

CEO, RUTH CARTER, INTRODUCTION, JUNE 2021

There are two schools of thought as to whether the saying 'may you live in interesting times' is a blessing or a curse. The reality is that it is probably a mix of both. And there is no doubt that I join CIBSE at one of the most interesting times in our sector's history.

My first few weeks in the role of Chief Executive has been a whirlwind of meetings and information gathering. The issues discussed have been widely diverse but all of them are underpinned by a desire to make an impact and genuinely help shift the dial. I have already had the pleasure of meeting many of you (albeit online) and the welcome has been warm, with a wry sense of humour and deep-seated passion for this sector and for making a difference. I look forward to meeting many more of you over the coming months and especially at our Council Meeting in a few days' time.

As you read the CIBSE Council Report, you will see that here at CIBSE HQ, we remain closely in touch with the challenges ahead for our industry and are ensuring we are able to react to that and support you going forward.

Membership remains strong and our retention rates are exceptionally high, reflecting the value you place on CIBSE membership. But building services is not just a profession – for many it is a calling. We are indeed fortunate to have a 'young' average member age of 46 – something that many other PEIs can only dream of – and it is exciting to see a new wave of young, vibrant and highly talented individuals, who are passionate about building safety, saving the planet and protecting the environment, engaging with CIBSE and joining our member ranks.

Our event and knowledge sharing products have also seen considerable activity. You will see a full programme of digital events already in our schedule, but we are optimistically, if cautiously, starting to plan for a return to live face-to-face events towards the end of the year. Digital delivery will remain a key part of the offering we provide going forward but we know there is no substitute, in some instances, for the serendipity, the depth of interaction and knowledge sharing and the chance to discover what you didn't even know you needed to discover that a live event can offer.

Whilst many sectors in the outside world have been operating in benign or even turgid markets, CIBSE has seen the opposite and the report from our Technical Team highlights the depth and reach of CIBSE, its members and the highly committed volunteer community.

I believe passionately in 'pay it forward'. Taking what you know and sharing that information with those coming through the ranks or starting their own journeys. I have been lucky enough to be part of the Government's 'Be the Business' mentoring scheme over the past couple of years where they have developed a bench of executive mentors who work with Enterprise organisations to help them with productivity and growth. Whilst much of last year focused on navigating pandemics and finding paths back to profitability, for some it was about how to reenergise and reinvent themselves in the light of new opportunities that would be arising.

The building services community is in exactly this place. As I write this, the long-awaited Building Safety Bill is poised to go through Parliament and the impact and implication of what is probably the single biggest piece of legislative change in our sector in pretty much everyone's lifetime is not lost on any of us. Process, infrastructure and the seamless 'Golden

Thread' are challenges enough let alone the need for new competencies and skills sets as well as the demand for a fundamental culture change in our industry.

We could be standing on the train tracks with an express train hurtling towards us or we could be standing on the top of the most exciting rollercoaster ever. How we prepare and react to these challenges and opportunities will shape our organisations, our industry and the wider community for the foreseeable future.

CIBSE's relevance has never been higher as this new era starts to unfold in front of us, and I look forward to ensuring that we are relevant, ahead of the curve in ensuring we strive to do good stuff and support our members.