

RIAS Pandemic Impacts

Reflections from Retired Members

Thank you to all Retired Members who responded to the Surveys to allow RIAS to understand the impacts of Covid C-19 and Lockdown on their lives. This document shows a summary of the findings.

Our retired Members acknowledged in their responses that for the most part it is the next generation and practicing architects who are most hard hit by Covid C-19 and its effects. In common with practicing members and students most respondents care deeply about the issues that affect our profession – procurement, design quality, circular economy and climate change impacts. Their views on these key topics echo those points made in the member and practice surveys. In addition, there was a heightened understanding from the retired members of the importance of localism and communities.

When it comes to continued involvement in the profession; whilst some retired Members feel that they have been away too long from practice to be able to significantly contribute, others are active in RIAS/Chapters and in their communities. Many retired members really value their link with RIAS and wish in future to become more involved, most popularly through Mentoring and Discussion Sessions, to support others and younger members, through the Chapters and RIAS HQ. This key message and the others from all surveys will be taken into account as RIAS develops its strategic working in the future.

Karen Stevenson Acting Secretary

Christina Gaiger RIAS President

RIAS Retired Member Survey 2020

Summary Findings

Who responded?

The survey issued by RIAS was completed by 159 retired members. This represents a 29% response rate and is almost twice that of the Members survey.

Impacts of Lockdown

Respondents demonstrated a high degree of resilience with over 85% reporting that the Lockdown and its effects have had little or no impact on them personally.

Countering Covid Impacts

When it comes to suggestions for measures to support the industry and profession post lockdown, respondents rated the following as the most important:

- **Improvement/ adaptation of architect's role in the design/ delivery process**
- **Increased public investment in new developments (education/ housing/ healthcare etc.)**
- **Focus on measures to bring forward carbon reduction and climate related changes to design and construction**

Not unsurprisingly proposals to improve Planning and Warrant processes were seen by retired members as less of a priority.

Retired members had some specific suggestions for Scottish Government many of which focussed on procurement, circular economy and climate change-related actions including the following:

- **We should not just be building housing but should be constructing communities with appropriate facilities**
- **Bring in a quinquennial MOT-style Test for buildings to bring them all into the DDA & Green parameters.**
- **Reduce reliance on overseas manufacturing, etc. and encourage/incentivise "home-grown" production, automation, industry, employment.**
- **Halt development on any farmland until a full study has been carried out of our entire land mass to assess what farmland is needed for our existing population plus at least 10% taking account of rising sea and flood levels.**

- Support localism to encourage small towns and communities to thrive
- Encourage employment opportunities within the community to reduce excessive staff commutes.
- Stop the procurement of new buildings by contractor-led construct and design processes and revert to traditional methods of design by professionally-led and build tender processes.

Supporting Each Other and Knowledge Sharing

25% of retired Members reported they would consider contacting or had contacted RIAS for assistance over the period and 9% would, or had, contacted RIBA. Of those who did contact either organisation 72% considered it helpful.

Individuals reported the following:

- The most important thing I crave is confirmation that these entities are still there and performing for the membership and community.
- I have received a few phone calls from organisations of which I am a member as to whether I am coping with lockdown and they have been very welcome.
- I haven't attempted to reach out to either RIAS or RIBA. However, knowledge of their increased active presence through regular online events, presentations, contact forums etc would have helped bind me back into the social and cultural network I lost following imposition of the lockdown and which will not meaningfully return in the near future. 'We can still do it.'

The RIAS have an important role to play in maintaining their connections with all of their members and considering the ways this can be achieved. These comments are noted and will be taken into account in future.

Knowledge Sharing and Support

Whilst some retired Members feel that they have been away too long from practice to be able to significantly contribute to supporting practicing members, there is appetite to be involved with the profession in knowledge sharing and other initiatives through RIAS or the Chapters. With the following being possibilities to develop:

Mentoring	24.22%
Skill sharing	15.60%
Generating CPD sessions	5.45%
Discussions/ Debates	24.58%
Networking/ Social Events	18.35%
Joint working initiatives	14.55%

The Future and Bigger Picture

Retired Members are particularly keen to emphasise that we should learn lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic. With a call to 'Examine the failings of our society highlighted by the effect of the virus. Learn from them and use this emergency to shock us into realising that the next generation deserve a better legacy than our present one.' Members urge RIAS to prioritise and lobby Scottish Government and Westminster to:

- **Invest more in good quality architecture and increase design fees accordingly.**
- **Make it easier for owners to upgrade older buildings to reduce carbon emissions.**
- **Give communities a stronger voice in determining the shape of their areas - further and meaningful reform of planning policy and process**

ends