

Member Bulletin - January 2026

Dear \$[UD:FIRST_NAME]\$,

Welcome to the first edition of the IPM Bulletin for 2026

Welcome to the first Institute of Place Management Bulletin of the year. We are pleased to share this update with you as an IPM member, a current or former student, or a stakeholder in our work. We hope these monthly bulletins provide a useful overview of what is happening across the international place management sector and how IPM is helping to lead it.

It has been a busy start to the year, with a strong focus on strengthening the connection between academic research and professional practice. Prof Steve Millington has been working with academic colleagues across Manchester Metropolitan University to review and develop IPM's research plans, ensuring they are grounded in the real-world challenges and opportunities facing places. We will be inviting members to learn more about this work and to engage with the emerging research priorities in the coming months. You can check the events [out here](#).

We have also opened recruitment for a new [Practitioner Editor for the Journal of Place Management and Development](#), reinforcing our commitment to ensuring practitioner voices and experience sit alongside academic insight within the journal. Dr Nikos Ntounis has also been working closely with IPM practitioners to support the publication of practice-based articles. You can read more about this opportunity below.

Alongside this strategic work, Dr Chloe Steadman was [pleased to welcome the 2026 intake of postgraduate students](#) last week, who have now begun their studies on the Place Management and Leadership programme. We encourage IPM members to connect with the students, helping to expand professional networks and strengthen the bridge between learning, research, and practice.

Finally, Rachel Nickeas continues to support IPM members, and building on work undertaken in January 2025, we are launching this years [IPM member survey](#). This will gather feedback from across our network and help shape how IPM responds to the needs of both practitioners and academics.

All of our research comes together to help IPM speak up on the importance of place management. In that context, we were pleased that [Cathy Parker recently appeared at a Select Committee event](#), sharing research-informed evidence on the challenges and opportunities facing towns and high streets. We are also delighted that Dr [Lucy Montague](#) will be chairing a high street conference next week, continuing IPM's contribution to national conversations about town centre renewal and place-based policy.

You can read more about each of these updates below. If you enjoy this bulletin and would like access to the *Journal of Place Management and Development*, the IPM Members Area, and member-only events, we warmly invite you to consider joining the Institute of Place Management [here](#).

Ian Harvey SFIPM

Head of Institute of Place Management

Up and coming events



RSA X IPM Webinar - Pride in Place

- **Date:** 9th February 2026
- **Time:** 13:00 - 14:00
- **Online**
- Open to IPM members and non-members

If you need assistance, please email nicola.pilling@regionalstudies.org.

[Register here](#)



International Women's Day

- **Date:** Tuesday 10th March
- **Time:** 1pm 2.30pm
- **In-person**
- Open to IPM members and non-members

[Register here](#)

[Read more details about our events](#)

Postgraduate Place Management Students Begin Their Studies – 2026 Intake

The Institute of Place Management is pleased to welcome the 2026 intake of postgraduate students, who have now begun their studies on the Place Management and Leadership programme.

The cohort brings a wide range of professional and academic backgrounds from the UK and the Netherlands. Over the course of the programme, students will explore how places are shaped, managed, and experienced, combining academic insight with practice-based learning and real-world case studies.

Welcoming the students, Dr Chloe Steadman, Programme Lead, said she was delighted to welcome the new intake and looked forward to getting to know them more as the course progresses.

IPM members are encouraged to connect with the students on LinkedIn to help welcome them into the place management community and support their extended professional networking. [Read more here](#).

IPM launches survey to inform future priorities for members

The Institute of Place Management has launched a new members' survey, building on the feedback gathered through its January 2025 survey.

[The survey is available to fill in here](#).

It provides an opportunity for members to share their views on IPM's research, professional development, events, communications, and overall role in supporting place management practice and policy.

The survey will remain open until 23 February, and findings will be shared at an online event in March. Insights from the survey will directly inform IPM's priorities and work programme over the coming year, including the development of its CPD offer, member services, and engagement activity.

Members are encouraged to take part and help shape the future direction of IPM.

IPM seeks Practitioner Editor for Journal of Place Management and Development



The Institute of Place Management (IPM) is inviting applications for a new Practitioner Editor for the Journal of Place Management and Development (JPMD), reinforcing the journal's commitment to bridging academic research and real-world practice as IPM approaches its 20th anniversary.

This voluntary role is offered on a three-year term, starting June 2026, and will report to the Editor-in-Chief, Dr Nikos Ntounis. The Practitioner Editor will work closely with the JPMD Editorial Board, the IPM team and membership, and Emerald Publishing.

The role has been created to strengthen practitioner voices within JPMD, ensuring that each issue includes high-quality, practice-led contributions that reflect the lived experience, challenges, and innovations of place professionals working across towns, cities, neighbourhoods, and regions worldwide.

Read more on this role [here](#).

Members invited to contribute to an event in Gothenburg



We are pleased to invite practitioners, policymakers, consultants, and place leaders to contribute to a Special Session at the Regional Studies Association conference, titled Contemporary Issues in Place

Management and Leadership. This session is grounded in the practical realities facing towns, cities, and regions, and is designed to share applied experience and learning from the field.

Despite widespread support for “place-based” approaches, many places continue to struggle with fragmented governance, limited capacity, and top-down decision-making. We therefore welcome practice-informed papers, case studies, and reflective contributions that explore what is working, what is not, and why offering practical lessons for more inclusive, resilient, and effective place leadership and delivery.

Read more [here](#).

Prof Cathy Parker speaks at the Scottish Affairs Committee inquiry into high streets



Cathy Parker, Professor of Place Management at Manchester Metropolitan University, recently gave both oral and written evidence to the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee inquiry into high streets and town centres, alongside IPM Senior Fellow, Professor Leigh Sparks and Professor James White.

While the inquiry focused on Scotland, the Committee was clear that it was seeking UK-wide, transferable lessons. Drawing on Manchester Met research, Cathy emphasised the importance of understanding structural (not cyclical) change; why town type and function matter more than simple rural-urban

classifications; and why successful regeneration depends on place management capacity, cross-sector partnerships, perceptions and experience, and governance that operates close to the high street. Read more on Cathy's LinkedIn page [here](#).

Dr Lucy Montague to Chair Conference on the Future of Britain's High Streets



Dr Lucy Montague will chair a national digital conference, *From Decline to Renewal: Breathing New Life into Britain's High Streets*, taking place on Thursday 29 January 2026.

Dr Montague is a Senior Lecturer at the Manchester School of Architecture and a former Special Adviser to the House of Lords Built Environment Select Committee. Her work spans architecture, planning, policy, and high streets, bringing a distinctive, policy-informed perspective to debates on town centre regeneration and high street renewal.

The conference will bring together senior voices from national government and the heritage sector, with speakers from organisations including the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Business and Trade and Historic England.

Read more [here](#).

Addressing the challenges between placemaking and tourism



Earlier this month, more than 50 colleagues from academia and industry came together at Manchester Metropolitan University Business School for the Northern Tourism Academics Network event, “Addressing Synergies and Challenges between Placemaking and Tourism in Destinations.” The event marked a full and highly productive day of discussion, learning, and collaboration.

A particular strength of the event was the balanced mix of participants, with an equal representation of academics and industry practitioners from across the UK and Ireland. This blend enriched discussion throughout the day and was especially evident during the closing workshop, where enthusiasm for collaboration was clear. Conversations focused on how closer working can enhance student experience, strengthen applied research, and support the development of future talent needed to sustain thriving places and destinations.

Read more [here](#).

IPM Member, Brendan Moffett shares thoughts on UK City of Culture and the countdown to 2029



Since its launch in 2009, the UK City of Culture programme has become a powerful - but contested - tool for placemaking. Drawing on experience from Sheffield's 2016 bid and reflections on hosts including **Hull**, **Coventry**, and **Bradford**, IPM member Brendan Moffett argues that its greatest value lies not in a single year of activity, but in long-term civic alignment. Successful bids embed culture into everyday life, governance, and identity. As places prepare for the 2029 round, the key question is not who can stage the biggest programme, but who can sustain cultural momentum for lasting place change.

Read the full article [here](#).

Manchester Metropolitan University strengthens global place management links through IPM visit to Turku, Finland



We strengthened our global place management links in January through a visit to Turku by Professor Steve Millington.

Reflecting on his time in Turku, Professor Millington described the visit as a reminder of why place-based work matters. Across two days of debate and exchange, discussions ranged from the future of public space to the energy and ambition behind a new national network for place management in Finland. He highlighted the people, ideas, and moments that stayed with him, noting a strong sense that Finland is building something distinctive-bringing together policy intent, professional practice, and civic commitment.

The visit reinforced the role of the Institute of Place Management in connecting research, policy, and practice internationally, and in learning from places developing innovative approaches to managing and shaping towns and cities for the long term.

Read more about Steve's visit [here](#).



Your thoughts on current place management and leadership issues as an IPM member

We love showcasing the expertise and insights of our valued members. If you have a story, research, or a project that might interest the wider IPM network, we'd love to hear from you! Whether it's a discussion topic, a LinkedIn feature to highlight your profile, or an update that deserves attention, we're keen to share your contributions.

Additionally, as an IPM member, you gain exclusive access to our members' area - a hub filled with valuable resources, networking opportunities, and industry insights. If you're not yet a member and would like to explore the benefits, feel free to get in touch to discuss membership options.

Let's continue to build connections and celebrate the fantastic work happening across the sector!



We're always keen to know your thoughts on current issues directly via [email](#) and in comments on our LinkedIn social media posts. Thank you for taking the time to read this bulletin, our next issue will be issued in December.

The IPM Team



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