

President's mid-year update

Sharing knowledge from our global engineering community



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As we reach the midpoint of 2024, I am delighted to share my activities as President and acknowledge the many vibrant regional groups and members I have engaged with so far. I'm also excited to provide an update on progress of my 2024 Presidential themes, centred on actions to reduce carbon, increase and share knowledge, and enhance inclusion (Figure 1), all with the purpose of deepening and celebrating our impact as structural engineers on the world.

We have visited 13 regional groups (nine in the UK and Republic of Ireland, and four internationally; Figure 2); celebrated the People and Papers Awards (Figure 3) and the Past Presidents' Luncheon in London; engaged more than 200 people in the President's call to action (Figure 4); hosted an inaugural webinar with past Gold Medallists; launched a broadened mentoring pilot programme; and celebrated the opening of our Hong Kong office. I was also privileged to participate in judging of the Structural Awards and I'm excited for all of you to see the shortlist of projects that will be announced soon after you read this.



FIGURE 1: The 2024 Presidential themes celebrate the impact of structural engineers on the world

In addition to these achievements, the Institution is working on an exciting new initiative which will see equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) working groups launched later this year. And we are collecting members' stories and impacts relating to the call to action which we

will soon share with you. All in all, there is a lot to celebrate!

What have I heard from you?

Feedback has been consistent that the idea of bringing our whole membership community



FIGURE 2: Engaging with regional groups around the world is a highlight of the Presidential year



BENJ DAVIES

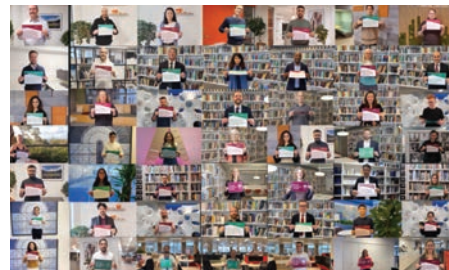
FIGURE 3: The People and Papers Awards celebrate the service and achievements of members and those contributing to Institution activities

together through a call to action is welcomed and inspiring. You've told me that the positive focus of the impact of our work as structural engineers is an uplifting perspective to balance the more disheartening narrative related to climate change. Both are important, yet balance and action are imperative and allow us to approach the problem from different angles.

I also heard challenges in attracting and retaining talented people, in pressure on fees, in constraints in the education curriculum and in education in practice to keep up with the

“ WE MUST COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT AND PUSH OUR PROFESSION FORWARDS ”

FIGURE 4: The level of engagement with the President's call to action has been inspiring



changing needs of our profession, including new and updated regulations.

These Institutional engagements – from the awards dinners and technical talks to school presentations and regional gatherings – highlight our committed community, sustainability, how we share knowledge (Figure 5) and inspire the next generation of engineers. These interactions reinforce the strength of our global network and shared passion for structural engineering.

On a personal note, when I stop to consider the immense volume of activities, engagement, support, and knowledge sharing and distribution carried out by the Institution, I am in awe. I may have known this in theory and now, in living it as President for six months, I realise I undervalued or perhaps did not fully understand what was available to me as a member. So I share this realisation with you in the hope that it will pique some of your interests and spark an action to become curious yourselves and get more from your profession, as I am now doing.

Reflecting on the past six months, we know that our profession is facing evolving tests in competency, made more challenging by our more rapidly changing digital and environmental landscape. Around the world, we have engineering skills and resource shortages, and then there are the somewhat newer impacts of artificial intelligence set against the ever-important challenge of upholding of safety and risk. It's a lot!

Our members across the regions of the UK and around the world are facing similar challenges, in different ways. My biggest takeaway is that we must come together to support and push our profession forwards. If we collectively keep moving, keep evolving, keep learning and increase our skills and knowledge, we can continue to be the leaders of the built environment.

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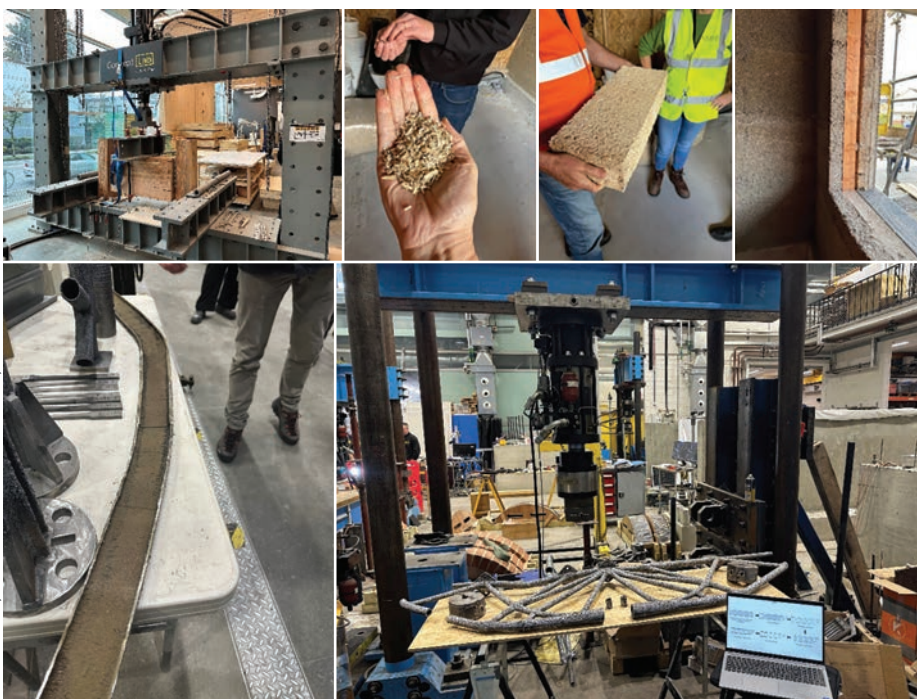


FIGURE 5: It is exciting and encouraging to see members advancing climate action through creative thinking, deep knowledge of structures and materials, rigorous testing, and generous sharing of their research