

The Student Publication Association CIO
2021 Trustees' Annual Report

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". It is currently registered at 13 Brake Wood Close, Fremington, Barnstaple, EX31 3DP.

The trustees who served during the reporting period are:

Owain John Evans (Chair – trustee ex officio) (left post 24 October 2020)
Ben Adam Warner (Chair – trustee ex officio) (joined 24 October 2020)
Chay Louie Quinn (Second Financial Officer – trustee ex officio) (left post 24 October 2020)
Udit Singh (Second Financial Officer – trustee ex officio) (joined 24 October 2020)
Jemma Louise Collins (Elected Trustee)
Sian Maree Elvin (Elected Trustee) (left post 3 October 2020)
Elliot Alexander Davies (Appointed Trustee) (left post 3 October 2020)
Aubrey Edward Lewis Allegretti (Elected Trustee)
Geraldine Scott (Elected Trustee)
Conor James Matchett (joined 3 October 2020)
Richard Lewis Brooks (joined 22 November 2020)
Chris Chohan (joined 22 November 2020)
Juliet Rix (joined 22 November 2020)

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 four 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.

Following the end of the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020, which permitted charitable companies and CIOs to hold AGMs and other members' meetings online regardless of governing documents, in March 2021, the trustees exercised their power under Clause 26 of the Constitution to make clear in the Bye-Laws that an online AGM could be held in May 2021, but that this ability will be repealed the day after the AGM, and instructed the Chair to note this decision in the annual report to demonstrate good governance.

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, and taking steps to create further training resources and update existing ones.
- Facilitating collaboration and peer learning between student journalists from across the UK and Ireland by providing social media platforms to host discussion. The SPA currently operates a total of ten groups on Facebook, with the largest containing over 1,700 members. Further communication between student journalists is facilitated through the work of the SPA's team of volunteer Regional 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 following:

- A virtual annual conference (2020) held over the course of a weekend, providing extensive vocational education for student journalists. To ensure that this conference was accessible to the widest range of people possible, tickets were offered free-of-charge
- A second virtual annual conference (2021), to be held over the course of a weekend, providing extensive vocational education for student journalists. The same steps as with our 2020 national conference have been taken to ensure that this conference was accessible to the widest range of people possible.
- A series of virtual workshops hosted online and provided free of charge. The workshops focused on skills relevant to student journalists.
- A week-long virtual festival hosted online and provided free of charge to members of the public. This festival was co-hosted with other similar organisations, with the SPA's sessions focused on skills relevant specifically to student journalists.

Of the four projects listed directly above, three have been completed, while the 2021 national conference was not held until after the conclusion of the reporting period.

The Trustees are satisfied that, due to the freely accessible nature of resources produced and shared by the SPA this year, that 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 established a Diversity Bursary grant-issuing scheme. These grants were intended to cover the cost of attendance at the SPA's 2020 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 have been 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 would be carried out either directly by the SPA, or reimbursed on production of a receipt detailing approved expenses. Unfortunately, the grant-issuing scheme did not come to a conclusion due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

In keeping with the SPA's object, the trustees identified two 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 create a bursary scheme to widen access to the conference, covering the costs of attendance.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only one of these goals was completed by the end of the reporting period. This was due to statutory limitations on gatherings, as well as considerations over welfare risks to attendees and reputational risk. A vocational conference was held virtually instead. The trustees are of the belief that the SPA was on course to achieve both of these aims if it were not for the COVID-19 pandemic.

An additional goal of the SPA was to produce further training materials to be hosted on the SPA website and made publicly accessible to all. The SPA has carried out planning relating to such training materials, including the organisation of online events. While time and resource was expended during the reporting period in the pursuit of this goal, these educational materials were not made available until after its conclusion.

The SPA also aimed to increase its reserves position to £500, and asked members to approve a long-term target to hold the greater of 50% of expected annual turnover, or £7,500, by FY23 at the 2020 annual general meeting. At the end of the reporting period, the SPA held reserves below this target, but has shown significant progress towards this target, and the trustees are satisfied that the organisation is capable of meeting its target..

FINANCIAL REVIEW

At the end of this reporting period, the SPA held a total of £7,499.35 in accounts managed by it. £650 of this figure is reserved funds which are intended for the SPA's Diversity Bursary. No funds of the SPA are materially in deficit.

At incorporation, the SPA trustees had agreed 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 2020 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 £6,469.32 in 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.

THIS REPORT WAS APPROVED BY THE TRUSTEES AS A WHOLE ON SATURDAY 29 MAY, AND SIGNED ON THEIR BEHALF BY THE TWO FOLLOWING TRUSTEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPA CONSTITUTION.

Ben Warner

Ben Warner
Chair

Geraldine Scott

Geraldine Scott
Trustee