

QSletters

In this issue, why we shouldn't be overly reliant on timber, the two sides of QSing when it comes to the APC and we consider whether email is good for project management

Branching out

Not being a QS but having an office next door to one I occasionally read *QS News*.

Being a timber structural engineer, I read with interest your analysis article (The case for timber, *QS News*, 5 May).

While I would commend the author on the salient points (I've been saying as much about the economics of timber for a while now) can I caution a headlong rush to timber frame – nationally we do not have enough timber engineers/fabricators or erectors for the current workload.

If the system is subject to anymore pressure, mistakes will happen and we will all be in the same boat as in the 1970s (World

in Action programme for those who don't know) which set the industry in England back 30 years. In short, a great idea but first recruit, then train, then build.

**Andy McGovern,
McGovern Structural**

The coal face at the APC

I read with interest the correspondence in your last issue (Letters, *QS News*, 5 May).

As a twice referred candidate, I did have a bee in my bonnet about how the process was bias towards PQSing.

Being employed as a contractor's QS by a local authority, in an ex-DSO style arrangement throughout my APC, there were no immediate

colleagues that were F or MRICS. I felt this was not catered for by the competencies and somehow this was going against me.

It was not until I stumbled onto the fine course run by Alpesh Patel (who did actually refer me as my panel chairman one time) that it all came together and how the two sides of QSing were not poles apart at all and the competencies reflected this.

It's a shame the RICS does not provide a regional training advisor to help the candidates directly, rather than one that will only liaise with supervisors or counsellors who may only see the candidate at three-month intervals. There are the doctors of course, but are they always up to speed with

what's happening at the coal face of the APC?

**Ben Kitowski, QS,
Lancashire County Council**

Busy times

I thoroughly enjoy the magazine which is very informative and is delivered in a nice succinct manner, which makes it very attractive to read (for a busy PM!) as opposed to some of the more lengthy mags that pass across my desk. Keep up the good work.

Kevin Stewart, Merseytravel

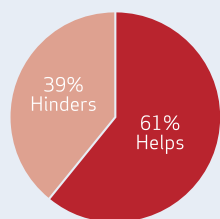
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qsnews@cmpi.biz**

Emails aren't such a bad thing, poll reveals

AYH project director Paul Phillips kicked off a debate about the usefulness or otherwise of email in project management in our last issue. He felt emails were a distraction to running a live project as you lose what your priorities are on the job and waste time replying to or penning emails. MDA director Emlyn Jones certainly agreed (see letter) listing his dislike for the communication form. A majority of *QS News* readers disagree, according to a web poll on our site, with nearly two thirds of you claiming email helps rather than hinders project management. If you have any more thoughts, email us at qsnews@cmpi.biz

Does email help or hinder project management?



The majority believes email actually helps when working

Unplug, or become unhinged

Emails are definitely a curse and should be banned in terms of project communication. The main complaints being:

- need to constantly review and up-date
- difficulty in maintaining an audit trail for prompt and comprehensive retrieval
- scatter gun copying to individuals on the periphery who should really be out of the communication loop
- the assumption, on the part of

the sender, that the email will be read and retrieved by the appropriate person within an appropriate time

- concealed messages to a copied individual who, by inference, is expected to register and respond to a requirement not properly addressed to that individual.

I could go on and on.

Quite how to deal with the issue is not apparent unless we revert to post-delivered correspondence, faxes and telephone calls.

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PAST AND FUTURE

The Stadium: The two art deco, Grade II listed buildings are in place (see left).

An additional point is – wasted paper. Often a message of a few words may be tagged on to a screed of previous messages littered with disclaimers and spurious text. The result is reams of wasted paper unless one culls out before printing.

I am seriously considering being unplugged before becoming unhinged.

**Emlyn Jones, director,
MDA Consulting**