

MINUTES OF NAWE AGM 2020

The NAWE AGM was held online via Zoom on Sunday 15 November 2020.

Attending:

NAWE Management Committee: Anne Caldwell, Jonathan Davidson (chair), Ian McEwan, Andrew Melrose, Derek Neale, Caleb Parkin, Lucy Sweetman.

Staff: Fi Mason, Seraphima Kennedy, Lisa Koning, Philippa Johnston.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Jane Bluett, David Kinchin, Michael Lovaday.

2 Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes of the NAWE AGM held at the Park Inn Hotel in 2019 were approved.

3 Annual Report and Accounts for 2019/2020

Fiona Mason, Interim Director, NAWE, explained that this year's accounts incorporated the Report of the Directors bringing it more in line with charitable recording practice. The deficit for the year was as budgeted (£14,835). However, it was noted that the Directors were conscious that this can't continue. Key to sustainability is to secure additional funding through a broader approach to income generation. Reserves are currently £28,562 but there is need to increase them.

Jonathan Davidson echoed Fiona's words. He reported that Fiona was currently drafting another ACE application which would include some funding for core posts. (Fiona added that she had spoken with the regional ACE representative about the application and he had advised NAWE to apply for NPO funding.) A small surplus was predicted for the coming year. This should be our aim in future years too.

4 NAWE 2019-20 Activity Report

During 2019, NAWE continued to deliver projects with partner organisations, disseminating the outcomes of the Paper Nations project and the Creative Writing Benchmark. Regional networking events were successfully piloted in Cornwall, Leeds, Norwich and London, working with a range of partners. The third iteration of the Max Literacy Awards culminated in a sharing day in Manchester and a special conference plenary event.

Our 2019 conference took place at the Park Inn Hotel in York, with Paul McVeigh and Imtiaz Dharker as keynote speakers, and attracted 143 delegates from 9 countries.

We continued working with subject associations and learned societies, responding to concerns around policy changes in education at all levels, and worked with many of these partners in the wider discipline of English in the planning of the second English: Shared Futures conference due to take place in Manchester in June 2020. (This was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic but we took part in an online version). We have also continued to maintain close links with international creative writing partners AWP, EACWP and AAWP.

On the staffing front, we welcomed Lisa Koning as our new Publications Manager and Fiona Mason who joined in March as Interim Director while Seraphima Kennedy was on maternity leave.

With the arrival of the pandemic, plans for 2020-2021 have had to be adapted and we have focused on what we could do to meet the needs of members and the wider sector while ensuring NAWE's sustainability. A successful Emergency Response funding bid to Arts Council England has allowed us to deliver development opportunities for writers in education including virtual regional networking events and a pilot Action Learning Programme. Achieving charitable status will allow us to begin applying for trust funding.

Fiona Mason reported that Arts Council England NPO guidelines will be published in July 2021 for funding starting in 2023 and discussion followed about the pros and cons of applying for NPO status

Jonathan Davidson thanked Fiona and the staff for all their hard work and welcomed back Seraphima who would be back in post fully in March. He reported that two members of the Management Committee were stepping down, thanking long-standing member Jane Bluett for all her work especially around the Creative Writing 'O' Level and Ian McEwan for his much appreciated financial input and expertise. Seraphima echoed Jonathan's thanks to the staff and to the retiring committee members and said that she was looking forward to returning and working with everyone.

5 Ordinary Resolutions

1 To approve the Annual Report and Accounts of the Company for the financial period ended 31st March 2020.

Proposed by Lucy Sweetman Seconded by Anne Caldwell

2 That Morrell-Middleton Accountants shall continue as Independent Examiners of the Company, to hold office from the conclusion of this Meeting to the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company.

Proposed by Derek Neale Seconded by Lucy Sweetman

3. That the Santander bank shall continue as our bankers in accordance with our original application to them.

Proposed by Jonathan Davidson Seconded by Caleb Parkin

6. Any other business

NAWE Management Committee:

There was discussion, initiated by Derek Neale, about the need to co-opt new members to the committee with schools and financial expertise.

Action: Put out a recruitment call to the membership.

Jonathan Davidson announced that this would be his last year as chair although he would like to continue to serve as a member of the committee.

Action: Add this to the agenda for the next Management Committee meeting.

Reserves:

There was a question from Anne Caldwell asked about the level of reserves that NAWF should be aiming for. Fiona Mason suggested six months operating costs with possibly 10-20% contingency.

Action: Develop a reserves policy.

7. Date of next AGM

The next AGM will be held in November 2021 in Bristol.

PJ/16 December 2020