



**Minutes of the AGM of the Westcountry Potters Association
Held at The Kenn Centre**

Sunday 22nd March 2026

There were 93 members present, including 14 committee members.

1. Apologies for absence

Pearl Taylor, Edward King, Bec Davies, Charline Marzin, Jane Lake, Sue Rouillard, Vivienne Bennett, Amy Cooper, Annabel Hatton, Max Williams, Astrid Whitton, Paul Finlay and Andy Ogden.

2. Minutes of the 2025AGM

The Minutes of the 2025 AGM were proposed by Roger Cockram and seconded by Heidi Knight-Tomsett and unanimously approved as a correct record.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters were arising from the Minutes.

4. Annual Report from the Acting Chair – Mark Sweetland

This past year has seen changes in the committee team and roles. Bec Davies took on the Chair role last March, but sadly, due to conflicting personal & professional commitments, was unable to continue giving it her full support. I had previously adopted the role of vice Chair to help out, so I stepped in to provide continuity of the Chair role within committee. I would like to thank Bec for what she achieved for WPA during her brief time as Chair and her honesty in taking that brave decision to step down.

I am delighted to announce that Anna Hearn will be taking over as Chair from May 2026, whilst I continue in support as Vice Chair. Anna was on the WPA committee for many years, before taking a break to retrain for her new career as a Clinical Reflexologist.

We are both looking forward to exploring how we can help the Association develop and grow even more than it has in recent years. We will value the support of the rest of the committee, but will also welcome your input and help from you as the wider membership – so do get in touch if you have the enthusiasm to get involved in some way.

Other committee changes welcomed Pauline Parnell and Deborah Hicks, looking after Membership and our Magazine respectively. They have both gotten off to flying starts, with their own reports giving more details later. New committee members bring fresh ideas and input into the proceedings. I'm sure that we will see their multiple inputs and ideas bearing fruit in 2026 and beyond.

Our membership continues to go from strength to strength. Pauline took over as Membership Secretary from Martin Harbour during the year and has done a brilliant job of overseeing the renewals process early in 2026 - always a very busy time! A very warm welcome to all new and returning members.

Deborah has started to develop her own stamp upon our magazine editions and I'm sure you'll agree, it continues to grow and be a real flagship offering for our members and is well-respected within the wider potters' association network.

2025/26 was another successful WPA year! Our activity calendar had its usual rich mix of events, with some welcome newer initiatives such as the Knowledge Bank Sessions – which are aimed at freely sharing expertise with our members on a wide range of topics. Potters are a very generous group of people anyway, always willing to share their skills and knowledge to other enthusiasts. Huge thanks are due to all the many team members who arrange and manage these various events and activities to make them successful. These events are where members can meet and get to know fellow potters, develop contacts and seek out knowledge.

I make no apology for continuing the “thanks-fest” to the wider support teams working off committee – all volunteers and listed within the magazine. The WPA could not deliver the many member benefits we all enjoy without you!

A final word to say that the WPA is only as brilliant as its membership enables it to be. So please continue to support us in any way that you can – either with ideas, suggestions or the offer of some time. Both Anna and I will be focusing on how we can grow the engagement and involvement of more members in WPA activities of every type within the coming year. Happy potting for 2026/2027!

5. Treasurer's Report - Richard Cole

1. Summary of Accounts

Summary

- The WPA recorded a deficient in 2025 of over £3,200 this was greater than budgeted (£1,500). It was driven by three main areas.
 - An increase in costs and a different mix of users for the Anagama firing
 - Reduced level of exhibitors and sales at the 2 shows
 - Increased IT costs and the introduction of bank Charges
- The annual cost of the magazine has increased but this has been offset by increased membership income and improved advertising revenue coupled with a detailed review of printing and distribution costs. The cost per member remains below £17 per year.

- Cash in the bank at year end remains healthy and provides the WPA with enough cash flow for 2026.

2025 Accounts

	2024				2025		
	income	expenses	total		income	expenses	total
Membership	£ 14,294.60	£ 413.19	£ 13,881.41	£ 15,821.81	£ 489.96	£ 15,331.85	
Magazine	£ 2,637.00	£ 13,628.01	-£ 10,991.01	£ 2,992.96	£ 14,333.52	-£ 11,340.56	
Activities	£ 9,030.01	£ 7,860.29	£ 1,169.72	£ 7,922.89	£ 8,767.32	-£ 844.43	
Donations	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Potters' Market	£ 3,008.16	£ 3,165.62	-£ 157.46	£ 2,095.35	£ 2,137.25	-£ 41.90	
Exhibitions	£ 5,864.65	£ 5,675.10	£ 189.55	£ 4,958.81	£ 5,766.13	-£ 807.32	
Assets	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
Committee							
travel & rooms	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 725.61	-£ 725.61	
other costs	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 173.29	-£ 173.29	
Association General	£ -	£ 2,785.53	-£ 2,785.53	£ 15.00	£ 3,421.70	-£ 3,406.70	
Annual Member Events	£ 177.50	£ 1,766.86	-£ 1,589.36	£ 94.62	£ 1,378.43	-£ 1,283.81	
Deposit interest	£ 72.44		£ 72.44	£ 48.96		£ 48.96	
Credit/deficit	£ 35,084.36	£ 35,294.60	-£ 210.24	£ 33,950.40	£ 37,193.21	-£ 3,242.81	
Current account			£ 10,174.33			£ 6,882.56	
Deposit account			£ 6,154.10			£ 6,203.05	
total			£ 16,328.43			£ 13,085.61	
financed by							
Accumulated funds			£ 15,913.71			£ 15,703.47	
Surplus/Deficit			-£ 210.24			-£ 3,242.81	
true balance			£ 15,703.47			£ 12,460.66	
	2025 advance subs		£ 307.74	2026 advance subs		£ 459.87	
	2025 activities adv		-£ 86.20	2026 activities adv		£ 179.90	
balance			£ 15,925.01			£ 13,100.43	

2. Looking Forward in 2026 & 2027

In 2026 I am projecting a deficit of around £3,100 as we continue to actively seek to reduce the surplus that we have.

It has been agreed by the Committee to take a new approach to exhibitions (of which there will be 3 in 2026) with a reduction in the level of WPA commission (down from 25% to 15%). It is hoped that this will drive more participants and increased sales – as these have dipped in the last couple of years.

With regard to the Anagama firing in the summer a slightly revised approach is being taken to reduce any loss on this activity.

Overall, with improved budgeting, the Committee will continue to strive to deliver a sustainable and cost effective organisation for the benefit of all members.

Query was raised regarding the level of surplus held by the society in previous years. It was noted that the surplus stood at £12,460 last year and is estimated to be approximately £9,000 for the current financial year. The aim is to maintain a surplus just under £10,000 (£6,000 of which is in a deposit account) in order to cover upfront exhibition costs and occasional one-off expenses, such as website development.

Audit report

This year's audit of the 2025 WPA accounts was carried out by Graham Macey. This was to ensure absolute separation of roles, as the other auditor, Mark Sweetland, has taken on wider Chair responsibilities within the year. Graham's findings were discussed with Mark before the audit report sign-off and submission to committee for review - but this still ensured there was no possible conflict of interest within Mark's roles. The report contains some observations for committee, but no non-conformance within procedures, spending and accounting. The forecast deficit for the year was noted and was in line with recommendations made in previous audit reports.

Mark Sweetland added his name to the audit report and declared his position as the current Acting Chair. It was noted that the audit requires sign-off today and will be presented at the next committee meeting for further discussion.

ACTION - Audit discussion to be added to next committee meeting

6. Reports from committee

a. Membership Secretary - Pauline Parnell

We ended 2025 with 754 members. As of 28th February we had 655 members with a continuing steady trickle of late renewals.

We have had in excess of 30 new members join via the website so far this year.

During 2025 the committee decided to make all student membership free of charge. As part of this change, all students and apprentices were asked to provide evidence of entitlement, which has resulted in some students becoming paid members and others leaving.

Membership offers at events this year will be changing and align more with our normal offers regarding half year membership from July and membership for the following year from November but each starting from the earlier event date. It is worth noting that many members who joined on offers in 2025 did not renew this year.

Current membership stands at 675, representing a decrease of approximately 75 members compared to the previous year. This reduction is thought to reflect a natural drop-off following sign-ups during events and following The Great Pottery Throw Down. Efforts to follow up with lapsed members were noted to have caused significant disruption.

b. Activities Report 2025 - John Watson

The Activities team consisting of Karen Edwards, Mark Sweetland and I arranged the flowing programme in 2025

Date	Activity
20 th January	Knowledge bank session on using social media led by Charlene Marzin and Alison Hannah
3 rd February	Knowledge bank session on fundamentals of glazing led by Lucy Winch
10 th February	Knowledge bank session on starting to mix glazes led by Lucy Winch
17 th March	Knowledge bank session on preparations for wood firing led by Anna Hearn
22 nd February	Zoom demonstration by Adrian Bates
30 th March	Demonstration by Mark Smith at the Kenn Centre. Association AGM
15 th & 16 th July	Social Firing Days at Tarka Pottery
19 th October	Autumn Gathering at Puriton Village Hall
9 th November	Demonstration by Sarah Rooms Heaphy at the Kenn Centre

The demonstration at the AGM, Autumn Gathering and Knowledge Bank Sessions were free to members.

The association programme for the year included a wide range of events which are organised by other members of the committee. These were:

- Association exhibition at Bovey Craft Fair on 6th to 8th June organised by Claire Davey-Potts
- Wood Firing event at Kigbeare running from 2nd June to early July organised by Anna Hearn and team.
- Potters Market in Exeter on 2nd August organised by Edward King.
- Exhibition at the Created Festival, Abbotsham on 20th & 21st September organised by Claire Davey-Potts
- Potters Market in Butchers' Hall, Tavistock on 26th October organised by Patsy Lang.

Details of these will be covered in separate reports at the AGM.

These events and activities continue to be very popular with members and are well supported with great enthusiasm. We are most grateful to our guest potters and association members who contribute so much to their success. The team work and camaraderie evident at all events is one of the great benefits of belonging to the association. Follow up articles and photographs in the magazine are greatly appreciated and we would like to thank the members who contribute to these and in so many other ways.

I am particularly grateful to Karen Edwards and Mark Sweetland for all their hard work, ideas and enthusiasm. We are delighted that Penny O'Brien has joined the Activities team.

The current year's programme is published in the magazine. We hope this offers something for everyone and are always on the lookout for new ideas and activities.

Thanks were extended to Chris Walpole for the loan of equipment, which made today's event possible.

It was noted that over the past year the society has delivered a varied programme of activities, including three live demonstrations, an Autumn Gathering, four Knowledge Bank sessions, one Zoom demonstration, one social firing, and one workshop.

Thanks were also given to those members who contribute written reports of events for the wider membership, as well as to those who assisted with the social firing, for their enthusiasm and support.

Special mention was given to Karen Edwards and Mark Sweetland in recognition of their significant contribution and hard work.

c. Exhibition Report - Claire Davey-Potts

Exhibitions have gone well this year with engagement from both the buying public and members despite the economic climate.

Craft Festival

Craft festival was busier than ever this year with over 10,000 visitors, it is one of the biggest craft events in Europe. We were well placed by the main marquees and engaged with members and public. This year it was noted that the pick up service at Tiverton and the Stewards info zoom meeting was appreciated by the members.

The new mobile and payment system also went through much easier this year. As usual, we were reliant on our set up team led by John Watson and the selection committee, as well as the hand over/pick up group who helped members drop off and pick up the work. We also rely on the curation team to fine tune the exhibition and there were lots of positive comments on the set up. Thank you to everyone who helped. We are looking forward to welcoming new helpers this year from people who have come forward over the year.

There were lots of compliments on our work, our stewards and our organisation as we promote ourselves to a wider audience. Sales were slightly down on this year with more sales of functional ware as opposed to sculptural or decorative. I felt that we missed the larger garden sculpture in the catalogue which tends to bring in more sales, by drawing people into our stand. It was also noted that with the application fee and the commission at 25%, there was less benefit for makers. Our WPA treasurer has offered to drop the commission fee to 15% which should help more. We will need to involve a few more makers to accommodate this but we are hoping this will help our members and encourage them to exhibit with us. We also noted that several makers have received commissions as a result of their involvement in the exhibition at Craft festival so there can be benefits beyond the actual 3 days of the Craft Festival. Member biographies and cards should be clearly defined. Applications have opened already.

Created Festival

This was our second year and despite the awful weather on Saturday afternoon, it went well for a lot of the makers exhibiting there. Sales and footfall were up on the previous year and applications are now open for this year. As usual, there was great engagement with the public and the stewards were brilliant at talking to people and letting them know about our work. There was about 14 memberships signed up too which was great. Created offers a brilliant opportunity to those members who have never exhibited before. Several first time exhibitors sold a few pieces which was nice to see.

This year ahead

With the Rosemoor exhibition in July 18th-August 2nd, as well as Created and Craft festival, Bovey, we are busier than ever. Thankfully, a number of members have offered to help and involved themselves for which I am most grateful. There are also many ways in which you can help such as visiting our stand and sharing our material on social media. It all helps promote our work and that of our members. To keep Rosemoor as a separate exhibition but also to highlight it, I propose we call it the WestcountryPotters Summer Exhibition. I am in the process of putting together a poster for promotion through social media and the website. I have met with the events person who reminded me of the vintage weekend over one of the weekends with a model exhibition, 40s and 50s dancing, family activities and vintage village so we might like to have a few more stewards on for that weekend so everyone gets a chance to see it. Applications for Rosemoor are open 20/3/26 to 30/4/26. Feel free to come and have a chat if you would either like to exhibit or steward in any way.

d. Potters Markets

Exeter Market Report - Edward King

The Exeter Quay Potters' Market went well this year. Despite 3 people having dropped out, I managed to fill 2 spots (the third one was a no-show on the day). Table hire and the background logistics went smoothly, with Allens providing the tables again and The Customs House being supportive as always.

Thankfully the weather was great and the Quay was as busy as you would expect. The feedback from the potters was all very positive and everyone seemed to enjoy the day. A few Potters mentioned having more of a social media run-up to the event and greater online advertising (especially on local Facebook groups). This year I asked the potters in advance if they would like physical posters to reduce waste and for practical geographical reasons. There was a 60% uptake of posters for those that lived more locally.

It was our first year trialling an updated poster design across both Exeter and Tavistock Potters' Markets, the feedback having been good. Both Exeter and Tavistock have the same design, with the image being changed to reflect one potter at each market. Successful applicants to the markets are asked to submit images of high quality that we can then use for our advertising of the event.

The other main feedback from the more regular potters to the Exeter Market was how nice it was to see a lot of new faces. As with all WPA markets, half of it is making connections with the rest of the community.

The next market will be advertised in the spring and be handed over to Jayne Randall. Edward King will now be taking over from Patsy Lang at the Tavistock Potters' Market. Our Pottery Markets both need volunteer help to man reception desks, chat up WPA, answer people's questions and sometimes take WPA Zettle payments. This year I split my table into my own work alongside WPA information and so didn't require volunteers. If people think they might be available to help at either market it would be helpful if you came forward during the AGM so we can plan accordingly then.

Tavistock Market Report - Patsy Lang

This year's Tavistock market was held a little earlier than usual as there was limited availability for the hall. At the 2025 Tavi market there were 26 potters in all at 25 tables. We continued the use of the 'drawing from a hat' of all registered potters to select them. For Tavistock there are two different types of positions so you can register for the one you want. We had about a dozen people on the waiting list.

We decided to try something new prompted by suggestions from potters the year before. We rotated the outside tables 90degrees, so perpendicular to the butcher's shelf running along the wall, providing better access to things on the shelf behind. At the market about half of

these tables were turned back to the parallel placement by the potters. A couple of potters then commented during the market that they wish they had gone with the perpendicular layout! Having a mix made it quite interesting to walk around I think.

Our Pottery Markets both need volunteer help to man reception desks, chat up WPA, answer people's questions and sometimes take WPA Zettle payments. I only had 2 volunteers come forward this year though really needed 3. I did an additional call out a few weeks prior to event to potters in the region for a volunteer with no response. If people think they might be available to help at either market it would be helpful if you came forward during the AGM so we can plan accordingly then.

Our visitor numbers were in the same ball park as last year reaching something between 1300 & 1400 people. We count the people coming in the front door by our reception table but are not able to count those coming in the back alley door. We used posterage, newspaper advertising, and social media to promote our markets. This year we picked an image from a potter attending the Exeter Market on both posters. We may use two separate images next year, one from each market.

Possible suggestions for next year are moving the Tavistock market to Friday or Sunday to see if there might be better availability closer to Christmas. A better timeslot would likely boost sales. We are also considering adding in a Spring Market which Tavistock could sustain but it might be more prudent to secure a new location possibly in Somerset. All suggestions welcome!

This was my last year organising this market and it is over to Ed King so questions/suggestions to him. I have really enjoyed this as I love Tavistock but my jobs have taken over my time. I will remain on committee and hope to help out at various events when possible.

The Potters Market team shared that they are looking to set up a third market in the Somerset area.

A query was raised about the possibility of shared tables at markets, allowing members to sell a small number of pots and pay a proportion of the table cost. It was explained that there is already an option for shared tables on the application form, and that most people tend to arrange sharing with someone they know.

It was suggested that the Market team review this option going forward.

e. Magazine and Advertising - Deborah Hicks, Laura Clatworthy

I took over as editor of the magazine in July last year, working with Anna Hearn on the July/August issue and taking over full responsibility from the following edition. I should record my grateful thanks to Anna for her guidance and very thorough handover process and for her support in the months following.

I enjoyed a very lengthy publishing career, editing and managing a wide variety of publications, from books to newsletters, magazines and journals, mostly in the field of international taxation, and was delighted to have the opportunity to combine those skills and experience with a new found hobby in ceramics.

My aim for the magazine is to provide a wide range of feature articles from both WPA members and prominent figures in our field of interest. With a membership of over 700, the range of skills, experience and indeed motivation of readers is very wide. I feel it is important to strike a good balance in content to be as relevant as possible to as many as possible – not an easy task! I am endlessly fascinated – as I hope readers are – by the diverse backgrounds and inspirations of our members and ceramicists more widely.

By featuring some images drawn from the magazine on the WPA social media platforms I hope to help the Association work towards a more integrated way of communicating with members.

The features are, of course, supported by entertaining and informative reports of WPA events and activities and I am grateful to the organisers for their hard work in ensuring that we have all the details, images and reports to include in each edition.

My thanks go to Roy Murray, who performs a sterling job of stuffing an extraordinary number of magazines into bags and getting them posted out to members in the most efficient manner. And to Dean Fraiquin and Rich Toze who, though operating commercially, give excellent support, advice and rapid turnaround of copy.

Special mention goes to Laura Clatworthy who handles the advertising element of the magazine with the greatest efficiency despite some personal challenges.

As always, contributions from members are vital to the future of the magazine, whether you wish to write or to make suggestions for content. Do get in touch.

A query was raised regarding the use, or absence, of captions accompanying photographs in the magazine. It was explained that this can be challenging, as the editor is limited to the information provided with submitted images. Members were therefore requested to include relevant details when submitting photographs.

It was further noted that, particularly for images from ceramic events, it is important to identify the makers so that members are able to research their work.

f. Website – Mark Sweetland

	Total 2025	Total 2024	Total 2023
<i>Total Visitors</i>	21k	14k	11.9k
<i>Home Page Views</i>	6.6k	6.2k	7.5k
<i>Members Area Views</i>	5.7k	4.9k	5.2k
<i>Bookings Page Views</i>	1.8k	1.8k	1.7k
<i>Members Pages Views</i>	5.9k	4.3k	4.9k
<i>Events Page Views</i>	2.8k	2.6k	2.5k
<i>News and For Sale Views</i>	2.5k	3.2k	1.2k
<i>Forums</i>	457	375	530

As per the above table, our website activity by volume has increased across nearly all measures compared to 2024. The exception being the News & For Sale area,

which is variable, largely depending upon members' input and relevant news items to report upon.

The use of the Forums area has picked up this year, but still not a major area of member usage. Almost all our new members join directly from the website and it is a critical element in bookings and applications for our events.

We now have well over 200 member galleries published which is a nearly 15% increase over this time last year.

There has been a change to the website team over the year, with Neill Hughes standing down and he is to be thanked for his work and team input. Charlotte & Mark Biddulph-Armstrong, together with Chris Greening, joined the team during the year. Martin Harbour spent the year as acting website officer as well as his wider maintenance of the site content and inducting/training our 3 new team members.

Martin stood down from this role at the end of 2025 and I (Mark S) am currently supporting the team and website team workload. This is an interim role for me, as whilst I have a reasonable level of technical system awareness, rather than specific skills to make the website updates, it needs someone with more dedicated focus than I am able to give with my other WPA hats.

Martin is to be thanked for his significant input and work in supporting the website team throughout the past, and previously many, years.

The role of volunteer Website Officer is still vacant. The holder does not need to join the committee and neither do they need a high level of technical IT competency. With the volunteer team-members able to perform the website updates, the role is very much about co-ordination, some direction and support for the team. Often just an hour or two's commitment most weeks is all that's needed...

However, without a permanent role holder, there is a concern that the currency and relevance of our website may become degraded over time. Our website is an important promotional tool for the Association and many of our members. If you have any interest in offering your time as a team member or as the officer role – please get in touch

There are previously documented ideas for website development for the benefit of all members, but without a more settled and resourced team, their ability in being proactive rather than reactive is naturally hindered.

It was noted that, for website and gallery image updates, certain times of the year are busier than others. Members were asked to be patient and to provide sufficient notice, particularly in the lead-up to application deadlines.

It was also suggested that members may be able to update their own gallery images; however, this was not widely known, including by members of the Committee. This requires further clarification, and, if confirmed, the guidance should be updated accordingly.

ACTION - Committee to confirm whether members can independently update their gallery images on the website, and, if so, to update and communicate clear guidance to the membership.

g. E- News - Tim Gee

Though changes in social media use and other methods of communication have resulted in fewer E-news items. A range of items of interest continue to appear in the committees' inbox at times that do not necessarily coincide with Magazine deadlines or necessitate a quick turnaround.

It is continued to be hoped that you do not feel inundated with e-mails. Many thanks for continuing to click those links!

It was noted that some links included in emails are not functioning correctly. The Website Team will review and address this issue. Members experiencing problems were encouraged to contact the Website Team directly.

h. Social Media - Charline Marzin

Professional dashboard and insights summary below since the last report in March compared to a year ago.

	Instagram	Facebook
Nb of followers	2226 1884 (+342)	1712 1604 (+108)
Nb of posts	51	53
Nb of stories	330	330

In summary, social media activity and engagement is very healthy. There was a peak activity from summer to autumn coinciding with a busy calendar of events. Members are tagging @westcountrypotters on a regular basis.

Social media team

In addition to Charline regularly manning the Instagram and Facebook account, Deborah from the magazine is now helping with relating magazine related content around time of publication and this has been very successful. Claire also helps relay information relevant to exhibitions on the accounts.

Facebook Group

Discussions at previous AGM and conversations by email have expressed interest in having a Facebook group where members would be able to post themselves (which is not the case for the existing page). It would be technically easy to set up a Facebook group for members to interact but the social media team would need more people to help set it up, define terms of reference and regularly moderate posts and interactions.

The idea of a Facebook group was discussed, with around 10–15 people expressing interest. However, no one volunteered to help set it up or manage it. Any offers of support would be very welcome.

7. Membership Fees

Membership Fees - 2027 proposals

Current fees

Current fees are £27 for single and £37 for dual membership, though early payment via Standing Order attracts a £2 discount. Payment via STRIPE sees the WPA pay a fee of about 65p per member so a single membership brings in about £26.35 per member.

There has been no need to raise membership fees and they have been unchanged for many years this has been linked to the policy of the past 3 years to reduce the WPA surplus. However, by 2027 there will be a need to adjust fees as the surplus will have been reduced from over £16,000 to about £8,000.

Proposal for 2027

Raise annual membership fees to £30 (single) and £40 (dual) with a £3 discount for Standing Orders payable in first 2 weeks of January 2027. After considering a range of uptake options I believe that we will see an increase in annual fees of around £800. Payment through the year via STRIPE and exhibition membership promotions would continue as now.

Conclusions

Therefore, on the basis that it is likely that the many members will want the discount the expectation is that the majority would switch to Standing Order payment. The expectation would be that we should see an increase in overall fees of about £800 per year.

At the same time there would be a autumnal promotional email campaign and magazine note to encourage members to switch to Standing Order. This has the added benefit of reducing the workload on both the Membership Secretary and Treasurer.

The proposed increase in membership fees was discussed. It was noted that fees have not been increased for approximately 15 years.

A concern was raised that it may be optimistic to expect members to amend their standing orders, and that issues with late payments may persist. As a result, the introduction of Direct Debits was suggested as an alternative. WPA committee had reviewed Direct Debit option in the past, but it was not judged to have been viable at that time. The advantages outlined included greater control over the timing and amount of payments, as well as reduced administrative burden for the Treasurer, who currently monitors payments frequently at the start of the year. It was also noted that Direct Debits generate automatic email notifications.

It was acknowledged that implementing a Direct Debit system would be more complex and may require the use of a third-party provider to manage administration and compliance requirements. This would involve additional costs.

It was noted that much of the discussion focused on the process of payment collection rather than the fee increase itself.

The proposed increase in membership fees, as outlined in the proposal, was proposed by Martin Harbour and seconded by Theresa Ashford and unanimously agreed. The potential introduction of Direct Debits was also put to a vote, proposed by Theresa Ashford and seconded by Graham Macey unanimously approved in principle.

ACTION - Committee to research Direct Debit providers, including costs and compliance requirements.

8. Election of Officers

Committee Membership & Nominations 2026

Anyone can put themselves forward for nomination, or if you'd like to nominate any other member, please ensure that they give their consent.

The Constitution states that the committee shall consist of between 7 and 17 members.

Positions available for nomination/election are shown in black. Where a name appears alongside that position, the person named is willing to stand for election/re-election. Existing posts are shown in grey for information. An asterisk * indicates that a post was filled by co-option during the year and needs to be ratified at the 2026 AGM

Chair	Anna Hearn* (2nd term 2026)
Vice Chair	Mark Sweetland* (1st term 2024)
Treasurer	Richard Cole (2nd term 2025)
Administrator/Exeter Market	Jayne Randell-Humphreys (2nd term 2025)
Membership Secretary	Pauline Parnell (1st term 2025)
Activities Co-ordinator	John Watson (5th term 2026)
Potters' Market Organiser	Edward King (1st term 2025)
Magazine Editor	Deborah Hicks (1st term 2025)
Exhibition Officer	Claire Davey Potts (2nd term 2026)
Minutes Secretary	Penny O'Brien* (1st term 2024)
Website Officer	VACANT
E-News	Tim Gee (5th term 2026)
Social Media	Charline Marzin (1st term 2024)

Committee Member/Activities

Karen Edwards (5th term 2024)

Committee Member

Patsy Lang (2nd term 2025)

Committee Member

Olwyn Kiero-Watson (2nd term 2024)

Committee Member

Bindy Saywood (1st term 2024)

Committee Member

Bec Davies (1st term 2024)

Supporting off committee

Auditor

Graham Macey and Martin Harbour

Magazine packaging/distribution

Roy Murray

Magazine Advertising

Laura Clatworthy

Event Support

Tony Smither

Website

Chris Greening, Mark and Charlotte Biddulph-Armstrong

During the election of officers, it was brought to the Committee's attention that advance notice of officers and their terms on the Committee had not been circulated to members. An apology was made by the Acting Chair and read out to those present.

Election of officers proposed by Lorraine Gilroy and seconded by Chris Sane and membership unanimously approved all positions as above.

9. Appointment of Auditors

Graham Macey and Martin Harbour

Martin Harbour kindly agreed to act as auditor alongside Graham Macey. proposed by Chris Sane and seconded by Peter Lee and unanimously approved.

10. Thanks to Retiring Members

Thanks to retiring members

- Stepping down from committee and supporting roles - Martin Harbour*
- Stepping down from Markets role - Patsy Lang*
- Stepping down from role as chair - Bec Davies*
- Stepping down website team member - Neill Hughes*

Thanks were proposed unanimously by all present.

11. Open Session

Thanks were given by Lorraine Gilroy, on behalf of the membership, in recognition of the Committee's hard work, with particular thanks to Mark Sweetland and Bec Davies, and to Anna Hearn for stepping forward to take on the role of Chair.

It was noted that members do not need to be on the Committee in order to contribute or assist with the running of the Association, and offers of help are always welcome.

Tim Andrews referred to a recent Craft Council report on the state of craft in the UK, noting that ceramics was identified as a particularly vibrant and active sector. However, the report also highlighted significant financial challenges for professional makers, with average incomes falling by approximately 40% since 2019 and an average annual income of around £12,000. Concern was raised that the market has become distorted by the underpricing of work. Members were encouraged to price their work appropriately and realistically. This is an importance area of education, noting that many ceramicists are not fully aware of their true costs, including time, materials, and overheads, and may not be calculating an appropriate hourly rate or overall profit and loss.

The possibility of addressing this through a Knowledge Bank session was discussed. It was suggested that the Committee consider ways to better support and educate members on pricing and financial awareness as this is often an area not sufficiently covered in education.

ACTION - Committee to discuss ways to support members in understanding pricing.