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Introduction

Our theme for 2018/19 was that of 'Building a Stronger Infrastructure'. Our aim is to re-establish NAWE's place in the national, long term conversation, meet the needs of our freelance and project-based writers as well as those who teach in universities and schools, advocating for the subject while renewing bonds with partner organisations across the country.

While doing this, we are conscious that we are working with limited resources and a challenging national picture. This doesn't just affect NAWE's capacity - it affects us all. Our focus this year has been to look at what we can do with what we have, where we can sit, and how we can alter our services so we are providing services that directly benefit you, our members.

NAWE Conference

Our 2018 Conference welcomed 150 delegates from Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain, the US and the UK for 3 days of networking, fellowship and exchange. We were delighted to be joined by Stuart Maconie and Jean Sprackland as our guest speakers, and our thanks go to them as well as to Michael Loveday, Keith Jarrett, Jennifer Steil, Karen Stevens, Jonathan Taylor, Caleb Parkin and Meryl Pugh, who all read or launched new publications.

Programmes: Max Reinhardt Literacy Awards

In 2018/19, the website for MaxLiteracy, <https://www.maxliteracy.org/> was launched with funders and partners the Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust and Engage (the National Association for Gallery Education), with kind help from the Ernest Cook Trust. This website includes a stunning selection of resources for anyone interested in teaching creative writing through art, as well as learning and evaluation from each of the projects, some demonstrating a massive impact on children's literacy through creative writing.



With our partners, we planned the third iteration of the MaxLiteracy Awards, working with four very exciting projects: Attenborough Arts Centre (John Berkavitch), Bristol Museum & Art Gallery (Caleb Parkin), Kirkleatham Museum (Kate Fox) and The Whitworth Art Gallery (Johnny Woodhams).

Each project was unique, touching on themes of disability/ability, mental health, isolation/exclusion and intergenerational learning. Each of them produced valuable resources which will be uploaded to the MaxLiteracy website and featured in the NAWE magazine. The 2019 Conference will include a plenary discussing some of this year's outputs.

We continue to plan for the future: for the next iteration of the project in 2020/21, and for new ways to spread learning from this interdisciplinary work.

Paper Nations



In 2018/19 our formal work with Paper Nations - a three-year, Arts Council-funded research programme led by partners Bath Spa University, Bath Festivals and NAWE - came to a close. Our 2018 conference saw the publication of a new benchmark in creative writing for young people and emerging writers in a special bumper edition of the NAWE magazine. We were pleased to celebrate Creative Writing in Schools, presenting a special selection of panels, papers, workshops and readings threaded through the conference.

One incredibly valuable output from this project was the Independent Evaluation by LKMCO. It demonstrated, among other things, the importance of networks for creative writers, a finding that is influencing our future plans for members. We hope that learning and resources from this project will provide you with information, support and strength as you continue to build your careers and change lives through the work you do.

Our thanks to all who submitted to the Call to Evidence and took part in consultations or workshops over the three years of the project. We continue to work closely with the Paper Nations team, and will watch future developments with excitement.

Higher Education

Our Higher Education Committee continued to meet regularly in 2018/19. Derek Neale was Chair of the committee and Principal Editor of our online, peer-reviewed journal, *Writing in Practice*, while Celia Brayfield continued as Vice Chair. We would like to thank Derek & Celia for their leadership: under their watch, the committee revised the NAWE Research Benchmark; nominated panels for the REF 2021; participated in the AWP and English: Shared Futures conferences; supported the NAWE PhD Network; produced guidance documents on Open Access (with the British Library), and Casual Contracts (with Society of Authors); and ran a series of helpful, practice based events for lecturers and PhD students with the Open University.

In addition, the committee set up a directory of external examiners for undergraduate, MA and PhD vivas, available to NAWE members through our website. They were also involved in consultations with AHRC, QAA, and HESA (altering the JACS codes for the subject area of CW), and liaised with PRAG UK. The committee formed the editorial board of *Writing in Practice* and many members were issue editors during the three years, some more than once. Contact was maintained with sister associations – EACWP, AWP and AAWP. We would like to thank all members of the committee for their hard work and dedication to NAWE.

International Creative Writing Partners

We believe it is important for NAWE to be outward looking. In 2018/19, we continued to strengthen relationships with international and European counterparts, attending EACWP seminars in Brussels in September 2018 and raising awareness of UK-based creative writing programmes, research and practice. We're delighted to see so many international colleagues at this year's conference.

NAWE representatives attended the Association of Writers and Writing Programmes Conference in Oregon in March 2019, promoting UK institutions and courses in creative writing through the NAWE booklet. We spoke to current and prospective students, educators and lecturers; writers interested in competitions and online courses; arts professionals, networks and alliances; publishers, marketing executives, journalists, editors, trustees and CEOs.

Many institutions do not have the budget to travel overseas, and this is a good way for universities to access an international marketplace at relatively low cost. Given the resource-intensive nature of AWP for NAWE, we've decided that our efforts in 2019/2020 will be best spent delivering programmes that directly benefit our members. We now aim to attend AWP every two years, and to spend more time consulting with member institutions about how to make the best use of our time there.

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English: Shared Futures

In 2018/19, planning began for English Shared Futures 2 with colleagues at University English and the English Association. ESF: 2020 will take place in Manchester/Salford, from 26 - 28 June 2020. We hope as many NAWE members as possible will attend or take part. Confirmed guest speakers include: Ali Smith, Kate Clanchy, Lyndsey Stonebridge, Jennifer Smith, David Adger, David Crystal, Bart Van Es, Priyamvada Gopal, Sandeep Parmar and Barbara Bleiman. For more info, visit: www.englishsharedfutures.uk/

Other Networking and Subject Supportive Activity

We continued working with subject associations and learned societies, responding to concerns around policy changes in education at all levels. These included the English Association, University English, the English and Media Centre, the Common English Forum, the Arts and Humanities Alliance, the Council for Subject Associations, Artworks Alliance and PRAG UK. Current concerns include the impact of policy changes on recruitment into English Literature at A-Level (which may have a knock-on effect on Creative Writing at University Level), and we have worked with partners to bring these concerns to the attention of the Department of Education.

Organisational Update

Finance and Resources The theme for 2018/19 was that of 'Building a Stronger Infrastructure'. We engaged a new accountant, and continued to work with Mosaic Events, who manage our bookkeeping, membership and administration to set up new electronic systems. This saves time and resources and means we can now produce accurate financial reports quickly.

Our accounts for 2018/19 will be presented to the membership at the 2019 AGM. These show a budget surplus for the first time in some years, and we will reinvest a portion of this into services that directly benefit members. In 2018/19 our turnover was £132,354. Our expenditure was £122,406, of which £34,168 was staffing. Conference income was £40,345 and conference expenditure was £40,343. We received £66,651 in membership income, with a significant amount in the final quarter. This was down from £70,622 in the previous year.

Governance Both the Higher Education Committee and the Management Committee have continued to meet and work effectively. The Management Committee continued work on future proofing the organisation and strengthening financial planning. The company's articles of association were redrafted, and a final version of these will be presented to membership at the 2019 Conference before being adopted. The Management Committee also co-opted two new members who will stand for election at the 2019 AGM: Lucy Sweetman and Anne Caldwell.

Publishing, Marketing and Communications Throughout 2018/19, we continued to produce the NAWE magazine, *Writing in Education*, three times per year, and the online peer-reviewed journal, *Writing in Practice*, once per year. We said a final thank you and farewell to Paul Munden, who had continued as our Publications Manager. We wish him the very best of luck with his next

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role. We communicated with members by email, through the magazine, and through *The Writers' Compass*, our weekly bulletin of job opportunities. In 2019, we are recruiting a new Publications Manager, and a review of *Writing in Education* is planned. We will be consulting directly with members on this, and look forward to hearing your views.

Membership Our membership fell in 2018/19 from approx. 1602 members to 1492 members. Some of this decrease was to be expected: inspection of our databases revealed some duplication of records, and there was natural decrease as some of our members retired, or simply stopped carrying out the work. Many members cited wider economic difficulties such as 'schools having less money to go round' as their reason for changing careers, and we would like to plan further research to see how changes to the curriculum and to the funding formula for schools may have affected the creative writing ecology.

Last year, we conducted our first Members' Survey, to inform our planning for the future. The survey was open for 2 months, and gathered some interesting information, although only a small sample of members took part. The key highlights were:

- 75% of respondents were professional members. The majority were in the north east (22%), London (19%), SE (17%), SW (17%) and the north west of England (12%)
- 35% of respondents worked in adult/community education, 27% in HE, 20% in arts/literary organisation, 17% in schools (primary & secondary)
- The most valued membership benefit was public liability insurance & DBS (40%), followed by 'being part of a writerly community' (30%) and the weekly e-bulletin (15%). The 'most useful' benefit was the e-bulletin
- The most popular options for future development were guidance on standard fees/payment (50%), an accredited writing coach qualification (35%), subject-specific CPD days (35%), regional networking events (30%)
- **Membership characteristics:** This was the first time that NAWE had collected information of this kind from our members, and we did so in line with Arts Council England definitions. The key highlights were as follows: **Age:** Of those who responded, 67% of our members were aged 25-59 and 17% were aged 65+. **Ethnicity:** 67% classed themselves as white British, while 5% were mixed b/w (the highest category of non-white members), 2% were white Irish, while 10% preferred not to say. **Gender and sexuality:** 57% of respondents were women, 35% men and 2.5% classed themselves as non-binary. 22% were LGBTQI and 62% heterosexual. **Disability:** The majority of members were not disabled (81%), but 3% were d/Deaf or had a hearing impairment, 5% reported a physical disability, 8% reported a mental health disability and 5% had an invisible disability.

All the feedback from members was incredibly valuable, and these findings will shape our approach for the future. Since then, we have drafted a guidance document on fees (with thanks

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to Ian McEwen), and set up a number of Regional Networking events. We will report on these in 2019/20.

What we're doing in 2019/20: More direct activities to serve our members

While we have made great strides in some directions, progress in other areas has been slower than we'd hoped. Resources continue to be a factor, with many of our staff working over and above their contracted hours.

In 2019/20 we will review our mission, vision and values to ensure they are fit for purpose, and conduct a review of *Writing in Education* to ensure it meets members' needs. We will continue planning the next phase of NAWE's development, looking at matters of greatest value such as new ways of serving our members, working to ensure the organisation's financial health, renewing governance and the constitution.

We know that not all members can come to the conference, so we are setting up Regional Networking events in different parts of the country: Leeds, Cornwall, Norwich, Bath, and London working with regional partners. We are looking forward to planning our 2020 Conference in Bristol, and are in talks with local stakeholders about the possibility of joint events.

We hope to make progress on our university roadshows, submit our long-planned ACE application, and to carry out more external facing work to support our members and the creative writing community. We'll carry on delivering projects with partner organisations that will be of lasting benefit to the discipline: disseminating the outcomes of the Paper Nations project and the draft benchmark, proceeding with the fourth iteration of the Max Literacy Award, and engaging with the REF 2021.

We will continue working on rebuilding relationships with Arts Council England, regional development agencies, and other stakeholders: Arvon, First Story, First Story, CLPE, the National Literacy Trust, the National Centre for Writing, and all of our regional partners.

My thanks to all our members, colleagues and our two committees for your continued support and hard work. We are digging deep, and planning for an exciting future.



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