



**Final Report for
The Institute of Historic Building
Conservation
and The Institute of Field Archaeologists
On the Consideration of Various Options
Relating to Joint Working**

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PARN

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Executive Summary

This report concludes the work that PARN has completed on the consideration of various options relating to the joint working of the Institute of Historic Building Conservationists and the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The research process was as follows:

1. Stage One (April-August 2006):
 - * Interviews with key personnel;
 - * Interviews with 11 stakeholders;
 - * Analysis of PARN data on accreditation and mergers;
 - * Submission of interim report for consideration.
2. Review Stage (August 2006-February 2007)
3. Stage Two (February-March 2007)
 - * Round table discussion including members of the respective governing bodies and paid staff;
 - * Submission of final report incorporating the interim report.

Interviews during Stage One were structured around 4 options:

1. Full merger;
2. A federation model;
3. A joint service provision model (e.g. for accreditation);
4. Do nothing.

Stakeholder interviewees expressed the following preferences among the four options:

- * 5 of the 11 chose the full merger (3 of which were from an archaeology position);
- * 2 preferred the Federation model;
- * 2 suggested a merger involving bodies other than just IHBC and IFA (both of these came from a conservation position);
- * 2 did not have, or were not able to express, a preference;

Nobody expressed a preference for the 'do nothing' option.

It was clear during the interviews with key personnel and following the round table discussion of Stage Two that none of the four options were appropriate for IHBC and IFA at this time. While there was virtually total support for the merger among IFA volunteers and staff, there was considerable opposition to the idea among IHBC volunteers and staff, at least for the idea in the short term.

Our conclusions are that:

1. *These two institutes are not yet ready to merge for a number of reasons that are discussed in sections of this report.*
2. *They would benefit from establishing a joint committee (a new 5th option) to discuss and deal with issues of joint concern.*

This committee could fulfil a range of purposes, including:

- * Provide a joint voice to government;
- * Produce joint responses to proposed legislation;
- * Aid each institute's understanding of the other;
- * Promote joint working and further partnerships.

3. *IHBC and IFA should consult with their respective memberships before considering more structured joint working.*

1 Introduction and Background to the Research

1.1 The Historic Environment Sector

The historic environment sector is perceived to be fragmented and under threat from legislation and a lack of resources. As well as the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), the field of conservation contains other groups such as the Institute of Conservation (another professional body), and groups based on specialisms as wide ranging as the British Association of Paper Historians and the British Horological Institute. IHBC members can be architects or planners as well as conservation professionals and often belong to an appropriate professional body as well as IHBC. Archaeology tends to divide itself up into interest groups based on period or specialism. Many archaeological groups exist alongside the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) including:

- * The Council of British Archaeology (CBA);
- * The Society of Antiquaries of London;
- * The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO);
- * The Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (CAUM);
- * The Society of Museums Archaeologists;
- * The Subject Committee for Archaeology (SCFA);
- * The Standing Committee for Archaeologists in Continuing Education (SCACE);
- * RESCUE.

There are also two forums for archaeology, the Archaeology Training Forum which is sometimes seen as a subsidiary of IFA and deals with aspects of higher education and vocational training, and the Archaeology Forum which is a lobbying group and has IHBC involvement. These have come together to attempt to address the fragmentation and to build capacity in the sector.

Many of these bodies are voluntarily run with no professional staff so they work at a different speed to the professional Institutes. Some are felt to be less trustworthy in terms of ability to speak on behalf of the sector with regard to appropriate standards and approaches. Some are defensive of their territory.

It is generally understood that this fragmentation, is negative and unsustainable, and that there has been a coming together of archaeologists and conservation professionals. A vision of a united historic environment is one of the drivers beneath the suggestion that IHBC and IFA should work more closely together.

1.2 Drivers for Considering Joint Working Options

IHBC and IFA are currently in a position where they feel that various parties and situations are encouraging them towards closer working. A full merger of the two institutes has been suggested. Some of the conditions which have led to this position are:

1. In England The Heritage Protection Review was begun by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2003. This led to the Government's decision statement on the future of the statutory protections for heritage assets, which proposed changes to the current planning system including a unified register of historic assets, bringing together the separate regimes of listing, scheduling and registering sites and buildings of historic interest. At the time of writing, the White Paper had just been published. This has contributed to the view that the Historic Environment needs a joined up approach to its study and protection, and that a separation of archaeology and conservation is increasingly unsustainable;
2. There is a feeling that English Heritage, in line with this view, favours a merger of the two institutes;
3. English Heritage, Historic Scotland, CADW and DoE (Northern Ireland) are increasingly moving away from a distinction between

archaeology and conservation, both structurally and in their approaches;

4. The report of the All Party Archaeological Group recommends a merger;
5. IHBC and IFA recognise that to secure efficient delivery of charitable objectives and services they must address issues of scale, capacity, policy and legislative changes within their forward planning strategies. In particular it is felt that both IHBC and IFA could benefit in terms of advocacy, efficiency and financial security from working more closely together.

1.3 PARN's Involvement

To survey the spectrum of options available to each institute, IFA and IHBC consider it prudent to consider the strategic impacts of a range of options for enhanced partnership, ranging from continuing the status quo to full merger, and the implications of such strategies on their wider corporate and charitable operations and aspirations.

PARN was enlisted by the two Institutes, funded through English Heritage, to talk to key people at both Institutes and a range of stakeholders in the sector about their preferences, hopes and concerns in relation to various options of convergence. The four options that emerged, and which were discussed with all parties are as follows:

1. Full Merger;
2. Federation Model – a model where the two organisations would remain separate but create an umbrella structure, jointly funded and governed by its own steering group, through which to project a joint historic environment voice and run joint initiatives;
3. Joint Service Provision Venture – this option considered the two institutes setting up a new, separate body through which to provide joint services. The example that was used to generate discussion in the interviews was that of setting up an accreditation body – a model where a new, separate, body (perhaps 'The Society for the Historic

Environment') is created to focus primarily on developing and running an accreditation scheme for the historic environment, with an ultimate goal of achieving Chartered status. PARN felt from the discussions it had with the stakeholders that accreditation was a key issue for the sector, and while their comments are focused on the idea of an accreditation body, they also give insight into responses to a separate body for joint service provision. Other joint ventures might include shared publications or events, or standards body;

4. Do nothing – that is, do nothing structural but continue to develop the relationship between the two Institutes.

This report outlines the issues as PARN sees them, and aims to provide a picture of the range of views on this subject across the historic environment sector. We have also used our unique position as a cross-professional network for professional associations to inform and add detail to some of the issues discussed below. PARN is keen that the two institutes have ownership of the discussion process and aimed to support considerations of the best way forward through input into, and guidance during, the round table discussion in Stage Two of the research (see 7.3). This report offers a view of the situation at the time that the research was carried out, and the hopes and fears expressed by both institutes and a selection of stakeholders with regard to various levels of joint working. It also offers extra benchmarking information in the shape of a case study from a merged professional body along with analysis of a benchmarking exercise which elicited experience of mergers from across the professional body sector. This report also provides a summary of responses to a benchmarking exercise which focused on professional associations' experiences of accreditation schemes (see Section 2 for details of the research process). This cross-professional information shapes PARN's understanding and knowledge of professional bodies, and has informed our contribution to the research activities. Section 6 focuses on the final stage of the research, including the round table discussion, and PARN makes recommendations on ways forward for the institutes in Section 7. Section 8 makes observations on the role and mechanisms of accreditation.

2 The Research Process

The research process involves:

- a. Stage One: a primary stage of scoping of the key issues;
- b. Review Stage;
- c. Stage Two: a round table discussion with both Institutes, and a final report and presentation.

Stage 1 included:

- a) A period of desk research in order to compile a comprehensive picture of both IFA and IHBC via their web sites, their responses to the new PARN Professionalisation Survey, and materials provided by the Institutes. This has enabled a comparison of the two organisations in terms of structure, governance, members, services, progress with/discussions on accreditation etc.;
- b) A set of in depth individual interviews with Peter Hinton plus the Chair at IFA and with Sean O'Reilly plus the Chair and other IHBC Officers to investigate the perceived pros and cons of the four options described in 1, taking into account concerns, points of conflict and potential solutions;
- c) A telephone survey of 11 other stakeholders as selected by IFA and IHBC to investigate their concerns and issues with regard to the range of options. A list of those we have spoken to is detailed in Section 4;
- d) Further analysis of a previous PARN Members' Enquiry¹ on the subject of mergers;
- e) Circulation of a new PARN Member's Enquiry to PARN membership on the subject of accreditation.

¹ PARN Members' Enquiries are queries posed by individual PARN members and distributed to all PARN members as a method of benchmarking on a range of topics relevant to professional associations

3. Comparison of the Two Institutes

The following information on the history, mission and strategy, governance, staffing, structure, membership, services, CPD, ethics and standards, finance and external relations of the two organisations was collated from the institutes' websites, the materials they provided to PARN for information and the responses they gave to PARN's recent survey entitled 'The Professionalisation of Professional Associations 2006'. This survey was sent to over 300 professional bodies in the UK and asked questions about governance, operations, membership, CPD, ethics and standards, and external relations.

3.1 History

IHBC describes itself as 'the professional institute which represents conservation professionals in the public and private sectors in the United Kingdom and Ireland'. It has its roots in the Association for Conservation Officers (ACO), the body for Local Authority Conservation Officers. In 1997 it became an Institute.

IFA was created in 1982, following from the Association for the Promotion of an Institute of Field Archaeologists (APIFA), which was launched in 1979 to canvass opinion on the form the Institute would take. Its website says it is 'the professional organisation for archaeologists in the United Kingdom'.

Neither organisation has a Royal Charter, and only IHBC has Charitable Status.

3.2 Mission/Objectives/Strategy

IHBC's mission, as stated on its website, is 'to establish the highest standards of conservation practice to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment'.

IFA's mission statement: 'The IFA exists to advance the practice of archaeology and allied disciplines by promoting professional standards and

ethics for conserving, managing, understanding and promoting enjoyment of heritage’.

To compare, both missions express a commitment to standards of practice. IHBC is concerned with protection and enhancement, while IFA mentions conservation, management, understanding and promotion of enjoyment. IHBC talk about the historic environment where IFA refer to heritage, though the distinction is not relevant in this context.

IHBC’s objectives are to promote for the benefit of the public:

- * The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment in the UK;
- * The highest standard of professional skills in the field;
- * The education and training of professionals and specialists responsible for such work.

IFA’s objectives are to:

- * Influence and inform actively through consultation with the legislature, public bodies and others, on matters relating to archaeology;
- * Promote an active professional organisation, involving and offering appropriate services to its membership;
- * Develop proper professional guidelines and standards for the execution of archaeological work, and to establish these guidelines and standards by promoting membership of the Institute to all those practising field archaeology;
- * Promote the training of archaeologists in cooperation with other bodies and to encourage and monitor the provision of archaeological courses in education;
- * Facilitate the exchange of information and ideas about archaeological practice and to communicate these to the profession and more widely.

Again, to compare, both institutes state a concern with professional standards and training to practice. IFA refers to informing and influencing outside of the

organisation on behalf of the subject and the profession, while IHBC's objectives are shaped to benefit the public.

The two organisations are at different stages of strategic development. IFA is working to its current ten-year Strategic Plan and shorter-term Business Plan, which link the IFA's objectives with associated strategies, actions and targets. They also have a Financial Plan incorporating budgets and risk assessments, and a publications strategy. This research project included a 'Review Stage' which enabled the research to take a break while IHBC worked on their new business plan in order to be better placed to participate in the round table discussion which commences Stage 2.

3.3 Governance

Both organisations have a single body governance structure, and that governing body is a Council. Both Councils are of a similar size with IHBC's consisting of 21 people and IFA's having 25. All who sit on both Councils are directors who have full voting rights. Neither Council includes lay people or representatives of external stakeholders. Neither IHBC's or IFA's Council includes members of staff. Both Councils meet 4 times a year.

For IFA, 21 of the 25 people on the Council are elected by all-member votes, and 4 are appointed by the organisation to address imbalances, usually with regard to UK countries or professional roles. At IHBC (which is currently considering a re-structuring that will slightly modify the balance of members) 8 of the 21 people on the Council are elected by all-member votes, and 12 are by defined constituencies (branches).

Both Councils are supported by committees. IHBC, under its current operational structures, has 5 permanent committees which oversee its operations and advise the strategic decision-making processes inside council:

- * Finance & Resources;
- * Membership & Ethics;
- * Education, Training & Standards;
- * Policy;
- * Communications & Outreach.

IFA has 8:

- * Executive;
- * Validation;
- * Membership Appeals;
- * Working Practices in Archaeology;
- * Registered Archaeological Organisations;
- * Professional Training;
- * Editorial Board;
- * Conference.

IHBC has a separate Chair, whose term of office is for 1 year which can be held for a maximum of 3 years, and a President whose term of office has no restrictions. IFA has a combined role whose term of office is three years, of which two consecutive terms is the maximum allowed.

3.4 Staffing

As of January 2007, IHBC has 3 full time members of staff - the Director, a full time Projects Officer, and a full time Membership Services Officer. Another half-time post for administrative support is outsourced to a services company, making a total staff of 3.5 FTE. In comparison, IFA has 6 full time members of staff, which comprise the Chief Executive, Head of Professional Development, Training and Standards Coordinator, Head of Administration, Membership Administrator, and Administrative Assistant with responsibility for membership. An Editor (responsible for IFA's publications), a Recruitment and Marketing Coordinator, Finance and Administrative Assistant, Workplace Bursary Coordinator, the Jobs Information Service Compiler and the Membership Administrator make up 3.5 FTE posts which gives a total staff of 9.5 FTE. IFA have developed a staff handbook and contracts of employment.

3.5 Structure

IHBC is organised into 14 geographical branches which include:

10 English regions -

- * North
- * North West
- * Yorkshire
- * East Anglia
- * West Midlands
- * East Midlands
- * London
- * South
- * South West
- * South East

3 UK countries –

- * Wales
- * Northern Ireland
- * Scotland

2 international –

- * Republic of Ireland (currently under review)
- * International (covering all other areas)

The main branches have a budget allocation which can be drawn on, supported by a business plan which is agreed by Council. Members are placed in a branch upon application. Branches are key drivers in delivering services locally for the membership, in particular educational and training events.

Meanwhile, IFA has only three 'area groups' – Scotland, Wales and West Midlands – alongside five special interest groups:

1. Buildings Archaeology
2. Diggers Forum
3. Finds
4. Maritime Affairs
5. Illustration and Survey

Members may join both an area group and a special interest group. All groups report to Council through the Honorary Group Affairs Officer. Groups are funded annually with a sum decided by Council, on the recommendation of the Honorary Group Affairs Officer and the Honorary Treasurer. The 'Group Fund' is not divided equally between groups.

3.6 Membership

At the time of writing, IHBC has 1564 individual members while IFA has 2373. The majority of members of both Institutes are based in the UK.

IHBC membership is divided into full membership, affiliate membership and associate membership. There are also concessionary rates for those in part-time employment, on low wages, retired, or studying. IFA membership is divided into: practitioner (PIFA), associate (AIFA), member (MIFA), affiliate, student and honorary member.

Both institutes follow rigorous assessment of applicants' competence before granting membership. IHBC has eight areas of competence that must be demonstrated by any applicant for Full Membership, as well as endorsed by referees and Branches. The areas of competence are:

- 1 Philosophy;
- 2 Legislation/Policy;
- 3 Technology;
- 4 History;
- 5 Finance/Economics;
- 6 Research/Recording/Analysis;
- 7 Design/Presentation;
- 8 Practice.

IFA membership application is assessed by appropriate qualification, competence, level and length of experience, demonstrated via CVs, portfolio of work and referee's report. NVQs in archaeological practice have been approved by QCA and are being built into membership entry routes.

IFA also has 55 organisation members who are placed on the IFA Register of Archaeological Organisations, must be led by a member of IFA and undergo rigorous peer scrutiny of the quality of their work. IHBC has a form of associate membership called libraries but has no members in this category at present.

IHBC members include conservation officers in central and local government, architects, architectural historians and researchers, planners, surveyors, structural engineers, academics, and craftspeople. Two thirds of IHBC members are also members of other professional bodies including the Royal Town Planning Institute (33% of IHBC members), and the Royal Institute of British Architects (23%) in particular. Only 3% are also members of an archaeological body. Only Full members of IHBC are entitled to use IHBC nominals as a sign of professional competence. IFA members are practising archaeologists in all fields, both professional and amateur, and are entitled to use nominals to indicate their membership of IFA. A number of IFA members are also members of another professional body including RIBA, RICS and IHBC. IFA estimate that they have approximately one third of all potential members in the UK, but IHBC have not formally estimated this.

Practitioners in the field of the historic environment are not required to be members of either institute in order to practice. IFA in particular is looking at ways to encourage membership as a requirement to practice.

IHBC members pay £80 per annum (other than the concessions, currently from £16) whilst IFA subscriptions are dependent on income. The fees range from £16.50 for students up to £202 for the highest earners. The average works out at £90, but the range is vast so this figure may not be useful.

3.7 Services

IHBC services include (in addition to those supplied by the branch network), 'Context' magazine, which is published in five issues, roughly bi-monthly from March to December, and in January a Yearbook. A local government forum (currently under re-development) is available to members via the website, as well as a discussion forum, and open advisory services.

IFA offer a range of services including quarterly copies of 'The Archaeologist' magazine, reduced rates at the Annual Conference which attracts 300-500 delegates each year, papers on specialist professional topics, standards and guidance leaflets and papers, Annual Yearbook and directory, 30 minutes free legal advice, an arbitration scheme and a Jobs Information Service which is charged to be issued free to members, along with 'Heritage Link Update' e-bulletin, from 1st April 2007. Additionally, IFA members are entitled to a range of discounts with other providers of services such as professional indemnity insurance, health insurance, mobile phones and publications.

3.8 CPD

IHBC's CPD scheme has been compulsory since 2005, and requires its members to undertake a minimum of fifty hours of relevant professional development over a rolling two-year period. Participation is not monitored or formally measured as yet, although assessment procedures are being planned when the first two-year period ends in 2007.

IFA's CPD scheme is currently obligatory and recommends undertaking at least 50 hours of CPD over a two-year period. It is based on a personal development plan (PDP) and a CPD log. IFA are hoping to make CPD compulsory in the near future.

3.9 Ethics & Standards

Members of both IHBC and IFA are expected to subscribe to their respective Institute's Code of Conduct, identifying them as possessing specific standards of competence, responsibility and ethical behaviour. IHBC has also developed common standards for conservation work, and is developing a set of occupational standards describing what can and should be delivered in providing a service. There is also a set of guidance leaflets available on the website. IFA also has a code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology, and a set of standards and guidance for: desk-based assessment; field evaluation; excavation; watching brief; building investigation and recording; collection, documentation

conservation and research of archaeological materials. The two institutes, with ALGAO, are working together on preparing a common standard for stewardship.

Both conservation and archaeology are self-regulated professions. Both Institutes have a formalised disciplinary procedure to deal with members against which there has been a complaint, which involve a range of penalties including suspending membership.

3.10 Finance

IHBC's total worldwide operating income in 2004/5 was £246,449. IFA's was £494,932. Both obtain approximately 35% of their income from membership subscriptions. IFA also earns income from registration fees, training provision, publications, advertising and projects. IHBC also has other sources of income.

Both Institutes believe themselves to be financially sustainable in the short term, but feel that growth might be difficult without structural change and collaboration.

3.11 External Relations

Both Institutes seek to influence the legislation under which their professions operate in the UK, although neither have a formal parliamentary lobbying mechanism in place. There exists an All-Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group of approximately 140 peers and MPs.

4. Reflection on the Interviews

In-depth, face-to-face, three-hour interviews were conducted with both IFA and IHBC. The IFA interview involved the Chief Executive and the Chair, whilst the IHBC interview involved the Director and seven other key officers including the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Telephone interviews were conducted with the following stakeholders, as identified by IHBC and IFA, in no particular order:

1. Rob Cowan, Director, Urban Design Group;
2. Mike Heyworth, Director, Council for British Archaeology;
3. Stewart Bryant, Chair, Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers;
4. Nathan Blanchard, Senior Associate, The Conservation Studio;
5. John Fidler, (former) Director of Conservation, English Heritage;
6. Malcolm Cooper, Chief Inspector, Historic Scotland;
7. David Hargreaves, Fellow, Chartered Institute of Building;
8. Alastair McCapra, Chief Executive, the Institute of Conservation;
9. Miles Oglethorpe, Operational Manager for Architectural, Archaeological and Maritime Heritage, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland;
10. Adrian Olivier, Strategy Director, English Heritage;
11. Lizzie West, Senior Archaeology Policy Advisor, Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Some interviewees found it difficult to respond on behalf of their organisation, and gave their personal opinion. Others asked that their comments were not attributed to them or their organisation. The government representative was not able to speak on behalf of the government with regard to the four options. Both Institutes were promised anonymity. The comments and opinions detailed in this and the next section are therefore not attributed to either an individual or organisation. It should be noted that many of the comments and perceptions are those of stakeholders and do not represent the views of the institutes.

At the end of each stakeholder interview, the interviewee was asked for their preference among the four options:

- * 5 of the 11 chose the full merger (3 of which were from an archaeology position);
 - * 2 preferred the Federation model;
 - * 2 suggested a merger involving bodies other than just IHBC and IFA (both of these came from a conservation position);
 - * 2 did not have, or were not able to express, a preference;
- Nobody expressed a preference for the 'do nothing' option.

4.1 Divergence of Opinion

With regard to the telephone calls with stakeholders, there was a wide divergence of opinion and in some cases, very strong opinions either for or against the merger. For some it is most definitely the only way to go, and for others it would be a terrible mistake. Very broadly, the conservation professionals interviewed were more negative about the merger than the archaeologists. As to differences between those speaking for a public versus private body, the representatives of public bodies were slightly more positive towards a merger as might be expected seeing as it is the changes to planning processes that appear to be driving the merger idea. Those speaking on behalf of the private sector were more likely to be ambivalent about the whole thing. However, we did not interview equal numbers of public (6 out of 11) and private (3) representatives (with 1 being neither, and 1 being the Department of Culture, Media and Sport).

4.2 Fundamental Differences in the Conception of the Historic Environment

Those who were in favour of a merger tend to give the potential new English Heritage legislation and local authority planning guidelines as a reason for why the sector needs to be more joined up and therefore needs a joined up professional body. These people believe that the fragmentation of the sector is a weakness, and that division of the two sub-sectors is false and increasingly outdated. One interviewee conceptualised both conservation and archaeology as something that is done to the historic environment –

conservation conserves and archaeology investigates. These people see a need for a shared approach to the historic environment, and see the current divisions as false and outdated.

Conversely, those who are vehemently against the merger believe the very opposite – that attempts to join the sector are driven by a false idea of compatibility. These people describe fundamentally different approaches in archaeology and conservation. One claimed that archaeology is concerned with things that don't exist any more and collects fragments of information which are all deemed equally valuable while conservators have to select what is valuable from a wealth of information. Another distinction articulated was that archaeology is a discipline while conservation is a field, with another agreeing that archaeology is one discipline with many specialisms whilst conservation is multi-disciplinary. These people believe that the historic environment needs different approaches and different professional bodies. One conservator described it thus:

“Archaeologists are powerful – it’s the romance of the unknown. Building conservation is not so romantic, especially if it’s a warehouse. The conservation of a warehouse must be seen from the perspectives of design, architecture, and recycling. Not archaeology. Archaeology is inadequate here.”

There is also a belief here that archaeologists and conservation professionals are very different types of people. Archaeologists are seen as forward thinking, with transferable skills, and a tendency towards management, whereas conservators are seen as focused on the smallest detail, with very specialised skills. One respondent referred to this difference in terms of convergent thinkers (archaeologists) versus divergent thinkers (conservation professionals). Convergent thinkers bring material from a variety of sources to bear on a problem and tend to have a scientific approach. Divergent thinkers use a creative elaboration of ideas and tend to be found in the arts and humanities. Another interviewee commented that conservators are ‘fixers’ who are focused on the outcome, whilst archaeologists are concerned with the process of getting there.

These fundamental differences in opinion make it difficult to see overall patterns or tendencies, and may make it hard to persuade one camp of the benefits of the other's preferences.

4.3 Relationships with Local Government

While not all archaeologists and conservators work within local authorities, both organisations have members who do. According to the PARN survey² 50-74% of IHBC members work in the public sector compared to 25-49% of IFA members. The figures are reversed for members who work in a direct relationship with clients on a fee-paying basis.

Typically, archaeological officers are based in local authorities at County Council level while conservation officers are based in District Councils. This has led to a tradition of tension between the two. IHBC was born from ACO, which was a body for local authority conservation officers. There is a perception that IHBC is for local government conservators but in fact only 52% of their members are local government conservation officers. Nevertheless, all of the members of the Council that attended the interview in Plymouth were employed in local government except the Director and two EH inspectors. In contrast, the Chair of IFA that we spoke to was from the private sector. So IHBC has a significant local authority conservation bias and representation. IFA has members who work in local authority but does not have a formal locus for local authority representation. ALGAO represents local authority archaeological officers so this role is separate from IFA, which is seen to miss out on this connection. A relationship with local authorities is deemed very important.

There was disagreement over the inevitability of a joint planning process. Some see this as a given, others are more wary. It was claimed that there is a misunderstanding at the senior levels of English Heritage about the relationships that archaeologists and conservators have in relation to the planning system, and that their holistic conception of the historic environment is not how people work on the ground. Some point out that not all

² The PARN Professionalisation of Professional Associations 2006 Survey

archaeologists and conservators work under the local authority planning system anyway.

5 Consideration of the Four Options

This section outlines the discussion of the four options described in 1.3 that took place with both IFA and IHBC and the 11 stakeholders. Interviewees were asked to consider the positives and negatives of each option, and this is how the options are structured below.

5.1 Full Merger

This option considered a full merger of the two Institutes with the joining of all aspects of the organisation and the formation of a new, single institute with a new identity as the professional body for the historic environment. Those in favour saw a full merger as beneficial to the sector. At one extreme, it was deemed essential. At the other, a disaster. There were a range of reasons expressed as to why a full merger was a bad idea.

Four interviewees felt that merging with other bodies was a better solution. One suggested that IFA should merge with ALGAO, and IHBC should merge with RTPI. Another suggested that IHBC was better suited to a merger with ICON. Another thought was that IHBC and IFA should include ICON in their merger and one respondent felt that the two Institutes should be ambitious and merge with other bodies too – *“...don’t stop at two institutes. RIBA has lots of different specialisms under one roof – the historic environment is the same and should have a professional body like RIBA.”*

However, even those in favour of a full merger often qualified this with a suggestion that this should be aimed for in the longer term – *“It would be damaging to force the agenda now, but things are likely to end up there.”* Other comments include *“Don’t rush it.”* and *“The merger is a massive challenge. There are two different cultures and approaches, resistance must be overcome. Other options might be more practical in the shorter term.”*

It was suggested that there would need to be a public understanding of what is happening, and that the way the merger is ‘packaged’ is important.

5.1.1 Positive Comments from the Interviews

- * It would produce one point of contact for issues of professionalism and standards which would be valuable for other bodies in the sector;
- * The sector would be less fragmented;
- * The two Institutes need to align their approaches – a single institute would enable an integrated and consistent approach and the application of the same thinking and standards across the sector;
- * A stronger voice on behalf of the sector so that politically the new institute would be stronger with a higher profile;
- * IFA have a large staff which IHBC could benefit from;
- * Better deals could be made for benefits arrangements;
- * There would be an opportunity to establish a new and more effective governance structure;
- * Could be a multi-faculty Institute of the Historic Environment;
- * IFA members are widespread, including academics and policy makers who have a broader range of influence – people know who archaeologists are so the new institute would have better political clout;
- * Savings on backroom functions – economies of scale;
- * The government and English Heritage are perceived to be in favour and this could lead to greater influence over policy;
- * Cross-fertilisation of ideas;
- * The world is moving towards an integration of the historic environment;
- * The Heritage Protection Review seeks to have a single register so it makes sense to have a joint profession – the government is moving this way so the Institutes will have to follow;

- * The heritage bodies are moving towards multi-disciplinary teams in terms of generalists with specialisms who understand the whole historic environment so it makes sense to have a single professional body which mirrors this;
- * Archaeologists are moving into new areas which is positive but they need to join a rounder field of work, study and influence;
- * The government is eroding the historic environment and it needs to be protected – a powerful professional institute with a big membership is needed to influence politicians.

5.1.2 Negative Comments from the Interviews

- * The new institute would not be able to give coherent advice given the conflict between private conservators and local authority conservation officers;
- * IHBC members are against a merger and will leave if they feel archaeology is taking over;
- * English Heritage are driving this idea and their top people are archaeologists;
- * Archaeology will swamp conservation as it is naturally predatory and dominant;
- * If the merger is unbalanced the properties of one of the Institutes will be lost;
- * IHBC's Council is adverse to change and slow at decision-making – this would be bad in a new institute;
- * Conservation will lose its identity in association with archaeology, which will result in a dilution of the perception of the range of skills in the conservation sector. The conservation officer embodies a whole range of skills and it is vital not to lose this richness;
- * Conservation needs to link to the wider built environment rather than archaeology;

- * A sense of belonging to a ‘family’ would be lost;
- * Job instability for staff at both institutes;
- * Might be perceived as a powerful threat by other organisations in the sector;
- * There is a misunderstanding at the senior levels of English Heritage about the different relationships of conservators and archaeologists in relation to the planning system so this holistic conception of the historic environment is unrealistic;
- * Archaeology and conservation cannot be treated as a single profession – a merger would result in a hybrid body rather than an inclusive one;
- * The interests of archaeologists and conservators are different;
- * IHBC members are already often also members of other professional bodies which IHBC cannot compete with – a merger would only dilute their strengths;
- * Archaeology and conservation require different approaches.

5.1.3 Advice from the Literature on Mergers

A comprehensive review of literature on mergers, along with recommendations, is outside of the scope of this research. However, we can make a few observations.

The literature on mergers tends to come from the corporate sector where advice is to “merge people not companies”. Dr Jørgen Thorsell of the Danish Leadership Institute claims that:

“Most mergers fail in the integration phase. They fail during the period where each and everybody in the two organisations should work together... The day we can deal effectively with the people issues, from the start throughout the merger process, we shall be considerably more successful in merging organisations.” (see www.dieu.com).

In this literature the ‘people’ under discussion are staff. Member organisations such as professional bodies not only have staff to worry about, but also, their *raison d’être*, their membership. Even if all staff and volunteers are happy with the merge, it could still fail if members are unhappy and leave.

This was picked up in the interviews. People are seen as a vital part of the process of merging – *“It is crucial to get the process right and take people with you.”* It was emphasised that a full merger would be a painful process with regard to both practical issues and persuading the members of both Institutes of the benefits – *“There are elements of the memberships on both sides who will be against a merger, there is a danger of bickering and losing members.”* Others claimed *“The framework needs to be supported by both memberships... it is crucial that members are involved in the process, not just the Councils.”*

The literature in the voluntary or third sector field is small, and we are not aware of anything that specifically analyses professional association mergers, other than brief historical accounts on organisations’ websites which do not explore the problems encountered. A paper written by researchers at the Association for Chief Executives in Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) focused on the role of the Chief Executive in five mergers of voluntary organisations. They caution that organisations in the third sector, especially charities, are sometimes encouraged towards mergers as a way of pooling resources *“...despite accumulating evidence that corporate mergers deliver fewer benefits than expected.”*³

5.1.4 PARN Members’ Enquiry on Mergers

In 2005, PARN ran a Members’ Enquiry on mergers as a way of benchmarking experience among professional associations. Twenty three organisations responded, thirteen of which had been involved in mergers, although for some this was an historical event. A summary of the responses received follows.

³ Harrow, J & Cripps, A (2004) ‘Merging under pressure: chief executives’ and organisations’ learning from merger processes, events and outcomes’, <http://www.istr.org/conferences/toronto/workingpapers/harrow.jenny.pdf>.

Enquiry

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of professional bodies that have merged, or been involved in either successful or unsuccessful merger negotiations.

PARN was interested to know to what extent this has been an issue for PARN members.

In particular, PARN asked:

- 1) Have you been involved in merger negotiations?
- 2) What was the reason behind considering a merger?
- 3) How did the negotiations conclude?
- 4) Was it considered a success or a failure?
- 5) What factors do you think contributed to its success or failure?

Respondents (23)

Association of International Accountants
Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport UK
Chartered Institute of Patent Agents
Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply
College of Occupational Therapists
Energy Institute
General Osteopathic Council
General Teaching Council for England
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
Institute of Field Archaeologists
Institute of Healthcare Management
Institute of Legal Executives
Institution of Occupational Safety & Health
Institution of Structural Engineers
Irish Auctioneers and Valuers Institute
Law Society of England and Wales
Market Research Society
Personal Finance Society
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Radiologists
The Organisation for Professionals in Regulatory Affairs
The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists

Results

1) Have you been involved in merger negotiations?

From the 23 respondents, 13 had been involved in mergers. Four respondents commented that this was some years ago.

2) What was the reason behind considering a merger?

The main reasons given for considering mergers can be broadly categorised as:

- Regulatory and legislative changes making mergers more attractive

- To improve offer of member services
- Pressure from internal and external stakeholders
- Nature of the sector
- Overlapping aims and activities
- Hold a stronger position in terms of membership, profile, lobbying, media, and finances

One respondent also commented that one body in their merger negotiations had a charter, which was appealing for some. One respondent commented that having one voice and one focal point rather than two, would benefit their dealings with external agencies and the media. Another respondent noted that the merger provided better organisation for qualifications and standard setting. One respondent commented that their issues were becoming more globalised which therefore led to merger considerations.

3) How did the negotiations conclude?

Six organisations merged following negotiations.

Four respondents had been involved in merger discussions more than once. One respondent organisation had been involved in the collapse of 2 merger negotiations in the past, but due to new regulatory changes is considering increasing collaboration.

One respondent organisation had unsuccessful negotiations on one occasion but had successfully merged on the second.

For one organisation, 2 sets of negotiations have not led to mergers, although one may still.

In the case of 2 respondents, merger negotiations have been mooted but not rejected. One respondent added that this has led to a closer strategic partnership involving joint working on projects and working informally to align procedures and practices in order to avoid top-down pressure on the 2 institutes.

4) Was it considered a success or a failure?

Eight respondents commented on this. Six respondent organisations that merged considered the merger a success. Two respondents commented that it was still in the balance and too early to comment.

5) What factors do you think contributed to its success or failure?

Eight respondents commented on factors, all in relation to positive outcomes of negotiations.

Several respondents commented that the personalities, and the will to make it work, of staff of both institutes were factors for success, highlighting the importance of being open, showing determination, and a good sense of humour in the face of setbacks. One respondent commented: "The merger had been tried at least 5 times before, without success in the initial discussions. It needed a number of people well established in the right places at the right time with a similar viewpoint to make it happen."

Respondents also noted the importance of keeping members well-informed and taking on board the views of stakeholder groups. One respondent commented that grass-roots members need to be listened to, as their votes are crucial. One

respondent highlighted the importance of a clear and comprehensive communications plan, both internally and externally, which is “essential for getting the first ‘yes’ vote”. The respondent adds that it needs to continue long after the merger has taken place as the issues raised by the merger “will take a lot longer to settle down than you imagine especially tackling the required culture change and its management.”

Respondents pointed out that a common vision between the two bodies is needed, with one respondent adding that organisational requirements, such as for Company House, need to be agreed on.

One respondent noted that the decision to proceed with the merger was made by the most directly affected groups (not by a small group of trustees or staff) and adds that it was carried through quickly (9 months from the 'yes' vote to creation and part consolidation), which were factors in its success.

5.1.5 ICON Case Study

PARN interviewed Alastair McCapra, Chief Executive of the Institute of Conservation (ICON), on the subject of the Institute’s creation as a result of a recent merger, in order to provide extra information and advice for IHBC and IFA in consideration of a full merger.

ICON is the professional body for conservators and restorers of historic objects and buildings, with over 3000 members. It is the result of a merger that took place in 2005 of five bodies, with a sixth joining in 2006:

- * The Care of Collections Forum;
- * The Institute of Paper Conservation;
- * The Photographic Materials Conservation Group;
- * The Scottish Society for Conservation and Restoration;
- * The United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works;
- * The Institute of Conservation Science.

Chief Executive Alastair McCapra describes the reasons for the merger as threefold:

1. To relieve the burden of 6 separate costs for staff and administration;
2. A need for a united conservation profession to raise its game in the political arena and have a stronger voice;
3. To encourage a development in the profession from a ‘treatment-based’ to an ‘ethics-based’ attitude in which different specialisms within conservation are united through an approach and set of values rather than defined through the peculiarities of different types of objects.

Convergence was advanced through the National Council for Conservation-Restoration, which was established for the purpose of guiding the merger, and was disbanded following the creation of ICON.

Alastair was appointed at the tail end of the merger, and has spent the last year knitting together the member and financial bases as well as taking the Institute forward in raising the profile of the profession in society. The Chief Executive does

not have a background in conservation, and was deliberately appointed so as to bring a different set of skills to the role, with relation to strategy and planning.

The merger is considered to have been successful. The criteria used to measure such a success were based on a financial model of integration which has been achieved, a target number of lost and gained members and the fact that ICON was called on by the House of Lords Committee on Science and Technology to give evidence and speak on behalf of its members in a relevant matter which is felt to show a new level of visibility and respect.

Anecdotally, the merger has resulted in a dynamic, responsive and flexible organisation, which has shed some of its predecessors' 'inward-looking' attitudes and brought forward enthusiastic and forward-thinking people.

On the flip side, some have felt the loss of belonging to a small community of well-known and trusted people.

No conflict was reported between the different groups involved in the merger. Alastair credited this to the fact that the ground had been well-prepared and that everyone had a chance to voice their concerns well in advance so that issues could be resolved early on. The different cultures have remained by way of different groups within ICON, such as groups for stained glass or historic interiors, so that sub-identities have not been shattered or assimilated but rather an overlying culture now unites them.

The major difficulty of the merger was initially persuading all of the members of the different organisations that the merger was necessary and relevant. This was a big political job. Another key complication was the complexity of merging all of the finances – with Alastair having to grapple with 21 different bank accounts!

What turned out to be surprisingly easy was the branding exercise, which was expensive but externally funded. When the website went live, everyone was thrilled and the expected complaints didn't materialise.

Alastair's advice for other organisations contemplating a merger is to take it slowly. It is the small things that matter to members, and they will judge their satisfaction with a new organisation not on strategic things, but on whether or not they still receive a newsletter.

5.2 Federation

The second option discussed was labelled the 'Federation' model. This envisioned that the two organisations would remain separate but create an umbrella structure, jointly funded and governed by its own steering group, through which to project a joint historic environment voice and run joint initiatives. Comments from the stakeholder interviews were less weighty here, and opinions less forceful, perhaps because the federation model was less easy to imagine than a full merger, or because this idea was still fledgling and not detailed. However, whilst two interviewees stated that this option was their

preference, four claimed that a federation would only work if it was a first step on the way to a full merger and not a final solution.

5.2.1 Positive Comments from the Interviews

- * This is not so different from the present situation;
- * No upheaval;
- * This would work in the short term as a move towards a full merger;
- * This idea should be opened up to include other organisations in the sector, not just IHBC and IFA;
- * Collaboration is positive;
- * Policies could be integrated;
- * This would help networking in the sector;
- * This would present a joint voice to government and it is only government who has a problem with the institutes being separate;
- * Representation of historic environment professionals would be useful;
- * Keeping the Institutes separate along with their identities would overcome members' concerns;
- * The local authority level needs a power base from which to fight against cynicism and this would offer a more coherent approach to heritage.

5.2.2 Negative Comments from the Interviews

- * It could be confusing if the federation had a different voice to IFA or IHBC independently – where would we connect? At what level?;
- * There could be a duplication of committees;
- * Could lead to complacency;

- * This is not effective as a last step as it is a veneer covering two separate institutes;
- * How would it be funded? What proportion would come from each Institute?;
- * How would it be Chaired? There would need to be a balance in order to ensure that both groups are represented;
- * There is no need for it - it is unlikely that the two institutes would want to comment on the same consultation documents from local government;
- * This is a fudge – why bother?
- * If there are still two separate organisations they won't be forced to tackle the big issues;
- * This wouldn't have the same weight or power as a merged institute;
- * The two institutes on their own are not strong enough for this – they would need to involve all the other professional bodies in the sector and RICS would not join in;
- * This would increase committee voting and decision-making would get even slower;
- * The two cultures would clash;
- * Fear that archaeology would swamp conservation;
- * From a recording perspective this would threaten the extant built environment;
- * This emphasises the differences and does not move integration forwards.

5.3 Joint Service Provision Venture e.g. Accreditation Body

Accreditation appears to be a key issue for the sector. At present anyone can call themselves an archaeologist or a conservator and practice without any restrictions. This is felt to be unacceptable, and both institutes recognise

benefits in a situation where some kind of control over standards – such as an accreditation scheme – is required to practice in the historic environment. This throws up questions for amateur practice, and many in the sector (including the IFA) are concerned that any new accreditation scheme takes into account the vast number of amateur and voluntary practitioners in archaeology. The government warns that any common accreditation scheme cannot be an exclusive model as IFA and IHBC do not yet represent the whole sector and suggests that a range of organisations would need to be involved for it to work.

The stakeholder interviews revealed confusion over the use of the term ‘accreditation’. Some used it to talk about accrediting people, some to refer to accrediting qualifications. Some saw accreditation as a secondary process, which followed from one’s first profession – for example, an architect who is then accredited as an historical building conservator. Some discussed degree or masters courses to be designed and accredited by the professional bodies. In discussions with IFA, accreditation was understood as *“...the end product of a process of assessment that demonstrates that someone has the capability to undertake specific tasks or roles.”*

However, it was generally agreed that membership of IFA or IHBC was already, in itself, a form of accreditation which was widely recognised in the sector. In fact, in the preface to IFA’s 2006 Yearbook, David Lammy, Minister for Culture, writes:

“DCMS sees IFA membership and registration as an indication of quality and a commitment to ethical practice.” An issue for the sector is how to encourage those who require or authorise archaeological and conservation work to demand that practitioners deliver a proper quality of service, a quality that should be represented by organisational or individual accreditation (for the latter in some cases their membership of the relevant institute).

This third option offered to interviewees for consideration attempted to elicit their feelings on IFA and IHBC operating a joint service provision venture, focusing on a joint accreditation scheme. This model could involve the creation of a new, separate, body (perhaps ‘The Society for the Historic Environment’) to focus primarily on developing and running an accreditation

scheme for the historic environment, with an ultimate goal of achieving Chartered status.

5.3.1 The Current Situation

The historic environment is seen by some to need greater public involvement in activities of investigation, documentation, interpretation etc. The profession has become more 'professional' in terms of ethical behaviour as well as a shift from unpaid to paid work. Heritage assets require protection to ensure they are managed in accordance with standards by ethical and competent practitioners. 'Professional' here is not about being paid for work but about adhering to a code of professional practice. Discussions on future plans for accreditation in the sector are not intended to inhibit amateurs but enable all practitioners to demonstrate ethics and abilities.

The historic environment sector is seen to need an accreditation scheme due to:

- International conventions and national guidance obligations;
- A need to provide more effective services and outlaw poor standards of work;
- Standards and training initiatives in government and agency plans and policies;
- A lack of commitment to training and CPD;
- Underdeveloped career structures and opportunities to progress.

The European Valletta Convention says that states must ensure that archaeological work is done by qualified/authorised people. This is not the case at present in the UK. English Heritage is charged with the implementation of the Convention. The historic environment sector is diverse, involving both professional and avocational, or 'hobby' practitioners and there is unrest from a vocal minority of avocationalists in relation to accreditation. English Heritage has developed a non-binding 'Statement of Principles' to raise awareness, which is based on IFA's Code of Conduct and is for 'non-

professional' work. Public consultation on this has been deferred as it could convey the message that the government sees no need for professional self-regulation. This would have dire consequences for IFA.

There are already a number of accreditation systems in operation in the historic environment sector:

- * Membership entry requirements of professional bodies in the sector such as IFA, IHBC, the Association of Archaeological Illustrators and Surveyors (AAI&S);
- * Membership entry requirements of professional bodies in overlapping sectors (e.g. the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS);
- * Formal schemes such as the IFA Register of Archaeological Organisations (RAO), the Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorers (PACR) which is administered by ICON, and RIBA's Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC) register.

These differ in terms of structure, robustness, how much they are respected in the sector, and extent to which they are specified as a requirement by those commissioning/ authorising work.

Though there is and has been much work on the process, there is no formal vocational qualification being taken up in the historic environment sector. There are National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Archaeological Practice and they are being developed for Building Conservation. Archaeological practice qualifications are being introduced, based on archaeological NVQ framework. An accreditation scheme need not depend on professional qualifications – getting the qualification is one component of one route to accreditation. Any new scheme for the historic environment must accommodate but not require candidates with vocational qualifications.

Options for the sector include:

- * Could require membership of relevant professional association;

- * Could require membership of a new Chartered professional association (our third option in this research);
- * Could recognise existing schemes and expand/create new ones to cover the rest of the sector;
- * Could develop a new time-limited system of individual accreditation administered by professional associations.

5.3.2 Positive Comments from the Interviews

- * This would help to make the transition to a single body by creating the climate for a full merger;
- * Other organisations could find a role in collaboration on a joint accreditation scheme or body;
- * Being a Chartered historic environment professional would give status in a broader area;
- * This would be good for unpicking what accreditation means and what the institutes want to achieve;
- * This would raise and maintain standards and gain status for the two institutes;
- * Creates a barrier to practice and enables regulation of the profession;
- * Accreditation would help in the highly competitive market for archaeological services which is unstable and fragmented;
- * IHBC is losing members to other accreditation schemes so this would be a way of keeping and gaining members.

5.3.3 Negative Comments from the Interviews

- * This would be disaster and is not needed;
- * How would this fit into a merged organisation?;
- * IFA and IHBC would become defunct – you can't have all three;

- * This would complicate rather than simplify matters – a new scheme would need to be part of a new, merged, organisation;
- * Chartered status is an obvious threat to other accreditation schemes in the sector such as PACR;
- * Why would anyone join IFA or IHBC if they needed Chartered status? Most practitioners in the sector have an alternative route to Chartered status via RICS or RIBA;
- * There might be a problem with duplication of other schemes – professionals will be unhappy if they feel they have to fulfil yet another set of criteria;
- * Chartered status does not necessarily bring real status and the calibre of people accredited via other schemes in the sector is already problematic;
- * Might be perceived badly by non-professionals and shouldn't be restrictive – amateurs are very powerful in this sector;
- * Schemes that make membership of a professional body mandatory make people suspicious;
- * Membership of IHBC and IFA are accreditation in themselves so this isn't necessary;
- * What about people outside of IFA and IHBC? This would leave people out and cannot be exclusive;
- * The criteria for accreditation schemes is based on the work you have done so it is hard for the less experienced to become accredited and thus gain experience.

5.3.4 PARN Members' Enquiry on Accreditation

In August 2006 PARN ran a Members' Enquiry on the subject of accreditation with its members in order to benchmark experience across professional associations. Twenty two organisations responded, of which 14 said there was some kind of accreditation scheme in place for their profession. The responses were very detailed and wide-ranging, encompassing a variety of

ways of understanding what accreditation is and occasionally membership of the association is conflated with accreditation. Those professions which are externally regulated add another dimension. A copy of the full text of all responses has been provided to IHBC and IFA in a separate file. The summary of responses follows.

Enquiry

The Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) are currently looking into developing an accreditation scheme for individual practitioners. Pete Hinton, Chief Executive at the IFA, would like to ask PARN members:

- * Is there an accreditation scheme for your profession?
- * Is membership of your, or another, professional association a requirement of accreditation?
- * If not, how does the scheme enforce ethical standards?
- * How does the scheme deal with accreditation at different levels of responsibility or for different roles within the profession?
- * Is accreditation open-ended or for a fixed period, and if the latter how is it renewed (e.g. re-assessment, evidence of CPD)
- * How were those who might require or authorise work within the profession (for example, for the archaeological profession it might be English Heritage) persuaded to insist on the use of accredited professionals?

Respondents (22)

Association of Accounting Technicians
Association for Project Safety
British Association/College of Occupational Therapists
British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
Chartered Institute of Public Relations
Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply
Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
Institute of Engineering and Technology
Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
Institute of Legal Executives
Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators
Institution of Engineering and Technology
Law Society of England and Wales
Pensions Management Institute
Psychological Society of Ireland
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland
Royal Society of Chemistry
Royal Statistical Society
Society and College of Radiographers
Tourism Management Institute

Results

1) Is there an accreditation scheme for your profession?

Respondents gave a range of answers to this question. Accreditation can be of individuals, of companies/firms, of CPD programmes run by employers, or of education/degree programmes. Below is a table showing how the organisations responded. Some organisations accredit both individuals and programmes so the figures add up to more than 22.

	No accreditation	Individuals	Companies	Employer s' CPD schemes	Training / Degree programmes
No. of respondents	8	8	1	2	7

2) Is membership of your, or another, professional association a requirement of accreditation? If not, how does the scheme enforce ethical standards?

Those organisations who run accreditation schemes for individuals require membership of the association as a pre-requisite. For those professional bodies who are also regulators, professionals are required to be members in order to practice as well as to apply for accreditation. For some regulated professions, the regulatory body is different to the professional association and the ability to use the title of, for example, 'Occupational Therapist' is protected by the regulator who requires validation and re-validation for practitioners to remain on their register and able to practice. For other, unregulated, professions the title (for example of 'Statistician') is unprotected but accreditation can help practitioners to prove their competence. Some bodies offer Chartered individual status as a form of accreditation which requires membership of the association. Only one body enabled non-members to join their accreditation scheme at a fee and upon adherence to the Code of Ethical Conduct. Those who accredit training or degree programmes use these qualifications as a demonstration of competence in application for membership. One organisation commented that students on an accredited course are automatically student members of the association.

3) How does the scheme deal with accreditation at different levels of responsibility or for different roles within the profession?

Most respondents made a distinction between accreditation at different hierarchical levels, or had different schemes for different roles. Respondent organisations used the following to distinguish between these levels, with higher levels of responsibility requiring a combination:

- * Qualifications
- * Demonstration of competency
- * Experience in the field usually measured by length of service
- * Degree of responsibility in the field
- * Significant contribution to the profession (which in one case led to Fellowship status).

One organisation used the criteria of the level of gross fee income generated by the self-employed work done by practitioners.

In some cases the levels of accreditation were linked to grades of membership. Enforcement was linked to Codes of Conduct and the organisations' disciplinary procedure for members.

4) Is accreditation open-ended or for a fixed period, and if the latter how is it renewed (e.g. re-assessment, evidence of CPD)

Degree or education programmes are usually accredited for a fixed period of 5 years, following which the course is re-assessed. For individual accreditation, 5 respondents said that their scheme was for a fixed period – 2 of these were renewed annually, 1 every two years, and 2 every five years. Renewal of accredited status is usually based on satisfactory CPD participation with some requiring other sources of evidence such as a statement of philosophy, a check against disciplinary records, record of experience, or professional indemnity insurance. Those schemes based on membership of the professional body such as Chartered individual status are for life as long as membership is maintained according to whatever CPD requirements that might entail.

5) How were those who might require or authorise work within the profession (for example, for the archaeological profession it might be English Heritage) persuaded to insist on the use of accredited professionals?

Four respondents mentioned encouraging employer organisations to use accreditation as a sign of professionalism, using an awareness campaign. For two of the organisations who replied, employers seemed to be insisting on accredited individuals without the use of a campaign – these were both in the health sector. Individual clients who employ the services of a self-employed professional seem to require accreditation although it is not a pre-requisite for practice. One organisation only gave details of accredited practitioners to members of the public. Those organisations for whom this question remained a mystery tended to be in professions which were perhaps less 'dangerous' for clients, such as research or management. However, there does seem to be a sense that associations have set up schemes which then become perceived to be valuable so that people start to insist on accreditation as a gradual process.

5.4 Do Nothing

The final option was to do nothing – that is, to do nothing structural but for each institute to continue to develop and to work together in various ways as they are doing at present. This was not a popular option, with not one interviewee making a truly positive comment. Generally, 'doing nothing' is not seen as a real option.

5.4.1 Positive Comments from the Interviews

- * The two institutes would retain their identities;
- * Maintaining the status quo is easy, people stay comfortable and don't have to face a challenge;
- * The relationship between the two institutes may already be stronger after this consultation exercise.

5.4.2 Negative Comments from the Interviews

- * Although there might not be a problem at present, this would result in lost opportunities;
- * The Heritage Protection Review and government policy are moving the two fields together and eventually that will be in conflict with the two separate institutes;
- * This is not an option - the government wants change and things are moving swiftly;
- * There is a need for a wider body to speak for the sector as a whole;
- * The institutes would become marginalised and redundant in the end, losing momentum they would wither and die;
- * The two organisations would become increasingly out of step with the heritage bodies who are trying to unite rather than divide;
- * They won't get economies of scale and financial security;
- * More collaboration is needed;
- * Conservation officers are currently under resourced and this is unacceptable;
- * Archaeology is predatory and needs to be prevented from moving into different territories.

6 Final Stage

This review stage was built into the research so that IHBC could work on their new business plan. It is anticipated that this work will be finished by December and will therefore be available to inform subsequent discussions.

6.1 Questions to Consider

The interim report concluded with a set of questions for consideration which related to the shape a merger could take, the feelings of members and staff, the real motivations and reasons for a merger, and the issue of accreditation:

- * What are the real motivations for a move towards a merger?
- * What is hoped to be gained by closer working?
- * Is the historic environment best served by an integrated approach or is it made up of fundamentally distinct ways of thinking and practicing?
- * Can the risk of losing members due to disagreement with a change be calculated?
- * What are members' feelings about a merger at present? How would they feel about a Federation or a body created for joint service provision?
- * How would staff feel about a merger, a Federation or a body created for joint service provision?
- * Could other organisations in the sector be involved in a merger along with IFA and IHBC?
- * Would IFA or IHBC consider merging with organisations other than each other?
- * Could any of the options that have been considered be improved if other organisations join in? What would a joint Federation or joint service provision body involving multiple organisations look like? What problems would this encounter?

- * How does the issue of accreditation fit into these options? How important is it for the sector to improve and expand its current accreditation systems? How important is it that all work in the historic environment sector is carried out by individuals who are accredited in some way (via a scheme or membership of a professional body)? If this is deemed important, how can English Heritage, Historic Scotland, Cadw, EHS and the DCMS be encouraged to insist on this and encourage local government to do likewise? How do vocational practitioners fit into the picture?

6.2 Review Stage

Following the submission of the interim report, PARN received a range of feedback from both institutes, and during the break in the project (from August 2006 to February 2007) we were kept up to date with shifting opinions and developments, including IHBC's production of a business plan. We also received official responses to the questions posed at the end of the interim report. All of this information, along with the interview undertaken in Stage One, led PARN to approach the final stage of the research with the understanding that:

- * There are a variety of views with regard to a merger between the two institutes;
- * These views are often completely opposed and vehemently expressed.

We believe that the issues that divide these institutes are not those that would necessarily preclude them from some kind of eventual 'coming together'. Many of the issues expressed are more to do with impressions that each institute has of the other which, if tested, may be less of a problem than they are currently perceived to be. PARN strongly believed that middle-way options between full merger and doing nothing should be considered. This would allow positive action in the short term which did not either presume or preclude a merger, but would encourage the process of improving

understanding between the executives of the two institutes, their governing bodies and their memberships. However, the two middle options that were offered during the first stage of the project (Federation model and Joint Service Provision Venture) were not strongly favoured. We therefore entered the final stage of the research hoping to find some other positive initiative which the institutes could agree to. We also strongly believed that PARN should not, and probably could not, impose recommendations.

This influenced our structuring of the round table discussion, during which we employed a mediation model which uses a bottom-up approach where PARN was facilitator rather than provider of solutions.

6.3 The Round Table Discussion

This took place on 1st February 2007 and was attended by Andy Friedman and Tina Williams of PARN, Pete Hinton and 6 other representatives of IFA, and Sean O'Reilly and 7 other representatives of IHBC.

Our aim was to find areas of consensus and ways forward that both institutes could agree on. Both institutes had the opportunity to present a position statement, and to respond to the other's statement, without interruption. PARN then drew out points which could be agreed on and the discussion moved towards the idea of a joint committee.

Both institutes recognise a set of common issues, including:

- * Broader sectoral changes in the understanding and management of the historic environment;
- * A shared legislative framework emerging for local government;
- * Environmental issues affecting the historic environment;
- * A shared belief in a holistic approach to the historic environment;
- * A shared need for practice-based qualifications;
- * A desire to collaborate and build a strong relationship.

These issues form a foundation on which to build a joint committee and future relationship.

7 Recommendations

PARN makes the following recommendations:

1. *IHBC and IFA should not consider a full merger at the present time*

It is clear from all of the information collected as part of this research that a full merger would not be acceptable to a large number of stakeholders at the present time. IHBC's position statement at the round table discussion made it clear that both the Council, and, they believe, the membership of IHBC are firmly against a full merger with IFA at the present time. The extent to which full merger is open for discussion at a future juncture is not clear – some of IHBC's representatives seem to be open to future debate while others insist it must be off the agenda completely. Under these circumstances, it is unlikely that a full merger would be successful.

During the course of the research a number of barriers or objections to merger were noted. Some of these may be seen as opinions or conjecture, some may be verifiable through further research, and some we might categorise as true or likely to be true based on a range of comments. The barriers or objections categorised below were all raised during interviews or the round table discussion. The categorisation is, of course, a subjective process in itself. Also, even if a circumstance is true, the perception of it as a barrier to merger may be a matter of opinion.

1. True/likely to be true

- a. There are differences in the ways that archaeology and conservation are interpreted and understood;
- b. The institutes have different priorities for accreditation;
- c. The institutes are at different stages of development;
- d. The institutes have differing perceptions of what each other does;
- e. The institutes have different ways of delivering member benefits e.g. IHBC has branches;
- f. IHBC's Council is against a merger;

g. A merger would create job instability for staff.

2. Verifiable

- a. Each membership has a different bias with regard to local authority staff;
- b. IHBC's membership is against a merger;
- c. Each institute is operating in a different environment with regard to other bodies in the sector;
- d. The institutes have different cultures, including the ways in which volunteers are involved;
- e. Other organisations in the sector might feel threatened by a merger.

3. Opinion/conjecture

- a. IHBC's work with construction bodies could be hampered if they had to re-focus on the interests of the archaeological world;
- b. There is an absence of clear benefits to merger and it might undermine the services of both institutes;
- c. Each institute has its own priorities and it would be difficult to find a common voice;
- d. Archaeology will swamp conservation;
- e. Both archaeology and conservation will lose their identities;
- f. IHBC's Council is slow at decision-making and change-adverse which would be bad for a new institute;
- g. Archaeology and conservation have fundamentally different ways of thinking and approaches to their work.

2. *IHBC and IFA should establish a joint committee*

Both institutes were enthusiastic about a joint committee which could focus on issues of joint concern and which would aim to address some of the shortcomings of the current situation which were put forward as reasons to merge:

- * It could provide a joint voice to government;
- * It could produce joint responses to proposed legislation;
- * It could aid each institute's understanding of the other;

- * It could promote joint working and further partnerships.

We suggest that the joint committee is made up of no more than 6 people – both CEOs, both Council Chairs, and one other person from each Council to represent the memberships. The joint committee could draw on the expertise of other officers, members, or representatives from other professional associations, depending on the issue under review, but the core group should not exceed a total of 6.

We also suggest that the joint committee draws up its remit with a set of measurable objectives and targets by which its success can be measured, and that this is reviewed after a period of one year. After 12 months the committee should report to both Councils and, depending on whether its objectives have been met, be disbanded or develop a new set of targets.

The joint committee might benefit from its own website and identity. It could also run joint conference sessions, write articles for both institutes' magazines, offer discounts for dual membership, and provide e-mail updates to members following committee meetings.

The joint committee's remit might include some or all of the following:

- * Revise the Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutes;
- * Design activities to further understanding of each other's memberships, strategic objectives and values;
- * Produce a joint response to the Heritage White Paper and future consultations;
- * Review of joint projects undertaken in the past with a view to improving the process;
- * Initiate new joint projects;
- * Categorise occupational roles within the historic environment;
- * Look at accreditation and whether a scheme would be better undertaken together or separately, and how separate schemes might compliment each other;

- * Initiate joint initiatives in training and career development;
- * Establish Special Interest Groups to support areas where the two memberships overlap e.g. local government employees;
- * Discuss ways to best support the impact on members of the HPR;
- * Initiate guidance or best practice papers on areas of common interest;
- * Organise joint consultation of members on areas of common interest;
- * Undertake a review of member benefits.

3. *IHBC and IFA should consult with their respective memberships before considering more structured joint working;*

During the research process both institutes, and a number of stakeholders, made claims about the feelings of their members with regard to closer working. However, other than IHBC sending the interim report (which was not written for members) to their branches, via Council members, PARN's understanding is that the memberships have not been consulted on the subject of closer working between the two institutes. We recommend that this is undertaken before further consideration of any structural changes in the future. This may be an activity for the joint committee.

8 PARN comments on accreditation

PARN has been asked to comment on the issue of accreditation and the idea that users of professional services (whether the users are individual clients, government departments or private companies, and whether those professionals are archaeologists, conservationists, lawyers or management consultants) should insist on those professionals being accredited in some way.

Accreditation is a complex issue. The members' enquiry described in 5.3.4 of this report uncovered a range of ways of understanding what accreditation is. Sometimes, membership of a professional body is seen as a form of accreditation. Professional associations can accredit:

- * Individuals (via a practising certificate, Chartered membership or other titles);
- * Companies;
- * Employers' CPD schemes;
- * CPD providers and courses;
- * Initial training and degree programmes.

PARN's view is that professionalisation is a process, and some occupations are further along in that process than others. The ultimate, or strongest, form of professionalisation is a situation where professionals are unable to practice without some form of accreditation (which might include membership of a professional association). However, there are stages along that path, and one step might be a clear accreditation process connected to membership of a professional body. This might involve separate, higher, grades of membership.

Some professions – especially in the medical field – operate that highest form of professionalisation, where membership of a professional association is required in order to practice. For other professions, including those in the historic environment, this is not the case. The PARN 2006 'Professionalisation of Professional Associations' survey found that only 4.5% of the 110

respondent organisations claim that professionals in their field have to be a member of the professional body in order to practice.

PARN defines a professional association as a body that has, or aims to have:

- * Entry requirements, based on education/experience;
- * A code of conduct or guidance for members regarding their professional work;
- * Systems to maintain standards and quality within the profession;
- * A commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

In this way, we perceive membership of a professional association to be some assurance of what we call ethical competence, which embraces but is not limited to technical competence. In our support of professionalism, we would encourage professional associations to support the technical and ethical competence of their members in moving towards the goal of an accreditation system, which truly guarantees professionalism.

PARN's view is that professionals who are accredited will best serve users of professional services. Maintaining standards of technical and ethical competence are the best ways to protect clients and the public interest, particularly for the provision of complex services. While professionalism requires accreditation, different routes to accreditation should be made available and accreditation should be open for all to apply. We cannot recommend a single way to accredit professionals, but some form of accreditation is essential to protect the public interest. PARN believes that the principles of any accreditation system should be that:

1. Accreditation should be rigorous and continual. Accreditation should not be limited to a single event which provides accreditation to an individual for all time. Professional associations are set up to support both rigorous and continual accreditation, not only through initial professional qualifications, but also through ensuring adherence to CPD programmes;

2. Accreditation should assess both technical competence and ethical competence. Ethical competence should be linked to a widely publicised document such as an ethical code of conduct. Such a document should also be supported by detailed guidelines, advice and forums for discussion;
3. Accreditation requires systems for ensuring compliance with codes of conduct and standards, complaints and disciplinary processes and a range of penalties which can be found already within professional associations.