

Northern Potters Association

Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting

Held by Zoom (due to Covid restrictions).
At 1.00pm, Saturday 15th November 2020.

Present

John Cook (chair), Sally Streuli (minutes), Emmeline Butler (treasurer), Ann Davis (membership secretary), Joan Hardie, Dianne Cross, Nadine Blakemore, Lyn Grant, Gerry Grant, Carol Newmarch, Kathryn Stevens, Michelle Park, Lorraine Clay, Juliet Myers, Sue Clarke, Helen Pickard, Lyn Clarke.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Election of committee members

4.1 The following new members have joined the committee in the last year and therefore require confirmation of their position: Pamela Thorby (who has also taken up the position of vice chair), Lyn Grant, Gerry Grant, Kathryn Stevens, Carol Newmarch and Michelle Park (who will also be taking up the position of treasurer). All the above were put forward for election by Joan Hardie and seconded by Dianne Cross, and all were carried. All regions are represented on the committee.

5. Chairperson's Report

5.1 John Cook gave his report with the main points outlined below:

The NPA has maintained a large membership of around 600 and a strong financial position as outlined in the accounts. The NPA has made a further investment in software to administer, securely maintain and manage the membership details.

Exhibitions and Events:

5.2 Unfortunately the exhibition and events programme has been hard hit by the Covid pandemic, however the two NPA exhibitions at the Platform Gallery, Clitheroe and the Water Street Gallery, Todmorden are now planned for 2021, with the NPA stand and demonstration at Potfest in the Pens also held over.

Regions:

5.3 John encouraged the Regional groups to organise events including on line demonstrations and selling events, and to make use of the £200 grant available to each region annually for relevant activities.

5.4 John thanked Geoff Wilcock who has now stood down as the regional coordinator for the West region after many years in the role.

5.5 The NE region is now operating with a group of volunteers working together to manage and reach a large region. It is hoped a similar approach may help the SE region reach all areas, particularly Lincolnshire where members have felt a little isolated.

5.6 The NPA intends to supply each region with two banners to be used at exhibitions to promote The NPA, negating the need to share the banners held centrally.

Insurance:

5.7 The NPA's Public Liability/Professional Indemnity Insurance Policy is now more cost effective and also covers all NPA members who are undertaking official NPA business. The policy however does have limitations, including the use of dangerous processes or hazardous material and does not replace the Public Liability Insurance that individual members have to have for exhibitions, for example. Local arrangements or disclaimers would still be appropriate for say a Raku firing and demo by an NPA member. Members representing the NPA must check before they assume that they have insurance cover.

Annual subscription and payment:

5.8 As agreed at the AGM in 2017 In York, payment is by standing order only. The Constitution on the website now reads, "The subscription fee shall be payable in advance for one year from the first day of the month of joining by Standing Order. Membership shall be deemed to have lapsed if the Standing Order has been cancelled." This wording was agreed and subscription details on the website have also been updated.

An online Membership Application Form is being progressed. Whether this change can incorporate an online payment system will be investigated.

Equality Statement:

5.9 The committee recommended that an Equality Statement should be published in NPA News and JC proposed, and the AGM voted in agreement, to amend the written Constitution to read:

"The NPA is an inclusive, not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers which welcomes and values diversity (of age, ethnicity, race, religion, disability belief or non-belief, sex or sexual orientation) within its membership. Our aim is to ensure that all our members are treated with dignity and respect."

Bursary scheme:

5.10 The bursary scheme is up and running and was formally approved by the meeting. It will run from AGM to AGM and be approved at the AGM each year, the constitution will be amended to reflect this. It was agreed to award bursaries of up to £250 with the total amount kept at £1000 for the year.

Volunteers:

5.11 JC thanked Ken Taylor and Sue Kaskiewicz for their work on the committee as they both stood down this year. John also thanked Emmeline for her excellent work as treasurer over the last two years, she will be replaced by Michelle Park and they have been managing the transition smoothly. New members have joined the committee this year but there is a continuing need for new members to join the committee and take up named positions.

Website:

5.12 The NPA website was relaunched in January 2020. The conversion to a WordPress site allows the NPA to undertake edits and so recoup the investment in the site within 3/5 years, including £540 overspend. The new site gives security protection against hacking and control of the content.

The new website has positively received and is being overseen by Jack Hardie who volunteered to be the Administrator to oversee the site for the NPA. Current content is

managed by JC (Gallery), DC (Events/Courses) and JH (Archive). More members will be required as website administrators to ensure continuity of editing.

Members were encouraged to join the Gallery as numbers with a page are only about 25% of the membership. This has been a constant figure for a number of years, although the page gets an average of 10,000 hits annually.

Newsletter:

5.13 NPA News continues to be of a very high standard but JH is endeavouring to find a member to take over responsibility for the newsletter. The potential for an electronic version of the Newsletter is also being progressed.

Social Media:

5.14 The NPA social media presence is expanding, with input from PT, NB and DC on both the facebook pages, Twitter and Instagram.

6. Membership Secretary's, Treasurer's and Membership Survey Reports:

6.1 The two reports were circulated to all members in advance of the AGM, together with a short report on the Membership Survey. There were no questions arising from the three reports.

7. Any other business

No questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting from the membership.

Sue Clark has given demonstrations on Zoom during lockdown, which were welcomed. She is happy to continue with these and thanks were expressed to her.

CN questioned how and why an amount of £10-12,000 was held by the NPA. JC and others remembered this amount had been agreed at an AGM in 2011 as a suitable amount to cover operating costs if income failed. The committee agreed this amount should be reviewed and justified

8. Next Meeting

The 2021 AGM will be held in Penrith to coincide with Potfest in the Pens.