

# CIHT Dubai Group Newsletter

## Welcome

**Dear CIHT Dubai Members,**

Welcome to our seventh issue of the CIHT Dubai Group Newsletter.



*CIHT Dubai Hackathon at the University of Wollongong*

Eid Mubarak! CIHT Dubai wishes everyone a happy Eid Al-Fitr.

As we reflect on the first quarter of 2024, we have witnessed a busy period in recent months, both for CIHT and for transport in the UAE and GCC. From July 2023 up to date to 2024, CIHT Dubai hosted five online seminars and an exciting Transport Hackathon event at Wollongong University in Dubai to engage students and support the development of young professionals. This has been matched by some great developments more widely, including the holding of the COP28 Climate Change Conference, announcements of the new Blue Line of the Dubai Metro and plans to launch one of the World's first Urban Air Mobility networks within the next couple of years.

Within this month's newsletter, you will find details of the current Dubai Committee, information on online seminars, an update on membership and professional qualifications, and a profile of one of our members. We are also looking forward to our second Annual General Meeting in May and encourage all CIHT Members and interested transport professionals to attend.

The Dubai Group exists to organise technical, membership and social events which share and develop knowledge, ideas and skills amongst highways and transport professionals in the UAE. We extend our thanks to all those who have helped us in this goal over the past few months through membership, service, or other voluntary contributions.

## CIHT Dubai Group

The CIHT Dubai Group currently consists of 13 Committee Members, pictured below, who meet regularly to discuss progress and to plan and organise future events. There are over 100 full CIHT Members in the UAE and we now have a local and global contacts database of over 1,800 transport professionals.



**Martin Tillman**  
(Chair)



**Richard Lewis**  
(Vice-Chair)



**Mohamed Al-Mansi**  
(Secretary)



**Samar Nasser**  
(Young Professionals Representative)



**Dr. Stephen Wilkinson**  
(Events Coordinator)



**Brindha Sankari**  
(Web and Data)



**Michelle Wood**  
(Professional Development Officer)



**Jonathan Spear**  
(Committee Member  
– Former Chair)



**Robin Miller-Stott**  
(Committee Member)



**Dr. Khalid Nur**  
(Committee Member)



**Prathyush Mukkadekkat**  
(Committee Member)



**Kashyap Shukla**  
(Committee Member)



**Sherif Rashad**  
(Committee Member)

Additional support is always welcome so if you wish to get involved in the Committee, please get in touch on our email: [ciht.dubaigroup@gmail.com](mailto:ciht.dubaigroup@gmail.com).

This newsletter is published twice a year by the Dubai Group of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT). To subscribe to our newsletter, receive notifications of upcoming seminars, give us feedback, or find out more about CIHT activities, membership and qualifications, contact us via:

General queries: [ciht.dubaigroup@gmail.com](mailto:ciht.dubaigroup@gmail.com)

Branch website: [Dubai | CIHT](http://Dubai | CIHT)

## Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The CIHT Dubai Annual General Meeting (AGM), which will be held online on **7th May 2024**, will feature a review and reflection on the past year, celebration of our achievements and a chance to look ahead. The AGM will also see the election of new Committee members and the appointment of the Chair and Officers to take forward our plans for the next year.

There are many benefits of getting involved in CIHT Dubai. Like other CIHT regions and nations, it plays a critical role in the wider Institution, acting as a focal point for members to meet and share their experiences locally. We look forward to organising an annual programme of activities, which include CPD opportunities, seminars, site visits and social events. A more formal announcement will be made by CIHT Britannia Walk in the forthcoming weeks with details of the proposed elected office bearers and ordinary members of the Committee.

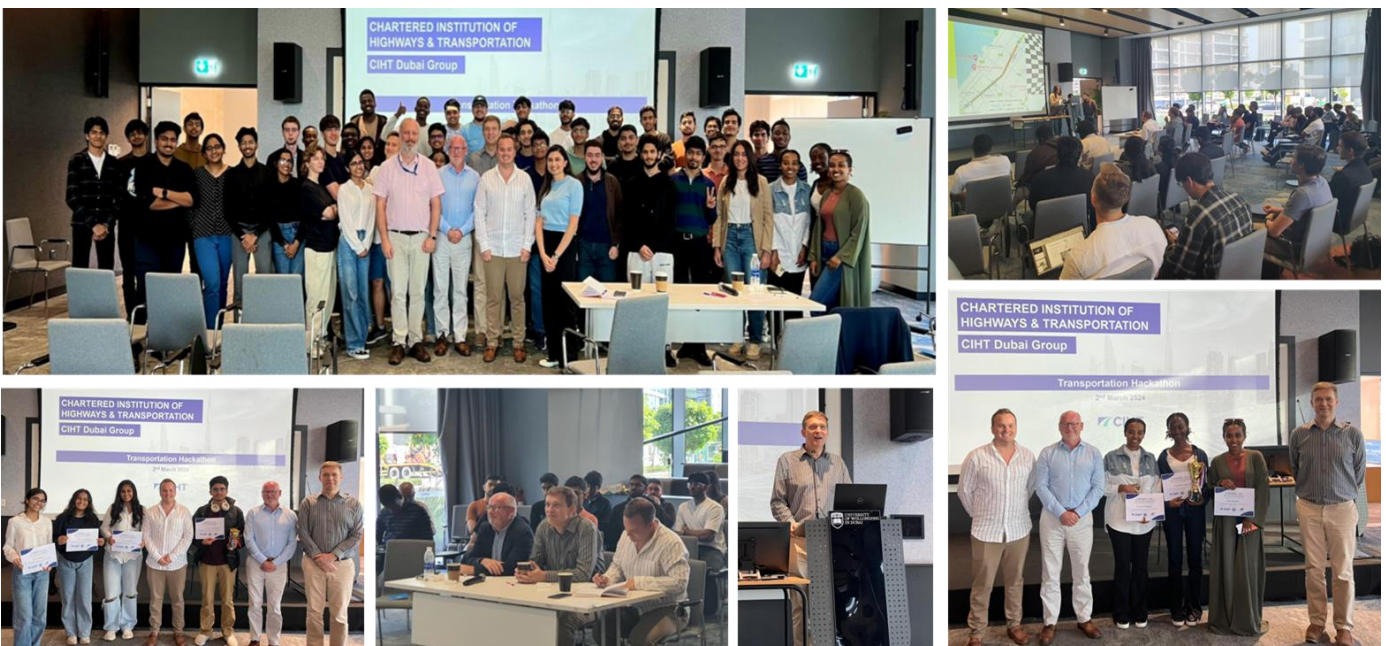
We encourage all members to attend this year's AGM. Instructions on how to book a place will be communicated in due course. Upon confirmation of your request to book a place, you will receive a confirmation email with details on ways to attend the AGM (online/in-person).

## CIHT Dubai Transport Hackathon

The first edition of CIHT Dubai's Hackathon was held at the University of Wollongong in Dubai, participated by 12 incredible teams of undergraduate students from the University of Wollongong and Harriot-Watt University. Given the strategic importance of Sheikh Zayed Road for Dubai Government and City's residents, the chosen topic for the CIHT Dubai Hackathon's was "Sheikh Zayed Road: Barrier or Bridge?"

The teams impressively developed ideas which were exceptionally innovative, creative and sustainable. The students demonstrated an excellent diversity and covered key areas of transport planning and mobility domains – including capacity reinforcement, public transport, micro-mobility, transport sustainability, alternate source of energy, future modes of transport, travel demand management, automation and technological advancements, and placemaking.

All participants were commended for their efforts and prizes were awarded by the panel of CIHT Dubai judges, Jonathan Spear, Martin Tillman and Robin Miller-Stott. CIHT Dubai extends its gratitude to Dr. Stephen Wilkinson and Samar Nasser for their instrumental role in organizing the first and highly successful Hackathon.



CIHT Dubai Hackathon at the University of Wollongong

## Events July 2023 – March 2024

From July 2023 to date, five seminars have been successfully organised, including our most popular event ever on Big Data and modelling delivered by Luis Willumsen which had 500 Registrations. Seminars generally lasted 60 to 90 minutes and consisted of a brief introduction to CIHT and the Dubai Group, one or more presentations, followed by moderated Questions and Answers. The topics covered in 2023 and speakers are as follows:

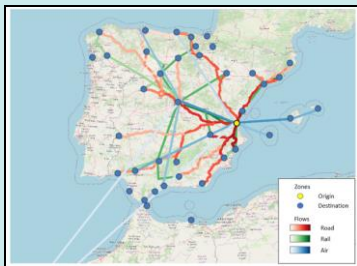
Month	Seminar Title	Speakers and Organisations
July 2023	Helium and Hydrogen: The Past and the Future of Transport?	Stephen Wilkinson – Director of Research at the University of Wollongong in Dubai
October 2023	Big Data for Transport Models	Luis (Pilo) Willumsen - Internationally recognised expert in Transport and Traffic modelling
November 2023	Revolutionizing Transportation: Master Planning Next-Gen Mobility Platforms	Ashish Agrawal - Executive Director at Transpo Group
January 2024	Reflections on COP28, The Sustainability of Transport Systems	Farah Naz – Director of ESG and Innovation AECOM Arun Krishnan – Global Innovation Lab Bruce Haldors – CEO at Transpo Group
February 2024	Urban Strides: Perspectives On Pedestrian Modelling	James Nicols - Associate Director at Jacobs Brett Little - People Movement Lead at Arup UK Samya Ghosh - Director of Transportation Planning at AECOM Tan-Na Cheng - Technical Expert at Sweco Swede

A full programme of technical seminars is planned for the second half of the year, either online or in a hybrid format. Come along, brush up on some topical subjects and network with like-minded people. Bulletin Notes have been produced for each seminar and are available on our website [Click Here](#).

The upcoming event is “Signs And Markings – Getting Them Right” by Dave George for sign up [click here](#).

## In case you missed it.....

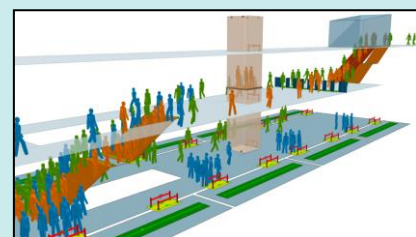
### October 2023: Big Data for Transport Models



This seminar emphasises the significant role of big data, particularly from mobile phones and smart devices, in revolutionising transportation models. The availability of vast and current datasets allows for improved model accuracy, rapid updates, and the detection of evolving trends and behavioural changes.

This is exemplified by the application of mobile phone data during the pandemic, where the World Bank sought insights into the impact on public transportation usage in Latin American cities, specifically Bonosciis and Bogota. The speaker emphasises the importance of processing and validating mobile network data, suggesting that these steps may be more crucial than the raw data quality itself. For more details [click here](#).

### February 2024: Urban Strides: Perspectives on Pedestrian Modelling



This seminar delved into the multifaceted aspects of pedestrian modelling, including the intricate dynamics of pedestrian behaviour within urban environments, extending beyond transport planning to encompass broader considerations of urban design, human behaviour, and public space management.

Discussions revolved around innovative modelling techniques and how the rise of big data and AI could impact the future trajectory field, exploring their potential impacts on the modelling process and how they could work to optimize pedestrian flow and enrich our understanding of human interaction with the built environment. For more details [click here](#).



## Membership and Qualifications

The latest CIHT Membership figures for the UAE are shown below. CIHT Dubai is working hard to grow overall interest and application for CIHT Membership, including a more equal gender balance and encouraging diversity across ages, membership levels, skills and between the private, academic and private sectors.

	Fellow	Member	Associate	Graduate	Student	Total
Total 2023	13	80	1	3	5	102

Whether you are just starting your career in highways and transportation or are an experienced professional, CIHT can help to support your professional development needs by offering access to professional qualifications which recognise your knowledge and practical experience and improve your chances of progression in your chosen career.

CIHT Dubai exists to help existing Members with CIHT services and encourage more Members to join.

### Why Become Professionally Qualified?

- ✓ National and international recognition as a professional
- ✓ Greater influence within your organisation and industry
- ✓ Assists career progression
- ✓ Recognition of your knowledge and expertise by colleagues and clients
- ✓ Evidence of your commitment to professional standards

### What Can CIHT Offer?

#### Routes to:

- ✓ Chartered Engineer (CEng)
  - ✓ Incorporated Engineer (IEng)
  - ✓ Engineering Technician (EngTech)
  - ✓ Transport Planning Professional (TPP)
  - ✓ Road Safety Auditing Certificate of Competency (CoC)
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Not sure what Qualification is right for you?

- Go to CIHT Website at [Get Qualified \(ciht.org.uk\)](https://www.ciht.org.uk)
- Complete your Initial Assessment Form online, so CIHT can confirm the options and best route available to you.

## Training and Mentoring



Michelle Wood is the Professional Development Officer of CIHT Dubai Group and is focused on raising the awareness of professional training and qualifications in the UAE for both CIHT members and non-members working in the Region's highways and transportation sectors. Two seminars are delivered annually: one on transport planning qualification (Transport Planning Professional) and the other on engineering (Chartered Engineer, Incorporated Engineer, and Engineering Technician).

The Dubai Group supports applicants through a set of local mentors in region who are professionally qualified. Engagement and feedback from individuals and employers who are interested in pursuing professional qualifications is being actively encouraged and the objective is to make access to qualifications as flexible and relevant as possible.

In addition, it should be noted that PTRC 20-week lecture series covering "The Principles of Traffic and Transport" will commence in mid-April. The well received lectures are delivered by experienced industry leaders within the region is aimed at those joining the field or wanting to have a broader understanding of other aspects within the industry for more details [click here](#).

For any queries on any training opportunities above, please reach out to Michelle directly or any other committee member who can direct you further. More information can be obtained through the CIHT website (<https://www.ciht.org.uk>). We would also be delighted to hear from senior professionals who are professionally qualified and willing to act as mentors to others.

## Dubai Takes Centre Stage in Global Climate Change Negotiations and the Decarbonisation of Transport (COP 28)

COP28, the largest global climate conference to date with almost 97,000 participants, was held at Expo City, Dubai, at the end of 2023. There was much to observe, comment on and argue about as the event unfolded over two weeks, including on issues pertinent to transport, on which many side events were held, particularly on Transport Thematic Day, 6th December.

It will take some time to pick through the detail of the COP28 (Global Stocktake) Agreement hammered out by delegates in the early hours of 13th December. The 21 pages and 196 paragraphs have 198 countries noting, inviting, deciding, requesting, committing and contributing to a wide range of actions. However, highly notable was the meaningful language towards the irreversible transition away from fossil fuels and some real progress in areas like renewable energy, loss and damage, and sustainable development. With the statement “Transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science,” COP28 produced the first officially adopted UNFCCC document to include language on abandoning the extraction of oil, the fossil fuel most relevant to the transport sector.

For the transport sector, the COP28 Agreement gives also recognition to “accelerating the reduction of emissions from road transport on a range of pathways, including through development of infrastructure and rapid deployment of zero- and low-emission vehicles.” Leaving aside the parallel importance of behavioural change, modal shift and travel demand management, which received far less attention, this is the first time that language on the transport sector and zero emission vehicles was included in any official decision, making COP28 a milestone for decarbonising transport.

As the UAE COP28 Presidency said in his closing speech, countries now will be judged by their actions, not words, and how all collaborate to solve pressing common problems. The next few years will be crucial to further increase ambition on climate action, which must be reflected in the 2025 updates of Nationally Defined Contributions (NDCs) to be produced by all countries, including strengthening their transport focus.

CIHT Dubai followed and was impressed by the energy to reach agreement at Expo City. It remains for the incoming COP presidencies of Azerbaijan and Brazil to secure more ambitious language on fossil fuel divestment and to address topics to keep the 1.5-degree Paris target alive, including in the transport sector.



## Committee Member Profile – Richard Lewis



### 1. What's your job and who do you currently work for?

I work for Transpo Group as the Director for KSA & International but based in Dubai with frequent travel. My role involves leading all aspects of transport planning on exciting projects across the region for a variety of clients whether public or private sector.

### 2. Can you briefly summarise your career to date?

In 2002, while studying for a degree in Geography and Computing in Coventry University, I did a year out at Atkins in Birmingham. During that time, I undertook some SATURN model coding and wrote many Post Opening Project Evaluation (POPE) Reports for the Highway's Agency and I brought GIS into the team. I continued part-time in my final year and back to full time after graduation. I was lucky to be seconded to the specialist PRISM Model development team (the most disaggregate model in the world at the time).

In 2007 I joined MVA Consultancy as a Senior Team Leader and was promoted to Principal. I worked on model development, business cases & city strategies. After a short 7-month stint in Dubai in 2008 to help on a project, I decided to move permanently in 2010 when I was offered a job by IBI. Eventually I ended up at AECOM leading a team and working on exciting projects from transport modelling, financial modelling to policy and the Economic and Social Cost of Accidents in Dubai which was one of the most enthralling projects of my career. In 2017 I joined Transpo Group as an Associate Director and in 2019 was promoted to Director of Special Projects Unit and later converted the team to a wider remit to oversee KSA and International.

I have always had a passion for developing people and their skills. I am truly blessed, that the team we developed is the best, most committed team of overachievers I have ever worked (no bias here). I still make time to provide the lessons of experience and am hands-on in some projects to give my insights. This also enables me to interact with the team, provide coaching and see how I can provide opportunities for career development.

A key part of my job is to develop our business and service offering by bringing new clients and new skills to the team to ensure we keep developing.

### 3). Why did you move to Dubai and what's the best thing about living here?

I came with MVA Consultancy in 2008 to assist on a project for 7 months. I returned to the UK in February 2009, but still kept an enthusiasm and appetite for Dubai and its leading approach to transport in the Region. I was contacted by a friend who knew of a company looking for a Principal level transport planner with a background in modelling and economics. So, I came with a view to stay two years. That was 14 years ago.

### 4). What do you get out of being in CIHT Dubai?

I like the community and joined to access events and qualifications as well as meeting new people across the industry. As a committee member, I can be part of developing an organisation that is truly beneficial to the industry in Dubai and the region. We were lucky that Johnathan Spear had established and laid the foundations and continues to guide us. Maybe we share the same reasons, I like to give back to an industry I love, help the next generation and see them flourish.

### 5). What do you think CIHT can offer anyone thinking of joining?

As well as access to qualifications and learning materials, I think networking and contacts are probably the most important. People from different companies can interact and they will know each other until they retire, hopefully sharing knowledge and techniques along the way. Although we compete, we also often collaborate and help each other out through knowledge transfer (I often call and message friends I have worked with in the past and they call me for help in techniques, recruitment etc) and I feel we should encourage this.

### 6). How do you feel transport is moving within the region?

Dubai and UAE are now established and stable in transport terms and many of the major infrastructure projects are delivered with additional refinements coming online. I think we have all seen that the major growth has shifted to KSA where they are developing the country at an impressive pace and taking the lessons learned in Dubai. Many colleagues have moved in-country and many others fly in and out regularly. The projects are impressive and challenging, as is their focus on sustainability and innovative solutions.