



Conflict Avoidance

Newsletter

February 2026

Welcome

The start of 2026 has been challenging for many across our industry. Ongoing pressure around payment and cash flow is again highlighting how disruptive disputes can be. Once issues escalate, they are difficult to undo. While we cannot change what has already happened on projects, we can take practical steps to prevent the same problems arising again.

That is why the Conflict Avoidance Coalition exists. We have brought together professional institutions, contractors, consultants, trade organisations and supply chain partners with one shared goal. Early intervention to prevent disputes before they take hold. This was never going to be an overnight solution. It is a long term cultural shift. 2026 is a pivotal year for turning awareness into implementation.

Raising awareness across the whole UK construction industry remains a challenge. The next step is ensuring organisations commit to embedding conflict avoidance into their business models. Most importantly, they must implement early intervention in practice.

Len Bunton FRICS FCI Arb Hon FRIAS, President

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1. Coalition Webinar Series: Embracing Conflict Avoidance

Our monthly webinar series remains one of the most effective ways to build awareness and share experience.

These conversations give industry leaders the opportunity to speak openly about how they are embedding conflict avoidance into their organisations. They discuss what is working, what challenges remain, and how early intervention is influencing behaviour on projects.

These sessions are grounded in real commercial experience. By attending, you help strengthen a growing community committed to making conflict avoidance the norm. We're delighted to

confirm that our next session will feature conversations with Kier Group and Fenwick Elliott. Find out more about our guest speakers below:

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE COALITION ONLINE WEBINAR

*Embracing Conflict Avoidance:
Kier Group and Fenwick Elliott*

 **March, 3rd 2026**
09:30 - 10:30 am


Jim McCluskey
Kier Group


Jeremy Glover
Fenwick Elliott

 Follow us on LinkedIn  Visit our website cac.uk.org

Jim McCluskey, Kier Group

In our second series of interviews, Len Bunton, the current President of the Conflict Avoidance Coalition, will facilitate a discussion with Jim McCluskey, a member of the Conflict Avoidance Coalition representing both Kier and the CICES. Jim's day-to-day role is with Kier Infrastructure and he will discuss with Len his experiences in being involved in one of the first tranche of Conflict Avoidance Panel cases and he will discuss the benefits that he sees in introducing this process into the United Kingdom construction industry. Jim is one of the trustees on the Council of Management and also Chair of the Commercial Management Practices Committee of the Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors and will highlight the progress being made in creating awareness in that sector.

They will discuss the measures that are being taken to create a wider awareness of conflict avoidance in the industry, and how organisations can commit to this and implement conflict avoidance into their day-to-day business model?. They will also look at some of the hurdles that need to be overcome to get a wider commitment from the industry and to creating early intervention to prevent issues escalating into construction disputes which are disruptive and expensive.

Jeremy Glover, Fenwick Elliott

Fenwick Elliott partner Jeremy Glover has been at the core of the Conflict Avoidance Coalition's work for a number years, having spearheaded our inaugural conference and played a major part in attracting leading speakers to our events. He is immediate Past President of the Dispute Resolution Board Foundation, one of the found members of the coalition. He has specialised in construction energy and engineering law and related matters for most of his career. An accredited adjudicator and member of the FIDIC President's List of Dispute Adjudicators, he

focuses on dispute avoidance and resolution where his experience spans litigation, arbitration (domestic and international), adjudication, DAB/DRB, mediation, early neutral evaluation and expert determination. He is also editor of *Dispatch*, a monthly publication covering key construction law updates.

Date: Tuesday, 3rd March 2026

Time: 9:30 - 10:30am (online)

Joining details: [Click to join via Microsoft Teams](#)

[ADD TO CALENDAR](#)

We welcome and encourage all signatories and working group members to attend.

If you are interested in speaking at a future Coalition webinar or sharing your organisation's experience, we would welcome a conversation. Please contact us at info@cac-uk.org.

Up next, on the 7th April, we'll be joined by [ASFP](#) and [ResoLex](#).

2. 2026 Conference, 16th June

This year's Conference is more than a date in the diary, it is a critical opportunity to demonstrate that conflict avoidance is gaining real momentum across the sector.

The Conference provides a national platform to showcase success stories, highlight practical implementation, and reinforce the commercial case for early intervention. It is where awareness turns into commitment, and where commitment turns into action.

We look forward to seeing the industry come together to reinforce that collaborative delivery and dispute prevention are not aspirational ideals, but achievable standards.

Put your organisation at the heart of project excellence by sponsoring the Conflict Avoidance Conference 2026, the premier forum for collaboration, dispute prevention and better outcomes across the infrastructure and built environment.

Why Sponsor?

- Get your brand front and centre on all promotional materials and at the event.
- Raise your profile with project clients, major public bodies, leading contractors and key sector suppliers.
- Build valuable connections with industry leaders committed to proactive risk management and collaboration.
- Support accessible delegate costs and broaden participation, helping to embed conflict avoidance across the sector.

If your organisation is interested in sponsorship opportunities, we would be delighted to hear from you! [Visit our website for more information on sponsorship.](#)

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE COALITION CONFERENCE 2026

By sharing knowledge, promoting best practices, and supporting early resolution methods, we're making the industry more resilient, efficient, and productive.

Together, we are shaping a future where conflicts are managed constructively - and often prevented entirely.



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 16th June, London

3. Signatory Spotlight

Laing O'Rourke's Contract Simplification Pilot: Raising Clarity, Reducing Risk

Laing O'Rourke has launched an ambitious contract simplification pilot aimed at reshaping one of the construction industry's most persistent challenges: overly complex contracting models. The initiative forms part of a broader shift toward a more collaborative, resilient, and outcomes-focused way of delivering projects. According to Kate Kennedy, who is spearheading this initiative on behalf of Laing O'Rourke, contracts can play a far greater role in shaping project performance than the industry often acknowledges. Yet, for decades, contracting has been rooted in adversarial behaviours and documentation that is difficult for delivery teams to interpret and apply.

The simplification pilot draws on proven approaches from other sectors, supported by research from World Commerce & Contracting (WorldCC), a global leader in contract optimisation. The aim is not to dilute the commercial deal but to ensure that contracts become clearer, more accessible, and more usable for the people on the ground who bring projects to life. By testing the simplified contract in live environments, Laing O'Rourke hopes to gather robust evidence demonstrating that clearer contractual frameworks promote better collaboration, reduce ambiguity, and enable stronger project outcomes.

The initiative is already gaining momentum across the industry. Organisations such as the Technology and Construction Solicitors Association (TECSA) and several insurers have shown strong support, recognising the potential of simplified contracts to reduce disputes and enhance risk management. Kennedy notes that the greatest challenge lies in shifting long-established mindsets - from viewing contracts as tools for when things go wrong to seeing them as enablers of shared success. But early signs suggest that the appetite for change is real and growing.

5. Join the coalition

The Coalition is already seeing tangible progress. A number of signatories have taken the conscious decision to step up to Silver and Gold, demonstrating deeper commitment to conflict avoidance and promoting it across their clients and supply chains. We have also seen strong engagement from Constructing Excellence, including opportunities to present to their members, and welcome the positive commitment shown by the Environment Agency and its supply chain. These are clear signs that the message is gaining traction, but continued growth depends on collective action across the industry.

Becoming a Pledge Signatory is not about placing a certificate on the office wall. It is about embedding early intervention into your business model and using it when it matters most.

The Coalition's work has always focused on three strands:

- **Awareness** – ensuring the industry understands the cost of unmanaged conflict
- **Commitment** – integrating conflict avoidance into business practices and contracts
- **Implementation** – actively using early intervention processes when issues arise

We are now asking signatories who signed up on the RICS website, to refresh their commitment [via our new website](#), it takes just a couple of minutes. If you have not yet signed, we strongly encourage you to do so and to invite your clients, consultants and supply chain partners to join you.

Sign the Pledge today and help make conflict avoidance the norm across UK construction.

**To find out more about the coalition and to sign the pledge, visit our website:
<https://conflictavoidance.org/>**