

## 2021 Annual Report of Congress

---

This report covers Congress activities between the Institution's AGMs in June 2020 and June 2021.

During this period the operations of the IChemE have been restricted by COVID regulations. The virtual nature of Congress meant that discussions were able to continue as normal, underscoring the value of the on-line format.

Three sessions have been held, and the range of discussions has been diverse. Topics have included the Climate Change statement, the Institution's 'Value Proposition' to members, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement, the Commercial Strategy, and the Regions Committee, amongst others. Topics have been suggested by Congress members, IChemE members and the Board of Trustees. We encourage all members to engage with us via email, either to the general Congress address, or by individual contact. Efforts to increase member interaction with Congress are planned for the coming year.

Congress has robustly represented members' views, and I am pleased to report that the Trustees have been receptive to the ideas and comments put forward. The transition of the Regions Committee to the nascent Member Engagement Committee being a prime example of Congress suggestions being welcomed and acted on. It is with some sadness I report that the majority of Congress comments on the Climate Change statement were not adopted by the relevant committee.

We have just held our third elections, and I am pleased to welcome the eight new Congress members, bringing our total membership back to 34 out of 40 available seats. The interest in Congress of members in the early stages of their careers is particularly heartening. Unfortunately, it is again impossible to meet 'face to face' to introduce new and existing members of Congress, but a detailed induction session is being held to ensure that new members can contribute effectively from the start of the next session.

An important part of Congress's role is to assess and report on the Institution's business strategy and accounts. Whilst these have been adversely affected by the pandemic, we commend the work of the Trustees and the Management in controlling costs to a better than break-even position. Congress has had input to the business strategy, and we look forward to seeing this move forward, possibly stronger, as a result of the lessons learned about remote working during the pandemic.

Finally, Congress could not function without the wholehearted backing of the staff at Rugby. I am pleased to report that there has been a new focus on supporting members, and I thank the staff for their patience and dedication in coming to terms with remote working, in particular our Congress Officer Sarah Fox.

Nigel Hirst  
Congress Chair