

Valuable Platform for our Outreach and Advocacy



After a period of re-shaping, AGI has a new focus, new priorities and a new partner to champion GI, explains new chair Abigail Page.

What should a modern membership association look like? During my time as a member of AGI, I've seen significant changes in both the outlook of the organisation and steps we've taken to deal with significant challenges – most particularly in my last four years on the Council. Of course, the need to adapt is not limited to AGI. Around us we see the impact of significant change on organisations and individuals' day-to-day work – disruption, restructuring and increasing "busy-ness".

In January I was honoured to be elected as the first "millennial" chair of AGI by an incredibly strong AGI Council for 2017. It's an exciting time to serve AGI in this way - after a period of reshaping the organisation's "back office" we are now in a position to look ahead, streamlined and ready to take the steps to become a more modern membership association.

Our core values remain intact – our mission is still real, but our delivery must be different. There is much that we have to offer as experts in GI and an even wider playing field for us, if we can adapt to a different game. This was evident in our activities during 2016 – our successes were too varied to summarise succinctly here but notably we built on the success of the Foresight report and AGI held some of its most successful events in recent years, with record numbers of delegates attending events in Scotland and Northern Ireland, to a renewed and focused GeoCom creating a valuable platform for our outreach.

Moving ahead to the outlook for 2017, there are three key areas where Council will focus our attention:

- Outreach and Advocacy
- Supporting skills and career development
- Opportunities for knowledge exchange and networking

I'm delighted that the first step towards this was announced in early February, through a strategic alliance with the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). The collaboration will provide the opportunity to champion the value of geographic information, ensuring advocacy and engagement with those who increasingly embrace location within the digital economy.

Skills development remains a key priority for AGI. Our Early Career Network (ECN) has been a notable success: we were delighted to welcome a representative to our January Council meeting and will continue to extend this invitation to ensure that input from this important demographic of our membership influences our strategy and activities.

We know that one of the ways that many members come across AGI is through our successful events – from #GeoDrinks and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) events to our annual conference - #GeoCom. AGI continues to commit to providing a valuable opportunity to bring members together, share issues and challenges but also to understand and keep pace with the changes around us (and of course, share a drink or two in the process). During 2017 we will work with our SIGs to reshape the way in which we can offer opportunities for knowledge sharing. We will also ensure that we have an opportunity to invite the whole membership to join us at #GeoCom – an important highlight in our year as members come together, but increasingly also a valuable platform for our outreach and advocacy. Keep the 26th October clear, more details coming soon!

I often reflect on how lucky we are to work in such an exciting industry, adapting to change and full of innovation and inspiring, committed individuals. I'm grateful that we have such a positive opportunity and support from our members to take AGI forward as a modern membership association and with renewed focus to continue our mission. Take the opportunity to engage with and support AGI during 2017 – we have an exciting year ahead.

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