



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

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Introductions and explanation of AGM running**
- 3. Reports to the Membership**
  - a. [Chair's Report](#) (Appendix 1)
  - b. [Training and Opportunities Officer Report](#) (Appendix 1)
  - c. [Communications Officer Report](#) (Appendix 1)
  - d. [Sponsorship Officer Report](#) (Appendix 1)
  - e. [Membership Officer Report](#) (Appendix 1)
  - f. [Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statement 2023/24](#) (Appendix 2)
- 4. Business**
  - a. [Motion 1 - Constitution changes](#) (Appendix 3)
  - b. [Motion 2 - New guidance on decision-making process for SPANC bids](#) (Appendix 4)
    - i. [Amendments](#) (Appendix 5)
  - c. [Motion 3 - Trustee term and appointments](#) (Appendix 6)
  - d. [Motion 4 - Reserves policy](#) (Appendix 7)
  - e. [Motion 5 - Focus on visual journalism](#) (Appendix 8)
- 5. [Lifetime memberships](#)** (Appendix 9)
- 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 the Membership Officer
- 7. Any Other Business**
  - a. Reminder of further upcoming elected positions
- 8. Adjournment**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Chair and other Executive Officer's 2024/25 reports**

#### **Chair report**

At the outset of my tenure, I set three goals for myself: to foster deeper connections between the SPA's member publications, secure the charity's long-term financial stability, and continue expanding support for student journalists across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

To provide SPA members with opportunities to gather outside of the national conference, I aimed to hold eight in-person regional conferences and awards ceremonies. However, serious financial constraints meant that only four took place. This, in itself, was a significant achievement, and all involved should be commended for their efforts.

As part of my goal to strengthen the charity's financial position, the 2024/25 team:

- Implemented a process to accept donations via Stripe.
- Launched a fundraising campaign encouraging donations to support the charity's mission of making journalism accessible.
- Expanded sponsorship packages to include regional awards and conferences, sending over 240 sponsorship proposals.

The SPA's financial outlook remains mixed at the conclusion of my tenure. While we exceeded our sponsorship target for the national conference—an impressive achievement given that several long-term sponsors were unable to support #SPANC25—the charity is unlikely to meet its goal of holding £3,500 in reserves by the end of the 2024/25 year.

Throughout my tenure, the SPA continued assisting member publications that reached out for support. After listening to our members, we pivoted away from online training and instead focused on incorporating more panels and training sessions into the regional conferences.

2024/25 in numbers:

- 330 active member publications as of March 2025 (11.5% increase), with 36 new member publications and 65+ individual members joining.
- A record 642 entries to the 2025 Regional Awards (up 57%) and another record 1,326 entries to the 2025 National Awards (up 6%).
- Four in-person regional conferences and award ceremonies (up from just one the previous year) in the Midlands, London, Scotland, and Wales.
- 200+ delegates and 57 speakers at #SPANC25.
- Increased engagement across social media.
- 27 dedicated volunteers (a full team for the first time in many years).

A detailed handover document will be provided to the incoming 2025/26 SPA Chair and their team, outlining my key learnings from the past year and advice. It is my hope that next year's teams will be able to hold

more regional in-person events and build on the initiatives started this year to secure the charity's long-term financial position. I wish them every success as they oversee the SPA's mission of supporting student journalists and their publications through 2025/26.

### **Training and Opportunities Officer report**

As the training and opportunities officer my role is probably the most loosely-defined of the executive committee so I took it upon myself to get more involved across all areas of the SPA's administration, particularly involving the national conference where I have absorbed several aspects of the conference and events officer's brief. This was due, in part, to the resignation of the individual elected to the role at SPANC24 and the co-option of a new member to ensure we did not have a vacancy on the team.

My main focus was on the programme of events taking place at SPANC25, particularly in regards to speakers and scheduling. I have worked closely with the Chair and trustees - as well as with assistance from Sponsorship Officer, to craft a more curated approach to the conference. My intent with this was two-fold: firstly, last year we offered too much choice which led to stretched resources on the team's parts and risked reputational damage when important sponsor's panels were not well-attended. Thus, I wanted to run a more curated and minted schedule of events to both prevent such risks but also make sure that we were offering a strong slate of speakers to our delegates. Secondly, as the charity's second financial officer, my intent was also financial to prevent overspending on travel as we did for SPANC24 which had significant consequences on the charity's finances. I am pleased to say both have been proving successful although the final results will only be clear after SPANC25.

Outside of the national conference, my other main focus this year was running online workshops targeted at members for training. These consisted of two prior commitments due to the headline sponsorship deal with News Associates from SPANC24 (a breaking news workshop and ethics and editorial decision-making, respectively) alongside a media law 101 workshop. Unfortunately, all three events were only moderately successful as we only had approximately 40 student participants attend across the three workshops - with only five non-SPA officers attending the media law talk.

We had more planned but following the disappointing conclusion of the three prior ones, alongside the increase in planning responsibilities of regional conferences, we shifted our focus to SPANC25 and our regional conferences and awards events. We also had two planned workshops with a potential sponsorship partner ResetUK on human rights reporting with a specific focus on immigration and community sponsorship. Unfortunately, due to external circumstances affecting ResetUK's financial situation, these did not materialize although in the grand scheme of things this was probably for the best as I am still not convinced these events would have been well-attended or were even wholly relevant to a student journalism audience. The topics ResetUK's talks would have covered have since been partially folded into the programme of events for SPANC25 in the form of the equalities reporting panel.

My final main point of focus this year was leading on the planning for the Midlands Regional Conference alongside Midlands Officer and SPA member Impact's editor-in-chief. Despite several issues posed by being the first regional conference to go ahead and ran as a partnership with Impact rather than a solo SPA endeavour, the conference was overall successful and brought together approximately 30 students from across the Midlands with seven speakers spread over four talks and an awards ceremony. I was also heavily involved with the planning for the London Regional Conference as I secured Marianna Spring as one of the evening's three guest speakers and was part of the SPA team running the event on the night. I

also assisted, albeit in a more limited capacity, with the planning of the Scotland and Wales events, booking speaker Beth Williams for the latter and assisting with general advice and guidance for the former. All four regional conferences were successful given the severe limitations they were placed under.

Finally, if I had more time I would have liked to have re-launched the SPA's mentoring scheme and created more training resources for the website. Despite some progress on a mentorship scheme, the demands of online workshops, regional conferences and SPANC25 took up all my attention so I was unable to devote the time to it I intended to do so. This also impacted my ability to write any guides for the website or even promote anything about grad scheme season. I would encourage next year's officer to focus more on website materials and a mentorship programme given the poor attendance of the online workshops. Nevertheless, the year has been successful in creating more opportunities for members outside of the national conference.

### **Communications Officer report**

- I developed and produced the SPA Spotlight podcast, allowing student journalists from publications across the country to share what they have been working on. I produced episodes on starting out in a new role, specialist publications, exploring your archive, entering the SPA National Awards and creating a newsletter. This breadth of topics allowed student journalists from a range of publications both to come on as guests and to benefit from the discussions. I think this has been a great way of encouraging students from various publications to share their ideas as I set out to do in this role.
- I have created regular, clear and consistently designed newsletters and emails to keep members updated with a range of SPA projects and events, as well as to fulfill our sponsorship agreements. I have tried to ensure that these have gone out regularly enough to keep members up to date with the SPA's work and meet the charity's needs, but have also condensed various updates into single newsletters where possible so as to not overwhelm our members with emails. As of 19/03/2025, I have sent out 27 email newsletters to our members. I have also refreshed our mailing list to ensure emails go out to all our current members.
- I have worked closely with our Digital Media Officer to ensure our social media output has been regular, well designed and informative, especially in the run up to SPANC. (We all owe him a big thank you for his amazing hard work!) I also led on social media output during our largest push on ticket sales - in this period 64 #SPANC25 tickets were purchased.
- I led on the Spotlight initiative for sharing publications work, alongside the DMO. We did two rounds of this, one during the General Election campaign and one in the Autumn. This was a great way to celebrate the work of our members and encourage engagement between publications. We had 34 submissions from members which were of a really high quality! I would have liked to have repeated this on further occasions throughout the year – the Comms and DMO roles both have a high workload and you sometimes have to prioritise the projects that are essential to the regional and national conferences. If something similar was to be tried again, I would recommend doing it in collaboration with the Membership Officer and Regional Officers to spread the workload and perhaps do more direct outreach to encourage publications to engage with the scheme.

### **Sponsorship Officer Report**

- I expanded the Sponsorship Pack to include both new Regional Conference and Rolling Sponsorship packages. This helped the charity secure sponsorship for three regional conferences. Likewise, I introduced new social media promotion options to our National Conference packages,

such as Instagram story takeovers. In terms of wider work on finances, I supported the team with introducing donations via Stripe.

- I, with the support of the wider team, surpassed the sponsorship target of £13k by securing £15.4k with over a month to go until the conference. This was a particularly exciting achievement, given some regular sponsors opted not to sponsor #SPANC25 for various reasons. I, again with wider team support, reached out to over 240 contacts for sponsorship opportunities. This helped create some new particularly advantageous relationships with organisations, such as IPSE.
- Outside of my sponsorship responsibilities, I consistently supported member publications surrounding issues with their Students' Unions, usually collaborating with the Advocacy Officer on these workpieces. Something I promised at the AGM was to use my knowledge of how SUs function from my Editor-in-Chief role to support members throughout my term.
- Had I had more time, I would have liked to have focused on more dedicated Financial Assistance Scheme outreach. The charity nearly secured a Headline FAS Sponsor, which would have covered six tickets, but this unfortunately fell through before it could be secured. Had my focus not been on reaching our sponsorship target, I would have liked to secure more financial support for individual members to attend this year's National Conference. Although, we have secured 3 confirmed FAS tickets (with a bit of time to potentially secure more!).

## Membership Officer Report

The post of MO is new to the year 2024/25. It was exciting building the new position from scratch, and organising how it fits into the wider team's groove. I have laid the groundwork for future MOs to keep our membership engaged - and I believe there is much more to be done. This is a role full of opportunities, from hosting on-boarding video calls with new members in the future, to keep acting as the first port of call not just for new joiners but for the wider membership. As the SPA would not exist without its passionate members across the country, the role of MO gives you the key to the kingdom - and it's one I feel immensely grateful to have held.

Among my achievements and highlights, I:

- Onboarded **101 new members** between new publications (36) and individual (65). Updated the historic membership master sheet to reflect all active members after a thorough audit conducted with the support of Regional Officers. This brings the **existing membership to 330** (11.5% increase from last year).
- Acted as first port of call for new publications; answered queries from new members, including about SPANC, SPARC, and awards submissions throughout the year.
- Liaised with ROs to organise regional conferences across the country (Ireland, Scotland, Wales, London); actively took part in the Scotland conference, stepping in when the Events exec couldn't make it, and provided guidance and oversight for a smooth running of the event in collaboration with our Scotland RO.
- Took immense pleasure in judging both SPARC and SPANC awards submissions. This became one of my favourite parts of being an SPA committee member, after continuing to serve the committee for a second year. There is no better way to see the talent and passion of our members than being given the opportunity to read their work up close, and learn about the hundreds of dedicated reporters, editors, and photographers.
- Set up the first building blocks of our brand new **Membership Hub**, activating the BuddyPress plug-in on our existing website to manage special areas dedicated to members including: a) groups,

b) alumni support; a third area is in the making for general resources. The core work of our Membership Hub, as envisioned by past and present committees, will soon be ready for the next MO to build something amazing with it.

## **Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statement 2023/24**

### **Appendix 2**

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 46 St Olaves Road, London, E6 2PA

This report covers the accounting period from 01/05/2023 to 30/04/2024.

The trustees who served during the reporting period are:

- Matthew Ward-Perkins (Chair — trustee ex officio. Left post April 14, 2024);
- Justine Noble (Second financial officer — trustee ex officio. Left post April 14, 2024)
- Jack Patrick Wash (Chair — trustee ex officio. Elected April 14, 2024)
- Juliet Rix (Appointed Trustee. Left post April 14, 2024)
- Jemma Louise Collins (Elected Trustee)
- Aubrey Edward Lewis Allegretti (Elected Trustee)
- Geraldine Scott (Elected Trustee)
- Ollie Colle (Elected Trustee. Elected 28 May 2023).
- Richard Lewis Brooks (Appointed Trustee)
- Anttoni James Numminen (Appointed Trustee).

## **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 four 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.

During this period, the charity held one AGM in April 2024, allowing members to vote on policy and direction. [The minutes for this are available online](#). A total of five motions were voted on and passed by members:

- [Trustee Term Lengths](#): It was noted that while the term limits set out above have been in use since the charity's incorporation, they had been omitted from the governing documents. This motion formerly added term limits of four years for elected trustees and three years for appointed trustees into the constitution.
- [Add Membership Officer](#): This motion notes the executive does not have a dedicated member engagement and management officer, despite being a member organisation. Currently, these duties

are split between the executive. This motion adds an additional member to the executive committee and constitution to focus on membership.

- [Add Trustee Position](#): This motion notes that the charity has less than 20 volunteers, leading to stretched resources. It also notes the previous membership motion to add an executive member and wishes to keep the ratio between executive and trustees consistent. To this end, it adds a new appointed trustee to the constitution.
- [Awards Representation](#): This motion resolves that the SPA should monitor the representation and equity of awards entries, by collecting anonymised data about entrants, shortlisted, and winning entries each year, reported back to members.
- [Financial Reserves Policy](#): In 2020, the organisation set a reserves policy which mandated “the greater of 50% of expected annual turnover, or £7,500”, with the expectation of meeting this target within three years — FY23. Based on annual turnover, this would require reserves of £20,000, largely due to the facilitation of our annual conference, which is run at a loss. Currently, the organisation has yet to hit this target or move closer towards it. This motion recognises that such levels of reserves would not be practicable or a good use of charity funds. Instead, it sets out a path to holding £10,000 in reserves by 2027, by raising £2,500 in reserves each year. The motion also sets a requirement for the organisation to hold two bank accounts, one for reserves.

## 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. Currently, the charity works across LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter/X. 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 Bristol, the first time the event has been held in South West England, providing extensive vocational training for more than 250 student journalists over the course of a weekend. This was our largest attendance to date. In addition:

- To ensure this conference was accessible to the widest range of people possible, we ran a Financial Assistance Scheme, covering tickets, travel and accommodation for those who would be otherwise unable to attend. In total, seven students made use of the fund.
  - The SPA also worked to secure £14,000 of sponsorship for the event, which was used to subsidise the sale of all tickets.
  - Running a 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 six student journalists, who reported from the event.
- Organising a national awards scheme, with 26 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 2023/24.
    - The SPA also ran a series of regional awards, offering further feedback and recognition to student journalists across all eight regions.
  - Hosting series of virtual workshops hosted online and provided free of charge, run by trustees and external journalism training colleges. The workshops focused on skills relevant to student journalists.
  - Launching an editor's survey of member publications to understand the needs of our users in greater detail:
    - A total of 13 publications offered in-depth insights into how they are funded and supported by their universities or unions, how the SPA could better support them, and the biggest challenges they are facing.
    - This was supplemented by an in-person editors' coffee morning at the SPA Conference, to facilitate peer learning and in-depth feedback for the charity.
  - A complete relaunch of our website, with a focus on great accessibility and ease of use. Our previous website had not been updated for more than five years, with a new redesign allowing for easier access to online training resources, booking of events, and the ability to add further functionality in future.
  - Our first-ever regional conference in the Republic of Ireland provided a day of vocational training to 47 student journalists, consisting of workshops, talks, and panels. This is the first time an in-person SPA event has been held in the region.

Of the six projects listed directly above, five have been completed. One, the website relaunch has completed the first phase. Work continues to the second phase to build a membership hub to allow for more peer learning between members and the construction of an alumni network.

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. These grants were intended to cover the cost of attendance at the SPA's 2024 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 relaunched our website to further these objectives.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

At the end of this reporting period, the SPA held a total of £5.09 in accounts managed by it. No funds of the SPA are materially in deficit. This report also notes that at the end of the reporting period, the organisation was owed some £3,800 in overdue invoices, as follows:

- University of Cardiff — £1,500
- News UK & Ireland — £1,500
- Savanta — £800

While the SPA does not aim to make a profit, the trustees do not view this level of reserves and cash flow as acceptable. In their view, it is a risk to the charity. A review into the low levels of cashflow identified a number of contributing factors:

- Invoices for sponsorship of the national conference were paid late;
- Sponsorship income being made up of a small number of larger payments, meaning late payments have a larger impact;
- An overspend on speaker travel at the national conference.

As a result, the trustees have commissioned urgent strengthening of financial controls to safeguard the charity's future, as well as plans to significantly increase reserve levels to prevent future incidents. New financial controls include:

- The implementation of a new digital expenses system that requires trustee or chair approval in order to make claims, as well as mandating receipts alongside claims.
- Moving to a new bank account that allows for the SPA to have its charity debit cards. This is with a view to eliminating payments made on personal cards.
- Setting up a second bank account to store reserves, to allow for a greater separation of funds. Policy to complement this states that funds cannot be moved from the reserves account to general use without a vote of the executive and trustees.
- New speaker booking policies; a points-based system will better inform budgets when booking speaker travel, allowing a geographically sensitive budget assessment and live updates. A new travel booking procedure and set travel booker roles will also check this and provide rolling updates.
- A new cashflow budget projection to be used alongside the overall budgets used by the executive and trustees, to offer an early warning system for the effects of late payment.
- The SPA will also enforce late payment legislation, as set out by the UK Government.

The trustees also decided that the SPA must significantly increase its reserve level in order to ensure that it is protected against further incidents that could have a negative effect on the SPA's financial position. This is also necessary to achieve the goals set out in the reserves motion. These steps include:

- A ticket levy will be added to all future conference payments, starting from the 2025 National Conference. The value of the levy will be set when ticket prices are decided, with funds directly transferred to the reserves account. Depending on the level of subsidy set each year, this could bring in £250–£1,250 based on current ticket sales.
- A dedicated donations and fundraising campaign to bring in additional general funds to the charity is to be launched — work on this has subsequently begun in the next reporting period.
- The trustees will investigate additional schemes the charity might benefit from, for example:
  - GiftAid;
  - Grants;
  - VAT Relief;
  - Employer charitable giving — subsequent investigation into this area in the next reporting period has allowed the charity to sign up to a scheme with a number of the trustees' employers, projected to bring in £2,500pa.

On the basis of the measures set out above, the trustees are satisfied that the SPA can continue to operate as a going concern, with a review of the above measures in the next reporting period,

## **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.

## **Motion 1 - Constitution Changes**

### **Appendix 3**

*Proposed By: Jem Collins | Seconded By: Jack Walsh*

#### **The Student Publication Association notes:**

- That the SPA's constitution was first approved a decade ago and is an important safeguard on how the organisation operates and stays accountable to its members.
- In order to keep protections robust and timely, full reviews of the constitution should be taken periodically.
- A review of the constitution was undertaken during the past year, proposing a number of administrative changes to the constitution.

#### **The Student Publication Association resolves:**

- To change all instances within the document of she/he or her/him to they/them, as a gender neutral alternative;
- To change the following wording under Clause 11, 6, b, for clarity on the process. Addition shown in underline green:
  - **Current Text:** A resolution put to the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, unless (before or on the declaration of the result of the show of hands) a poll is duly demanded. A poll may be demanded by the chair or by at least 10% of the members present in person or by proxy at the meeting.
  - **Proposed New Text:** A resolution put to the meeting shall be decided on a show of hands, unless (before or on the declaration of the result of the show of hands) a poll is duly demanded. A poll may be demanded by the chair or by at least 10% of the members present in person or by proxy at the meeting. A poll shall be conducted by all voting members receiving a physical poll card to cast their vote. These votes will be verified by at least two SPA officers.
- To change the following wording under Clause 11, 6, e, to ensure this is always an elected student representative. Amends shown in orange underline.
  - **Current Text:** In the event of an equality of votes, whether on show of hands or on a poll, the chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
  - **Proposed New Text:** In the event of an equality of votes, whether on show of hands or on a poll, the chair of the SPA, or delegated deputy, shall have a casting vote.

- To change the following wording under Clause 13, 2, on the election of ex-officio trustees, to ensure the role does not remain vacant for a year, without student representation at a legal level. Amends shown in orange underline.
  - **Current Text:** The relevant office of ex officio charity trustee will then remain vacant until the office holder ceases to hold office
  - **Proposed New Text:** The relevant office of ex officio charity trustee will then be offered to another member of the executive committee, to ensure student representation on the trustee board.
- To change the following wording under Byelaw 1, f, to include Irish members and both UK official regulators. Amends shown in orange underline.
  - **Current Text:** Adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice for professional and responsible journalism.
  - **Proposed New Text:** Adhere to one of: the IPSO Editors' Code, IMPRESS Standards Code, or the Press Council of Ireland Code of Practice.
- To change the following wording under Byelaw 2f to make clear the handover period and allow for the changing date of Easter holidays, when SPANC is held. Amends shown in orange underline.
  - **Current Text:** Executive Officers shall serve a term of one year, beginning and concluding on 1 May. This may be moved in extraordinary circumstances by the trustees, but in no case may it be moved further than 21 days after the following general meeting.
  - **Proposed New Text:** Executive Officers shall serve a term of one year, beginning 21 days after the general meeting at which they were elected, known as a handover period. This handover period should end no later than May 30, unless in extraordinary circumstances agreed by the trustees.
- To change the following wording under Byelaw 2 to make clear that term limits apply as a total of exec positions held, and do not include RO/PO positions. Amends shown in orange underline.
  - **Current Text:** Executive Officers must be individual members, and can serve no more than two terms.
  - **Proposed New Text:** Executive Officers must be individual members, and can serve no more than a total of two terms on the executive committee. This could be made up of different roles. Terms as regional officers or project officers do not count towards this term limit.
- Addition to wording under Byelaw 4 to make clear all SPA leadership votes on SPANC bidding, as it is the biggest financial liability of the organisation. Addition shown in underline green:

- **Current Text:** “The Executive Committee shall choose a host for the National Conference from those who have bid utilising the Single Transferable Vote method.”
  - **Proposed New Text:** “The Executive Committee, trustees, regional, and project officers shall choose a host for the National Conference from those who have bid utilising the Single Transferable Vote method.”
- Amend wording under Byelaw 5 to add the following to reflect working policy. Addition shown in underline green:
    - **Current Text:** Any expenditure under the cost of £50 must be made with the permission of one of the Financial Officers. Any expenditure above £50, but less than £100, must be made with the permission of two Executive Committee members, one of which must be a Financial Officer.

Any expenditure of £100 or more, or any long-term agreement which may cost over £100, may only be approved if a minimum of two quotes have been sourced. Such expenditure may be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee, subject to any additional limitations on expenditure imposed by the charity trustees.

    - **Additional Text:** Any expenditure of £250 or more, or any long-term agreement which may cost over £250, may only be approved if a minimum of two quotes have been sourced. Such expenditure may be approved by a majority vote of the SPA Trustees.
  - Amend wording under Byelaw 5 to add the following to reflect working policy. Addition shown in underline green:
    - **Additional Text:** All charity trustees and financial officers should receive access to the SPA bank accounts, where practicable. Additional members of the executive committee should be added on their request.
  - Amend wording under Byelaw 2 under regional officers and project officers to add the reflect wording for executive committee members. Addition shown in underline green:
    - **Additional Text:** Regional/Project Officers must be individual members and can serve no more than a total of two terms as a regional/project officer. This could be made up of different roles. Terms as regional officers or projects officers do not count towards the term limit for executive officers.

Regional/Project Officers shall serve a term of one year, beginning 21 days after the general meeting at which they were elected, known as a handover period. This handover period should end no later than May 30, unless in extraordinary circumstances agreed by the trustees.

## **Motion 2 - New guidance on decision-making process for SPANC bids**

### **Appendix 4**

*Proposed By: Joe McFadden | Seconded By: Luke Hewitt*

#### **The Student Publication Association notes:**

We propose that the Student Publication Association (SPA) amends its fourth bye-law (henceforth “bye-law four”) to include a passage mandating that the Student Publication Association’s National Conference (SPANC) should, where possible, change regions every year to create better representation of its members across the UK and Ireland and encourage wider participation in hosting duties from member publications.

Currently, SPANC has been held consecutively in the South West region for two years which has opened up the charity to criticism, posing a minor reputational problem. While it was unintentional on the part of the executive committee and trustee board, some members have nevertheless voiced concern via social media that returning to the South West was unfair to students from the more northern regions of the SPA.

Members rightly expect the charity to be representative of all student journalists in the UK and Ireland and currently, we believe, this is not being reflected by the SPANC bidding or decision-making process. This is why we propose that the SPA mandates SPANC cannot be held in the same region for two consecutive years where possible.

This means that SPANC must rotate across all member regions of the SPA (the North, Midlands, London, South East, South West, Scotland, Wales and Ireland & Northern Ireland) every year to ensure full equality of opportunity for its members across the UK and Ireland. This would boost the level of regional speakers available for SPANC and prevent the conference becoming concentrated in one region. It would also create more opportunities for student journalists from across the UK as it means the likelihood of SPANC being held in their region is boosted if the opportunity for repetition is not available.

Currently, bye-law four does not include any guidance on how the executive committee and trustee board decide the location of SPANC other than the voting process so, if passed, this motion should be implemented as official guidance to ensure that any bids outside of the previous host region should be prioritised in the decision-making process.

However, if a strong bid is received from the previous host region and it is the executive committee and trustee board’s decision that this is the best option for SPANC then this motion should not explicitly prevent the SPA from opting with that bid. Thus, in the case where a bid is chosen which is from the same host region as the previous year’s national conference then the SPA must publish and communicate to its members their rationale for choosing this bid. This process should be guided by the chair and agreed in full with the trustee board and executive committee.

This guidance should also apply to any bid location which, while technically is in a separate region in SPA terms, is geographically still close to the previous host region. For example, Nottingham and Sheffield are only approximately 50 miles apart but are grouped in separate SPA regions, so, if Sheffield was chosen the

year after Nottingham hosted the national conference then the SPA would have to publish its rationale to be open with members about why it chose a location in such close proximity to the previous year's host.

To achieve this, the executive committee and trustee board for 2025/26 must draft and publish a new updated SPANC bidding document, including clear guidance on how these measures will be implemented alongside the list of criteria bids will be judged against to ensure increased transparency for members bidding. This will also have the added benefit of letting members know how the bids will be judged so they can tailor their bids to the criteria.

This motion is not intended to limit the pool of bids or locations from which the SPA can draw, it is only designed to address member's recent concerns on representation and ensure the bidding process is as fair and transparent as possible in the hopes of creating a stronger student journalism community across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

### **The Student Publication Association resolves:**

#### *Original text:*

The host of the National Conference shall be determined through an open bidding process. All members of the SPA shall be entitled to bid, and a minimum of one month must be provided for the submission of bids.

#### *Updated text:*

The host of the National Conference shall be determined through an open bidding process. All members of the SPA shall be entitled to bid, and a minimum of one month must be provided for the submission of bids.

The national conference host should, where possible, rotate region and publication each year to ensure equal participation and opportunity for all members and their publications. If a region is chosen to host consecutively then the executive committee and trustee board must publish their rationale and reasoning for making the decision to members. This must also be published if a location is chosen which, while in a separate SPA region, is in close geographic proximity to the prior year's host. What constitutes close geographic proximity will be decided by the chair in consultation with the executive committee and trustee board in any given year an issue such as this arises.

## **Amendments to Motion 2**

### **Appendix 5**

*Proposed By: Ollie Cole | Seconded By: Geri Scott*

#### **Explanatory note:**

The following amendment changes the new guidance on decision-making process for SPANC bids (Appendix 4) motion, to clean up wording regarding the phrasing of mandating and rotating, and to ensure that the policy and guidance are drawn up by the executive board of the SPA in a workable manner, rather than being adding through a change to bye-law, which can only be amended at a further general meeting.

#### **FULL AMENDED TEXT, with amended entries highlighted in yellow:**

#### **Motion 2 - New guidance on decision-making process for SPANC bids Appendix 4**

*Proposed By: Joe McFadden | Seconded By: Luke Hewitt*

#### **The Student Publication Association notes:**

We propose that the Student Publication Association (SPA) **adopts a policy to ensure** that the Student Publication Association's National Conference (SPANC) should, where possible, change regions every year to create better representation of its members across the UK and Ireland and encourage wider participation in hosting duties from member publications.

Currently, SPANC has been held consecutively in the South West region for two years. While it was **a decision taken by an anonymous vote by the executive and trustee board of the SPA based on the bids received and feasibility of proposals, some members have nevertheless voiced concern about the cost and travel arrangements brought about by returning to the South West twice in a row.**

Members rightly expect the charity to be representative of all student journalists in the UK and Ireland and currently, we believe, this is not being reflected **as well as it could be** by the SPANC bidding or decision-making process. This is why we propose that the SPA **ensures** SPANC cannot be held in the same region for two consecutive years **where practicably possible based on bids received and viability for the charity.**

This means that SPANC **should move between member regions of the SPA (the North, Midlands, London, South East, South West, Scotland, Wales and Ireland & Northern Ireland) between events** to ensure full equality of opportunity for its members across the UK and Ireland. This would boost the level of regional speakers available for SPANC and prevent the conference becoming concentrated in one region. It would also create more opportunities for student journalists from across the UK as it means the likelihood of SPANC being held in their region is boosted if the opportunity for repetition is not available.

Currently, bye-law four does not include any guidance on how the executive committee and trustee board decide the location of SPANC other than the voting process so, if passed, this motion should be implemented as official guidance to ensure that any bids outside of the previous host region should be prioritised in the decision-making process.

However, if a strong bid is received from the previous host region and it is the executive committee and trustee board's decision that this is the best option for SPANC then this motion should not explicitly prevent the SPA from opting with that bid. Thus, in the case where a bid is chosen which is from the same host region as the previous year's national conference then the SPA must publish and communicate to its

members their rationale for choosing this bid. This process should be guided by the chair and agreed in full with the trustee board and executive committee.

This guidance should also apply to any bid location which, while technically is in a separate region in SPA terms, is geographically still close to the previous host region. For example, Nottingham and Sheffield are only approximately 50 miles apart but are grouped in separate SPA regions, so, if Sheffield was chosen the year after Nottingham hosted the national conference then the SPA would have to publish its rationale to be open with members about why it chose a location in such close proximity to the previous year's host.

To achieve this, the executive committee and trustee board for 2025/26 must draft and publish a new updated SPANC bidding document, including clear guidance on how these measures will be implemented alongside the list of criteria bids will be judged against to ensure increased transparency for members bidding. This will also have the added benefit of letting members know how the bids will be judged so they can tailor their bids to the criteria.

This motion is not intended to limit the pool of bids or locations from which the SPA can draw, it is only designed to address member's recent concerns on representation and ensure the bidding process is as fair and transparent as possible in the hopes of creating a stronger student journalism community across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

#### **The Student Publication Association resolves:**

##### *Original text:*

The host of the National Conference shall be determined through an open bidding process. All members of the SPA shall be entitled to bid, and a minimum of one month must be provided for the submission of bids.

##### *Updated text:*

The host of the National Conference shall be determined through an open bidding process. All members of the SPA shall be entitled to bid, and a minimum of one month must be provided for the submission of bids. The charity executive and trustee board will follow agreed guidance to ensure that the host, where possible, moves between regions and publication each year to ensure equal participation and opportunity for all members and their publications, as laid out in the decision-making process policy (2025)

### **Motion 3 - Trustee term and appointments**

#### **Appendix 6**

*Proposed by: Ollie Cole, Seconded by: Jem Collins*

#### **The Student Publication Association notes:**

This motion would amend the wording of our governing document, to ensure that an elected trustee does not have to stand down prior to the standard term length if no trustee's standard term is due to expire at that year's annual general meeting. It also removes wording which could see an elected trustee's term extended beyond the standard length should two trustees be elected on the same date.

#### **The Student Publication Association resolves:**

*Clause 11, (1) - Replace:*

*"and must elect trustees as required under clause 13"*

*With:*

*"and will elect trustees as laid out under clause 13"*

*Clause 13, (1) (b) - Replace:*

*"At every subsequent annual general meeting of the members of the SPA, one of the elected charity trustees shall retire from office;"*

*With:*

*"At every subsequent annual general meeting of the members of the SPA, if applicable, the elected charity trustee whose term is expiring at that meeting shall retire from office;"*

*Clause 13, (1) (c) - Replace:*

*"The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall be determined to be the trustee who received the least number of votes on their appointment. If they received an equal number of votes, those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot; (i) For the purpose of sub-clause (1)(c) of this clause, the date of appointment for a charity trustee who is appointed in accordance with sub-clause (1)(e) of this clause to replace a trustee who had previously retired or been removed in accordance with clause 15 shall be the date of appointment of the charity trustee that was replaced."*

*With:*

*"The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those whose term has reached the standard length as set out in (g) by the time of the end of that annual general meeting since their last appointment or reappointment. (i) For the purpose of sub-clause (1)(c) of this clause, the date of appointment for a charity trustee who is appointed in accordance with sub-clause (1)(e) of this clause to replace a trustee who had previously retired or been removed in accordance with clause 15 shall be the date of appointment of the charity trustee that was replaced."*

## **Motion 4 - Reserves policy**

### **Appendix 7**

*Proposed By: Jem Collins | Seconded By: Ollie Cole*

#### **The Student Publication Association notes:**

- At the 2024 AGM, members passed a new reserves policy. This was as follows:
  - The SPA aims to hold £10,000 in reserves by 2027, to ensure the long-term stability of the organisation;
  - The SPA aims to add £2,500 to our reserves by 2025, bringing reserves to a total of £5,500 as part of work towards this goal;
  - Reserves must be held in a separate bank account, with a guidance created for when they can be used;
- Prior to #SPANC25, the SPA held £428 in reserved funding as of March 16, 2025. At the conclusion of #SPANC25, the SPA projects to add a further:
  - £2,000 in funding from its own fundraising;
  - £1,200 in funding from company time-matching donations.
- This will leave the organisation with some £3,600 held in reserves.

#### **The Student Publication Association resolves:**

- That the organisation has made progress in growing reserves and should continue with its goal of holding £10,000 in reserves by 2027.
- The organisation should aim to add a further £3,000 to reserves by the conclusion of #SPANC26 to further this goal.

## **Motion 5 - Focus on Visual Journalism**

### **Appendix 8**

*Proposed By: Sylvain Chan | Seconded By: Suchita Thepkanjana*

#### **The Student Publication Association notes:**

Illustration is an underappreciated field within journalism, as visuals are integral to uplifting the written word and entice readers. Reportage illustration is also a unique medium of capturing the energy and atmosphere of an event, potentially even excelling photography in this regard.

I am aware that photography and illustrations are celebrated under the Best Design award, though it would also be encouraging for artists like myself, to continue illustrating for their student newspaper, by having a Best Illustrator category they could submit their work to.

In an era where technology such as AI is rapidly developing and being pushed to the forefront of industries such as journalism, creatives are especially marginalised as often their work becomes undervalued as generative AI 'does their job faster'. As such, having a category that supports artists in such regard would be highly motivating.

#### **The Student Publication Association resolves:**

The SPA to celebrate and focus on more visual methods of journalism, specifically with illustration.

The SPA to have speakers at the next national conference that are in this line of work, as it would inspire artists to pursue new fields.

The SPA to create a Best Illustrator category for the national awards

## **Lifetime memberships**

### **Appendix 9**

*Proposed By: Jem Collins | Seconded By: Geri Scott*

#### **The Student Publication Association notes:**

- Lifetime membership is a ceremonial honour that can be bestowed upon someone members believe “had a significant impact on the wider student media community”.
- Richard Brooks, formerly of Hullfire, served as NUS VP for Union Development from 2015–2017. He became the first-ever NUS elected official to formally attend a Student Publication Association event, beginning the first formal dialogue between student unions and publications on best practices regarding funding and censorship.
- Since 2020 Richard Brooks has served as a trustee for the Student Publication Association, continuing his commitment to supporting student publications and bridging the gap with students’ unions. During this time he has pushed the charity forward in its journey to professionalisation immeasurably, writing our first ever code of conduct, supporting dozens of publications in successful funding bids, launching our first-ever fundraising campaign, running fair and transparent AGM processes, and is often heard saying the words ‘delightful’ or ‘you’ve all done a democracy’ at the AGM.
- In 2025, Richard’s term as a trustee ends.

#### **The Student Publication Association resolves:**

- To award lifetime membership of the SPA to Richard Brooks.