

# Member Bulletin - February 2025

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Dear \$[UD:FIRST\_NAME]\$,

**An Introduction by Cathy Parker MBE SFIPM, Chair of IPM and Professor of Retail at Manchester Metropolitan University**

Just a week has passed since the latest [House of Commons statement on devolution](#), reinforcing the Government's commitment to devolution. This follows the publication of the [English Devolution White Paper, Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth](#), which sets out the Government's vision for shifting power from Whitehall to local communities.

The government says that its ambition is clear: it wants to empower local leaders who truly understand their communities, ensuring that decisions are made closer to the people they affect. But will it work? When organisations such as the [National Association of Local Councils](#) are questioning whether the proposed devolution will genuinely empower communities, one must ask: is it simply a redistribution of power within existing structures, concentrating authority in combined authorities?

We know this issue concerns many IPM members. [IPM Fellow Graham Galpin](#) asks, "[Where do high streets and town centres fit within this evolving governance model?](#)" Similarly, [IPM Senior Fellow Jean Ball](#) recently questioned, "What role will organisations such as IPM, town councils, and community organisations play in shaping the future of devolution?" As [IPM Fellow Chris Wade](#) observes in his blog [How Local Is Local...](#)

Manchester Metropolitan University and the Institute of Place Management invite you to join our upcoming events and discussions, where academics, policymakers, and place leaders will explore the opportunities, challenges, and real-world implications of devolution. Whether it's our next event on [place partnerships](#), our [International Women's Day](#) event featuring an expert line-up, or our deep dive into the [impact of devolution](#), each discussion will examine what truly needs to happen to make devolution work for places. Read below for event details of our next few events, or visit our [website to see the events](#) we have recently published for the next few months.

We want you to be part of our discussions as we consider how to make devolution a success for both places and people everywhere. Borrowing the question from Chris Wade FIPM: how local is local when it comes to devolving decisions to a local level? Do you want to help contribute to a working group on this? Get in touch with Ian Harvey via [iharvey@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:iharvey@mmu.ac.uk).



Professor Cathy Parker MBE SFIPM



**IPM Webinar: Effective Place Partnerships**

The number one recommendation after visiting 150 places with the High Street Task Force was the need to restructure local governance arrangements to mobilise expertise, enthusiasm, and effort from both business and the wider community. Join this webinar as we highlight various place partnerships and consider what role these organisations could play in the devolution agenda.

- **Date:** Thursday 27th February
- **Time:** 14:00 - 15:30
- **Attendance:** online
- IPM members only

[Register your place today](#)



**IPM Webinar Celebrating Women in Place Leadership: International Women's Day Event**

We are delighted to announce that Michelle Sacks, Chief Executive of Huntingdonshire District Council, and Clare Richmond, author of *Scavenger Mindset*, will be joining a fantastic panel for IPM's first contribution to International Women's Day event. They will be joined by an IPM Senior Fellow, Jean Ball, and Grosvenor's Nicola Rochfort, Grosvenor bringing together inspiring voices in place leadership, local governance, and community-driven regeneration.

- **Date:** Friday 7th March
- **Time:** 11:00 - 12:00pm
- **Attendance:** Online
- Open to IPM members and non-members

[Register your place today](#)

[Read more details about our events](#)



**Ian Harvey and Rachel Nickeas out and about meeting IPM members**



Over the past few weeks, Ian Harvey, Head of the Institute of Place Management, and Rachel Nickeas, Professional Network Officer, have been meeting with IPM members across the country, listening to their experiences, challenges, and ambitions for place management as we review our membership offer for you.

From discussions with IPM Fellows in Australia and America, to visits to Dudley to meet Zoe Gmaj and Chris Gregory, to catching up with Stefan Gurney, Senior Fellow and Chair of The BID Foundation about changes in the BID world, Ian and Rachel are actively working to strengthen connections across the IPM community and the place management sector. If you would like to connect with Ian and Rachel to share your insights or discuss how IPM can support your work, please get in touch!

Alternately, for those on LinkedIn, [you can follow the discussions by following IPM on LinkedIn](#).

**IPM Fellow, Graham Galpin on shares thoughts on devolution**

With devolution reshaping local governance, questions remain about the role of high streets and town centres in driving economic growth and regional development. IPM Fellow and High Streets Task Force (HSTF) Champion, Graham Galpin, explores these issues in a new blog on our website, asking:

- Will central Government increase ring-fenced funding for town centres?
- Will mayoral funding KPIs include town centre growth?
- How far down the governance structure will devolution reach?

Graham says that it is crucial that organisations like IPM, NALC, and ATCM ensure that town centres remain central to the devolution debate. You can read [Graham's blog here](#), and you can join him to explore this discussion further at an [IPM event on where town centres fit into the devolution discussion](#).

## IPM Case Study: Sparks Bristol

The research team at the IPM have been involved in researching Place-based Circular Society Innovations, to examine where social justice and well-being are integral to the way the project runs. This research ties in heavily with what some place-based practitioners are currently doing. This case study touches upon the importance of examining the benefits of understanding the place-based circular economy. It draws our attention to Sparks in Bristol, to showcase the positive impact places can have when they engage with local, social issues. Sparks is a project which occupies the former Marks & Spencer's store and has repurposed it as an innovation space focuses on sustainability, creativity, and education.

[Read about the work undertaken in Sparks, Bristol on the IPM website.](#)

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### Professor Cathy Parker to Speak at UKREiiF 2025

Professor Cathy Parker, will take centre stage at UKREiiF 2025, joining a high-profile panel discussion on how the real estate sector can create residential and commercial developments that stand the test of time. As Chair of the Institute of Place Management and Professor at Manchester Metropolitan University, Cathy has been instrumental in shaping place-based policy, town centre revitalisation, and economic resilience for over 25 years. Will you be at UKREiiF 2025? Don't miss the opportunity to hear Cathy's insights during this discussion at at the UKREiiF Pavilion on Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 1pm.

Alternatively, if you'd like to schedule a meeting with Cathy to discuss how IPM and MMU can support your work in place management and regeneration, please get in touch via [iharvey@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:iharvey@mmu.ac.uk).

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### What do you think to an Alumni Network for Place Management and Leadership Graduates?

IPM's Rachel Nickeas and Dr. Chloe Steadman, programme leader for postgraduate courses in Place Management and Leadership at Manchester Metropolitan University, recently met with the university's Alumni team to explore launching a dedicated alumni network. This network would serve graduates of the specialised programmes in Place Management and Leadership, a move that would aligns with IPM's celebration of our 20th anniversary in 2026.

For more details about the current course, please visit [this link](#).

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### International Place Branding Association conference heading to Manchester

Building on the momentum of the 2024 IPBA Conference, the **2025 IPBA Conference** is heading to the UK to be held in Manchester and aims to explore the evolving role of place branding as a driver of positive change in a rapidly shifting global landscape.

Colleagues from the Institute of Place Management at [Manchester Metropolitan University](#) are playing a key role in organising the conference, including:

- **[Professor Mihalis Kavaratzis](#)** – Manchester Metropolitan University, UK (Chair)
- **[Dr Nikos Ntounis](#)** – Manchester Metropolitan University, UK (Co-chair)
- **[Dr Chloe Steadman](#)** – Manchester Metropolitan University, UK (Co-chair)

You can register to **attend the conference** and respond to the call for papers via:

<https://ipba2025.mmu.ac.uk/>

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## Your thoughts on current place management and leadership issues

Your thoughts on current place management and leadership issues Could you contribute an 800-word think piece on a topic of interest to place managers and leaders? Perhaps something based on a project you're running, or the challenges faced by our places.



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 February.

### The IPM Team



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