

Northern Potters Association

Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting

Held at The Hired Lad, Skirsgill Auction Mart, Potfest in the Pens.
At 5.15pm., Saturday 4th August 2018.

Present

Joan Hardie (chair), Sally Streuli (minutes), John Robinson (treasurer), John Cook, Dianne Cross, , Kit Hemsley, Colette Hennigan, Ken Taylor, Brian Holland, Gill Jones, Kay Butterworth, Janet Nuttall, John Kershaw, Michael Meadows, Hazel Higham, Barbara Chadwick, Juliet Myers, Lyn Grant, Gerry Grant, Colin Jowitt, Ruth Livesey, Roger Bell, Jack Hardie, Eileen Do, Claude Frere-Smith, Shirley Hetherington, Eryl Fryer, Jill Christie.

1. Apologies

Elizabeth Smith, Mia Frampton, Geoff Wilcock, Bev Seth, Kathy Watson, Renee Cryer.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes were approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Chairperson's Report

The NPA has a large and growing membership, a healthy financial position, a sound infrastructure and an active programme of events. During the last year we have had a stable and well functioning committee and have achieved a lot.

After Margaret Lawrenson resigned I took on the role of acting Chair in January 2018 and John Cook became acting Vice Chair, agreeing to serve until the 2018 AGM. WE have both continued with our existing roles as well. John Robinson is stepping down at this AGM, having served 3 years as Treasurer. Elisabeth Smith wants to be replaced as Membership Secretary. Carl Gray resigned from the committee and Ken Taylor has recently joined it.

We have been very fortunate to have several members coming forward to take on the role of regional coordinators. Thanks to the new, retiring and continuing regional coordinators.

- North West: John Kershaw has taken over from Ruth Charlton.
- South West: Alasdair Nelson and Juliet Myers have taken over from Barbara Chadwick.
- East: Lyn Clarke and Kay Butterworth have taken over from Becky Clouston.
- There has been no change in the other three regions, with Geoff Wilcock in West, Stephen Aal in North East, and Bev Smith and Kathy Watson in South East.

To take the NPA forward, we need such active regional coordinators and a strong central committee. However we have an ongoing problem finding volunteers to help in all areas. This will become critical for the organisation's future unless more members are willing to contribute.

The General Data Protection Regulations, which came into force on 25 May 2018, have taken much time and effort to understand and implement. We believe we are now compliant with the new regulations. Thanks to John Cook and Elizabeth Smith and all the regional coordinators who have shared the burden. We have now amended the membership database and provided regional coordinators with lists of members who have consented to receive emails. Our Data Privacy Policy is available on the website.

Events

Our 40th Anniversary in 2017 was celebrated with exhibitions around our regions, articles, photos and reminiscences in NPA News, the ceramic birthday tea party at Potfest and our innovative on-line competition. Thanks for all the hard work that went in to these.

The nine winners of the on-line competition each received a substantial voucher for from one of our many sponsors and have been featured in an exhibition at Valentines Clays. Particular thanks are due to Dianne Cross for organising these.

In 2017 the CoCA lecture, featuring Felicity Aylieff and Takeshi Yasuda, was held at York with support from the NPA. We had NPA stands at Earth and Fire and Potfest in the Pens. Our thanks to Margaret Lawrenson, Nina Wright, Dianne Cross and members who supported them.

In 2018 we have stands at Earth and Fire and Potfest in the Pens, organised by Mia Frampton and Colette Hennigan. Thanks to the members who helped man these stands, and to the event organisers who let us have them at no charge. The CoCA lecture will be on 10th November when the speaker will be Alex McErlain.

Regions

There has been a lot of activity in the regions, with many socials, studio visits, demonstrations and exhibitions. Here are some of the highlights.

NE: Clarts exhibition at Newcastle Arts Centre; photography workshop

East: Ceramics Sale at Poppleton; raku, barbecue and tile making at Fangosse Pottery; glaze discussion group at CoCA; day of clay at Hive; raku at Lotherton.

SE: Sheffield Ceramic Fair; Exhibition at Chapel Walk Art Space; Mette Meyer Gregersen demonstration; raku sessions; throwing demonstration by Steve Booton and Ken Taylor at the Art House Sheffield

SW; 'Pots at the Parsonage' exhibition at the Old Parsonage Didsbury.

West: 'A Taste of Clay' exhibition at the Lytham Heritage Centre.

NW; Raku day at Solway Ceramics Centre; Cumbria Ceramics at Upfront Gallery, nr Penrith.

Newsletter

NPA News continues to link members across the whole NPA. Thanks to all those who have contributed. I am sure that there are many other members with interesting stories. I would also like to include more articles about pottery techniques.

An archive of PDF versions of NPA News is now available on the website, accessible to the general public. The six most recent issues are not included. We could offer members

the choice of a printed or PDF version of NPA News if a member were to volunteer to help with the associated administration.

Website

John Cook has continued to ensure that our website is up to date, including the members gallery, and committee and regional coordinators contact details. The website has also been upgraded to modern security standards. An archive section has been added for past copies of the NPA News, AGM Minutes, Policy Documents etc. Items added to the website archive will be highlighted in NPA News.

John has also redesigned the membership application form to reflect changes to the payment method and GDPR consent.

Publicity

Dianne Cross has been active throughout the year publicising the NPA. The on-line competition and winners featured in an article in Claycraft magazine and an item in Ceramic Review. Dianne also organized the distribution of prizes, coordinated the exhibition with Valentines, and organized the delivery of pieces. John Cook helped out with exhibitor information cards and wall posters.

Dianne reprinted the Love Pots leaflets and distributed copies to regions and ceramic events. She also administers the NPA Facebook page. The committee recently decided to only allow NPA members to join the Facebook group.

The financial and membership status of the NPA are covered in the following agenda items. I would like to record my thanks to John Robinson and Elizabeth Smith for their contributions.

5. Treasurer's Report

John Robinson proposed the re-appointment of Steve Wood FCMA as auditor for 2016/17, seconded by Barbara Chadwick and passed.

The financial statement (30 March 2018) was printed in the last NPA News. A copy is attached to these minutes. The assets for the NPA are close to £13,500.00 giving us a trading surplus of £1,600.00, in comparison to last year's surplus of £777.00. Increases came from higher membership income of £800.00, although this was balanced against higher Newsletter costs of £700.00. Website costs were reduced by £500.00 following the work carried out on improving the website last year. Reduced venue hire costs of £100.00 and reduced travel costs of £50.00 were in part due to most committee meetings being held in a central location at Brian Holland's studio in central Sheffield, thanks were expressed to Brian for this.

Following JR's summary of the current situation it is apparent that the NPA holds a healthy and generally increasing balance on account. JH stated that the NPA committee, whilst needing to be cautious with funds, felt the operating surplus could be given to the regions on an equitable basis for projects for the good of all and which supported the ideals of the NPA.

There was general support from the floor, with Brian Holland likening it to a regional development fund. Claude Frere-Smith pointed out that such funding might also result in activities that made a profit after an initial input of funds. However it was also felt a balance needed to be retained for any one off costs or significant loss of income. The balance to be ring fenced for unforeseen expenditure was thought to have been set at £10,000 at a previous AGM.

It was also recognised that activities needed both members who were prepared to organise the activities and those who were prepared to attend, the NPA cannot exist without a healthy number of volunteers. This was further discussed under item 7 below.

6. Membership Secretary's Report

Membership has risen since the last AGM in October from 574 memberships/591 total members, to 593 memberships/615 total members, an increase of 24. This is less than a third of the membership rise in 2016-17, which seemed to be connected to the screening of the Pottery Throwdown early in 2017.

Earlier this year John Cook and Elizabeth Smith redesigned the membership form, with input from the rest of the committee. This was partly to make the form GDPR compliant, but also to try to simplify it, as people often sent the entire form including the standing order mandate. The new form seems to be working.

It was also decided to go ahead and phase out cheque payments. This is a slow process, often taking several months for each member. Some members have expressed unhappiness about the change in payment methods; this is partly because sending a cheque was simpler for them, but also because some people confuse a standing order with a direct debit.

	2016	2017	2018
Total membership	510	574	593
Joint memberships	19	17	22
Total inc joint members	529	591	615
Honorary members	4	4	5
GDPR 'Yes'	n/a	n/a	452
GDPR 'No'	n/a	n/a	131

7. Election of committee members

John Cook (website), Dianne Cross (publicity) and Joan Hardie (newsletter) have held their positions for the last 3 years and, as all are willing to continue in these roles, have put themselves forward for re-election. John Cooke was therefore proposed for re-election by Eryl Fryer and seconded by Gerry Grant, Dianne Cross was proposed by Lyn

Grant and seconded by Brian Holland and Joan Hardie was proposed by Barbara Chadwick and seconded by Hazel Higham. All were carried.

Ken Taylor has recently joined the committee and was proposed by Brian Holland and seconded by John Cooke: carried.

The committee currently holds vacancies for the post of Chair, Vice Chair and requires new members for the committee to allow those roles to be filled.

There is also a need for a treasurer, and if no-one can be found to fill this role a book-keeper will need to be hired to take on the day to day management of the accounts, at a cost to the NPA. JR is able to maintain a back-seat role to take care of the accounts until October 2017, but this is the deadline for finding a new treasurer.

The NPA has a very healthy membership of 600 but the committee is at breaking point. The Acting Chair and Vice Chair will continue until January 2019, after that if no other solutions are forthcoming the Association will be forced to invoke Clause 11, for the dissolution of the organisation. All members present were asked to report back to their regions on the pressing need for volunteers and the committee will continue to look for support.

Three regions have seen new coordinators take over the organisational roles this year and it is good to see such positive activity in the regions. It was suggested that, should the central organisation dissolve, the regions could fill the gaps, however this would require the setting up of six committees, and the central organisation would be repeated across the regions, which would put a significant strain on regional volunteers.

8. Any other business

All those currently involved in keeping the NPA working at committee and regional level were thanked from the floor, and the meeting ended with a strong message to consider how to encourage members to volunteer. Despite the current (and not unique) difficulties the meeting was held in a positive and supportive atmosphere.

Sally Streuli August 2018