The *Circular economy* guide was published in July of this year, building on the Institution's growing library of sustainability guidance and providing a framework for the reuse of buildings and building elements. The Institution

also issued its first sustainability position paper, on the use of ground granulated blast-furnace slag (GGBS). This was developed with industry and takes a global perspective on sustainable material sourcing.

The Institution continues to provide both technical and governance support to the Net Zero Carbon Building Standard. This will provide a science-based approach for buildings to meet net-zero criteria, helping meet industry sustainability objectives.

We also launched new IPD regulations this year. Together with changes to our examinations, these will put more emphasis on sustainability within the Professional Review process.

Regional groups and membership support

It has been a privilege to visit some of our regional groups for the first time and it was wonderful to connect with many of our members. For me, each interaction has emphasised the enthusiasm of our regional group volunteers and I have felt energised for the future.

We have also opened our first non-UK office in the Hong Kong SAR this November. This will enable us to better support our members based in the region and to build links with local employers and universities. It will also allow us to collaborate when appropriate with the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) in support of the structural engineering profession.

We have launched a new route to the Associate (AIStructE) grade, which now offers an opportunity for eligible Graduates to have



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their professional competence recognised when they pass the PRI assessment. Further details about these changes can be found on [page 12](#).

Equality, diversity and inclusion

This year has seen the introduction of some changes to membership accessibility and assessment criteria which I think represent a great step forward for an inclusive membership.

We also marked International Women in Engineering Day (INWED) on 23 June, organised by the Women's Engineering Society. This is vital in encouraging more young women and girls to take up engineering careers.

If you would like to share your thoughts on

EDI matters, please email edi@istructe.org.

Structural Awards

We announced the shortlist for this year's Structural Awards in September, revealing the overall winners at the annual ceremony on 10 November. Looking at the attributes of People, Planet, Process and Profession, these awards celebrate worldwide engineering excellence, with projects ranging from national landmarks and vast stadiums to cleverly designed smaller structures and ingenious retrofit projects. Turn to [page 27](#) of this issue to discover all this year's winning entries.

Award-winning activities British Parking Awards

In September, the Institution won the Special Jury Award at the British Parking Awards for our new *Car park design* guidance.

Memcom Excellence Awards

Our events were also shortlisted at the UK's Memcom Awards 2023 for Best Event on a Shoestring <£20K, and Best Virtual/Hybrid Event.

Association Excellence Awards

As this issue goes to press, we are looking forward to finding out if the Institution will be successful in the Sustainability Champion category at the Association Excellence Awards.

Thank you

As I list these achievements, I am conscious of the dedication of many whose hard work ensures that the Institution supports and develops both the profession and the professional alike. I want to thank each of my colleagues, our volunteers, as well as the

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Board and the Council for their continued commitment to the Institution.

I would like to make a special mention of two key people leaving the Board this year. First, Jane Entwistle, who is completing her tenure this year as Past-President. Jane has played a key role on the Board, where she has been a huge supporter of our regions.

Second, Peter Terrell, Chairman of our Board, whose tenure comes to an end in December. Peter has made significant contributions to the governance of the Board and has been an enthusiastic ambassador for the Institution.

I extend my personal thanks to both Jane and Peter for their support and wise counsel as I settled into my role this year. I am sure they will remain active volunteers of this institution they love so much.

With Peter's departure, I also have the privilege of welcoming Don McQuillan as our incoming Chair from January 2024.

In closing, I feel honoured to be leading the Institution at a time when objective technical expertise is fiercely needed to create a better built environment where communities thrive. Have a good rest of the year and advance wishes for a wonderful 2024!

