

BESA backs CIBSE president's 'inspire the next' vision

3 years ago



The building services industry has been urged to rally behind new CIBSE President Kevin Mitchell's campaign to inspire a new generation of engineers who can help society solve its big technical and scientific challenges.

The Building Engineering Services Association (BESA) congratulated Mitchell on taking up this prestigious role and called for greater collaboration between industry bodies, employers, academia, and individual engineers to turn his vision into reality.

"Kevin offers fresh hope that we could, finally, find a way to present our industry in a way that appeals to a much more diverse audience," said BESA chief executive David Frise. "However, we will only be able to give his vision positive momentum and create change if we work together right across the building engineering supply chain."

In his presidential address, Mitchell identified the "looming disaster" of climate change, recovering from the pandemic, and the devastation of Ukrainian towns and cities as key trigger points for increasing awareness of the importance of the built environment among young people.

He said these challenges starkly illustrated the role building services plays in people's lives.

Resilient

"The pandemic has raised urgent questions about our buildings and, especially, how they support the health and well-being of people," said Mitchell. "Healthy and resilient buildings have never mattered more. Not just to deal with Covid, but to manage the next threat – whatever and whenever that might be," he said.

“And in Ukraine, when we come to repair the buildings, the important thing is that we are repairing lives and helping people.”

It is this human element that he believes can have most resonance with young people looking to make a difference and improve their world. He said that, as a parent himself, the sight of children’s bedrooms destroyed by Russian missiles was extremely distressing, but also showed that rebuilding could give people hope for a better future.

“Research shows that the most talented young people – those who have a choice of profession – are increasingly drawn to careers where they believe their work will have a positive impact on the world. I would argue that there are few careers that offer more opportunity to deliver real change than that of a building services engineer,” said Mitchell.

“If we can inspire people to join us – people from a range of backgrounds who reflect the communities we serve – if we can do that, our ability to problem solve and innovate will increase exponentially.”

However, he said the industry had “mountains to climb” and if it expected a new generation to lead the way, then it would have to provide wholehearted support and encouragement.

“There has never been a better opportunity to promote our industry when even the role of mechanical ventilation is being discussed in Parliament,” added David Frise.

“As a body that represents a sizeable part of the built environment supply chain and hundreds of employers, BESA will be delighted to work with CIBSE and our other industry partners to meet the challenge Kevin has laid down,” he said.

BESA also congratulated CIBSE on reaching its 125th anniversary, a milestone marked by the new President with the creation of:

One theme: Inspire the next generation

Two overarching goals:

To pay forward the support we have received to the next generation

To learn and share how building services engineers are key in the transition to net zero and in fighting climate change

Five challenges:

Celebrate – building services icons

Inspire – future engineers

Boost – develop an ‘early years’ engineer

Share – your building services story

Engage – with your peers to share knowledge and fight climate change

(#CIBSE125CHALLENGES).