



News release

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Royal Institute of British Architects supports Cornish ethnicity and cultural diversity

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has revised its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy to recognise Cornish ethnicity following the Government's decision to include Cornish under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in April 2014.

In a move that highlights the RIBA commitment to making architecture more inclusive, RIBA forms will be amended to ensure that 'Cornish' is included as a tick box option under the ethnicity heading; providing the capacity to create an exemplar for supporting Cornwall Council in securing further devolved powers for Cornwall and recognising the important cultural value of organisations such as Gorsedh Kernow.

The historic decision was agreed at the RIBA Council meeting at 66 Portland Place, London in September last year following a motion put forward by nationally elected RIBA Councillor Jonathan Ball MBE, architect, bard of Gorsedh Kernow and co-founder of the Eden Project, from Bude.

In a letter, RIBA President Jane Duncan says 'The RIBA is committed to making architecture more inclusive. We believe a diverse profession, representative of society as a whole, is pivotal to meeting the challenges of the future. We note and recognise the Government's comments made in April 2014, that 'the decision to recognise the unique identity of the Cornish, now affords them the same status under the European

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Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities as the UK's other Celtic people, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish'.

RIBA Cornwall branch is already engaged with Cornwall Council and the Cornish Design Review Panel supporting design training for Cornwall councillors, plus regular contact with planning department executive staff, and supports the possible future devolution of planning and housing powers to the unitary authority.

RIBA Cornwall chair Jane Hamlyn said, 'It is fantastic news that the RIBA has made this positive recognition of Cornwall's unique identity and we fully support the work being done by organisations such as Gorsedh Kernow who help protect and promote Cornwall's precious cultural heritage'.

"This is indeed very welcome news," said Cornish bard and architect Jonathan Ball MBE, "and exemplifies just how a highly respected professional organisation like RIBA can help bridge the growing gap between cash strapped local councils and international centres of expertise such as the Royal Institute of British Architects while at the same time having due regard for the unique place that is Cornwall."

RIBA South West regional director Jon Watkins said, 'The RIBA is excited at the prospect of further devolution for Cornwall and the opportunity for increased discussion on issues around housing and planning'.

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Notes to editors:

1. For further press information please contact Jon Watkins, RIBA South West Regional Director on 07501 466649
2. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) champions better buildings, communities and the environment through architecture and our members. RIBA provide the standards, training, support and recognition that put RIBA

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members – in the UK and overseas – at the peak of their profession. With government, we work to improve the design quality of public buildings, new homes and new communities. www.architecture.com

3. For further information about Cornwall Council and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cornish-granted-minority-status-within-the-uk> and <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/cornish-minority-status/>
4. For further information about Gorsedh Kernow and the College of the Bards of Cornwall please contact Delia Brotherton, Gorsedh Kernow Communications Officer by email communications@gorsedhkernow.org.uk or visit the website www.gorsedhkernow.org.uk