

**MINUTES OF THE FINISHES AND INTERIORS SECTOR LTD
26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, COVENTRY ON THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 16:25**

Present:

Board Members:	Mr Philip Brown	President
	Mrs Helen Tapper	Immediate Past President
	Mr Ian Strangward	Vice President
	Mr Richard Grimes	Board Member
	Mrs Liz McDermott	Board Member
	Mr Stuart Roberts	Board Member
	Mr Nigel Watkins	Board Member

In attendance:	Mr Iain McIlwee	Chief Executive
	Mrs Jane Knight	Company Secretary

Member companies:

aask us Ltd	OWA (UK)
Apton Partitioning	Proline Internals
Architectural Wallsz	Protector
AT Jones & Son	QIC Trims
Aviso	QuickFix Profiles
Bunton Consulting	Rockfon
CCF	Saint-Gobain Ecophon UK
Chalkstring	Smith Building Systems
Clansman Interiors	Tapper Interiors
Encon/Nevill Long	The BDL Group
Fire DNA	The Horbury Group
Fire Stop Products	Thirdway
Grimes Finishings	Troldtekt Acoustic Solutions
Measom Dryline	Truline Systems
Medit Smartply	Vibe Construct
Meronden	voestalpine Metsec
Optima Products	Willmott Dixon

Other members may have been present but did not sign in.

1. WELCOME

FIS President Philip Brown officially opened the Association's 26th Annual General Meeting at 16:25 and welcomed those present.

Philip explained that he had completed his two year's in office as FIS President and then gave an update on FIS activities.

"It is my great honour to welcome you today to the FIS AGM. It is a day of mixed emotions for me as I have now completed my two years as President and must reluctantly stand down.

When I stood here two years ago, there were two things I wanted to focus on, the first was stepping up the fight for SME contractors.

The Reading Report published in 2023 was a tipping point. We have always had a great reputation as a technical authority, but this academic research into procurement and contractual practices helped to add gravitas to our voice and weight to our concerns.

The Empowering Responsible No campaign was born. The campaign is about setting boundaries and identifying the Irresponsible Asks. Knowledge empowers and to support a Responsible No we have bolstered our support services, introduced a contract review service, strengthened our technical guidance and given members free access to the British Standards they need.

Through this work we have been able to zone in on challenges and step up our lobbying. If you want evidence of impact, at the end of last month the Construction Leadership Council published a statement calling a halt on the amendment of contracts on the proviso we cannot effectively insure buildings. This was the FIS team working behind the scenes, using our data and knowledge, petitioning the insurance sector. This announcement will, I am sure, be a pivotal moment. This is not a new ask, but the statement is not just empty words from CLC, but it is the insurance sector speaking through the CLC setting down in a way that has never been done before the consequences to clients, spelling out their duty (now enshrined in regulation) and commercial consequence - the risk of stranded assets.

We have also been at the top table discussing retention, late payment and we are seeing new regulation on retention and a tighter watch on payment through the Duty to Report. The market is tough, but we are making a difference.

I'd also like to flag FIS as a collaborator. The challenge for FIS is huge and our team remain dedicated to focusing on collaborating and curating, as well as creating new resources. This has been exemplified by FIS being instrumental in establishing the Passive Fire Knowledge Group, along with colleagues from the ASFP who are here today and also to the development of guides such as Walls as a System, working with a number of trade bodies to deliver. We have also collaborated closely with the Supply Chain Sustainability School on another subject close to my heart – helping people understand the long-term consequences of their actions.

My second pillar was sustainability. Our Sustainability Leadership Group has made great strides, attracting interest and engagement from major client groups and architects as well as enthusiastic individuals from across the sector.

Through this group FIS has proven yet again it is not a talking shop and amidst a number of exciting and interesting projects has taken the bold step to start a physical re-use hub. This isn't a new business, but a live research project – as Iain put it “we can sit around talking about re-use or we can start solving problems in the real world”. The project has attracted a lot of interest, and one leading architect was so excited he wrote to all his sector contacts encouraging them to get involved saying:

“I am optimistic that this project has the potential to massively move us on in creating the framework for scaling up reuse products and helping to reduce waste and the carbon impact associated with fit-out projects.”

I have been proud to serve and have very much enjoyed working with my fellow Directors and teams. FIS is here to “make a Difference” and we do, every day for someone, but I am also convinced that some days we make a difference for everyone.”

2. READING THE FORMAL NOTICE AND MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Philip read the formal notice of the meeting, dated 3 October 2024. He said that the last meeting had been held on 7 November 2023 in London. Minutes of the meeting were made available to all members on the website. He asked members if they had any questions.

As no comments had been received Stuart Roberts (CCF) formally proposed the minutes of the 2023 AGM. These were seconded by Nigel Watkins (Rockfon) and the resolution was carried.

3. FINANCIAL REPORT, APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023 AND APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Phil Brown said that the FIS accounts for 2023 showed a deficit of £26,586 before tax. These had been scrutinised by the FIS Finance Committee and placed before the meeting with the full support of the FIS Board. They had been circulated to members and were available on the FIS website.

He said that as reported at last year's AGM, the reserves are healthy, and the Board had taken the view that we should be re-investing in FIS to ensure that we have the right support in place in an extremely challenging time. The deficit was planned and budgeted.

As well as increased funds available for key projects, he said FIS had invested in its technical team bringing through new services such as access to British Standards and the development of guidance covering the Building Safety Act, Competence Management Plans and a Guide to the Golden Thread.

Philip also highlighted the ongoing growth in membership which had resulted in an average 8% year-on-year revenue increase over the last three years. Membership retention remains exceptional and the ongoing recruitment saw FIS enter 2024 with over 600 members despite challenging trading conditions for the sector.

Auditors Prime Chartered Accountants had given a clean audit opinion and there were no major accounting or financial issues which needed to be brought to the attention of members.

Philip asked members if they had any questions on the accounts, to raise them now.

As no questions were received, he asked for a proposer. David Rattray (Clansman Interiors) proposed the acceptance of the Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2023, seconded by Helen Tapper (Tapper Interiors) with no votes against. Mike Tapper (Tapper Interiors) then proposed the re-appointment of Prime Chartered Accountants as auditors, seconded by Lucia Di Stazio (Encon/Nevill Long) and this was carried, with no votes against.

4. DECLARATION OF ELECTION RESULTS FOR FIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Philip then read out the results of the elections to the FIS Board effective from 7 November 2024. There are seven Contractor Board positions and five Supplier Board positions on the FIS Board. Vacancies for the new Board were for two contractors and four suppliers.

There were six contractor candidates for two contractor vacancies, and 11 supplier candidates for four supplier vacancies. A vote was therefore necessary for both the contractor and supplier vacancies. Voting details were circulated to members on 3 October 2024.

The contractors elected were Andrew Measom (Measom Dryline) and Helen Tapper (Tapper Interiors). The supplier candidates elected were Alan Brown (Fire DNA), Lucia Di Stazio (Encon/Nevill Long), Richard Mason (British Gypsum) and Nigel Watkins (Rockfon).

Philip congratulated the successful candidates and thanked all nominees for standing for election. In particular he thanked Jonathan Cherry (British Gypsum) who decided to not re-stand and Stuart Roberts (CCF) who has stood down. Both have been phenomenal servants of FIS and our community

Philip continued by announcing that the FIS Board had nominated its new President – Ian Strangward from Architectural Wallsz. Philip officially handed over Presidency to Ian Strangward. Philip will remain on the FIS Board as Immediate Past President.

Ian Strangward then addressed guests and thanked Philip for his service as President.

"I am honoured and grateful that the Board have put their trust in me and invited me to serve as your next President. I would also like to thank Phil for his sterling effort as President – another tough act to follow – and to hand him his Past Presidents badge which I am sure he will wear with pride.

I think we all appreciate that in FIS we have an exceptional trade body and a very dedicated and talented team who don't just work for our members, but work with passion for our members, showing genuine care about our community.

As you have seen, membership remains strong and the FIS is being listened to by the wider Construction Sector.

Phil spoke earlier about the Responsible No.

No, only has authority when it is backed up with knowledge. I was sceptical about the concept of this campaign when first introduced, but we have started to employ the principles and are seeing the benefit at Architectural Wallsz.

The bank of knowledge which FIS has built is impressive - we now need to make sure that we are not just a font of knowledge, but a modern information provider. It is not good enough to just have information available, we must work smarter to ensure it is used - getting to the right people in the right way. The recent development of the Acoustic Verification Scheme to embrace Pods is a great example of how we have put knowledge into action.

Our E-learning platform is also going to be key. The first course we put up "an Introduction to the Building Safety Act" has been a great start, several hundred people have already attended the course and the feedback has been very positive.

The second course on "Preparing Service Penetrations" went up last week and this week, our "Pre-construction guide to drylining" has been launched. You will see progress in the quality of these courses and now we have a process, you will be seeing a regular flow of new courses targeting vital interventions, job titles and knowledge gaps. I am personally looking forward to our Estimators course which we hope to publish before the end of the year.

Much of our training will be free to members, but we will also be looking to utilise income from training to support investment in the core work of the association, ensuring that we are resourcing our team to continue to influence change and drive compliance.

Competence is the key to compliance moving forward. A Competent workforce relies on people. As the market starts to grow, FIS is stepping up our support for recruitment through Bootcamps and redoubling our efforts on apprenticeships. I was impressed with the new Skills Centre that I visited in Edgware last month – we need more centres of excellence like this to help train the next generation of workers.

These are challenging times. It is not an easy time for construction, and we are almost certainly at a tipping point with new regulations and stark commercial lessons. We need to learn from the failure of ISG and strive harder to influence government and the Construction Industry to support our members.

For FIS to continue to grow and deliver for our community, modernisation is essential – we all need to be working smarter. One of our key initiatives in 2024 has been to launch the Fit-out Futures Group, as many of you observed earlier today.

Finally, with the committed team and strong community we have built, I look forward to continuing to work with my fellow Board members in ensuring FIS continues to be member led and is making a difference for individual members and the sector as a whole."

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ian Strangward advised that under agenda item five, no other business had been notified.

6. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Ian Strangward advised that the date and place of the next Annual General Meeting would be notified.

7. OFFICIAL CLOSE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Ian Strangward thanked all members for their support and closed the Annual General Meeting at 16.44.

