

SPA

**STUDENT PUBLICATION ASSOCIATION CIO
SPA Members' Annual General Meeting
14 April 2024, 11:30am**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Introductions and explanation of AGM running**
- 3. Reports to the Membership**
 - a. Chair's Report
 - b. Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statement (Appendix 1)
 - c. Training and Opportunities Officer Report
 - d. Conference & Events Officer Report
 - e. Communications Officer Report
- 4. Business**
 - a. Motion 1 - Awards representation (Appendix 2)
 - b. Motion 2 - SPA membership officer (Appendix 3)
 - c. Motion 3 - SPA reserves policy (Appendix 4)
 - d. Motion 4 - Trustee term lengths (Appendix 5)
 - e. Motion 5 - Trustee addition (Appendix 6)
- 5. Lifetime memberships**
- 6. Elections**
 - a. Election of the Chair
 - b. Election of the Training & Opportunities Officer
 - c. Election of the Conference & Events Officer
 - d. Election of the Communications Officer
 - e. Election of the Sponsorship Officer
 - f. Election of a Charity Trustee
- 7. Any Other Business**
 - a. Reminder of further upcoming elected positions
- 8. Adjournment**

Appendix 1

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statement 2022/23

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

The Student Publication Association CIO is a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales (number 1187383). The charity also operates using the working names “The Student Publication Association” and “The SPA”.

During the period of this report, it was registered at 13 Brake Wood Close, Fremington, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3DP. The registered office has since changed to 46 St Olaves Road, London, E6 2PA on February 4, 2024.

This report covers the accounting period from 01/05/2022 to 30/04/2023.

The trustees who served during the reporting period are:

- Marino Cole Unger-Verna (Chair — trustee ex officio. Left post April 2, 2023);
- Matthew Ward-Perkins (Chair — trustee ex officio. Joined April 2, 2023);
- Ben Adam Warner (Second financial officer — trustee ex officio. Left post April 2, 2023);
- Justine Noble (Second financial officer — trustee ex officio. Joined April 2, 2023)
- Sarah Esther Patterson (Elected Trustee. Left post 11 September, 2022);
- Jemma Louise Collins (Elected Trustee)
- Aubrey Edward Lewis Allegretti (Elected Trustee)
- Geraldine Scott (Elected Trustee)
- Richard Lewis Brooks (Appointed Trustee)
- Juliet Rix (Appointed Trustee)
- Anttoni James Numminen (Appointed Trustee. Joined 4 February, 2023).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The SPA is governed by a written constitution. The charity is constituted as a charitable incorporated organisation. The SPA's trustees are selected via three methods:

- Ex officio: The Chair and Second Financial Officer of the SPA serve as trustees ex officio.
- Elected: Up to four trustees are elected by the SPA's membership, serving a term of up to four years.
- Appointed: Up to three trustees are nominated by vote of the executive officers and ratified by a majority vote of the sitting trustees, serving a term of up to three years.

In our previous report (2021/22) the trustees acknowledged a number of changes in leadership, with a total of five people holding the role of chair during a 12-month period. As a result, a commitment was made to increase the support available to student leaders, including organised training and team building days, monthly support and oversight meetings, and increased handover guidance. We are pleased to report

leadership has fallen back into line with our annual election cycle, with both chairs in this reporting period (2022/23) serving full terms. The trustees are committed to continuing and building this support and are satisfied that it has made the desired impact.

During this period, the charity held one AGM in April 2023, allowing members to vote on policy and direction. The minutes for [this are available online](#). Two motions were passed:

- [Financial Reserves Policy](#): The membership voted to hold the organisation's financial reserves policy in its current form for another year, which sets an ambition to secure reserves of "the greater of 50% of expected annual turnover, or £7,500, within three years of the Bye-Law's enactment (FY23). At the time of the motion passing, this had not yet been achieved, with £6,225 in reserves, but the membership was satisfied that good progress had been made. The policy will be put to vote again in 2024.
- Arts & Culture Awards + Speakers: This motion proposed that the organisation should recognise the breadth of student journalism, with particular regard to culture journalism. Members voted to introduce new awards specifically targeted at culture journalists, as well as increasing the number of speakers from this area. Work has begun in this area, following the vote, with actions scheduled to take place at our 2024 conference. The executive committee will deliver a full report to the membership on this motion at the 2024 conference.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Clause 3 of the SPA's Constitution sets out that "the object of the SPA is to advance the education of student journalists in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland."

The SPA has carried out this object by:

- Hosting more than 20 informational training resources that are freely available on the SPA website. The SPA has also created further training resources and updated existing ones during this period.
- Facilitating collaboration and peer learning between student journalists from across the UK and the Republic of Ireland by providing social media platforms to host discussions. The SPA currently operates a total of 10 groups on Facebook, with the largest containing almost 1,700 members. Further communication between student journalists is facilitated through the work of the SPA's team of volunteer Regional Officers and Project Officers.
- Providing individual guidance to student journalists on request, including supporting them in defending their right to practice journalism.

The SPA has further carried out this object by:

- Organising the SPA National Conference in Glasgow, the first time the event has been held in Scotland, providing extensive vocational training for more than 200 student journalists during the course of a weekend. This was our largest attendance to date.
 - To ensure this conference was accessible to the widest range of people possible, we ran a Financial Assistance Scheme (renamed from Diversity Bursary in 2021/22), covering tickets,

travel and accommodation for those who would be otherwise unable to attend. In total, six students made use of the fund.

- The SPA also worked to secure £13,000 of sponsorship for the event, which was used to subsidise the sale of all tickets.
- Introducing a new series of practical one-to-one sessions at the annual conference, including copy clinics, design drop-ins, and CV advice. These were used by dozens of student journalists across the weekend, allowing them to gain more personalised advice and journalistic education.
- The SPA also collaborated with the external publisher Journo Resources to offer paid work and training for four student journalists, who reported from the event.
- Organising a national awards scheme, with 24 categories, offering student journalists the chance to get feedback on their work from professional journalists, as well as recognition. The SPA received more than 1,200 entries in 2022/23.
 - The SPA also ran a series of regional awards, offering further feedback and recognition to student journalists across all eight regions.
- A series of virtual workshops hosted online and provided free of charge, run by trustees, external journalism training colleges, and media companies such as Substack. The workshops focused on skills relevant to student journalists.
- Organising a 10th-anniversary celebration to bring together students with alumni and other professional journalists, with the aim of fostering networking opportunities.

Of the four projects listed directly above, all have been completed.

The Trustees are satisfied that, due to the freely accessible nature of resources produced and shared by the SPA this year, the SPA meets the statutory requirement to act for the public benefit.

The Trustees have, through the course of the reporting period, referred to guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales relating to the public benefit requirement when making decisions.

During the reporting period, the SPA ran a Financial Assistance grant-issuing scheme — in previous years this has been referred to as the 'Diversity Bursary'. These grants were intended to cover the cost of attendance at the SPA's 2023 Annual Conference and were to be funded by a combination of restricted fund donations and through the SPA's general funds. The Trustees are satisfied that the grants would be issued in keeping with the SPA's object and public benefit, as they were specifically targeted at student journalists who would either be financially prohibited from attending the event or who face other barriers to journalistic education.

The Trustees are also satisfied that grant money would be spent solely in support of these aims, as applications were reviewed by a sub-committee of the Trustees, and spending of the grant money is carried out directly by the SPA, or reimbursed on production of a receipt detailing approved expenses.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

In keeping with the SPA's objectives, the Trustees identified three major goals relating to the organisation of events:

- To host a vocational conference focused on journalistic education, at a cost lower than comparable conferences;
- To run a bursary scheme to widen access to the conference, covering the costs of attendance.
- To disseminate and promote the use of free-to-access resources hosted on our website.

All of these goals were completed within the reporting period.

An additional goal of the SPA was to produce training materials to be hosted on the SPA website and made publicly accessible to all. The SPA has released a number of such training materials during this reporting period and also began work to relaunch our website to further these objectives. Due to the scope of the work required, this relaunch was completed in the following reporting period.

The SPA also aims to increase its reserves to hold the greater of 50% of expected annual turnover, or £7,500 (whichever is greater) by FY23, passed at the 2022 annual general meeting. At the end of the reporting period, the SPA held reserves significantly below this target. The trustees have resolved to bring this to the attention of members at the 2024 AGM, with a view to setting out policy going forwards.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

At the end of this reporting period, the SPA held a total of £2,901.99 in accounts managed by it. £528 of this figure was reserved funds which were intended for the SPA's Financial Assistance Bursary. No funds of the SPA are materially in deficit.

At incorporation, the SPA Trustees had agreed to a target that the SPA should hold a minimum of £500 in reserves by the end of the reporting period. This was not intended to be the long-term reserves level, but a reflection of the trustees' estimation of an attainable target.

The trustees decided that the SPA must increase its reserve level in order to ensure that it is protected against any short-term incidents that could have a negative effect on the SPA's financial position. The long-term reserves level was set by members at the 2022 annual general meeting, at the greater of 50% of annual expected turnover or £7,500, and is subject to review at each subsequent annual general meeting.

At the end of the reporting period, the SPA held £2,373.57 in unrestricted reserves. On the basis of the SPA's financial position, the trustees are satisfied that the SPA can continue to operate as a going concern.

EXEMPTIONS FROM DISCLOSURE

The SPA has not sought any exemptions from disclosure in accordance with applicable law.

FUNDS HELD AS CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

The SPA has not acted as a custodian trustee on behalf of others during the reporting period.

Awards Representation

Proposed By: Jem Collins | Seconded By: Bree Allegretti

The Student Publication Association notes:

- The SPA National Awards are one of the highlights of the student media calendar, attracting more than 1,000 entries every year, rewarding the very best in student journalism. In the UK, the SPA runs the only full suite of national student journalism awards, so it is important to be a leader.
- Representation and equity are a key priority for the organisation — we want to make sure every member is encouraged to apply and has an equitable chance of winning. The SPA has already begun this work with outreach and entry-writing workshops but believes more must be done to ensure we uphold this aim.

The Student Publication Association resolves:

- To collect anonymised data about entrants, shortlisted entries, and winners each year across key representation metrics, where practicable. Data collection from entrants must be anonymised, unlinked to award entries, and optional.
- To make the results of this data freely available to all members, as well as report back with recommendations to increase equity based on the data.
- To complete a review of our award entry process, with the results made freely available to all members and subsequently implemented in time for the 2025 awards.

Appendix 3
Motion 2 - SPA membership officer

SPA Membership Officer

Proposed By: Matt Ward-Perkins | Seconded By: Ella Robinson

The SPA notes:

- The SPA does not currently have an officer role dedicated to member engagement and management
- Constitutional responsibility for membership currently sits within the Communications Officer role, however, given the significant commitments of managing the SPA's communications, in practice this responsibility has been split between Executive members, Officers, and Trustees
- Oversight of regional engagement is currently split between different Executive members

The SPA resolves:

- To create a role to organise the SPA's engagement with members and Regional Officers, as well as manage the SPA's membership systems and processes
- To enact the changes detailed below to Bye-Law 2 of the Student Publication Association's governing documents
- The SPA's current executive committee and trustees will have discretion in the process for choosing the first membership officer in 2024/25. This role will be elected similarly to other committee roles at next year's AGM

Current text in [governing documents](#):

Bye Law 2: Executive Officers

The Chair's responsibilities include: (i) Being the public face and spokesperson for the SPA; (ii) Overseeing and supporting the other Executive Officers, and supervise the team of Regional Officers;

New text (changes in bold):

The Chair's responsibilities include: (i) Being the public face and spokesperson for the SPA; (ii) Overseeing and supporting the other Executive Officers, **and supervise the team of Regional Officers;**

Current text:

(c) Communications Officer

The Communications Officer's responsibilities include:

- (i) Recruiting new members to the SPA;
- (ii) Processing new membership applications;
- (iii) Maintaining the public list of member publications;
- (iv) Maintaining the private list of individual members;
- (v) Maintaining two-way communications with the SPA's members;
- (vi) Creating a newsletter to be sent to all members;

- (vii) Taking and sharing minutes of all SPA meetings, and;
- (viii) Preparing a shared calendar, available to all elected members of the SPA containing provisional dates of all meetings.

New text (changes in bold):

(C) Communications Officer

- The Communications Officer's responsibilities include:
 - Maintaining communication with the SPA's members
 - Creating newsletters to be sent to SPA members
 - Overseeing the management of the SPA's social media and website
 - Taking and sharing minutes of all SPA meetings

New text (entirely new text so no changes in bold):

(D) Membership Officer

- The Membership Officer's responsibilities include:
 - Onboarding new members of the SPA
 - Processing membership applications
 - Maintaining public and private lists of SPA member publications
 - Supporting member publications which require assistance from the SPA
 - Supporting the work of the SPA's Regional Officers

Reletter the remaining sections as appropriate.

Current text:

There shall be the following Project Officers:

(a) Digital Media Officer

The Digital Media Officer's duties shall include:

- (i) Maintaining the website of the SPA;
- (ii) Assisting the Executive Committee with the digitisation of projects; and
- (iii) Managing the SPA's social media.

The Digital Media Officer shall report to the Chair.

(b) Alumni Officer

The Alumni Officer's duties shall include:

- (i) Creating a network of SPA alumni and ensuring they remain engaged with the SPA; and
- (ii) Maintaining a contact list of interested SPA alumni to assist with training materials and events.

The Alumni Officer shall report to the Training & Opportunities Officer.

(c) Advocacy Officer

The Advocacy Officer's duties shall include:

- (i) Serving as a point of contact for publications experiencing issues with students' unions and universities;
- (ii) Liaising with the Executive Committee to draft statements and advice regarding member publications' disputes; and
- (iii) Monitoring emerging issues within student media.

The Advocacy Officer shall report to the Chair.

New text (changes in bold):

There shall be the following Project Officers:

(a) Digital Media Officer

The Digital Media Officer's duties shall include:

- (i) Maintaining the website of the SPA;
- (ii) Assisting the Executive Committee with the digitisation of projects; and
- (iii) Managing the SPA's social media.

The Digital Media Officer shall **report to the Communications Officer**

(b) Alumni Officer

The Alumni Officer's duties shall include:

- (i) Creating a network of SPA alumni and ensuring they remain engaged with the SPA; and
- (ii) Maintaining a contact list of interested SPA alumni to assist with training materials and events.

The Alumni Officer shall report to the Training & Opportunities Officer.

(c) Advocacy Officer

The Advocacy Officer's duties shall include:

- (i) Serving as a point of contact for publications experiencing issues with students' unions and universities;
- (ii) Liaising with the Executive Committee to draft statements and advice regarding member publications' disputes; and
- (iii) Monitoring emerging issues within student media.

The Advocacy Officer shall **report to the Membership Officer.**

Current text:

The Chair will be responsible for supervising the team of Regional Officers. Each Regional Officer will be assigned a member of the Executive Committee as a direct point of contact with the Executive and Trustees. No member of the Executive Committee will be responsible for two regions more than any other member, excluding the Chair. The assignment of regions to each Executive Committee member will be decided after approval by the Chair, no more than two weeks after the appointment of Regional Officers.

A member of the Executive Committee each year will be tasked with supervising the handover period to ensure these are completed for each Regional Officer.

New text (changes in bold):

The Membership Officer will be responsible for supervising the team of Regional Officers. ~~Each Regional Officer will be assigned a member of the Executive Committee as a direct point of contact with the~~

~~Executive and Trustees. No member of the Executive Committee will be responsible for two regions more than any other member, excluding the Chair. The assignment of regions to each Executive Committee member will be decided after approval by the Chair, no more than two weeks after the appointment of Regional Officers.~~

The Membership Officer will be tasked with supervising the handover period ~~to ensure these are completed for each Regional Officer.~~

Appendix 4
Motion 3 - Reserves Motion

Reserves Policy 2024

Proposed By: Jem Collins | Seconded By: Ollie Cole

The Student Publication Association notes:

- At the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the SPA, members passed a motion which added a reserves policy to the SPA Bye-Laws. This set the long-term target for reserves “the greater of 50% of expected annual turnover, or £7,500, within three years of this Bye-Law’s enactment (FY23).” This policy was renewed in 2021, 2022, and 2023.
- While the SPA has made good progress in safeguarding reserves, the SPA has not yet met this target. Following the completion of #SPANC24, the organisation is expected to hold approximately £3,200 in reserves.
- The SPA requires reserves to ensure its continued operation should events outside of its control result in a serious financial loss. Reserves also allow for the running of our national conference — for example, where deadlines to pay suppliers may come in before we have received payments from sponsors.
- Due to the level of turnover involved in running SPANC — which is run at a loss — the trustees do not believe it is practicable or a good use of charity funds to base our reserves policy on turnover. This would require reserves of £20,000 based on the last year of accounts.
- Currently, the SPA only has one bank account, which holds all funds. There is no distinction between ‘reserves’ and money which can be spent.
- Bye-Law 7, which specifies the details of the Reserves Policy, says that at each subsequent Annual General Meeting, members’ approval must be sought to continue the Policy at current levels for another year.

The Student Publication Association resolves:

- To set out a new reserves policy — the SPA aims to hold £10,000 in reserves by 2027. This will not be linked to our turnover in any way.

- The SPA aims to add to its current reserves by £2,500 by 2025, bringing reserves to a total of £5,500, as part of the work towards this goal.
- To create a separate bank account to hold reserves and a guidance policy for when reserves can be used, to be approved by the executive committee and reported back to members at the next AGM.
- To further report on progress to members at the next Annual General Meeting of the SPA.
- To change this section of the governing documents to reflect this:

Current text:

Bye-law seven: reserves policy

The trustees shall be responsible for ensuring that the SPA has sufficient reserves to continue operation. The long-term policy of the SPA shall be to hold the greater of 50% of expected annual turnover, or £7,500, within three years of this bye-law's enactment (FY23).

The trustees may fundraise as they see fit in order to advance the reserves position to the stated amount. However, any addition to the reserves through ticket sales for charitable activities must be incidental in nature.

The trustees must report on the reserves position of the SPA annually to the membership at the annual general meeting. They must also, at each AGM, submit a motion to the membership seeking its approval for the continuation of the reserves policy at current levels.

If such a motion fails, the reserves policy shall not be immediately amended or discarded, but the trustees must propose an amended motion no less than 30 days after the rejection. This process shall be repeated until a motion on the SPA's reserves policy is approved by its members.

New text (changes in bold):

Bye-law seven: reserves policy

The trustees shall be responsible for ensuring that the SPA has sufficient reserves to continue operation. **The long-term policy of the SPA shall be to hold £10,000 in reserves, within three years of this bye-law's enactment (FY27).**

Reserves must be held in a separate bank account to general funds.

The trustees may fundraise as they see fit in order to advance the reserves position to the stated amount. However, any addition to the reserves through ticket sales for charitable activities must be incidental in nature.

The trustees must report on the reserves position of the SPA annually to the membership at the annual general meeting. They must also, at each AGM, submit a motion to the membership seeking its approval for the continuation of the reserves policy at current levels.

If such a motion fails, the reserves policy shall not be immediately amended or discarded, but the trustees must propose an amended motion no less than 30 days after the rejection. This process shall be repeated until a motion on the SPA's reserves policy is approved by its members.

Appendix 5
Motion 4 - Trustee term lengths

Motion: Trustee Term Lengths

Proposed By: Jem Collins | Seconded By: Matt Ward-Perkins

The Student Publication Association notes:

- The SPA trustee board works to term lengths of four years for elected trustees and three years for appointed trustees.
- This guidance has not been included in the constitution.

The Student Publication Association resolves:

- To put this into the constitution as part of good record keeping.
- To clarify language on when terms end — no matter at what point in the year you are elected/appointed, terms run until the AGM.
- To update the wording in governing documents as follows:

New text (entirely new text so no changes in bold):

Clause 13 (1)

Add: g) the standard term length for an elected trustee is four years.

Clause 13 (3)

j) the standard term length for an appointed trustee is three years.

Appendix 6
Motion 5 - Trustee addition

Motion: Trustee Addition

Proposed By: Jem Collins | Seconded By: Matt Ward-Perkins

The Student Publication Association notes:

- The SPA is a small, volunteer-run charity, with less than 20 volunteers across the year. This creates a large strain on the team at peak times of the year, such as SPANC24. We believe we could achieve more and increase volunteer retention with a larger team.
- The SPA believes the charity should always be student-led and that there is currently a good ratio of trustees to executive committee members. The SPA notes a separate motion to add an additional executive member.
- Currently, the SPA has seven trustees, three of which are appointed and four of which are elected.

The Student Publication Association resolves:

- The introduction of one additional appointed member of the trustee board.

Current text:

There should be:

- (i) Not more than two trustees ex officio; and
- (ii) Not more than four elected trustees; and
- (iii) Not more than three appointed trustees.

New text (changes in bold):

There should be:

- (i) Not more than two trustees ex officio; and
- (ii) Not more than four elected trustees; and
- (iii) Not more than **four appointed trustees**.