

apse direct

Association for Public Service Excellence

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A nighttime photograph of the Swansea Arena entrance. The building's facade is covered in a grid of small lights that spell out 'SWANSEA ARENA' in large, bright letters. Below this, 'ABERTawe' is also illuminated. People are seen walking in the foreground, and the arena's entrance is visible in the background.

SWANSEA
ARENA
ABERTawe

A look ahead to the APSE Annual Seminar 2022

Resilient Derby

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No one left behind

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(Mental) Health is wealth

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Editorial



Paul O'Brien
Chief Executive,
APSE

The heat is on

There's an old joke that, instead of having the typical four seasons in a year, the UK enjoys only two: winter and July. As crummy - and climatologically inaccurate - as the joke is, the punchline did spring to mind this last week as temperatures soared to tropical levels from Dundee to Dorset.

Mid-July has given us record-breaking temperatures accompanied, of course, by the obligatory red top front page splashes of UK beaches packed with seaside-goers switching off from their normal routines to bask in the sun.

Unlike the delicious cocktails served up in sun-laden bars and pubs this past week however, local councils are currently sipping a toxic cocktail of inflationary pressures, soaring energy prices, rising workforce costs and growing demands for services post-COVID - especially in already-stretched adults and children's social care services. Add in to the mix the severe housing shortages faced by authorities across the UK, and money saving expert Martin Lewis' recent comments on potential civil unrest later this year sound distressingly plausible.

On the topic of things heating up, the contest to replace Boris Johnson as leader of the Conservative Party (and UK Prime Minister) has now entered its second week. Thus far, one could perhaps accuse the contest of generating more heat than light with discussions on policy something of an afterthought. Touted as the Government's flagship policy, talk of 'levelling up' has barely featured amongst the candidates; seriously

disconcerting when one considers the name of the UK Government department covering local government...

Whoever the next occupant of 10 Downing Street may be, the incoming administration has to recognise the current system of local governance in the UK is misaligned, under-resourced and leads to dysfunctional outcomes. As was found in APSE's Local Government Commission 2030, the wicked public policy predicaments facing central governments cannot be resolved in top-down approaches; hence the urgent need for a principle of 'local by default'.

Whether through its innovative delivery of new homes, a co-ordinating role in carbon reduction, or influences and direction on a wider local economic basis, an empowered local government holds the key to better local resolutions in tackling issues like inequality. APSE's upcoming Annual Seminar in September, set against the stunning Swansea Bay and Gower Peninsula, will bring to the forefront examples of local councils from all across the UK building on their unique role as stewards of place to deliver for their local communities. You can read more about what is in store at our action-packed seminar on page 8.

Going back to that old crummy joke, winters in the UK can be notoriously long and harsh. Though the sun may be shining now, if local government continues to be left out in the cold when it comes to roles, powers and resources, the oncoming winter is likely to be a long and thoroughly discontented one.

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Report Back

A round-up of APSE advocacy and events



[L-R Clockwise] At the LGA Conference 2022: APSE Deputy Chief Executive, Mo Baines, with Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Lisa Nandy MP; APSE Local Government Commissioner Lord Gary Porter with then Chancellor Rishi Sunak MP; and APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien, with APSE National Chair and Deputy Leader of Swansea Council, Cllr Andrea Lewis.

APSE at the LGA Conference in Harrogate

APSE enjoyed a very productive couple of days at the Local Government Association Conference in Harrogate on 28-30 June. The event provided a great opportunity to promote our research 'Local by Default' with then Chancellor Rishi Sunak MP, Shadow Levelling Up Secretary Lisa Nandy MP, Lord Gary Porter and our National Chair Cllr Andrea Lewis. Thanks also to Cllr Kelham Cooke, Leader of South Kesteven Council, for chairing our Environment session.

Talking 'Local by default' at the Association of Labour Councillors Conference

On Sunday 19 June, APSE sponsored and held a fringe event at the LGA Labour/Association of Labour Councillors Conference 2022 in which the findings of the APSE Local Government Commission 2030 were discussed; namely how they can shape and inform Labour's local government policies. Chaired by APSE Deputy Chief Executive Mo Baines, speakers on our panel included: Cllr Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader, Birmingham City Council; and Paul O'Brien, Chair of the APSE Local Government Commission 2030. The Commission's final report 'Local by default' can be downloaded from the APSE website [here](#).

Congratulations Redbridge! Winner of the APSE-sponsored 'Best Council Services Team' category at the MJ Achievement Awards 2022

APSE was proud to once again sponsor the Best Council Services Team category at the MJ Achievement Awards 2022. APSE member authority - the London Borough of Redbridge - fought off stiff competition to be crowned this year's winner. The Council's Planning Service Team were presented with the award by APSE National Chair, Cllr Andrea Lewis, and APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien, at a ceremony which took place on 24 June in London. Many congratulations to the team at Redbridge!



APSE Deputy Chief Executive, Mo Baines, and Leader of South Kesteven District Council, Cllr Kelham Cooke, discuss APSE's research at an APSE fringe event at the LGA Conference 2022 in Harrogate.

How housing can help meet the climate challenge: APSE and TCPA launch our new report

On 24 May, at a virtual event, APSE and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) launched our eighth collaborative housing and place-making research publication. This year, the research focused on the role of housing and planning in tackling climate change at a local authority level. This event considered the findings and recommendations from 'Rising to the climate change challenge: The role of housing and planning within local councils' providing an opportunity to hear about the challenges facing housing and planning teams. You can learn more about the report on page 10.

Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors

APSE was once again delighted to support the ALDC Councillor Weekend in July with a showcase of APSE's research as part of the ALDC exhibition and a fringe event on 'Levelling Up: Fact or Fiction' addressed by APSE Deputy Chief Executive, Mo Baines, which explored APSE's response to the White Paper and subsequent Bill. APSE is calling for councils to be recognised for their unique



APSE National Chair, Cllr Andrea Lewis, and Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, present the 'Best Council Services Team' Award to the team from the London Borough of Redbridge at the MJ Achievement Awards in London on 24 June.



Cllr Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader of Birmingham City Council, addresses delegates at APSE's Association of Labour Councillors Conference Fringe Event on 19 June.

knowledge of local places and, with lessons learned from the APSE Local Government Commission report, suggests that levelling up is of equal importance to rural and coastal communities as well as urban areas.

Yes Minster: APSE National Council Meeting takes place in York

On 16 and 17 June, APSE held its National Council Meeting in York. Chaired by APSE National Chair, Cllr Andrea Lewis, The Meeting's agenda involved a review of APSE's Business Plan 2023-26, our existing research programme and research proposals, as well as a discussion on APSE's existing policy framework. The Meeting also included contributions from Sarah Longlands, Chief Executive of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, on community wealth, as well as a presentation from Lindsay Graham OBE, on the cost of living crisis and its impact on food and fuel poverty levels across the UK.

A focus on the future of local government in London

Westminster was buzzing with excitement and anticipation on 7 July... as APSE were in town for the Future Focus Seminar and Southern Region AGM. The main question delegates grappled with was: What does the future of local government service delivery look like post pandemic? Amongst the many speakers kind enough to join APSE that day, delegates heard from Bevis Ingram, Senior Advisor Finance, Local Government Association; and Julia Thrift, Director of Healthier Place Making, Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). The opening session was chaired by Southern Region Chair, Cllr Jacqui Burnett. We were also delighted to have our other workshops chaired by Cllr Sue Cooper, Vale of White Horse Council, and APSE Southern Region Secretary Colin Rowland of Isle of Wight Council. Presentations from the event can be downloaded [here](#).

APSE Chief Executive, Paul O'Brien, addresses delegates at the APSE National Council Meeting in York on 16 June.



Spinning excellence at the Silk Mill in Derby

Derby was the setting for the APSE Central Region AGM incorporating a free APSE half-day seminar on 5 July. Chaired by Central Region Chair Cllr Mark Pengelly, delegates from across the region arrived in Derby to learn how to secure frontline service excellence across local government. Speakers included: Paul Simpson, Chief Executive, Derby City Council; Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive, Derby City Council; Sam Dennis, Director of Public Protection and Streetpride, Derby City Council; Kim Graham, Economic Development Officer, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, and Elaine Needham, Aspire Housing; Beverley Parker, Chief Executive Officer, Rural Action Derbyshire.

Reinforcing best practice in South Shields

APSE Northern Region held its AGM, incorporating a free half-day seminar, in South Tyneside Council's Town Hall on 22 June. The event covered topics as diverse as: The Environment Act (2021); improving the collection and consistency of recyclable domestic waste; managing council grasslands; looking after the wider public realm by adopting a joint service approach; as well as an in-depth look at South Tyneside Council's use of renewable geo-thermal heat from mine waters. Present at the meeting were APSE Northern Chair, Cllr John Kerr-Brown, and APSE Northern Vice-Chairs, Cllr Julie Simpson and Cllr Tracey Dixon.

Save the date

Wednesday 14 – Thursday 15 September

This year's APSE Annual Seminar will be held at the brand-new state-of-the-art Swansea Arena in Swansea, Wales (including the APSE AGM and APSE Annual Service Awards Charity Dinner). Bookings are now open online! Information on what to expect at this year's event can be found on page 8.

Wales

Miskin in action

On 12 July, APSE Wales held its AGM at the Miskin Manor Hotel, Miskin. The event looked at the future of the Welsh local government workforce, and included opportunities to explore the latest data on recruitment and retention, the event also featured Geoff Bacon, Head of Property Services, Swansea Council; Rebecca Jones, Building and Accommodation, Swansea Council; Nerys Williams, Facilities Development Manager, Swansea Council; and Matt Wakelam, Assistant Director Street Scene, Cardiff Council, and chaired by APSE National Chair Cllr Andrea Lewis.

Scotland

Best practice applied by the Clyde

On 15 July, APSE Scotland held its AGM at the City Halls in Glasgow. The AGM provided an opportunity for APSE in Scotland to review its activities over the last year. The Meeting also looked at some of the big policy issues affecting Scottish authorities: Louise Melville, APSE Scotland Principal Advisor, presented the findings from APSE's publication "Deposit Return Scheme: lessons from Scotland and implications for the rest of the UK". Paul O'Brien, APSE Chief Executive, provided an update on the progress of local authorities in rising to the climate change challenge. APSE Scotland Chair, Cllr Archie Dryburgh, was also present at the event to chair the sessions. •

Adapting Services to Address Climate Change: APSE Energy in Winchester

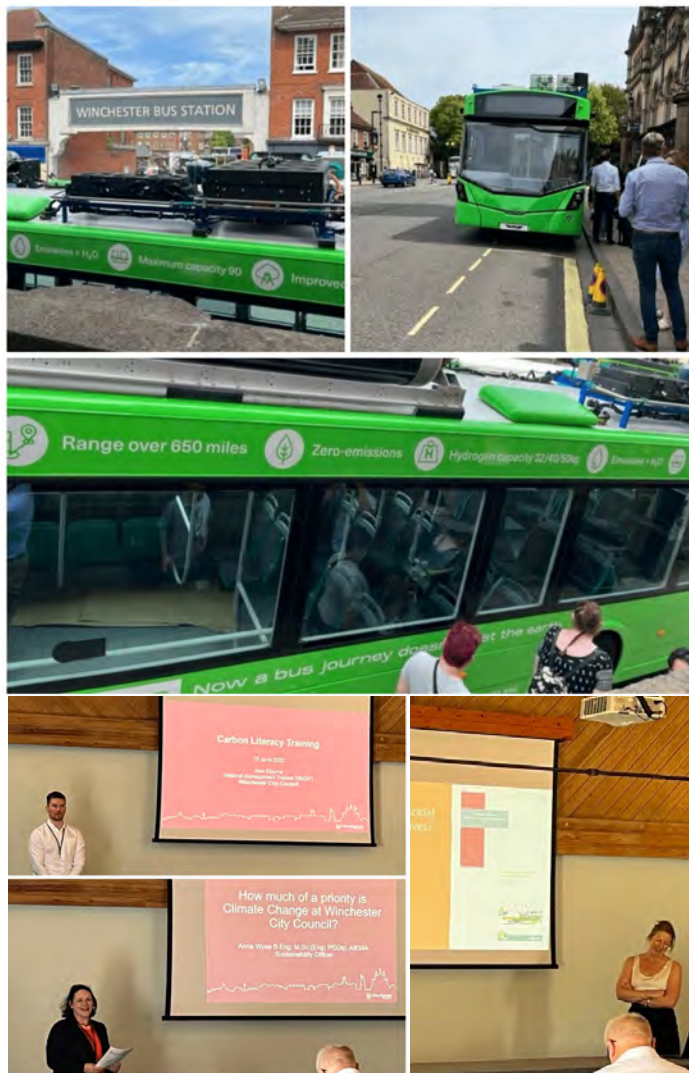
In 902AD, The City of Winchester was leading the fight against the Viking invasions. Fast forward to 2022AD, and Winchester is in the vanguard of the fight against another existential threat: that of climate change.

On 16 June, APSE Energy held a special event - free for APSE Energy members - in which senior figures within local government and the wider renewable energy and energy efficiency industry got together to share best practice on how local councils can stay in line with the climate change agenda. The interactive event shone a spotlight on the pioneering ways local councils are adapting services to address the climate crisis; from adopting alternative fuel fleets to encouraging active travel.

We heard from experienced officers about what they have done at their own local authorities, from suppliers about the latest technologies and their application, and from Paul Rolfe, member of the BEIS Green Skills Delivery Group and Chief Commercial Officer at Chichester College Group, about the skills agenda.

We were also delighted to be joined by Andy Harris, Advanced Engineering Manager at Wrightbus, with Wrightbus hydrogen bus in tow. Delegates were able to see the vehicle up close and personal; understanding the operational issues for consideration with this technology and how it can support the local government sector.

- *For more information on how APSE Energy can help your local authority stay ahead of the renewables agenda, please contact Phil Brennan on pbrennan@apse.org.uk.*



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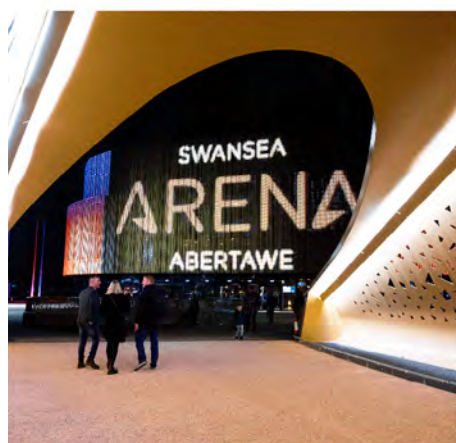
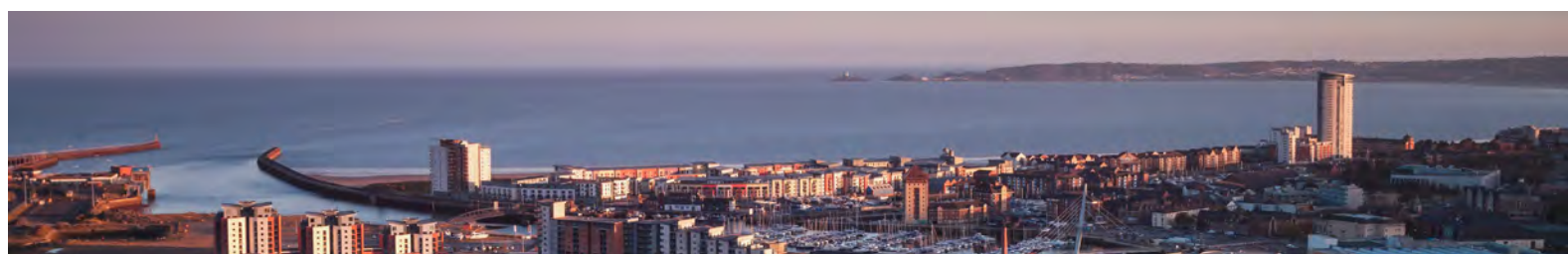
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apse annual seminar 2022

Local Government: The Green Machine at the Frontline

Swansea Arena, Swansea 14-15 September 2022

The event, unique in the local government calendar, will focus on all the big issues and challenges in the sector. Taking place in the brand-new, state-of-the-art Swansea Arena, and set against the stunning Swansea Bay and Gower Peninsula, the two-day seminar brings together strategic policy issues with practical research, the latest technological and legislative updates, as well the chance to network with sector experts to secure advice on frontline service best practice.

The Green Machine at the Frontline

The need to confront the threat of climate change will be the defining issue of the coming decades. Extreme weather events, combined with rising temperatures and sea levels, has culminated in international agreements to try and stem and hopefully reverse the amount of carbon in our atmosphere. Behind these international agreements lie a complex patchwork of more localised commitments, represented in the UK by the 200+ local authorities that have declared climate emergencies.

Announcing a declaration is one thing, but how can a local council and its constituent frontline service teams deliver on it? And, more importantly, how can authorities deliver on these targets whilst also securing greater prosperity, wellbeing, security and social cohesion for their local communities. This is the tricky question this year's Annual Seminar aims to provide answers for.

Speakers will join us from across the public policy landscape – governmental departments, non-departmental public bodies, local authorities, university business schools – to consider topics as diverse as:

- Workforce Matters: The Resources of Tomorrow
- Green skills for a green future
- Constructing a future for the UK building trades
- Future Communities
- The business challenge panel
- The digital interface: Fit for the future?
- Finance and resources

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The annual event also features one of local government's largest trade exhibitions. Delegates will have the unique opportunity to question suppliers about their latest products and pricing.

APSE Service Awards 2022

The Seminar also includes the prestigious APSE Annual Service Awards ceremony. The Awards celebrate outstanding achievement and innovation within local government service delivery.

Interest and recognition in the Awards has grown year on year. Judged by a panel of distinguished sector leaders, the local authorities who are winners and finalists receive publicity, both nationally and locally, as being exemplars in service delivery from the wider local government family.

Accommodation packages

APSE has secured two and three night accommodation packages at discounted APSE member rates. View the website to secure your package. We would strongly suggest to maximise your attendance experience you book a three night package. Please note at this time we are unable to accept dinner only bookings for the Service Awards. Dinner places will be prioritised to seminar delegate packages. •

Don't miss out!

For more information about the event and to book your place, [click on this link](#)

The two-day event will take place in the brand-new, state-of-the-art Swansea Arena, set against the stunning Swansea Bay and Gower Peninsula

Around the seminar:

Tuesday 13 September: Welcome reception and local history talk on Swansea's maritime journey

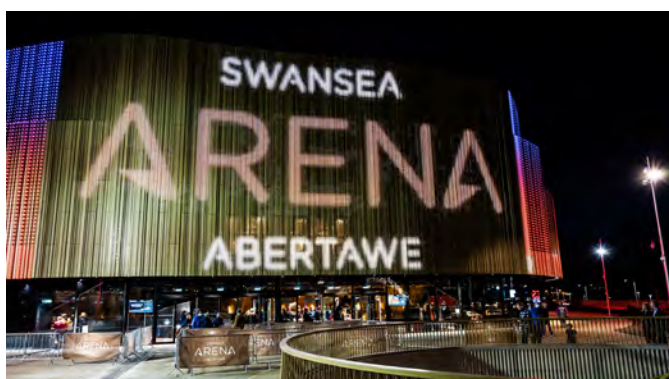
Wednesday 14 September: Day One of the seminar followed by the APSE AGM with an evening guest speaker and supper

Thursday 15 September: Day Two of the seminar followed by the APSE Service Awards Charity Dinner

Friday 16 September: Optional tours of Swansea sites including the 'Swansea Standard' (Passivhaus style) new build bungalows



Gweld chi yn abertawe! (See you in Swansea!)



Rising to the climate change challenge: The role of housing and planning within local councils

A new report by the APSE, researched and written by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), considers the important role of local councils in tackling climate change, with an emphasis on their responsibilities in relation to housing and planning.



“With talk of ‘levelling-up’ dominating the policy agenda, what better starting point for the levelling up journey than to address quality homes which do not cost the earth in carbon, and deliver affordable warm and decarbonised homes for local communities.”

Paul O’Brien, Chief Executive, APSE

Reflecting on the findings in the UK’s Climate Change Committee Sixth Carbon Budget that state that UK homes make up 25% of total energy use and 15% of emissions, this latest report argues that the UK will not meet its ambitious carbon reduction targets without tackling emissions from homes.

The report calls for national governments to take their enabling role more seriously and take urgent steps to better support ambitious action at the local level.

Drawing on the findings of a survey sent to all local councils within the UK, policy analysis, a roundtable discussion, and detailed consideration of five case studies, the report highlights that important work is already being undertaken by local councils through their approach to both housing and planning. Swansea Council, for example, has developed its innovative ‘Swansea Standard’ which is delivering lower carbon homes, ending reliance on fossil-fuels and addressing energy affordability with residents.

The survey responses showed that 85% of respondents said their local authority declared a climate emergency and many have set out targets to reach net zero by 2030. Of those, 78% said that their declaration included a specific target. In addition, 98% of respondents said that they had a climate action plan, or one was in progress.

Whilst these statistics are encouraging and backed up by ambitious case studies across the UK, the report argues that actions could be upscaled and maximised if planning and housing policy was truly supportive of climate change actions. While there are differences across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, this report identifies gaps in regulation and planning policy which hinder attempts to go further and faster on climate change. England in particular remains in a system that is often developer-led and risks the quality of future homes resting on a postcode lottery of land values.

The report aims to encourage and inspire further action from local councils, as well as making seven recommendations to national governments about how they can better enable urgent action on climate change at the local level. It recognises barriers that exist which, if tackled, could enable more, and more urgent, action.

Paul O’Brien, APSE Chief Executive said, “The urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is one fraught with a dizzying number of challenges for local authorities. However, as this report attests, councils have not been defeated by these challenges but have instead adapted proactive measures to develop local solutions. As our report case studies demonstrate, local councils from across the UK are leading the way in decarbonisation, not only through their direct actions on their own assets, but also through their stewardship of the wider area; creating cleaner, greener, healthier and wealthier local communities. With talk of ‘levelling-up’ dominating the policy agenda, what better starting point for the levelling up journey than to address quality homes which do not cost the earth in carbon, and deliver affordable warm and decarbonised homes for local communities.”

Fiona Howie, Chief Executive, TCPA said, “There is welcome recognition of the important role of action at both the national and local level in the Sixth Carbon Budget, which was also echoed in the Glasgow Climate Pact following COP26. But currently too many barriers exist. If governments across the four nations are to enable urgent action, they need to properly resource local authorities and provide proper guidance on issues such as carbon budgeting. Retrofitting homes to make them more energy efficient, and supporting places to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change, needs to be a core part of the levelling up agenda.”

• This is the eighth research project by the TCPA for APSE. The report is free to download from the APSE website [here](#).

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Resilient Derby

Samantha Dennis, Director of Public Protection and Streetpride, Derby City Council, explains how the Council is reimagining the city and working with their communities.



Derby City Council

More of a culture than a project, Better Together is a way of staying connected, breaking down barriers and silos and working together to shape how people connect with the council and how services are delivered in places.

Local government has faced many challenges over the last decade but the COVID 19 pandemic was certainly one of the greatest. Our communities responded in the most phenomenal way; supporting each other and working together to get through some really tough times.

As a council, Derby has been on a journey, changing the way we work with our communities. Recognising that local government is a complex interconnected but often silo-based system that does things 'for' or 'to', we are moving to a restorative practice approach of 'working with' communities. We recognise that we are not the council in charge of the city, but the council here for the city and our role is to create the environment for communities to thrive.

Working together through the pandemic has enabled us as a council to forge better relationships with our communities and gain a better understanding of the place, and the people living there. Our communities achieved some exceptional achievements through some of the most difficult times including creation of the Muslim Burial Council, Food for Thought Alliance, Youth Alliance and many more friends and support groups.

This, along with our work with Community Action Derby and Derby Homes, helped us to shape our Better Together programme. More of a culture than a project, Better Together is a way of staying connected, breaking down barriers and silos and working together to shape how people connect with the council and how services are delivered in places.

Together we have created platforms for residents, groups, and businesses to be heard by the council and partner agencies with Community Talks events, business round table events and youth voice events, we have also included community groups in funding bid applications such as the Safer Streets fund where we focussed on community needs to support the violence against Women and Girls Strategy.



Alongside this work we have been capturing data and information to help identify place-based demand which has enabled us to see that different localities have different issues, demands and skill sets. Drawing on this we are able to adapt our approach to ensure that our locality working teams are made up of the right people and partners, to help work with communities on the issues that matter to them. From waste issues to loneliness or more complex issues, the data provides the opportunity for bespoke and creative solutions to community problems.

Taking a restorative approach to 'working with', rather than 'doing to', will enable communities to build resilience. To promote and encourage collaboration the council has developed new spaces for officers, partners, and communities to work together: The Community Hub in the Shot Tower and a new public protection hub in the city centre.

Having now identified all of the people who work with communities in places, our next goal is to connect the teams with the communities in local spaces and to give them the freedom to work together in a creative way to solve localised problems. This could be in a library, housing office, children's centre or any other community-based asset, it really doesn't matter. What does matter is that we are ensuring the right people are in the right places, are listening to what matters and working together to develop lasting solutions to complex problems.

- *Sam Dennis will be addressing the APSE Annual Seminar 2022 in Swansea. For more information about how your central region local authority can benefit from APSE's rich suite of services, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Vickie Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk*

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During the one-year pilot, FFLS will research expanding into other public sector settings, including the NHS, prisons, care homes, further and higher education settings, and council-run leisure and culture facilities.

Food For Life Scotland expansion brings more good food to Glasgow

Food for Life Scotland Public Sector Expansion Pilot to deliver more fresh, local and sustainable food in Glasgow.

Food for Life Scotland has launched its Public Sector Expansion Pilot in Glasgow to bring fresh, local and sustainable meals to new public sector settings across the city, with the aim of scaling the programme in other areas of Scotland in the future, thanks to increased funding from Scottish Government.

Currently, Food for Life Scotland (FFLS) supports local authorities to serve school meals that are good for pupils' health, good for the environment and good for the local economy by supporting them to achieve the Food for Life Served Here (FFLSH) award for their school meals service. This can be certified at three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Embedding a Food for Life approach in the public sector

During the one-year pilot, FFLS will research expanding into other public sector settings, including the NHS, prisons, care homes, further and higher education settings, and council-run leisure and culture facilities. A combination of place-based activity in Glasgow and national intelligence gathering will provide a scalable framework for bringing Food for Life to other parts of Scotland in the future.

The Scottish Government is supporting this expansion as part of its manifesto commitment to "increase the use of healthy Scottish produce and explore how to embed a Food for Life approach in the new National Care Service, in the NHS, in prisons and in further and higher education sectors".

With no sign of easing on the cost-of-living crisis, it's critical that we continue working towards a fairer, more resilient food system to make sure that it supports and provides for everyone. The FFLSH award gives local authorities and public sector settings a framework through which they can achieve this. Public procurement of sustainable, local and climate-friendly food provides a clear path to drive a transformation in food production and supply.

Glasgow makes local and sustainable food a priority

The City of Glasgow is taking a lead in delivering local policies that tackle the negative impact of food on the climate. Glasgow City Council already holds the FFLSH Bronze award across its 130 primary

schools and 7 ASN schools, and the Council were also early signatories and key supporters of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration.

The city is also home to a flourishing cross-sector food partnership. The Glasgow Food Policy Partnership brings together a range of public and private sector partners such as the NHS, the Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, and the Council. Its comprehensive City Food Plan lays out how the Partnership will improve food in the city under key themes, including increased local sourcing and low carbon food in public sector catering.

Sarah Duley, Head of Food, Food for Life Scotland, said: "We're excited about this opportunity to help bring fresh, local and sustainable school meals to more of Scotland's public sector. Working closely with existing Food for Life Served Here award holders, we've seen how the hard work of local authorities in Scotland means school caterers are leading the way in delivering good food in the public sector. With these values now embedded in the City of Glasgow's food culture, it's a fantastic time to build upon this success and deliver the benefits of the Food for Life programme in new settings."

Stephen Sawers, Head of Catering and Facilities Management, Glasgow City Council, said: "At Glasgow City Council, we are passionate about providing the best quality food for the city's children through the Food for Life Served Here award. Achieving the award has provided us with a solid platform upon which we can build, and this expansion is a great opportunity to continue working with Food for Life Scotland to bring more good food to Glasgow that will improve health, support the environment and benefit the economy. We're keen to continue working in partnership with the Food for Life Scotland team to set out what else we can do to further support sustainable food being procured, prepared and served in Glasgow."

Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon said: "I am pleased that Food for Life Scotland is expanding its work through this pilot. The programme is already making a significant difference across the country by working closely with local authority catering teams to deliver fresh, local and sustainable school meals that make the most of ingredients grown, reared and produced in Scotland. This pilot is an excellent opportunity to bring these benefits to more of the public sector, and provide learning for the future."

- *Food for Life Scotland is now seeking to engage with those working in public sector catering and procurement in Glasgow. If you work in public sector settings in Glasgow, such as local authority sites, higher and further education or the NHS, and would like to learn more about how Food for Life Scotland can support you to achieve the Food for Life Served Here award, please get in touch with Sarah Gowanlock, Project Officer, Food for Life Scotland (sgowanlock@soilassociation.org). Alternatively, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Louise Melville on lmelville@apse.org.uk.*

Calling all local authority apprentices!



Both the APSE Housing and Building and Environmental Services Apprentice of the Year Awards are now open for entries.

Specific to local authority frontline service areas, the awards scheme is open to candidates from all stages of training and have been running successfully for over 20 years. The awards are open to every authority and their partner organisations in the UK.

Entry to the awards is free of charge and successfully short-listed candidates, and the local authorities they represent, receive individual awards to recognise the achievements of both the apprentice and the employer.

We will be running two categories in the APSE Environmental Services Apprentice Award:-

- Horticultural (E.g. gardener, horticulturalist)
- Street Scene/ Waste Collection (E.g. street cleansing, fly-tipping and graffiti removal, waste and recycling collection)

We will be running three categories in the APSE Housing and Building Apprentice Award:-

- Mechanical and Electrical (E.g. plumbers, electricians, gas fitters)
- Building Skills (E.g. bricklayers, joiners, plasterers)
- Professional Services (E.g. architects, designers)

APSE is an avid supporter of bringing women into frontline services. Showcasing successful women apprentices is one way of encouraging more women to join the industry as well as councils actively supporting the recruitment of women into frontline service apprenticeships. We strongly encourage applicant councils to ensure women are represented in your apprentice submissions.

The finalists will be contacted directly and then announced on the APSE website. If you would like to register your interest online for the awards, and download a portfolio template, [click on this link](#)

Long-term solution to reflective cracking for West Sussex County Council

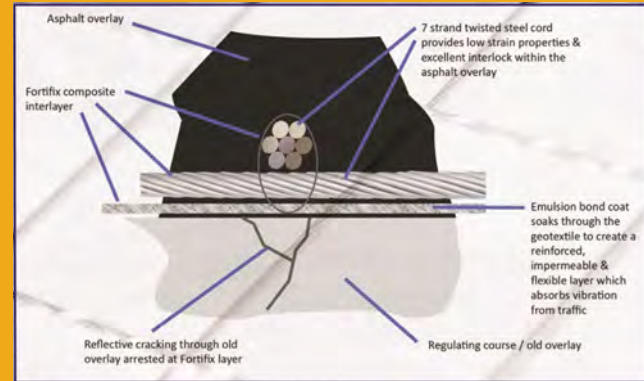
Asphalt is the most commonly used material for the surfacing of roads and car parks, however the low tensile strength of asphalt means it can be easily damaged by a number of factors including settlement, fatigue, temperature fluctuations and vehicle loadings. Damage arising from reflective cracking usually manifests as a cracked or broken surface, resulting in the formation of pot holes and creating large maintenance costs to the local council highways department.

For a longer-term solution to preventing the formation of cracks, the Fortifix® steel cord anti-reflective cracking interlayer provides an optimum balance of high stiffness and low strain properties.

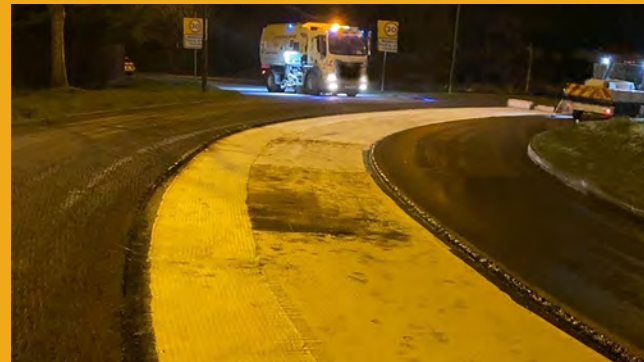
This long-term solution to asphalt reinforcement was recently specified by West Sussex County Council as part of the resurfacing works to the A2220 Horsham Road in Crawley town centre. Over 5,000m² of the steel cord interlayer was installed during night time closures during April and May to provide extended maintenance intervals on the route.

The fine twisted steel cord structure is far less brittle than glass fibre grid alternatives, with a Young's modulus of 190 GPa compared to 70 GPa. The steel cord strands also provide a large surface area to form a strong interlock that stiffens the asphalt overlay and prolongs maintenance intervals by up to 4 times.

The cost of installation spread over the extended lifetime of the road means maintenance costs are approximately half that of an unreinforced overlay. Fortifix® is also fully recoverable at the end of use and the surface is planed as normal before the steel cords are separated from the asphalt using magnets.



Fortifix steel cord interlayer key functions



Fortifix installed to the Broadfield Roundabout, Crawley during night-time resurfacing work

FORTIFIX: ADVANCED ASPHALT REINFORCEMENT



Fortifix asphalt reinforcement geocomposite combines an advanced light-weight steel cord grid with a polyester geotextile.

The balance of high stiffness and low strain properties provides an excellent anti-cracking solution:

- fine steel cord structure provides excellent interlock with the overlay surface to extend pavement lifecycles and reduce new build and on-going maintenance costs
- carbon saving alternative compared to traditional unreinforced road construction, owing to the increased lifetime of the new pavement or overlay
- **Fortifix** is 100% recyclable and thanks to the innovative treatment of the cords, the structure can be easily separated from the asphalt at the end of use



(Mental) Health is wealth with APSE's Wellbeing in the Workplace Training



'Wellbeing in the Workplace' is one of APSE's newest courses, developed by Senior Training Officer, Amy Caldwell. Amy shares how vital this course

is in the current climate, emphasising the importance of investing in your own and your colleague's mental health and wellbeing.

This highly interactive course equips you with a toolkit carefully designed to start conversations about improving mental health and wellbeing in a local authority context

"What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candour, and more unashamed conversation." – Glenn Close

The COVID-19 pandemic taught many lessons, not the least of which was how important it is to prioritise our mental health and wellbeing. Mental Health is a universal experience and the statistics are staggering. Local government research identified deteriorations in mental health and wellbeing across this twenty-four month period, impacts ranging from anxiety over possible illness to grief as a result of bereavement.

Whilst the pandemic has brought this issue to the global stage, mental health has always been a main character. Mind UK report that "1 in 4 will experience a mental health [condition] of some kind each year in England" and '1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem (like anxiety and depression) in any given week."

Given that we spend so much of our life in a working environment, this poses an important question; what are we doing to help ourselves and each other whilst at work?

The content for APSE's newest course, Wellbeing in the Workplace, hopes to provide learners with the space to begin to answer this question. The training supports delegates to identify and



mitigate workplace stressors, equipping them with a toolkit to start conversations about improving mental health and wellbeing in a local authority context. There are four key learning outcomes that underpin the content within the training, they are as follows:

- To examine the relationship between mental health and wellbeing.
- To develop strategies to proactively manage your own wellbeing.
- To understand the impact of a range of factors on job satisfaction and performance.
- To apply knowledge towards action(s) that will positively impact wellbeing for yourself and your colleagues.

On Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 June, we delivered the first open course for our local authority members over two morning sessions. As with all APSE services this was an excellent opportunity for attendees to share best practice and collaborate on effective solutions, working together to discuss how to best embed a wellbeing strategy and engage colleagues with this topic as a leadership issue. Following on from the conclusion of this course we received some positive feedback...



“ The course will give an overview on mental health and makes you consider your own mental health as well as others. Poor Mental Health has been on the increase since COVID-19 so this course is a good starting point. ”

“ A must as a foundation to tackling this subject. ”

“ Brilliantly presented and kept interesting and relevant. ”

We know we have to continue to bring wellbeing initiatives into core operational strategy as investing in our people means investing in our future. As we move forward, we hope to provide a space for more of our members to engage in conversations with colleagues across the UK in how we can continue to support one another. •



Learn how to identify and mitigate workplace stressors



Wellbeing in the workplace

£178+VAT (APSE members) £289+VAT (Non-members) *This course is also available as an in-house option*

This highly interactive course will help you:

- Examine the relationship between mental health and wellbeing
- Develop strategies to proactively manage your own wellbeing
- Understand the impact of a range of factors on job satisfaction and performance
- Apply knowledge towards action(s) that will positively impact wellbeing for yourself & colleagues

This course is run online as a full day or as two half-days. This highly interactive training includes a mixture of presentations, video conferencing, group work, games, quizzes and video. For more information, please contact Senior Training Officer, Amy Caldwell acaldow@apse.org.uk

[Click here to book your place](#)



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It's our experience of what you can't see, that helps create our beautiful spaces

Formerly known as Cemetery Development Services, The CDS Group has been on an incredible journey.

We have undertaken over 400 feasibility studies and completed over 40 new cemeteries in the UK and overseas. As a result of the success and reputation in the cemetery market, CDS expanded into designing and developing new crematoria sites for both private companies and local authorities using our inhouse team of engineers and architects.

Our dedication to your vision has enabled us to gain recognition in both the cemeteries and crematorium market, **but now we are expanding.**

Our business now focuses on three distinct areas, namely Cemeteries and Crematoria, Parks and Leisure, and Environmental Solutions.

Our Parks and Leisure team can help design sports facilities, landscaping of parks and public spaces as well as designing drainage solutions.

The Environmental team can assist with investigating contaminated land sites under Part IIA and brownfield land, bringing to life forgotten parcels of land, helping to contribute to the local community and provide potential income generation for the local authority.

We currently have new sites under construction with many more in different stages of project feasibility, design and planning. The quality of our work has not changed; maintaining the high level of service you expect.



CDS are with you every step of the way, from Feasibility Studies, Landscape and Concept Design through to Planning, Construction and Delivery, ensuring a seamless experience from inception to completion.

Our team of highly qualified specialists - field surveyors, engineers and designers - are committed to creating beautifully landscaped and thoughtfully constructed developments.

Ones that have distinctive spatial qualities but also offer excellent commercial value, and that are low-maintenance environments with minimal operational costs.

Our Green Agenda also ensures that our developments are environmentally friendly, offer reductions in emissions and pollution whilst helping improve biodiversity.

For more information on how The CDS Group can help, please phone us on +44 (0)1525 864387 or visit our website.



Discover what's beneath.

Cemetery Waste: An issue not to be buried

Operational burial facilities across the UK all have one thing in common, they produce excess burial arisings during their operational processes, which requires temporary storage on site prior to subsequent offsite disposal to a licensed landfill site.

Many burial sites across the UK treat burial arisings as a material to be 'lost' on site in order to reduce operating costs and help to reduce the cost of burial plots to the wider public. However, the construction/formation of mounds/bunds or the infilling of areas on the site, without an approved material management plan, is considered to be illegal landfilling and sites could be prosecuted by the Environment Agency and fined by HMRC.

Excess burial arisings need to be disposed of in line with the current guidance, as part of this, it is the waste producers responsibility to appropriately classify the material prior to off site disposal to ensure the material is sent to an appropriately licensed landfill. Alternatively, if the burial arisings can be used for a valid purpose within the grounds on the existing cemetery, then the works can be managed under an approved material management plan.

Waste Classification for offsite disposal

The current relevant waste legislation and technical guidance (WM3 1st edition version 1.2 GB, 2021) provides details for the assessment and classification of hazardous waste and sets out the requirements for classification and provides the methodology employed to ensure compliance with the regulations.

The purpose of waste classification is to indicate whether a material, in this case excess soil arisings from burial excavations, would be hazardous or non-hazardous. Following which additional WAC analysis can be used to determine which landfill would be appropriate to receive the waste material.

Should the material be classified as non-Hazardous, then this could either be Non-Hazardous or Inert. Whilst if the material is classified as Hazardous, further assessment would be required to assess whether any pre-treatment would be necessary for the material to be accepted at landfill.

Cemeteries are listed in Section 20 of the List of Wastes (England) Regulations 2005 and are indicated to be an Absolute Non-Hazardous Entry. This means that any waste soil, assuming the site is situated on natural ground rather than made ground, originating from a cemetery can be disposed of as Non-Hazardous, however, additional WAC testing would be required to determine if the material could be sent to an Inert Landfill, which would have significant cost savings to the waste producer.

The main issue with the Absolute Non-Hazardous Entry is that it does not consider the sites historical usage or setting, for example; a cemetery constructed on a former brownfield site could include a significant covering of made ground, which could potentially include hazardous concentrations of certain contaminants, including asbestos in either bulk form or loose fibres. Another example would be a former agricultural field which has been historically used for farming, in this instance, due to the historical use of pesticides and/or herbicides, there is a risk of residual contamination associated with the break-down of the chemicals used. This could lead to increased concentrations of heavy metals, notably Lead and Arsenic, which would potentially affect the classification of the waste soils.

As a waste producer you have a duty of care to ensure that the material you send off site has been correctly classified and is being sent to the correct waste facility. Therefore, even though the list entry for cemetery soil arisings is Absolute Non-Hazardous, due diligence is required on your behalf to ensure that the Non-Hazardous classification is actually the correct one.

The underlying soils should be screened for a 'full suite' of chemical components, the composition of this suite and number of samples required will depend on a number of factors, including site size and site history. These results can be used to classify the soils as Non-Hazardous /Hazardous. Following which WAC analysis can be undertaken to determine the final waste facility.

Here at The CDS Group, we can advise you on the appropriate number of samples to be taken, and the correct contaminants to screen for based on the sites history. We can also undertake the relevant testing and provide you with a Preliminary Waste Assessment to be issued to your waste carrier, ensuring that you as the client have met your legal obligations.

Material Management Plan and Onsite Re-use of Waste Material

The waste classification of excess burial arisings is only the first part of the issues associated with excess cemetery soil waste. Based on our experience, it is apparent that there is an industry wide issue with regards to the storage of waste materials on site and the mixing of soil groups and vegetation.

As discussed above, any natural strata could be disposed of as Inert (subject to confirmatory WAC analysis). However, the inclusion of organic materials, such as roots, clippings or topsoil, will mean that the mixed waste would need to be disposed of as Non-Hazardous, which is a significant uplift in disposal costs.

This mixing of materials leads to an increased cost for disposal, so not only is correct waste classification essential from a legal standpoint, but the correct management of the material on site is essential to ensure that the disposal of waste material off site is financially feasible.

An alternative option to the offsite disposal of excess arisings which could be explored is the re-use of clean site won burial arising for defined purposes on site. The creation of a detailed materials management plan would enable the site to clearly define how site won arising would be re-used on site for a clear and defined purpose. Under a material management plan, the site would then be legally able to re-use burial arisings for a defined purpose on site, reducing the cost to dispose of arisings.

The creation of landscaped mounds, or infill of areas to make them suitable for future burial would be considered appropriate, however some uses may be subject to planning consent.

The CDS Group are well placed to assess existing on site practises and to advise you on how to improve on site soil management and storage. Our landscape design team can provide you with workable onsite solutions to manage, store and segregate your waste, prior to disposal to the correct waste disposal facility, helping to improve efficiency by enabling the re-use of suitable soils such as topsoil and subsoil for grave topping up, whilst reducing operational costs by correctly classifying soils to be disposed off site and reducing the volume of arisings transported off site.

- Visit www.cdsgroup.co.uk for more information





No one left behind

Beth Cooper, Travel Unit Manager at Wolverhampton City Council, spoke to APSE Direct about how the authority's travel unit for those in Special Educational Needs successfully adapted to the disruptions - both temporary and permanent - that arose as a consequence of the pandemic.

The path to success isn't always signposted for us. Sometimes we are left to find our own way; and so it has been for the City of Wolverhampton Council's Travel Unit.

For many years at the council, the statutory responsibility for special needs pupil and adult transport had been disjointed. This had led to inefficiencies, lack of specialist knowledge, staff disengagement and dissatisfied customers and stakeholders.

So, in 2019, we took matters in hand with the appointment of a single service lead and further recruitment to newly created management posts. Together, we began to work on those issues. But then came the immense challenges of COVID-19.

We faced social distancing which reduced the capacity of our vehicles, and severe staff shortages due to shielding requirements. But we began to work more closely than ever with our schools, supporting them as they, in turn, supported their most vulnerable pupils.

And we worked collaboratively with our operators and supported them by continuing to pay them 100% of their contractual rate. In return, they showed flexibility in the routes they covered.

This flexibility allowed us to use our in-house fleet to support other colleagues:

- Offering 14 vehicles and drivers to waste services, enabling the service to fully function despite social distancing on vehicles.
- Delivering more than 18,000 food parcels to some of the most vulnerable families in the city.
- Working with Public Health England to transport elderly and medically vulnerable residents to receive their vaccines.
- Carrying out vehicle checks, ensuring hired-in vans were safe for volunteers to drive.

We are extremely proud of the work we did, giving help to every single child and adult that needed our assistance. No one was left behind.

When it came to planning the 2020/2021 academic year, it was clear COVID-19 was not going away. We needed new, innovative ways of working to build on our existing success.

One approach we undertook was changing every one of our 160+ routes to accommodate the class bubbles that schools had provided to us. We worked closely with PHE, Health and Safety, unions and schools to create new risk assessments, provide PPE and agree staggered start and finish times. This was widely recognised as helping to stop the spread of the virus within our service.

Now, more than two years into the creation of the new Travel Unit, our city is in a recovery phase and our team is looking at how we can continue to offer support.

After realising we can embrace new, innovative, and exciting ways of working, we now challenge ourselves to think differently and look for solutions without waiting for them to fall into our laps.

We currently face a new set of challenges:

- A rise in pupil numbers needing transport to provisions not currently supported by the unit has led to more single occupancy taxis being needed than ever
- A shortage of D1 licensed drivers which could put the service at risk
- The council has an ambitious target of being carbon net zero by 2028
- Rising fuel and living costs are leading to sharp increases in operator's tender prices and recruitment is proving harder than ever.

But, as before, we are facing these challenges head on. We are working with the city's Wolves at Work initiative which aims to support residents back into employment.

New staff will be able to drive vehicles for which a D1 licence is not required, before being trained and supported to gain their D1 licence, or PCV licence. This will allow them to drive our larger in-house vehicles, preventing future driver shortages.

We have hired hybrid vehicles, helping to make our city a greener, cleaner place; while we work towards replacing our own ageing fleet with suitable ULEV or equivalent vehicles.

The success of the Travel Unit has meant that 24 wheelchair-accessible Euro 6 engine vehicles are currently on order to replace the oldest of our current buses. This will also drive financial efficiencies for the unit of around £200,000, as we are not reliant on external contractors for any of the work that we undertake.

We are also working far more closely with our colleagues in adult services, helping some of our most vulnerable, elderly residents to access our service for transport to day centres and social clubs.

We will continue to look for ways to reduce the downtime of our vehicles and increase the support we offer to our residents.

It is clear that the decision to redevelop and retain the in-house fleet has been critical to our success. Without these assets it would not have been possible to achieve all we have done through the pandemic and into the new normal.

- *Beth Cooper spoke on this topic at the APSE Transport Seminar on 23 June. The presentation can be downloaded from the APSE website.*



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Pre-Need Cremation Plans for Huntingdon as they Partner with PlotBox

In PlotBox, the Huntingdon team are able to manage and schedule cremations, appointments and services, as well as manage work permits for memorial masons to carry out work on site.

In April 2022, Huntingdon Town Council opened the UK's second purpose-built, environmentally friendly crematorium. Encapsulating the Council's focus on sustainability and the environment, the 120-seater crematorium houses 2 electric cremators, with excess energy produced from the operation of the cremators being recycled to reheat the crematorium building. Purpose-built glass houses also enable the growth of flowers and bedding plants on site, to be utilised throughout the gardens and town.

As a brand new facility with no legacy systems, the Huntingdon team were looking for a software partner with whom they could work with from the ground up - ensuring that they had a deathcare management solution in place that would provide everything they needed to meet the operational needs of the crematorium, and the processes in place to support them.

In PlotBox, the Huntingdon team are able to manage and schedule cremations, appointments and services, as well as manage work permits for memorial masons to carry out work on site. PlotBox's Funeral Director Portal also provides funeral directors with 24/7 online access to view and provisionally book slots with the crematorium.

One key benefit of PlotBox's integrated solution has been in facilitating the crematorium's unique Prepayment of Cremation Scheme, as General Manager, Samantha Smith explains, "It was during our discussions with the PlotBox team that we began to see its fullest potential in helping us to reach our broader goals. While we didn't initially have the contracts module, we soon realised that it would

give us the functionality to effectively manage our pre-paid cremations, which is a key element of our service delivery model.

"In providing a cremation prepayment scheme, we want to put our community first. Purchasing a prepaid cremation allows individuals to plan ahead, not only giving peace of mind, but alleviating some of the pressure for the family at an already stressful time.

"As well as this, in the face of rising cremation costs, our prepaid costs are fixed, meaning that cremations are secured for a set price, regardless of rising rates. We hope that this is something that more operators will consider providing in the future."

PlotBox CEO Sean McAllister said, "We're delighted that PlotBox has been able to work in partnership with Huntingdon Town Council in a project that will help to put the families they serve first. For the Huntingdon team, that means having a system in place that provides everything they need in one place, whenever they need it, streamlining processes and providing smarter workflows."

To learn more about PlotBox, visit: www.plotbox.io

PLOTBOX



The not-so-convenient truth about public conveniences

An APSE survey has found that, due to the pressure on local authority budgets, there has been a decline in the provision provided by councils over the last ten years. However, there is a strong case to be made for retaining public conveniences, particularly as they have been shown to increase retail turnover, tourist numbers and economic growth.

The survey highlights that due to the pressure on local authority budgets there has been a decline in the provision provided by councils over the last ten years. However, there is a strong case to be made for retaining public conveniences. Whilst respondents in the service report that they do not make a profit from their public toilets, the additional income to local economies, of “good toilet provision has been shown to increase retail turnover, tourist numbers and economic growth” according to Professor Clara Greed of the University of the West of England.

The provision of safe, clean and accessible facilities ensures that people with disabilities, pregnant women and older people who need regular access to toilets can have the confidence to visit the town centre, park or tourist attraction and for others in the community it can encourage them to stay longer in the area.

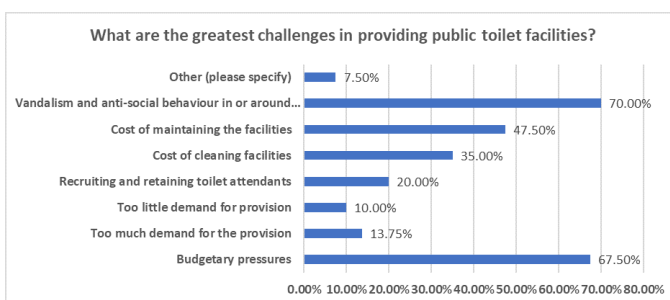
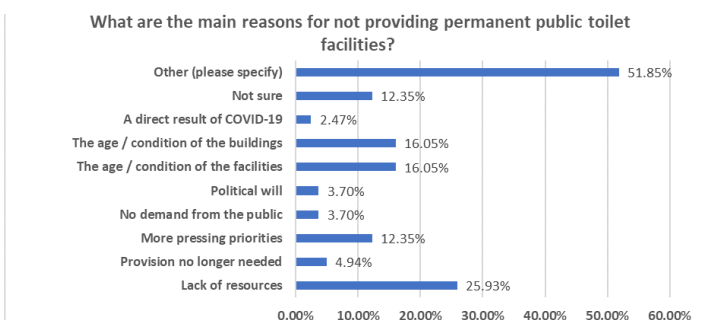
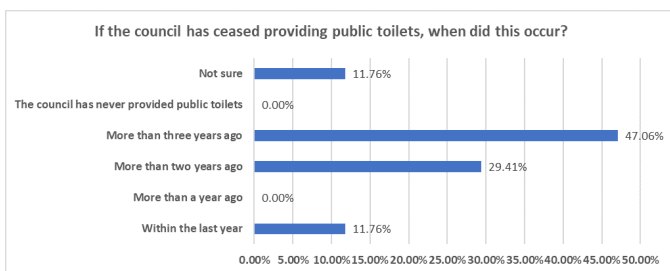
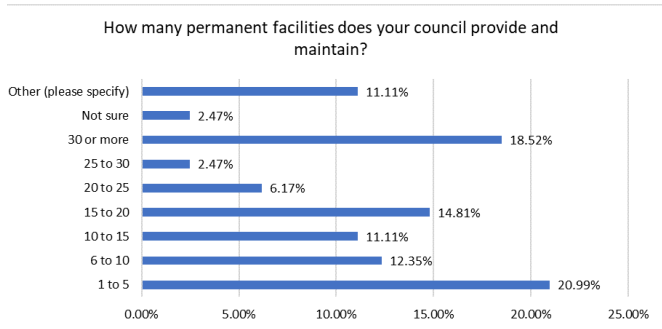
Councils reported that they had worked hard during the pandemic with the changing guidance to keep public toilets open for key workers and also as restrictions were lifted and people were utilising local parks, beaches and tourist attractions to ensure there was provision available and met the COVID-19 guidance.

There has been much publicity around male, female and unisex toilets, in recent months and 34.18% of respondents to the survey report that they have unisex / gender neutral provision. Following a government consultation - ‘Toilet provision for men and women: call for evidence’ - which applies to England, undertaken by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, it was announced on 4 July 2022 that all new public buildings should have separate male and female toilets.

This announcement will mean women, who may need to use facilities more often for example because of sanitary needs and pregnancy, will have the appropriate facilities. In addition, it is stated that separate unisex toilets should be provided if there is space, but not at the expense of female toilets. The Government report that a consultation will be launched in the autumn that will consider the design of unisex self-contained cubicles to maximise privacy and whether improvements to disabled persons toilets should be made.

APSE would recommend that councils develop a clear strategy for their public conveniences, taking into consideration the local need, the future sustainability of the facilities and also explore methods of financing public conveniences such as charging or introducing complementary services such as café facilities, particularly with the roll-out of electric charging points in remote areas, which require users to spend time in a location. Other options such as asset transfers to communities or town / village councils, comfort schemes that pay local businesses or providing facilities in existing council buildings for use by the public (e.g., libraries, sports centres) could also be considered.

• For more information on this survey, please contact APSE Principal Advisor Victoria Hacking on vhacking@apse.org.uk



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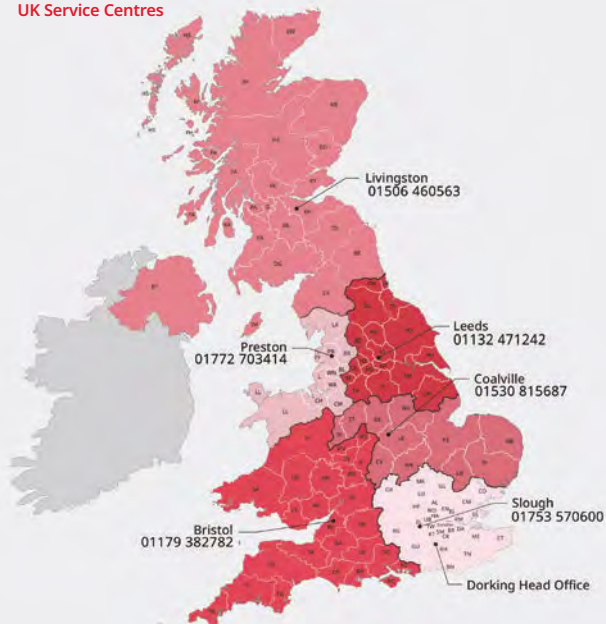
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