July 2015

Dear AECB member,

We are writing to you to let you know about some important changes to the benefits you receive as an AECB member. For over 25 years, almost since the inception of the AECB, members have received the Green Building magazine (formerly Building For a Future). We know that this has been an important member benefit for many members. The Green Building Press, under its proprietor and editor Keith Hall, independently publishes the magazine. Keith was, of course, with his wife Sally, founder of the AECB and the magazine is very strongly associated in AECB members’ minds with the AECB. Sally continues to serve as Administrative and Finance Officer for the AECB, so the links are very strong.

A while ago it became clear that Keith was finding it more and more difficult to continue to edit and publish Green Building magazine as a paper version and was looking for a way of changing the methodology of production or passing it on to 'younger blood'. He offered the AECB first refusal on the magazine, as he had always promised he would, to make it an official AECB publication. We, and the AECB Trustees, considered whether it was feasible for us to take on a paper magazine like this as an ‘in house’ activity. After very careful consideration, and some soul searching, we decided this really was not feasible. The key to this decision was that in Keith we recognised that the magazine had had an exceptional editor with a huge commitment, energy and enthusiasm for the issues that we are all, as AECB members, passionate about. As Keith himself said, having an editor who was similarly keen was an essential prerequisite to the ongoing success of a magazine like this. We also considered the relatively modest size of the AECB as an organisation, and the feasibility of magazines with small print runs. Considering all of this we did not feel that this was an advisable project for the AECB to take on directly and the Board agreed to offer an alternative membership package (see below). Consequently, Keith has decided to end publication of the paper edition of Green Building magazine with this, the Summer, edition. He has confirmed that he intends to publish Green Building magazine on the internet, and we will inform members when this becomes available.

With the ending of the paper version of Green Building magazine, we wanted to provide AECB members with a new package of benefits, which we hope over time might replace it in members’ affections as well as helping to support the AECB and its members in increasing our influence beyond the confines of our organisation itself. We believe the new package will do exactly that, and although we regret the loss of Green Building Magazine we believe in the old adage that `when one door closes another opens`.

So from now on in place of Green Building magazine, members will receive the following package of benefits.

1. Passive House Plus magazine: You already receive this magazine under a deal we struck a couple of years ago, although this was a temporary deal and never guaranteed to continue indefinitely for members. However, in the editor of PH+, Jeff Colley, and through his publishing company, Temple Media Ltd, we see very similar qualities as an editor to those that have been so obvious in GBM over the years; namely boundless enthusiasm and a passionate commitment to the issues. The intention of PH+ magazine has always been to put Passive House at the heart of a much wider range of sustainability issues in the construction sector. To date, due to limited resources and the speed of development of Passive House in the UK, coverage of these other issues has been limited. The AECB has now agreed to work intensively with Jeff over the next year or two to begin to ‘put more of the plus into PH+’, as well as promoting the AECB as an official partner to the magazine. Thus we should see the magazine begin to develop the wider focus that some AECB members particularly valued in GBM, while promoting the AECB to a much wider readership of around 10,000 (including AECB members) key professionals in the construction industry. Over time this will be a win-win situation.
2. AECB Yearbook: The last time an AECB Yearbook was published was 9 years ago. We believe that a Yearbook will be highly valued, as the last one was very well received. The Yearbook required a lot of hard work and considerable resources, which the AECB has not had over the last few years. However, working with Jeff Colley, with publication by the AECB in association with Temple Media Ltd, the AECB can edit this while having the professional support to enable production within our existing resources. We are excited by this proposal and believe this will be a valuable resource for AECB members as well as an excellent way of more widely promoting the AECB.
3. Online package of additional content and resources: This third package will take a little longer to implement. The first benefit members will see will be automatic subscription to online supporting content for PH+ magazine. This will include additional background material relating to articles in PH+ magazine, including detail drawings, which should be of great value to members. Over time this resource is expected to grow and be developed to include much more online material as well as interactive material, possibly podcasts, film material etc. Whilst in its early days now, this will be an exciting new benefit for members and something that we expect to develop dramatically over time. There will be strong cross-links to AECB website material.

Green Building Magazine has instructed and stimulated many of us during its years of publication. It is not easy to replace such an institution. However, we believe that this new membership package will bring new opportunities for the AECB and its members, supported by a similar editorial passion to what has been so evident in Green Building Magazine over the years.

Sincerely

Andy Simmonds, CEO

Peter Wilkinson, Chair

Fran Bradshaw, Vice-chair