



DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2009: EMERGENCY PLANNING SOCIETY

Introduction

On behalf of the Board I am pleased to present the Director's Report of the Emergency Planning Society, beginning with sincere thanks for their hard work, to both the staff and all members who volunteer their services to Branch, professional working groups and other activities on behalf of the Society.

Objectives

Our core objectives remain that of developing the Society's activities and range of services offered to a level equivalent to a professional institute by:

- Providing a forum for the study of the most effective means of planning and managing emergency preparation and response, and disseminating good practice;
- Promoting the views of members on all issues relating to emergency planning and management;
- Influencing national policies relating to emergency planning; and
- Encouraging professional development of members to achieve high standards of practice.

The strategy adopted to deliver these core objectives is incorporated within the Society's strategic business framework, the key elements of which are to:

1. Embed core competences and gain buy-in from stakeholders for a recognised professional qualification for emergency management.
2. Grow our membership to ensure we represent the vast majority of practitioners in the field.
3. Deliver an improved range of services to members – professional guidance and standards; a structured programme of seminars, workshops and training days to support CPD; support for Branch activity to provide local networking and development opportunities; and continuous development of the website, Blueprint and central office facilities to support effective information exchange.
4. Revitalise the professional working groups by restructuring to match current priorities, setting out milestones to facilitate delivery.
5. Gain wider recognition for the Society through a proactive media policy and targeted lobbying of central government, stakeholder bodies and employers' organisations.

Activities are divided between 4 Business Streams:

- i. Professional services
- ii. Member services
- iii. Training and events
- iv. Business support services

An overview of progress in these areas is outlined below:

Professional Services

Core Competences

A significant amount of resource has gone into supporting core competences work over the past 12 months. Embedding these core competences has been our number one priority and following the successful launch in London in December, some excellent progress has been made under the direction of Membership and Development Director, Mike Lees; and the supporting workstreams – membership criteria, educational standards, training and accreditation and CPD – to establish a recognised qualification for our profession.

We see this as bringing greater professionalism and is a major element in our push towards Institute status.

For employers this will provide a mechanism whereby Emergency Planning Society members will be accredited as 'fit to practice' based on the framework. We will also build in the necessary elements of governance as assurance that skills are current, and throughout the process we will seek the views of members through 'focus groups'.

Lobbying and Advocacy

The Society is well established as the main source of advice and consultation by central government in the UK, the Republic of Ireland and the devolved administrations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Regular contact has been maintained throughout the past year to influence decision-making, and promote members' interests with the various administrations.

Media interest in our work has continued to be high throughout the year. The EPS contribution to public consultation on 'emergency response and recovery' continues in a number of areas, and we are being involved in giving advice and interviews in the areas of terrorism, climate change, and of course more recently swine flu. The Communications Director has maintained a high profile further enhancing our profile and influence in the emergency planning world.

The Society has been consulted on the Civil Contingencies Act enhancement programme, our Chair is in discussions regarding a BSI standard for emergency planning with the EPS as a custodian, and discussions are well advanced for a new academic journal to be produced in partnership with the Emergency Planning College and Leeds University with the Journal being owned by the EPS.

Guidance and Standards

We have made progress in restructuring professional working groups whose members have a key role to play in the future development of guidance and standards. Ongoing progress has been made in developing a skills database which will assist in identifying members who might contribute to this area of our activity.

Currently we are collaborating with DEFRA and UKCIP on a climate change adaption workshop with a view to identifying any gaps in existing guidance, and is likely to lead to further activity in the future.

Networking and Information Sharing

We have been encouraged by the way the website has developed under new provider Tibus, but again make a plea to members to participate more as undoubtedly much benefit can be gained from this excellent communications vehicle.

Member Services

Administration

We have added a fourth member of staff to our central office team who will be focussing on communications and events, with a view to further developing service provision in these areas. Our Operations Manager, Dan Taylor, and his team have established sound systems in Cardiff and in December saw the smooth transfer of Republic of Ireland member administration to Central Office.

Membership has increased marginally and currently stands just short of 2,300.

Progression Through Membership Grades

The Director of Membership and Development has successfully run a number of Branch based upgrade workshops, with the result that we have seen a significant increase in the Member to Associate ratio. This has been a tremendous effort and Mike Lees would like to thank all the Branch officials, Martin Rawlings in his capacity as Chair of Council and Central Office staff who have supported him in this important area of our activity.

Focus for the next 12 months will be on the emerging CPD scheme, entry qualifications and a 5-point plan towards increasing our total membership.

Members Discount Schemes

Members are again encouraged to make full use of the many excellent discounts and benefits offered through this scheme available via the website.

Training and Events

The two main Emergency Planning Society events of the year were:

- Annual Conference: held in Torquay 16-17 June 2008
- Launch of core competences – held in London 1 December 2008

Both these events were well attended and feedback was very positive.

The majority of Branches continued to hold events for their members throughout the year, some Branches combining their Branch business with an event.

The organisation of the annual conference is well underway for 2009 and will be held in the Ricoh Arena, Coventry and an exciting programme is in place.

The Autumn study is planned for November 2009 and it is planned that this will be held in Manchester, taking into account members views this will now be a one day study and work is ongoing to make this an accredited event for continual professional development, and the content will be linked to the Society's Core competences.

For the coming year each Branch will be expected to run at least 2 events per year which should include an upgrade workshop. The planning for these events must follow the Emergency Planning Society's protocol as, if the event is going to incur a financial risk to the Society, then a Business Plan must be submitted to the Finance Director and approved by the board of Directors, before any planning is confirmed.

It is anticipated that many of the Society's core competences will be the focus of a number of events or workshops throughout the year and it is planned that these will be organised after the annual conference and shared with all members. These events/seminars/ workshops will

be accredited and it is anticipated that these will be done on a roadshow format so that all branches will get the opportunity to attend in their own area.

Our target is to have the structures for a new Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme in place by December 2009. This will become the focus for the work of Sally Brown, co-opted to the Board to drive this project. Sally will be working closely with Mike Lees in his capacity of Director of Membership and Development and Eve Coles, who chairs the Educational Standards Group, to ensure that we set the criteria correctly, valuing the knowledge and experience of practitioners, together with academic qualifications both of which are equally important in the CPD process.

Our aim will be to produce a scheme that is secure, simple and easy to use and is as flexible as possible. Sally will ensure that members are kept up-to-date with developments, so keep an eye on the website.

Business Support

Branches

Branch events and networking opportunities are critical to the success of the Society. We will continue to ensure that there is sufficient Central Office support for this important activity. In recent months the Cardiff office has assisted with various Branch and PWG events and is collaborating with DEFRA on a climate change seminar aimed at identifying any gaps in current guidance.

Finance

The financial account for the year ending 31 December 2008 showed a healthy surplus of £43k. This figure was only marginally down in 2008 [£46k], further strengthening our financial position on giving us a good level of resilience with which we can move forward with our objectives of attaining Institute status. The Emergency Planning Society Ltd net worth as at the 31/12/2008 was £145849. The current year is reflecting the economic downturn with a decline in Advertising Revenue however Subscription Income is as expected. Your Board and Staff continue to operate the Society in a prudent manner whilst making efforts to deliver the objectives within the business plan.

AGM

AGM 2009 will be held on Monday 15 June 2009 at the Ricoh Centre, Coventry. The main business being brought by the Board concerns some tidying up of the Articles of Association to pave the way towards Institute status, categories of membership, election/tenure of Directors and proposals to approve a way forward for subscription rates.

Board Matters

All existing Directors, with the exception of Steve Terry, offer themselves for re-election. We are grateful to Steve for all his hard work developing a media strategy

It is with much sadness also that we saw the death of former Director of Communications, Pauline Marren in December. Pauline was a true stalwart of the Society, serving tirelessly at both Branch and National level and will be greatly missed.

The Board is much indebted to the support it has received from Council and the excellent leadership shown by current Chair Martin Rawlings. Council has consolidated its position throughout the year leading to a clearer and more robust position, able to challenge and

support the Board. Attendance at Council meetings has improved throughout the year, and we believe this is a clear demonstration of the perceived value of Council. Recent Council meetings have clearly demonstrated that the will of members is being exerted to influence Board outcomes whilst also demonstrating a willingness to fully engage with the Board and support them in delivering on the Action Plan.

Worthy of note was the work of Council in examining the viability of electronic voting on matters such as approval of annual subscription rates as was resolved at AGM 2008. The experiment failed to deliver a satisfactory outcome and the matter will be remitted to members for resolution at the AGM 2009.

Council is also working closely with the Board to develop clearer and more robust corporate governance for the Society.

Priorities

Our top priority remains that of delivering more of the services that members want, and we will aim to make optimal use of our resources to this end. Priorities for the next 12 months will be:

- Take forward the core competences related workstreams to deliver a universally accepted professional qualification,
- Grow membership to ensure the vast majority of practitioners are represented,
- Support professional working groups and Branches to consistently deliver guidance, standards, toolkits, workshops, etc, linked to core objectives,
- Develop a training and events programme to support CPD,
- Encourage upgrades from Associate to Member,
- Adopt a proactive media on marketing policy to raise profile and expand influence, and
- Develop robust corporate governance arrangements.

Outlook

The Board has again earmarked significant resources to progress the necessary workstreams to achieve Institute status. Establishing a 'stakeholder group' and through its auspices gain universal support for an emergency planning qualification will be top priority in the coming year. I intend to take personal responsibility for driving this process.

Providing additional resource at Central Office is a key element if we are to move forward and we are likely to add a further member of staff to support our growing range of activities and delivery of continuous improvement in services to members.

With your support we look forward to another year of steady progress for the Emergency Planning Society.



M BEVERIDGE

Chair

For and on Behalf of the Board of Directors

EMERGENCY PLANNING SOCIETY

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