

## Chair's Report



28<sup>th</sup> August 2020

This is my second report for the Single Ply Roofing Association's Annual General Meeting as SPRA Chair. The last year has been like no other before in business or society at large due to the unprecedented impact that the coronavirus (Covid-19) has had, and continues to have, on our family and business lives.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, evident from March onwards; overall, we have had a very busy and successful year including our response in recent months to the pandemic. Construction activity was severely impacted by the pandemic and the role of SPRA changed overnight to collaborate more closely with other trade representative bodies in order to assist members through a variety of consultations that fed back to government, through the likes of the Construction Leadership Council (CLC), Build UK and the Construction Industry Coronavirus (CICV) Forum.

The necessary cancellation of the SPRA Conference that was due to take place in June was a real disappointment for me personally as indeed were the postponement of this year's SPRA Awards until next year and the 2020 SPRA Golf day originally scheduled for September but now planning to go ahead in September next year. We look forward to a time in the future when we can meet with our members at these events and come together as a SPRA community.

Recent months have made us all take stock as we learn to cope and re-adjust to the challenges brought upon us in our work and personal lives. As an organisation, SPRA has adjusted well and will continue to do so in the best interests of our members and the industry we represent. We are facing the challenges posed by Covid-19 head on and indeed the other issues that affect our industry sector, many related to the construction industry changes required as a result of the Grenfell tragedy.

SPRA continues to play a very active and full role in industry organisations on your behalf to ensure that you have a voice and can engage in debate and decisions that directly affect your business. Through SPRA you, the member, have direct access to key organisations representing the wider construction industry. Our involvement allows our members the opportunity to support, educate and influence their decision making and activities. SPRA has membership of Build UK, the Construction Products Association (CPA), the Advisory Committee for Roof Safety, the RIBA CPD Network, the CICV Forum and the UK Green Building Council. We sit on the NFRC Flat Roof Committee, the CPA Technical Committee and CPA Sustainability Group; and link to and support the Green Roof Organisation.

Despite the negative and tragic impact that Covid-19 clearly has had in recent months there has also been a real spirit of collaboration between construction industry organisations and their members enabling more frequent meetings and discussion because of the necessity to meet through virtual platforms. SPRA has engaged fully and been busier than ever participating in relevant meetings and expressing your views and opinions on issues that really matter.

From a technical standpoint SPRA is represented on a number of important industry bodies associated with British and European Standards. This enables us to speak up on behalf of our members on issues that are relevant. The work of the Technical Committee, a cornerstone of single ply roofing industry development, over the last year has continued to deliver exceptional industry leading guidance. This has entailed the release and publication of new or updated work including;

- Wind loading protocol for calculations (S11b-19)
- Site pull-out test protocol for flat roofs (S15-19)
- Rainwater outlets (CQS11- rainwater outlets)
- SPRA Design Guide 2020 (S1-2020)

SPRA has continued the spirit of collaboration in a technical sense with other flat roofing associations in representation to government and other bodies to clarify issues concerning fire safety. Also, during the year, a joint workshop was organised by SPRA and the LRWA for members with the BBA. This was very well attended by members of both organisations and from the responses' received, deemed very successful.

I reported last year that SPRA had been invited to participate in a number of construction industry Working Groups set up in response to chapter 5 of the Hackitt Report by the Industry Response Group (IRG) and dealing with construction industry **competence**. SPRA representation within these Working Groups has continued throughout the year with the executive continuing to play a very active role in Working Group 2 – Installers; and Working Group 12 - Products, while continuing to support and provide input as requested to the Marketing Integrity Group. The work here is vital in helping to bring about the necessary cultural change called for in the Hackitt Report.

SPRA has always supported and continues to fully support work in connection with improving industry standards and that also comes through ensuring individuals as well as organisations' are capable and competent of achieving and delivering the highest quality. An example of this in the last year has included providing the specialist questions to the NFRC for the Single Ply Gateway Test as part of the future Roofcert accreditation scheme. SPRA recognises that continuous professional development is part of Roofcert and that enables all to keep their knowledge and subsequent skill base developing ensuring the necessary high standards are maintained as new technologies and installation techniques emerge.

It follows therefore that from our own SPRA perspective we continue to have a major focus on training. It's part of our DNA. SPRA members fully support this ethos and assist by providing free training materials and advising on course content and curriculum. This enables a comprehensive training career path to be available for the single ply industry ensuring and reinforcing the delivery of the high installation standards mentioned previously.

Maintaining these high standards in training is paramount and the collaborative approach by SPRA in conjunction with our membrane members allows us to deliver the Basic Competency Programme for Experienced Workers and continue to offer our specialist training course for apprentices.

Working within the framework of the CITB is important and SPRA have thirteen upskilling courses registered on the CITB directory. In September the CITB will publish their 2021-2025 business plan outlining how they will work with government and industry to invest in the skills necessary to rebuild the industry.

Site assessment of trainees is supported by SPRA and ensuring that this assessment work is carried out by suitably competent, capable and experienced assessors. To this end assessor training programmes such as 'Train the Trainer' are important in helping to deliver this objective.

Training throughout and across our members organisations is important as indeed is external knowledge building for specifiers and others who are involved with single ply roofing products and systems through design and procurement of work. To this end the SPRA *Single Ply Online Training and Assessment Course* is part of the RIBA approved CPD programme as indeed is the seminar for architects entitled *Single Ply Roofing: Achieving High Performance with Minimum Risk*. These courses aimed at the wider single ply community help to guide, educate and influence towards continual improvement in the overall quality of single ply roofing projects in the future built environment.

Through our Weekly Newsletter we continue to inform members on developments, industry consultations and surveys to ensure that you have the opportunity for your opinion or viewpoint to be considered.

During the last year SPRA has undergone a restructuring within the SPRA Executive. Cathie Clarke who had provided excellent service as CEO for the previous five years decided to move onto pastures new. We wish Cathie well in her new venture and she remains a consultant to SPRA and a valued member of the SPRA Team. Cathie has been replaced by Ronan Brunton since the beginning of July this year. Ronan, who has been part of the SPRA Executive since 2018, carries forward the values, aims and objectives of the organisation and will build on these with the rest of the SPRA Team and SPRA Council to deliver a progressive, collaborative and modern trade association programme for all SPRA members. Earlier this year Mark Thornton who had completed his work on the setup of our training courses left SPRA to concentrate on his own roofing business. We thank Mark for his significant effort and expertise in his spell with SPRA and wish him every success in the future.

## **Membership**

On the membership front the focus last year had initially centred around training, auditing of members (including new applicants) and responding to technical and membership enquiries. As mentioned earlier, the emergence of the Covid-19 crisis during March this year brought an additional emphasis on meetings with other trade organisations and industry bodies as the construction industry grappled with the pandemic issue.

I am pleased to report that despite the challenges of the last few months applications to join SPRA have continued reflecting the value of the work of the organisation especially during the recent and ongoing pandemic. So much so that membership numbers overall have increased with a significant increase of four additional members since last year. At the time of writing membership is comprised as follows: 15 manufacturer members, 32 associate members and 60 contractor members. Two contractor, and 1 associate membership applications are in audit process at the time of writing.

## **Financial**

At the end of 2019, SPRA had a trading surplus of £3486 on a turnover of £289,765. Revenues increased by 1% on 2018, whilst costs decreased by 6.7% for the year to £286279. Overall membership numbers have increased to 107 from 103 at the time of writing. The trading surplus reversed the deficit from the previous financial year and was in part as a result of the restructuring of SPRA executive and membership increase. Reserves

increased from £119108 to £122,553. As the effect of SPRA Executive restructuring continues to the end of this financial year and beyond; reserves are anticipated to reach 50% of annual costs which is appropriate and provides a minimum six months' operating cost.

## **Governance**

A number of Council positions were up for re-election recently apart from John McMullan of Firestone Building Products (Membrane member), Joshua Lamprell of Invictus Roofing Ltd (Contractor member) and Duncan Murdoch of NRA Roofing and Flooring Ltd (Contractor member). Nigel Blacklock of Bauder Ltd was nominated and confirmed for the position of Technical Committee Chair and Shaun Lotay of DANOSA was elected as Technical Committee Vice-Chair. Steve Downey of DANOSA, Ian Muddiman of Sika Limited, Matthew Sexton of BMI Group were confirmed as the three remaining Membrane members on Council.

Peter Baker of Tata Steel Panels and Profiles, Paul Griffiths of Recticel Insulation Products and myself were nominated and confirmed as the three Associate members of Council.

Tony Ferry of Briggs Amasco Limited and Brendan McNulty of Delomac Ltd were also nominated and confirmed for another term as Contractor members of Council.

During the last year Mike Crook of SIG Design and Technology, Adrian Brazier of Kingspan Insulation and Carl Pryce of Maincare Roofing Ltd stepped down from their positions on Council. I would like to thank Mike, Adrian and Carl for their support during their time on Council and wish every them success in the future.

All Directors are recruited for a two year term, but may stand for re-election.

## **The Year Ahead**

There is no doubt that the year ahead is going to be a challenging one for business and for society in general. The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic is certainly expected to continue for some time yet and the full extent of the economic impact on the construction industry is as yet unknown. However, as mentioned earlier, this is a challenge like no other we have experienced before but you can rest assured that at SPRA we are ready to meet these future challenges. A timely restructuring process has provided a solid financial and operational platform for development. The global pandemic may have interrupted our plans during the course of this year but with a new Council recently formed and a restructured SPRA Executive we are ready to push on and deliver in the areas key to organisational success.

Our objectives are always centred around delivering real value for our membership through development. SPRA attempts to reach a wider and deeper membership audience and the potential of an additional category dedicated to the distribution of single ply roofing materials that will still maintain the high standards required of all members is a clear objective. This can only happen with the completion of the review of membership criteria to ensure clear and transparent rules to enable all involved in single ply roofing to have a path to become members of SPRA. Our membership task group will re-engage with this aim.

The SPRA Executive will focus on delivery of the Council objectives and ensure our members are represented in all relevant and strategic construction industry work streams, a number I have touched on earlier. Our technical quest relating to ensuring the highest levels of support and training will continue and in this vein the launch this autumn of the new *Wind*

*Load Calculation Protocol* training course, is a first and testimony to our commitment in this area.

SPRA will grasp the opportunity to increase our presence on digital platforms for meetings with members of other trade and industry bodies as well as for marketing purposes creating greater awareness among specifiers main contractors and other industry stakeholders. Where possible and when allowed SPRA will have a physical presence at industry events and will consider all options for the potential of our 2021 conference and other SPRA activities.

I would like to thank my fellow Council members for their time and support and to thank the SPRA Executive and support team who once again, have provided an outstanding service to members and the wider industry. Finally, I would like to encourage all members to consider how they can get more involved with SPRA. The more you put in, the more you get out! Make full use of your benefits, and as always, if you have ideas for improvements, then bring them to the attention of either a Council member or the SPRA executive.

Martyn Holloway

SPRA Chair