

Chair's Report

13th June 2019



This is my first report for the Single Ply Roofing Association's Annual General Meeting as SPRA Chairman. I have great pleasure in reporting that SPRA has had another successful year. New products and services have been developed and delivered and the organisation continues to expand its influence across the construction industry.

When planning began for the 2019 SPRA conference last year, we settled on the theme of 'Risk' as a suitable topic considering Brexit, Grenfell and Carillion were all very fresh and relevant issues at the time. Little did we know then that come June this year, the UK would still not have left the EU and that we would be living through a level of political turbulence not experienced for many decades.

It would be easy to throw up our hands in despair. However, rather than do that, SPRA and its members have focused on the positive things we *can* do in response to the challenges we face. I would like to remind members of the organisations that we are directly involved with on your behalf. Our involvement gives you, the member, direct access to them and therefore gives you the opportunity to support, educate and influence their decision making and activities. SPRA has membership of Build UK, the Construction Products Association, the Advisory Committee for Roof Safety, the RIBA CPD Network, the Trade Association Forum and the UK Green Building Council. We sit on the NFRC Flat Roof Committee and link to and support the Green Roof Organisation and our CEO is a co-opted Board Member of the Institute of Roofing. On the technical side, SPRA is represented on a number of important industry bodies associated with British and European Standards. We are never silent at these meetings and ensure that we speak up on your behalf whenever relevant. We also report back to you every week through our SPRA Newsletter to ensure that you are kept abreast of all developments and that you always have the opportunity to input into consultations and other surveys to inform decision-making.

I am delighted to add that over the last twelve months, the SPRA CEO Cathie Clarke has been invited to sit on the Build UK CITB Review Board with other industry leaders, the CSCS Card Management Committee and has been co-opted onto the board of the Institute of Roofing. SPRA was also invited onto three of the Working Groups set up in response to the Building a Safer Future report (Grenfell Tower, Hackitt Review). We have provided key information into Working Group 2-Installers and are proud to be working in partnership with the Liquid Roofing Waterproofing Association by sharing representation on the Working Group 12-Products. We are supporting the Marketing Integrity Group, established by the CPA as the 13th Working Group tasked with raising standards and changing culture in our industry. Collaborative working and sharing best practice is vital if we really are going to make a difference. SPRA is in discussions with the NFRC to provide specialist questions for the Single ply Gateway Test that will be part of their new Roofcert accreditation scheme. SPRA particularly applauds the element of continuous professional development within Roofcert as this will be key to ensuring installers are always up to date with new technologies and installation techniques.

That brings me nicely on to our own continued investment in training. Collaboration with our members has been at the heart of creating a comprehensive training career path for our industry. Whether it is reviewing and advising on course curriculum or providing free training materials from membrane to fasteners and adhesives, SPRA members have come forward to help.

We already work in partnership with membrane members to deliver the Basic Competency Programme for Experienced Workers and continue to offer our specialist training course for apprentices. But over the last 12 months we've had our work cut out to respond to the changes put in place by the CITB as they implement their new business plan. We've created thirteen short courses for upskilling and these are now available through the new CITB directory. A huge piece of work. We've also collaborated with the RIBA who have recently approved our online course to be part of their approved CPD programme – a major step forward. Assessment of trainees on site is the preferred option for many contractors, and we've invested in both train the trainer and assessor training so that we can better support our industry in this area.

Another major milestone by Training Manager, Mark Thornton has been the completion and delivery of our new 3-day course aimed at managers and professionals. Now commercially available, we hope that the Single ply Awareness Training course will be a real hit with specifiers and we aim to also get this course RIBA CPD approved in the near future. So – SPRA has risen to the challenge of creating a full suite of courses for installers, specifiers, inspectors and others working in our industry. We now need industry to invest in training and demonstrate best practice to the rest of the construction sector.

From a membership point of view, in addition to providing normal technical and training support, carrying out audits and processing new applications, the SPRA executive have delivered two special workshops this year providing members with direct access to the SPRA team. This face-to-face engagement is almost as good as one-to-one meetings and provides members with the opportunity to meet the team, really understand the range of benefits on offer and how they can get more involved to support us in influencing and educating the sector.

Technical Committee continues to work hard, and the 2018 revision of the SPRA Design Guide was launched at the 2018 conference. Since then, SPRA has sent over 700 flash drives containing the full Design Guide to main contractors and specifiers as a way of raising awareness, improving quality, and promoting SPRA and its' members. Over the next six months, Technical Committee will be reviewing the Guide in preparation for the next release due in early 2020.

Our Technical Director, Jim Hooker retired at the end of 2018 and received the first ever SPRA Award for Outstanding Contribution in front of a standing ovation. Due to a welcome five-month hand over period, Ronan Brunton was well prepared for taking on all Technical Manager responsibilities by the end of the year. Ronan supported Jim at a London RIBA CPD Network in the autumn and also embarked on taking over the Jim's Jotter mantel with 'Brunton's Blog'. He has since taken on the role with gusto. His fresh eye on audits, and participation in Working Group 12 have inspired new ideas and will feed into the new Task Group on compliance, criteria and competency.

Some great achievements I think you'll agree, but some things have taken a lot longer to achieve than expected and it is a clear warning that we must be realistic in our promises in future. SPRA is a forward-thinking, pro-active, well-respected and influential organisation. This good reputation has taken a lot of hard work and significant time to establish, but as we all

know, could be destroyed in the blink of an eye. A responsible business will guard against this at all times, especially with a changing commercial landscape that may bring new challenges. This is why SPRA is embarking on a root and branch review of our membership criteria and codes of practice through a new Task Group. We want to ensure that we can recognise all the best practice in our industry and reward those that deliver the best quality.

More and more companies are seeing the benefit of being part of the SPRA community and we expect to see membership levels increase in future months. At the time of writing, membership stands at 15 manufacturer members, 34 associate members, 54 contractor members, 1 Affiliate member, 1 Affiliate-Contractor member and 1 installer member. Four contractor, and 1 associate membership applications are in audit at the time of writing.

I am pleased to report that despite a drop in planned income, there was an equivalent drop in expenditure which resulted in SPRA drawing down reserves £608 under the expected figure of £19512 to fund planned training development work.

Financial

At the end of 2018, SPRA had a trading deficit of £ 18,840 on a turnover of £287,796. Revenues decreased by 12.7% on 2017, whilst costs increased by 2.1% for the year. Although membership fee income decreased by 5.7%, overall membership numbers have increased slightly. The decrease was expected and was caused by the introduction of a new fee structure that came into force in January 2018. As expected, reserves went down from £137,980 to £119,108 due to planned investment in training products and services. This represents approximately 50% of current turnover and covers all known commitments. Moving forward, financial reserves will be maintained at 50% of annual turnover which is appropriate and provides for six months' operating costs.

Governance

Apart from Peter Baker of Tata Steel (Associate member) and John Whittaker of CCM Europe (Membrane member), all other Council positions were up for re-election in May 2018. Nigel Blacklock from Bauder Ltd was re-elected as Technical Chair for a further term and Stephen Duffy of Topek Ltd was confirmed as Vice Technical Committee Chair. Mike Crook of SIG Design & Technology, Ian Muddiman of SIKA Ltd and Steve Downey of Danosa UK were confirmed as the other three Membrane Members.

Tony Ferri was un-opposed for the position of Vice Chair, and I was un-opposed as the new SPRA Chair.

Following the early retirement from Council of John Whittaker in April 2019, John McMullen was elected to take his place. Only three of the Contractor places were filled during the May/June elections and Tony Ferri of Briggs Amasco Ltd, Brendan McNulty of Delomac Ltd and Steve Shree representing Swift Roofing were confirmed as Council members. A further election was held in Nov 2018 where Carl Pryce of Maincare Roofing Ltd was successfully elected to Council. Finally, due to the early retirement of Steve Shreeve in April 2019, a further election process took place for the vacant Contractor position and Duncan Murdock of NRA Roofing and Flooring was confirmed as Contractor member.

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

The Year Ahead

A new protocol document to provide definitive guidance with respect to wind load calculations will be launched by SPRA in quarter 3, 2019. SPRA will also start work on the latest revision of the Design Guide which will be published in early 2020. In addition to its comprehensive technical library, SPRA can now boast an equally impressive and comprehensive training offer with courses suitable for all levels and experiences. It is now time for SPRA to focus on promotion and delivery of this training in addition to its constant promotion of the SPRA Design Guide and SPRA members.

As mentioned, SPRA will continue to ensure that quality and high standards are maintained whilst responding to changing commercial environments, and therefore a root and branch review of existing criteria and codes of conduct is under review.

SPRA will continue to develop membership services and support members to maximise their benefits, but also to encourage engagement at every opportunity in industry initiatives that are important to the single ply industry. SPRA will increase activity to raise awareness to specifiers, main contractors and clients alike of the benefits of working with an audited, quality business. Over the next twelve months SPRA will deliver more outreach sessions through regional events to support its other promotional activities such as trade shows, newsletters, social media activity and lobbying through industry organisations.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martyn Holloway". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Martyn Holloway

*Chair
Single Ply Roofing Association*