



**GET INVOLVED**  
with your **SPA**

**STUDENT  
PUBLICATION  
ASSOCIATION**

## **WELCOME**

We're delighted so many of you will be joining us in Norwich for this year's National Conference. As well as panels and awards, #SPANC26 is also the chance for us to hold our Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Our AGM is where SPA members can truly take control. You can do this by proposing motions on how you want the SPA to run, electing new leaders to make the SPA reflect your priorities, or by holding to account the SPA's reports and accounts.

To help you understand how the AGM works, we've put together this booklet. It explains what's involved, why you should join us and how you can participate.

We'll be on the ground throughout the SPANC weekend to answer questions about any aspect of the AGM. You can also field any questions to Matthew, on [chair@spajournalism.com](mailto:chair@spajournalism.com), or our Trustee [emma@spajournalism.com](mailto:emma@spajournalism.com), and they'll do their best to help.

## **WHAT DO WE DO?**

The SPA represents more than 200 student publications in the UK & Ireland, and a host of individual members across the country.

Throughout the year we put on training, events, and provide advice and support to our members.

Whether defending our publications against unfair censorship by their university or union, or putting on free media law seminars, we're there for you throughout the year.

**250+** member publications, with thousands of keen student journalists.

Newsletters sent directly to the inbox of highly engaged editors and writers. **740+**

**12,150** student & industry figures reached through social media.

Conference attendees made up of budding young journalists.

**200+**

## WHAT IS THE AGM?

The SPA year begins and ends with SPANC. The AGM is when members can scrutinise the work of the Trustees and outgoing officers, and elect a new Executive Committee to lead the charity in the year ahead.

This year, the AGM will take place on the morning of Sunday 29th March.

The three main roles of the AGM are to:

- Scrutinise the work of the SPA, by receiving reports and accounts;
- Steer the direction and strategy of the SPA, by discussing and then voting on motions; and
- Stand for election, and vote to appoint officers and trustees to lead the SPA in future years

But what do all of those actually mean in practice?

## SCRUTINISE

Although the SPA does its best to keep you up-to-date with what we've been doing, there's lots that goes on behind the scenes as well. The AGM is a vital opportunity for members to understand what the SPA has been delivering for members in the last 12 months, and why we've taken the actions or decisions that we have.

The SPA's governing documents say the AGM must be presented with the trustees' annual report, and the latest financial accounts.

The SPA's Executive Officers also present individual reports to discuss what they did over the course of their term, and how this aligns with goals they set themselves when elected.

Copies of written reports will be available to members in advance of the AGM, and time will be allotted to ask questions to officers and trustees.

You can find [those here](#).

## STEER

Motions will be proposed which change how the SPA runs and what our aims are. Among other things, these motions could change the SPA's governing documents, or induct new honorary lifetime members.

Motions are brought forward by members of the SPA, and will be put to the floor by the Chair. It's then up to members to ask questions, or argue their point and convince other members to vote one way or the other. To finish, each member publication is entitled to one vote, either for or against the motion (or they can choose to abstain).

More detail about how to submit motions can be found further down.

## STAND

One of the most important tasks at the AGM is to elect the next team of SPA officers. These are the individuals who will lead the organisation for the coming year, either as a member of the executive committee, or as a trustee of the charity.

Candidates who wish to run for election are invited to stand at the meeting, give a short speech, and field questions from all members. Voting takes place in a similar fashion for motions, with each member publication entitled to one candidate, and having the option to vote to Reopen Nominations.

At the 2026 AGM, we will be electing six Executive Officers: Chair; Training & Opportunities; Communications; Sponsorship; Conference and Events; Membership; and one Trustee.

You can see our current executive and what they [get up to here](#).

## JUST TAKE PART

Even if you don't want to propose a motion or stand for election, you have a valuable role to play in the AGM by just showing up, speaking where you want to, and casting a vote. Everything you do shapes the future of how we support student journalists across the country.

All member publications are invited to attend and vote at the AGM. (Individual members are able to attend as non-voting observers.) We operate a one member publication, one vote policy. This means that a member publication's team must discuss how to vote, then cast their vote as a collective on each issue.



# HOW TO PROPOSE A MOTION

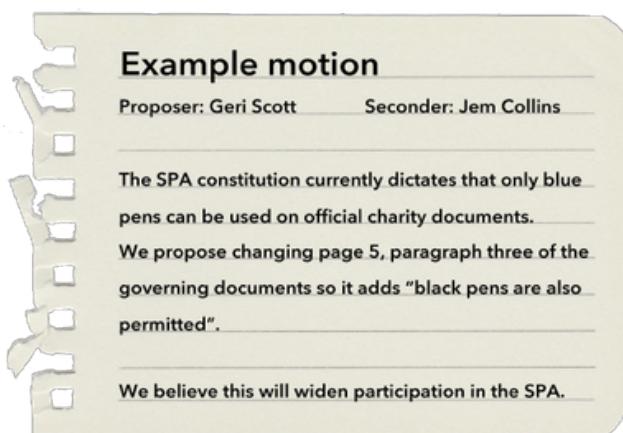
Do you have a burning idea that you think could improve how the SPA should run, and make sure we're continually improving the way we serve our members, and student journalists around the UK and Republic of Ireland?

At each AGM, we take motions submitted by the members and put them to a vote, helping determine the strategy the SPA should follow.

There isn't a specific format that your motion should follow, but we recommend including:

1. A short explanation of why this motion is important
2. Clear and tangible actions the SPA and members should take

Some example motions can be found in [last year's minutes](#).



If your motion would amend the Constitution or Bye-laws ([our governing documents](#)), then you must identify which text is being replaced, and provide the exact text that you want to be added.

Similarly, if you wish to remove something from the Governing Documents, then you must specify the exact text you wish to remove.

To submit a motion, you must be an SPA member, and your motion must be seconded by another SPA member. A member is:

- Someone who is a member of an SPA member publication, or who was in the past 12 months; or
- Somebody who is a current student of journalism and has registered as an individual member.

You can submit your motion by emailing it, along with details of the proposer and seconder, to [chair@spajournalism.com](mailto:chair@spajournalism.com) and [emma@spajournalism.com](mailto:emma@spajournalism.com) by 17:00, Tuesday 3rd March. If you submit it after this date, it cannot be debated at the AGM. Once submitted, the Chair will review your motion to ensure it is in order and compliant with constitutional and legal requirements. Although the Chair will attempt to liaise with proposers if issues arise, they reserve the right to rule motions out of order or to rule any vote indicative until the Trustees determine if it is in order or not.

## **HOW TO STAND FOR ELECTION**

Elections at an SPA AGM are fairly relaxed, and we do encourage anyone who thinks they have something to offer to give it a go! A lot of people only decide they want to run at SPANC or on the day, which is absolutely fine.

To be eligible to run, you will likely need to be a current student with a member publication, or have contributed to a member publication in the last 12 months. If unsure, please contact a current executive officer or trustee ahead of the AGM.

You don't have to do anything ahead of time, but we do recommend considering the following if you're interested in running:

- Speak to current SPA Officers and Trustees to learn more about the roles; and
- Prepare a short speech outlining your goals, and why you believe that you are the right person for the role (maximum 2 minutes for Chair and Trustee, around 1 minute for all other roles)

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## **WHAT ROLES ARE UP FOR GRABS?**

### **Chair**

The Chair is the public face of the Student Publication Association, and alongside this has a number of additional responsibilities. These include overseeing and supporting the other Executive Officers to help them accomplish their goals, supervising the team of Regional and Project Officers, chairing General, Executive and Trustee meetings, and overseeing SPA campaigns.

Term: Until 1 May 2027

### **Communications Officer**

The Communications Officer's primary responsibility is to maintain effective communication with the SPA's members and manage the external communications of the charity. In addition, they are tasked with creating newsletters to be sent to SPA members, overseeing the management of the SPA's social media and website, and taking minutes of all SPA meetings.

Term: Until 1 May 2027

## **Membership Officer**

The Membership Officer is dedicated to member engagement and management. Their responsibilities include processing membership applications, onboarding new members and supporting member publications. They also support the work of the SPA's Regional Officers.

Term: Until 1 May 2027

## **Conference & Events Officer**

The Conference & Events Officer's responsibilities cover events held during the year, all the way up to the set-piece national conference and awards at the end of their term. They serve as the Executive Committee lead on the organisation of SPANC, while also overseeing the activities of all officers who are organising any other events for the SPA.

Term: Until 1 May 2027

## **Sponsorship Officer**

The Sponsorship Officer coordinates efforts to secure advertising and sponsorship revenue, as well as donations, for the SPA to continue its work. They also manage event sponsorship and budgets, in order to ensure obligations to corporate partners are met, whilst they also support other officers, including Regional Officers, in securing sponsorship for their events where appropriate.

Term: Until 1 May 2027

## Training & Opportunities Officer

The Training & Opportunities Officer's responsibilities are wide-ranging, covering a number of different areas, including the production of training resources for SPA members, and ensuring these adapt to the ever-changing needs of student journalists. They also supervise the SPA Alumni Officer, and maintain contact with industry professionals to benefit SPA members at the National Conference and beyond.

Term: Until 1 May 2027

## Elected Trustee

At the 2024 SPA AGM, members will elect one Trustee to join the Board. The Trustees oversee the work of the organisation, with an eye on strategy as well as the long-term future of the SPA. Ensuring the financial viability of the SPA is a vital part of the role. There are currently four elected Trustees, who sit alongside three appointed Trustees, and two members of the Executive Committee, who sit as Trustees *ex officio*.

Term: Four years





For more information, email Matthew on  
[chair@spajournalism.com](mailto:chair@spajournalism.com)