

Professional bodies: *The Leisure Review* round table

In a continuation of a series of debates regarding the continuing development of the sport, leisure and culture sector *The Leisure Review* invited representatives of a number of professional bodies, including the ISRM and ISPAL, to discuss the role and future of professional representation within leisure. This is what they said.

Round the table:

Sean Holt

Chief executive, Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM)

Ian Jackson

Former vice chair of the National Association for Sports Development (NASD).)

Peter Mann

Chair, Institute of Sport, Parks and Leisure (ISPAL)

Stuart Mansbridge

Skills development manager, Institute of Parks and Green Space (IPGS)

Nick Reeves

Executive director, Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)



Round *The Leisure Review* table (LtoR): Nick Reeves, Ian Jackson, Peter Mann, Stuart Mansbridge and Sean Holt

Introduction

For anyone not intimately acquainted with the professional bodies serving the sport, leisure and culture sector a little background may be required. ISPAL, the result of a union of ILAM (the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management) and NASD, is currently involved in ongoing discussions with the ISRM regarding the creation of a new professional body, an institute for sport, for which they hope chartered status will be granted by the privy council. Greenspace, of which the IPGS is part, was formed to provide greater focus on and support for the interests of parks and open space professionals. CIWEM is interested in some elements of the sport, leisure and culture sector in light of its environmental interests. Representatives of these organisations were good enough to respond to an invitation to join *The Leisure Review* at the Reform Club in London to discuss the role of professional bodies in the sport, leisure and culture sector

TLR: To start I'd like to pick up on one of the key issues we discussed at the two industry summits previously hosted by *The Leisure Review*: what is the profession? And can something that stretches from sport and sports development through parks and open space to arts and culture be described as a profession?

Nick Reeves (NR): It's a good question and CIWEM is not an obvious candidate for a discussion like this given where we come from but we do have a royal charter which says we have a remit for recreation. Historically we haven't done very much and its recreation in a particular context to do with the use of outdoor space but a lot of our members are responsible for managing and the development of open space of various sorts mostly in the public sector. So we do have a legitimate interest apart from my own personal interest and we are happy to work alongside the organisations that you represent. Some time ago CIWEM began a discussion about professional bodies because an increasing number of our members have questioned some of our activities. Recently we set up an arts and the environment network and some members questioned what that had to do with us but as a lot of people in the arts and creative industries are getting more interested in sustainability and the environment agenda it seemed like the logical thing to do. Because we are a very broad church we find we have become a more campaigning organisation. That's what the trustees felt was the future role of a professional body. They felt a professional body could no longer survive by simply delivering membership services and being a self-serving, inward-looking organisation.

Stuart Mansbridge (SM): One of the real challenges that we face – and I mean Greenspace as well as the IPGS – is that parks and open spaces often find themselves falling 'in the gap'. If you ask a park manager what sector they are in they will scratch their heads and some will say the leisure sector, others green

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"We are moving into a new phase. What does a profession need in terms of qualifications, communication, networking that a professional body should be bringing to the table?"



Messrs Mann and Jackson: on the record

space, open space or the environmental sector. And that's down to a lack of status or identity, a lack of clarity on where it fits. We very much view ourselves as being a part of all those sectors and an important part of, and a facilitator of activity in, all of them. But it is difficult to sit down and say that we sit neatly in a specific sector. It's difficult to nail it down.

We turn to ISRM who very definitely define themselves as being for people who work in sport and recreation management.

Sean Holt (SH): I think it's fair to say that ISRM has a very traditional background in facilities and in leisure management – and in swimming pools in particular – but I think that it has to modernise to become more appealing to a broad church. The sector has moved on over the last 20 years. You only have to look at what has happened with courses in FE (further education) and HE (higher education) and the explosion in people working in the leisure sector. The challenge for institutes that have served this wider cohort – and I think that ISRM recognises it – is to be much broader in its approach and more appealing to a wider membership base. I don't think anybody should be prohibited from joining a professional body based on one interest or another but the reality is it is our offer that determines who actually utilises the ISRM or the new institute as it goes forward. ISRM has traditionally been in a very good position and done some fantastic work. However, the coming together of ourselves and ISPAL provides the opportunity to broaden our appeal to the industry.

There is one body which is not represented around this table and that is the new institute.

Peter Mann (PM): Well, it is represented as I am on the working group.

We understand that the Chartered Institute of Sport (CIS) will be with us from 1 January 2011, or at least that's what is rumoured.

PM: No. No rumours. We are waiting for the response from the privy council. We are hoping that that response will be in October but there is no guarantee. Then, assuming it's a 'yes' from the privy council, members of both institutes will vote in November and if that all follows through we will be opening the doors, metaphorically, in early January. But we are beholden to the privy council. Nick, who guided me [on chartered status] three or four years ago, explained we would be but we've done all we can.

Can I come back on the point of defining the profession? It's a real bugbear of mine that if you talk to architects, accountants, surveyors, lawyers, town planners, they are regarded as 'professionals'. They are members of professional bodies and the vast majority of them are members because they have to be members to secure their professional qualifications, to advance their careers. With respect to the various organisations in the room and all the great work that Sean indicated ISRM have done, ILAM [the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management] did, ISPAL is now doing, we are scratching the surface with a [membership] that is probably less than 10% of what we would consider to people working in the profession. So I think it's too easy to say, "We're a profession." We haven't got there yet and it's one of the reasons we are moving towards chartered status to help us secure what is necessary. It's not a panacea, it's not a gravy train and it's not going to make everything different but it's a stepping stone in the right direction. Until we are focused on attracting those hundreds of thousands of people who work across the spectrum you've talked about we're not a profession in the eyes of the people who matter, the people who are coming into our sector.

Is one of the parameters for judging a profession that it has a professional body representing it?

PM: I agree and thus the move to a strategic institute for us. Nick's gone through that in his sector and I can't speak for Greenspace but it is needed. An architect is an architect. A town planner is a town planner. A chartered surveyor is a chartered surveyor. As you said regarding the parks manager, or the leisure centre manager, or the guy or gal working on 2012, we're such a broad church. And that's been both a strength and a weakness.

So we believe there is a profession there?

SH: There is definitely a profession there but we still need a better definition of what that profession is. That's the challenge. We could sit on the sidelines and not do anything but now taking the first steps in a direction that actually creates something for the sector, which hopefully, as it evolves and starts to attract more people to it, will keep up that attraction.

Nick, would you accept that to define the sector you have to define one part of it and then add to it? Did CIWEM start with an institute for water management that then added 'environment'?

NR: The Institution goes back to 1895 so it has a long history with its roots in public health but over time it has had to add to its remit in order to be a sustainable institution. In fact we very recently changed our charter and bylaws to make ourselves more attractive to a wider group of professional people. Two

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Nick Reeves: coffee by the Reform, glasses model's own



Stuart Mansbridge and Sean Holt weigh the argument

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years ago it would have been almost impossible for someone like a town planner or an architect to become part of the membership; they would not have met the membership criteria. We've now softened those criteria and now anyone who has a focus on environmental affairs and some practice on the fringes of it could become a member. For example, we now have practical artists who specialise in ecology to inform their work who are joining the institution.

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**What do you – and your trustees – think a professional body should do?
How it should look?**

NR: We have strong links and a growing membership overseas and one of the things I have learned in my time at CIWEM is that professional bodies as they currently exist is a uniquely British thing. If I go to meetings in Brussels, for example, I have to explain exactly what a professional body is, what chartered status means, what being a registered charity means; and they don't get it. Most countries don't have it and the requirement to be a chartered something or other is completely meaningless. This is true in most Commonwealth countries as well. In Australia you don't need to be a chartered anything. You just come out of university with a degree and you get a job. You learn on the job and you become a great professional.

SH: Or not.

NR: Or not, indeed. I have to say that chartered status is pretty meaningless really. It's a kind of badge of honour and we award our own chartered qualification and we're also licensed to award three others but some of the chartered professionals I have dealt with, both inside and outside of my own institution, have been pretty dire.

So in terms of the defining characteristics of a professional body, what does membership mean?

NR: Unless it's a licence to practice then it's pretty meaningless, although very few institutes do carry this weight. It's very difficult to practise as a town planner unless you're a chartered member of the RTPI and it's very difficult to practice as an architect unless you're a member of RIBA but there are very few other professions where there are charters or otherwise where membership is a licence to practice. Professional bodies won't last very long unless they change, unless they become something slightly different.

Our profession, assuming we may refer to the sport, leisure and culture sector as such, is going into a new phase. We hope we are going to have a new institute and even if the privy council says 'no', ISPAL and ISRM are going to be working together anyway.

PM: Towards the new institute.

So we are moving into a new phase. What does a profession need in terms of qualifications, communication, networking that a professional body should be bringing to the table?

PM: Let me give you an observation that I think is important to the younger generation and the threats to a professional body. In my era one of the reasons you got together with your fellow professionals was to network, gain intelligence and to have kindred spirits. You got that from a large leisure department or not. Now professional bodies are under considerable threat from social and professional networking. I can click on LinkedIn. I don't need to go to an ILAM, ARM, ISPAL or ISRM meeting to liaise and communicate with my fellow professionals. And I think that's a big threat unless we – and that's the 'royal we' – somehow meet that demand and explain why face-to-face meetings are still very important and that there is a very important role for a professional institute. I talk to my young colleagues and they don't get it. "Why do I need it, Peter? I can communicate with whoever I want to, I get lots of CPD [continuing professional development] from my company, I don't have to have a professional qualification to get on at this stage so why should I be a member?" I think there are real challenges out there.

SH: I think the value of a professional body is in raising the standard of professional practice. It's got to be a given to achieve that. What is the value of membership? I've asked this question since arriving at ISRM and it's a challenge for the new institute. If you can't answer that question you do not achieve what Peter just articulated in terms of getting more people to become members. So what are the benefits of membership? If I can just look at ISRM at present, half of the business is about education and training around key technical courses that are absolutely crucial to the industry. Perhaps that's one reason perhaps to be a member but it can't be the only reason. We must offer a broader qualifications framework in which to support not just people entering the profession but people at the top end of the profession. Neither [ISRM and ISPAL] currently offer anything to do with leadership and management. We stop at Level 4 in our qualifications so we need to present something so that as you become a member there is a support mechanism from Level 2 onwards so that if you choose to work within our profession we are there to support you whether through vocational qualifications, CPDs or through technical more advanced qualifications. I think

that's a key role of the institute going forward. We also need to make sure that we have a regional network where we can bring people together. I absolutely agree with Peter about LinkedIn and other networks: we need face-to-face communication. When I went to our regional branch in Wales they had over 150 people there. There were a few young guys in that room and for them to be surrounded by people who work in the profession in Wales, a whole host of people, to have that network opportunity in a social environment is absolutely invaluable. "If I become a member of this professional body what do I get in return" is a fundamental question. Everywhere I go I ask people the question "How many of you are members?" The answer is very, very few. I'll give you a very stark illustration. Last year 3,500 people took one course offered by ISRM, of which 13 people joined the institute. Something is fundamentally wrong. We have to address the actual offer that we are presenting and get people engaged in membership, engaged in the organisation. Thereafter we have to look at how we support them and offer them something tangible. It could be a whole host of things in a whole host of different settings. What we offer our commercial partners is not necessarily what we offer our individual members or our fellows or our chartered people but they are the challenges we need to overcome. I have not met anybody yet that's said that a chartered institute is a bad idea.

SM: I agree with a great deal of what's been said. One of the things we need to sell the benefit of more than any other is that networking, that getting together with other individuals who have similar jobs, similar roles, similar challenges. However, when we ask our members to tell us what they want they invariably – and overwhelmingly – say "recognition of my professionalism". Second, they say "to influence policy" on many levels. Only a tiny fraction say "the opportunity to meet with other people to share ideas". And yet when we do organise events that puts them in the same room as colleagues when asked what was best about the day they say "the chance to chat to other people". The event can be an accredited training workshop but the biggest benefit is always held to be "meeting other people".

We have heard it said that the best thing about going to the ILAM conference was the journey there and back. Some who are now very senior figures tell us that early in their careers they learned far more by being in the car with senior colleagues for a few hours than they ever did from the conference sessions. Does such a view challenge the point about online social networking?

PM: It rather reinforces it. A lot of young people don't recognise the importance of face-to-face interaction. If you think about how we used to work ten years ago the phone was always ringing, you'd get post, you might even get a fax. Now everyone is head down over PCs or laptops. The whole world of interaction and communication has changed and we've got a responsibility to help younger people coming into the sector – I'm cautious about using the word 'profession' even though I'm passionate about it becoming a profession. We've got a real role here. This came out when the working group for the proposed chartered institute of sport invited the industry to come and meet us. We engaged with a range of stakeholders and there were no holds barred: you had your say, you could pick up this thing [the manifesto for the chartered institute] and you could tear it apart. These were big employers, whether private sector, public sector or third sector. They said, "You're not making an impression on our staff; you're not making an impression on our up-and-coming managers." I said, "I dream of the day when every job in our sector, if it's allowed will say at the bottom, 'You will be a member of the chartered institute of sport' if it's relevant to that job." We're not doing well enough on thought-leadership and informing policy. One of the things that worries me is, and perhaps it's an age thing, is that a lot of personalities have gone out of the profession. There used to be gurus in our sector who were so highly regarded by youngsters like me when I came in: the George Torkildsens, the Roger Quintons. They were listened to by government and we are not informing and key stakeholders and quangos as much as we should. Finally, when I went to a CCPR-sponsored event about what we should do about facilities ISRM hadn't been invited and ISPAL hadn't been invited. I got there through my other day job and I sat there agog at all this discussion and none of the institutes that represent what was being discussed had been invited to contribute. We're not punching high enough, we're not punching well enough.

SH: I think Peter is absolutely right but the key to that is you need to look at the membership base. It is the classic [situation] that numbers create influence. Unless you can create more and more people to get involved in the institute you will remain on the sidelines. We're scratching the surface of the people we're interacting with. If you look at a lot of the well-established professional bodies they have a strong cohort of a minimum of 35,000 members. They have to be listened to because they are not just members of that institute; they are part of MPs' constituencies, part of the communities they live in and they have a voice. And they utilise that voice. When you look at both institutes [ISRM and ISPAL] as they currently stand we have to grow the membership base to become much more influential.

NR: I'm sorry but I can't feel at all sorry for you. At CIWEM we had this angst as well so we did something about it. We decided to get political, so we got a parliamentary officer. We were going to engage the press, so we got a press officer. As far as I know none of your institutes and organisations are very active

politically. I don't see much reference to you in the press or the media. You're not campaigning. CIWEM was the only professional body that was having a go at the arts community over the BP sponsorship. We had people who turned up to Tate Britain as part of a spoiler at their summer party. No other professional body did that.

SH: I guess there are two ways of doing it. This will be a debate that will rage with the institute going forward. I absolutely agree that there [needs to be an] influencing side and the leadership side but I come back to the issue of the low base of where you start. It's about earning the right to play. Are we doing anything about it at ISRM and going into the chartered institute? This year alone we've doubled the membership. So from our point of view we've gone from 2,000 members to 4,000 members in nine months.

NR: You would do though, because you'll have a chartered qualification that will be attractive to professionals that have had very little dealing with the whole world of chartered status so it all seems new and attractive. But I'm still confused. A number of you – including myself – keep talking about the 'industry' and the 'sector' but what is it? It no longer looks as integrated as it was because you're talking about a chartered institute for sport and a chartered sports management award. Where are the arts people? Where are the tourism people? One of the great things about ILAM was that we did talk about integration. We may never have achieved it but at least we were trying to get professionals from different aspects of the sector to work together, share experience and knowledge. Now it all feels very disparate and as though it is all falling apart. We are going to end up with lots of different institutes serving different aspects of the leisure/cultural services sector. I think that's a great shame and I was really upset when I discovered that this chartered qualification was going to be for a tiny section of the sector. Where are the chartered arts managers going to be? No one is talking about that as far as I know. What about the museums and the libraries people? They could do with some big support at the moment. They are right under the cosh. Why isn't the industry coming together to support them?

PM: It is, Nick. It is coming together in some respects, whether it is as effective as it should be or not. Both our respective institutes [ISPAL and ISRM] sit on something called the Cultural Forum and you cannot sit round that table [without seeing] an archivist, a librarian. It is a broad church, it is a forum. What we have said there about what CIS [a chartered institute for sport] will do is engage very closely and I think very effectively with a range of key stakeholders but there comes a time when the church just gets too broad. You know yourself you don't get chartered if you've got such a wide portfolio. We decided to get chartered, get something really strong for sport – and in sport we're talking about management, development, research, strategy and administration, and we're talking about outdoor and indoor facilities. We've made it as broad as we can to tick the boxes but there has to be different ways of working and we have to engage much more effectively with the stakeholder groups. But I do think that there is a need – and we've both [PM and SH] said that we are scratching the surface in terms of membership. We've got to do something different.

Where does that leave parks and open spaces within a chartered institute of sport when a significant proportion of ISPAL membership is still parks-based?

PM: I think it was Stuart that said, 'What is a parks member?' If you work in green space and parks you manage facilities, you manage amenities and you manage services. That is what the new chartered institute is about. Don't replicate, don't go head to head with this organisation trying to combat it and beat it. We should have been doing this ten years ago. I don't know how long Greenspace has been going...

SM: About ten years.

PM: But why did it happen? Why did it evolve? Through dissatisfaction with what was being done by the current institutes. Things emerged for a good reason. Don't go head to head, accept it. I don't think there is anything wrong with having specialists round the table who are stronger in their own right and have more of a force. As Sean said, we're not a force to be reckoned with and perhaps a chartered institute of sport. And there's still a lot of debate about whether we should add on physical activity [to the remit of the organisation]! Can we be focused, please? Can we say, 'This is what we stand for within the remit of our definition and can we attract a lot of people?' If you go into LOCOG now, which has 400, 600 or 800 people who work in a park environment and are talking about venues and facilities and sports development and legacy I bet you five pints that less than two percent are members of any of these institutes. And yet they are meant to be the bright bunnies in this sector working on our behalf for 2012. And I'm sure they are. We're failing.

There are some people who might argue that they have been disenfranchised by this process.

Ian Jackson (IJ): I welcome the focus that the CIS will provide because, as a former member of NASD and chair of the Eastern Region Sports Development Association, which was a thriving membership organisation, I do feel – and I don't

think I'm alone in this – that with the creation of ISPAL, and ISRM as well, sports development has been fragmented. I don't think any one of the institutes could argue they represent sports development any more than the other one. As a consequence of that there is a lack of people coming together to drive sports development through in the way NASD and the regional associations may have done in the past. This means that we are not engaging members within sports development as we should and could be. I include within that people who are employed via funding from the Youth Sport Trust: PDMs [partnership development managers], school sport co-ordinators, competition managers. I would argue that a very small percentage are actually members of a professional organisation that purports to represent their sector. I'd also suggest that it may come down to the fact that the regions are potentially weaker as a result of a merger at a national level.

You did say you welcome this process. Can we ask you, Stuart, whether people feel that this is passing them by?

SM: IPGS never aspires to be an organisation with thousands of members because by its very nature it is quite specific, in so far as our members are quite clearly parks or open space professionals. That specific sector within the wider sector is not huge and never will be huge. So far from feeling disenfranchised, I think what our members would like is to be heard as a parks manager or parks professionals but we accept that we will never have a hugely significant membership base and therefore our voice will never be quite as loud as we would like it to be. Where I fully agree with Peter is that there must be a means of all of us coming together in some sort of umbrella with a voice where that voice can be amplified through a larger organisation with more sway. Our members clearly say that they want something that represents them as parks people, so they don't want to be lost in a wider sector, but at the same time they do recognise [the realities].

So the picture Peter paints of a core chartered institute for sport that works with stakeholders and speaks on behalf of a wider sector is valid?

PM: It's in the manifesto. There's a stakeholder wheel.

SM: We also sit on the [National] Culture Forum but therein lies a problem. We probably sit on a number of bodies that are umbrella groups in some respects; in the leisure sector, the environment sector. But which bit do we fit into so that we can amplify our parks voice?

SH: I agree with what Ian said. It goes back to the offer. Currently the challenge for the new institute from my perspective is the offer back to those individuals working in those sectors that you quite rightly identify. I sit next to Steve Grainger at present – his office is next door to mine – and I am aware of all these structures that he has beneath him and it is very much a challenge for us what exactly do we offer those people. That's the key to this. It goes back to this membership offer: why be part of something bigger; what do I get in return? Each individual is a stakeholder and I am constantly saying to people that this [new] institute isn't ISRM's, it isn't ISPAL's: it's the industry's institute. What is it that they want from it to support them in their businesses or their organisations? I think we've got a challenge on our hands to do that but I think we are committed to putting that offer on the table. It's going to take some time because we are going through a process now of trying to bring these two organisations together. Hopefully that will be successful and then we can start to set out and start delivering on some of the things that are in that manifesto. But let's not kid ourselves. This is not going to be something that is taken overnight. I think we will be pleading for patience. We will be moving at a pace that is acceptable because this thing needs to evolve and a new culture needs to evolve but we are absolutely committed to being representative and supporting and putting things together in terms of a membership package and information – whether that be technical, written, events, conferences – that actually reach the individuals. You are going to find very few graduates in the next few years who are going to come out of university with a £30,000 debt starting on a salary of £15,000. So the professional bodies need to look at their strategies around education and training and around CPD that supports these individuals who are not going to be able to go through the university sector or indeed are put off by it by the costs associated with it. It doesn't mean that they are any less important or can't reach the higher parts of the profession if they choose to but I think we have the responsibility to actually put in place the supportive mechanism that supports the industry. This industry is getting bigger. I don't know if you saw the Sport England economic impact [review]. It is growing exponentially and currently – we keep going back to it – we're only scratching the surface.

The Sport England figure may well be out of date but the report does show growth. You were invited to come here to talk about professional bodies for our sector. Is there anything you feel we may have missed that is relevant to the debate?

PM: Like Sean, I'd like to respond to Ian's comments. They were very refreshing and illuminating, and he's thrown down some challenges. The very reason that we have incorporated the word 'development' into the chartered institute of sport draft logo is because sports development is a fundamental part of the remit going

forward. It's not a discrete body in its own right as NASD was but things have to move on but it is part of this vast economic growth of sport in this country. People say to me, 'What about leisure, what about parks, what about arts, what about environment and water?' – all incredibly important – but at the moment my focus is to say, "Sport matters, sport is important, sport can change lives, sport is undervalued. We're doing something about it." But I'll finish with Nick's salient advice within the structure, which is what both organisations [ISRM and ISPAL] are now looking at: think about press, think about political lobbying, think about how you influence people. Don't just take it as a given because it won't happen.

But the manifesto says that the new institute will not be lobbying organisation.

PM: It does say it is not going to be a lobbying organisation. It doesn't mean that we are not going to drive positive policy change and provide thought-leadership. One's definition of lobbying can be taken in various ways.

Do we see the new institute as being one of the places where thought-leaders will meet?

PM: Going back to what we were saying regarding networking, the young people rubbing shoulders, the ISPAL ambassadors scheme, those kind of things are vitally important and I would be very disappointed if all of the key players in our sector were not keen to join the new institute. I'd be very disappointed because they have said they will. If I join, says the chief exec, my staff will be much more encouraged to join and I will promote it. We won't be reliant on that car journey.

SM: If this is about the role of professional bodies in the sector, Sean used a phrase that I totally understand: 'What do I get in return?' It is something that I'm very conscious of and something that is very important. Members and potential members need to see what the benefits are and need to see that they are going to get professionally recognised and receive qualification, et cetera. But it is also about convincing them that one question they should ask is: 'What can I do for the sector and how can I articulate my thoughts?' So it's not just 'What do I get' but 'What can I do' and 'How do I do it?' The answer may be join the institute and therefore they are doing something and they are in a position to influence policy. I don't want to alienate members by saying 'Ask not what your institute can do for you...' but I would like to change the mindset slightly so that people don't just join because they get something but that they can make a difference if they do.

NR: One thing no one has really mentioned is public benefit. We are a registered charity and the whole thing of public benefit is absolutely critical now because there is a legal obligation on us to prove the benefit that we have given and express that in our annual report. A lot of members of professional bodies think it's about services provided to them but it's not. It's a tiny part now and it's a much bigger deal. It's now about a contract with the public and you taking responsibility for explaining what you are about to the public by whatever means.

IJ: A couple of things struck me, one of which was that the strength of the membership will be in the regions. The [manifesto] document does refer to the home nations and it would be great to see the regional associations strengthened once again and have the life breathed back into them. I would welcome that. Mentioning universities, I think it is important that we do have links with tertiary education so that when people do go to university they can recognise the benefits of graduating through a course accredited by the institute. What exactly does a degree in sports development mean? There are so many variations.

SH: Just to say that the regions are a strength and I genuinely believe colleagues in Scotland, Wales and across the whole of England and Northern Ireland need to be represented and supported. We are fortunate that we have a strong network in the regions and that will be under review but we are committed to making sure that we have that regional infrastructure to support the membership base and the institute per se, particularly when you start looking at the devolved structures. I think the regions are absolutely key to retaining members and developing the institute, and being able to interact with local partners.

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