

From the President's Desk, "News in Conservation" February-March 2024, Issue 100

Submitted by sharragrow on 06 Feb 2024

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IIC's AGM was held on 29 January 2024 at the Institute's offices at 3 Birdcage Walk in Westminster, and it was a pleasure to welcome members there in person and online.

IIC Council met for one and a half days on either side of the AGM. Council meets three times a year, with generally two of those meetings online lasting no more than three hours. So our annual in-person meeting, in coordination with the AGM, is all the more important, allowing

issues to be unpacked in more detail and to have wider and more free ranging discussion than the online meetings afford, as well as allowing us to enjoy each other's company. We were privileged to meet in-person at the ICOM-CC Valencia meeting in September 2023 and will do so again at the IIC Congress in Lima in September 2024, when the majority of Council will be gathered together in Peru.

After the AGM was the annual Talk followed by discussion with Dr Nick Merriman OBE on the subject of *Focusing on the practical reality of the transition to a net zero future*. Dr Merriman is the incoming CEO of English Heritage. He was instrumental in the first UK Museum COP held at Tate Modern on 31 October 2023, organised by the National Museums Directors Council. This groundbreaking event secured consensus from museum leaders on collective action to decarbonise the sector and mitigate the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises.

Dr Merriman is also the editor of the recently published *Museums and the Climate Crisis*, which includes a series of challenging papers on how museums can respond to the interrelated global climate, biodiversity and pollution crises. I encourage you to access an e-copy or purchase a hard copy: [Museums and the Climate Crisis | Nick Merriman | Taylor & Francis eBoo \(taylorfrancis.com\)](https://www.taylorfrancis.com)

The book highlights the increasing focus on not only how museums should respond to the climate crisis but also what they can actually do, illustrated by a range of case studies. The book opportunely arrives off the back of progress at COP28 in Dubai where, for the first time, culture appeared on the COP28 formal agenda, resulting in the [Emirates Declaration on Cultural-based Climate Action](#). Conservation gets more than an honourable mention with aspirations including "Maximizing climate, social, and environmental co-benefits such as social cohesion, wellbeing, creativity, education and intercultural dialogue, across sectors including the built and natural environment, agriculture, cities and regions, energy, and care for habitats and communities, by including the conservation, protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage and the promotion of culture in adaptation and mitigation activities".

It's a tremendous outcome for the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action formed by the Climate Heritage Network (of which IIC is a founding signatory). As HRH Princess Dana Firas of Jordan, the Climate Heritage Network Special envoy said, "This is an absolutely pivotal step towards the full integration of culture and heritage in the climate agenda to achieve transformative and meaningful action".

So now, fellow conservators, we must show we really can take transformative and meaningful action. IIC is continuing to lead the profession with our IIC Net Zero Pilot Project being launched this month. This includes a heap of resources including on-demand lectures about net zero. Do look out for it.

Meanwhile my best wishes for 2024

Julian Bickersteth

IIC President

(Translations available in the PDF below. Languages include: French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese)

Document

[President's Column translated to: French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese](#) (490.95 KB)