**AECB Annual Conference 2014 - Feedback**

**Q1 Please rate the booking process.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| – | Excellent  – | Very Good  – | Good  – | OK  – | Bad  – | Total  – |
| –  Rating | 42.50%  17 | 42.50%  17 | 7.50%  3 | 7.50%  3 | 0.00%  0 | 40 |

Comments

1 It would have been nice to see a discount for early booking on the day rate as well as for the whole weekend.

2 lack of confirmation re accommodation.

**Q2 How would you rate the information you were sent prior to the event? What more information would have been useful**?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Excellent  – | Very Good  – | Good  – | OK  – | Bad  – |
| 27.50%  11 | 42.50%  17 | 22.50%  9 | 5.00%  2 | 2.50% |

Comments

1) I had no doubt where I needed to be, at what time, and what would be happening when I got there.

2) Very clear information on directions, the agenda and the speakers. It would always be better to have earlier visibility of the agenda, but appreciate that is difficult to arrange.

3) Pre-event information was ok as a general outline but did not give much detail particularly on the workshops and likely content

4) Not clear on whether we needed to book workshops ahead - but I was a newbie!

5) Would have been useful if travel / venue information was posted on the booking page rather sent out by email later.

6) There were some workshop without very clear contents in advance so that you had to attend in order to find out. When you want to attend other workshop too, it its hard!

7) I am more than happy with information being sent by e-mail or available on line. The lists of potential lift shares is always appreciated. We might have had better information on travel by public transport.

8) Just too many versions - perhaps one provisional + one final?

**Q3) Please rate the range of workshops and add any comments on workshops you attended and how they could have been improved.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Excellent  – | Very Good  – | Good  – | OK  – | Bad  – |
| 30.00%  12 | 42.50%  17 | 25.00%  10 | 2.50%  1 | 0.00%  0 |

Comments

1) Good range, It was really good to see some practical workshops, for example the airtightness one. More of this type of presentation would be great.

2) There was a wide range of topics covered in the workshops, the difficulty is choosing which workshops to attend I suppose the answer is to attend again next year.

3) A bit more information on the level of technical content would have been useful.

4) One of the spaces (the chapel) did not have great acoustics.

5) Some workshops sounded from the summary like they might be similar to things I'd seen before (eg at PHT conference).

6) The visit to Ashley Vale was excellent. It is always good to see real buildings and talk to people with direct experience of sustainable building.

7) One workshop was harder to hear - perhaps a combination of the room itself and a quieter speaker.

8) Workshops were good but mostly 'showing things' rather than explaining things - some more in-depth technical workshops might be good. Some workshops tried to cover too much and ended being too general

9) Some practical hands on workshops; some 'latest innovations / manufacturers latest' type forum or awareness area rather than just a few exhibitors showing the same things they did last year.

10) Detailed graphs spoil a talk; they are usually too complex for people to figure out before the subject has moved on....

11) Acoustics in Chapel were poor, making it difficult to hear (especially at the back) what was being said, particularly when people asked questions at the front.

12) More detailed explanations/demos of hands-on building techniques especially timber-framed PH houses. I am to be a client soon (subject to planning).

13) Some had a few too many spreadsheets. There don't seem to be as many practical workshops as there were in ''the old days''. Maybe this reflects the nature of people attending (or helps to dictate who attends).

14) Too strong focus on PH and building energy performance

15) The timber frame buildings workshops [Jon B, Jonathan H, Bernard P, Mike w and Fran B] were enjoyable. One speaker made no concession for the poor acoustics [facing away from the audience] and combined with his co-speaker's heavy accent made the whole workshop unintelligible. The density of the information they tried to put over was also too great.

16) As always, there was a shortage of places on the field trips. Too many clashing, interesting talks. (I know there is unlikely to be a solution!)

17) As ever, varied presentation quality, but excellent material. Acoustic issue in chapel - impossible for some speakers.

**Q4 Is 90 mins, about right for the workshops?**

Yes 87.5

No 12.5

Comments

1) I prefer 45min, or shorter - ideally with similar topics back to back to make up a session.

2) 90 minutes with two related topics works well.

3) Could also have a session of say 20-30min show and tell talks.

4) Please ask for minimum number of graphs

5) Could be worth exploring have some shorter workshops mixed in to allow a greater range or the possibility of repeating them in different slots.

6) I think it's quite a long time to keep absorbing information. Perhaps they could be shorter or have a 5-minute breather in the middle.

7) As long as the presentations are kept to time, it feels about right for some useful discussion as well.

8) I was hoping to gain a bit more practical knowledge of how to insulate a solid wall. I appreciate that there is no one hit answer - there are many variables, but a run thru on what would be appropriate in certain situations would have been useful.

9) Depends on what and who but all the ones I went to needed the time.

10) As usual, they were lectures, not workshops, i.e. not audience participation.

11) Spot on.

12) Some of the 'workshops' were lectures, with a short period for questions.

13) A bit shorter so more time to network in between

14) I preferred the 2 \* 45 min with 2 different speakers. Easier to follow and stay focused.

**Q5 Do you have any suggestions for formats, themes and workshops you would like to see at future conferences?**

Comments

1) More practical based workshops.

2) I like presentations of real feedback and monitoring from completed projects. Summer conditions and strategies would be interesting topic.

3) Hands on practical sessions/ demonstrations

4) It was very good to hear from Cath about Water & Floods in the main session this year, since I managed to miss all her talks last year.

5) Some detailed technical workshops explaining principles - the principles of good ventilation, the science of moisture movement. Perhaps some detailed workshops on Passive design and how this differs from the principles of PassivHaus

6) If possible, run some/ all the workshops more than once

7) Passivhaus applications - build project experiences

8) Some practical hands on workshops; some 'latest innovations / manufacturers latest' type forum or awareness area rather than just a few exhibitors showing the same things they did last year.

9) Practical building type demos were mentioned but I think they would take up too much valuable time. I think the emphasis on retro fit was good - despite the fact that it's challenging in that it's not very glamorous!

10) Might be useful to have some hands-on demos or videos of particular techniques or materials rather than Powerpoint only.

11) Sustainable construction materials, building physics and indoor air quality

12) Could the sessions be pitched at different levels of technical competency so you get an idea of how complex it's going to be?

13) Practical sustainable construction demos? The building tours are always fab.

14) Climate change and its effect on building design and construction; low energy standards in other countries, what is their focus, how do they compare;

15) Soap box slot/s

**Q6 Would you be interested in themed days so you could attend only 1 day to save money and time**?

|  |
| --- |
| Yes 38.4 |
| No 61.54 |

**Q7 If you enjoyed it, what made this a good conference for you? If not why not?**

1) The quality and variety of the workshops.

2) Networking

3) I enjoyed the conference as well as the networking; I would like to attend next year and would recommend the conference to a friend.

4) I enjoyed the opportunity of meeting new people - perhaps this could have been facilitated further by having informal discussion groups such as the one for female members.

5) I could have done without thinking about my divorce and instead getting very, very drunk. But I think neither things are in any way the fault of the conference organisers.

6) Meeting people new and old friends. Good venue, all seemed to run smoothly, easy to get to, nice food.

7) Good venue, good programme

8) This year's theme of building with wood wasn't of particular interest to me, and personally I'm less interested in retrofit than new-build (and there seemed to be a lot of content on retrofit).

9) A great combination of useful information, the chance to chat and discuss a whole range of topics, and generally stay up to date and in touch with people.

10) Meeting up with the great and the good. It always recharges the soul.

11) Good location, and a nice friendly group of people.

12) 'Networking' and building visit opportunity

13) Good speakers & useful exhibitions; great hearing other's experiences & networking

14) The dining experience seemed a bit formal and didn't encourage as much mingling as the previous year in Bradford

15) Invigorating!

16) Venue and social, good central location

17) Range of topics and speakers

18) Good balance of formal talks and time for networking

19) The usual mix of like-minded people in a lovely setting. Plenty of breaks and chances to catch up with what old friends and new acquaintances are doing in our world. Found the sessions on timber of particular interest.

20) Meeting people and friends

21) It was all good.

22) I really enjoyed the visit to Ashley Vale self build scheme. Overall I thought there was a really good balance this year - it was my favourite conference so far.

23) Meeting people and update of information about technical side. Tough questions.

24) The workshops are great, but ultimately they're a vehicle to meet people, start discussions etc. It's a great event to catch up and develop your knowledge.

25) Excellent speakers at the top of their game. Good social and an inspiring event. Lovely venue. Well organised, well done.

26) Warm friendly people, open conversation, able to try out new ideas without fear of being laughed at with people who are pioneers in the industry. Really useful case studies and workshops, not glossy stuff but genuinely fascinating.

27) The people always. Important to have enough time to catch up.

28) Great venue and some very good presentations

29) The venue. Networking. Most of the workshops.

30) Great venue, superb workshops, so well run, good food, and as always, lovely attendees. Couldn't fault it.

31) Opportunities for meeting other people and some networking.

32) Nearly all my workshops were in the chapel and the acoustics were terrible. Please check this out before organising rooms or even main venue.

33) Good speakers, interesting presentations and seeing like-minded friends / colleagues

34) Excellent presentations by Jon Broome and by Valentina Marincioni.

35) Always good to meet our 'professional family'. Fun to start with our only [?] mayoral member. Good venue.

**Q8 For many attendees, networking with like-minded persons seems to be a major benefit and pleasure of the conference. How might we improve this aspect of future conferences?**

Comments

1) It would be useful if on the contact sheet which gives everyone's name, company etc, if there could be a separate column with which city they are based in. As its a great opportunity to network with people in your area and would be a handy bit of extra information.

2) Networking sessions for withdrawn introverts.

3) I find the best time is towards the beginning of the event - so suggest schedule coffee/networking after an earlier registration time, or another break early on in the proceedings.

4) Maybe arrange some informal interest groups, for example for dinner on the Friday night, to accelerate the process of finding like-minded people.

5) There seemed to be plenty of opportunities to network between workshops and in the evening etc.

6) Having a more structured plan for meeting on the evening before the conference.

7) Seemed to work well

8) Just retain the relatively generous break and meal times

9) It would be so useful to establish a list of dedicated builders through AECB members’ recommendations

10) Round tables - always encourage inclusion; have a session or sessions where people are put into groups for discussion forums.

11) Maybe an informal social event on the arrival night.

12) Ideally to have the max number of delegates staying in the same place as often happens

13) I think the conference this year offered plenty of opportunities, and sufficient time between sessions to get around. Might be worth having a central point where people can post a message for someone they wish to meet.

14) All good.

15) Generally good amount of time allowed for breaks, however having break-out rooms and the dining hall so spread out was not ideal.

16) I think the conference was great for networking. The one thing that would have been good was an opportunity to meet up on the night before. I know a few people did go into town but it would have been great if the university bar had been open instead.

17) Not have such a noisy bar in the evening! Difficult one that!

18) I don't think you need to; I like the relaxed feel of it and free to roam around and talk to whoever you feel like. The mealtimes offer plenty of opportunity to network, even queues are a bonus, have had some very interesting queue conversations!

19) Do some newbies need support I wonder. Could feel like everyone knows each other.

20) It's just right.

21) We have always shied away from this being a business network as such but from conversations this year I think some people could do with a lightly managed way of letting other members know when they need more work or leads. Could we cope with this?

22) Posters. Short poster sessions to help identify and contact the contributes, but posters left up all weekend.

21) Have slightly longer breaks.

22) It is very good as it is.

23) Start the evening shenanigans earlier!

**Q9 Any general comments on this years conference or ideas for workshops and possible venues for future years.**

Comments

1) It was my first visit but I will definitely consider attending again next year. It came across as a professional event.

2) Can we have more cake next year?

3) There was some discussion about having more hands-on workshops. Those would be good - even just live demos rather than group participation would be better than wall-to-wall PowerPoint.

4) A great conference, again!

5) Workshops where designers & builders/ contractors can work together & share experiences, requirements of designs, concerns of buildability & practicalities etc possibly on life projects/ case studies of new build & refurbs

6) I live in Cornwall so Bristol was great!

7) Well done for organising!!! Thanks

8) Venue - Scotland Theme - academic and practical courses in sustainable building design & techniques (speakers e.g. Fionn Stephenson, Sue Roaf, etc., someone from RIBA/RIAS); conservation architecture (speakers e.g. Roger Curtis of Historic Scotland - very entertaining/knowledgeable, Roz Artis-Young from Scottish Lime Trust, etc)

9) Layout of food servery was a bit impractical for serving a large number of people

10) Uploaded slides could be more self explanatory so that missing a workshop is not so a hard choice!

11) Sheffield School of Architecture has expressed an interest in hosting in the future, if this is useful.

12) It was interesting when a show of hand revealed that about 10% of delegates were involved in architectural education. One wonders what the make up of the rest of those attending was. Eg how many builders, service engineers or archie's were there?

13) I like that it's not London centric like so many things. I liked that this years tour was housing, something I'm sure many of the AECB people do in their own work.

14) Great venue, lovely that it was all decided well before hand. Not keen on Norfolk as very long haul from anywhere.

15) More membership participation, such as discussions. More involvement of local groups: An inter-group discussion, group presentations and/or displays.

16) Thank you sooooo much. How about Edinburgh next year? I'll be staying in Pollock Halls very soon and will feed back what its like.

17) Timekeeping was much better than in previous years.

18) Keep it up Geoff + Karen + co. A highlight of my year... always...