

An open letter to Sally Haynes, CEO, CIEEM

Dear Sally

Thank you for your letter.

I'll take your points in turn.

Other literature

I am aware of Tilly's article—we have had some communication privately—her motivation is magnanimous and the article itself is very good.

CIEEM's acknowledgment of the problem

Further, I am genuinely delighted to hear there is an appetite within CIEEM to tackle the issue. I am sure the thousands of struggling graduates and entry-level ecologists out there will be similarly encouraged at the news.

Working group

I take the position that not all problems require committee-led solutions. I strongly believe this is one of them. There's just no good argument for not pressing forward with a Fair Pay Charter. As much as anything else a committee that is small and probably quite homogenous is, unless published for consultation, extremely unlikely to arrive at an optimal solution (at least by design; perhaps by luck).

As the most senior executive at CIEEM, you have the authority and resources to implement what is after all a very blunt, simple and costless solution. Author or commission a Draft Fair Pay Charter next week, issue a consultation with a 4-week response time so that the good ideas your Membership will undoubtedly have can be considered and incorporated, and then publish the finished article sometime in April. You can always update the charter again next year, and the year after that, and so on. **The need to get something done urgently greatly outweighs the need for the solution to be perfect.**

What I propose above would be an enormous win-win: CIEEM demonstrates that it understands the problem, and a significant proportion of new and soon-to-be members will directly and immediately benefit from the solution. It will also be a matter of weeks and not months before the problem is solved, something I'm sure that all young and aspiring ecologists would be pleased to see prior to the commencement of the summer season (where the majority of the exploitation takes place).

Taking into account the above, and the urgency (given our proximity to the optimal survey seasons for reptiles, newts, bats, etc), I am asking you to re consider the

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traditional route of: a); assemble a working group, b); go through several rounds of internal consultation; c); publish a draft for external consultation; d); yet more rounds of internal consultation; and finally e); publish.

However, if you are not willing to assume the responsibility to tackle the issue personally and indeed wish to form and take advice from a working group (for whatever reason), I would be pleased for a representative of Arbtech to contribute.

In fact, tackling this issue is something I deeply committed to. That being the case, I would like to be involved personally.

I don't see any binding reason that one must be a member of CIEEM to provide input to a working group—so perhaps you could explain your rationale here?

Notwithstanding this, if for some arbitrary reason you wish to exclude the obvious benefit (if nothing else, in diversity¹) input of non-Members: I am happy to submit myself to the application process for professional membership, assuming it would be determined in time for me to contribute.

Please can you let me know when the next application round (and determination date) is?

I look forward to hearing from you.

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¹ You can cut this many ways. What I am driving at is that there are many people that cannot afford your membership fees because they are so badly exploited. They have to prioritise what tiny disposable income they have toward expenses that might give them a better shot of landing a job (or at least one that pays the minimum wage!!!) e.g., CPD, or putting fuel in their car to volunteer, or travel costs to shadow/intern. To exclude the very people that you say you are trying to help is to my mind incomprehensibly entitled. If anything, it goes further to illustrate the disconnect between CIEEM's Ivory Tower and its student/qualifying membership. If you had bothered to read and respond to some of the hundreds of comments from people in this position on the post I referred to in my original letter, you might be able to employ more empathy and not make irrational and arbitrary decisions about who can and cannot contribute to the working group. Finally, irrespective of membership, I *sincerely* hope you have the foresight to include students, aspiring ecologists and employed graduates in said group.