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**Subject:** Open Letter - 12th September 2017  
**Date:** 19 October 2017 11:04  
**To:** [j.barber@collectivearchitecture.co.uk](mailto:j.barber@collectivearchitecture.co.uk)

SH

Dear Jude,

I have been giving some thought to your letter of the 12th of September regarding the RIAS and how it might respond to society's changing needs and demands.

You quite rightly refer to the RIAS being a membership body. It is and requires the participation of the membership in its everyday progress. Some interesting figures for you to consider;

We have 5,211 members,  
2,647 Chartered members and Fellows,  
1,186 Student members,  
168 Associates,  
1,025 Retired members/Fellows,  
170 Honorary Fellows,  
15 Affiliates.

There are 6 committees, the President's Policy Committee and Council, all together there are 88 members volunteering their time to the RIAS on a very regular basis. Of these 48 are on Council 42 of whom are elected by the membership. 22 are local Chapter nominees, 12 are Nationally Elected, 2 are non voting students, 4 RIBA related members. The President, Past President and the Honorary Treasurer are elected by Council.

So as you can see the majority of Council are from those members of the profession who participate at Chapter level or who have enough interest to stand for election. Typically, only about 1% of the membership votes in these elections.

If you and the other listed signatories (a number of whom are not members) are serious about the issues you raise then the route is open to you to become actively involved at Chapter level and volunteer your time to the Incorporation. A number of Chapter seats on Council remain unfilled with only the Aberdeen, Inverness and Stirling Chapters taking up their full allocation of places.

The Strategy Document you refer to was given originally to all Chapters to consider. Only Edinburgh responded. After the debate at June's Council meeting it was agreed to request input from the membership generally through the E-Bulletin and to ask Chapters once again to seek member input. I understand that Chapters are now organising specific meetings to discuss the Strategy and look forward to the responses. To date only a very few individual members have responded.

The quote below is lifted from a recent RIBA presentation which I attended:

*"Each member directly within the sphere of his local society and his immediate interests and indirectly through the elected committees can help to promote the work of the RIBA. These services are required not because the RIBA is an institution with some divine status. It lives and prospers solely because, for one hundred years, the services it has rendered through its members to the profession and community have been proved to be of infinite value. Every individual member has a position of responsibility which can find practical expression. To the member who says "why doesn't the RIBA do this, that and the other?" there is one reply... "Why don't you?"*

The Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, 6th November 1934

Active member involvement can only strengthen the Incorporation and I look forward to seeing more of you volunteering.

It is disappointing that you decline to share the email contacts for the signatories. Given that some are members I can access their contacts and have 'blind copied' them in on this email, but since a number are not members I will have to rely on you to include them.

Best

Stewart

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