

## SoAiS COMMITTEE CHAIR

### ROLE DESCRIPTION



## PURPOSE OF THE ROLE OF A COMMITTEE CHAIR

- To represent the Society of Authors in Scotland (SoAiS) membership on all issues affecting them. This includes communicating with members, sharing plans and strategy with members, and voicing the needs and concerns of members as their democratically elected representatives. Communication and other administrative tasks are supported by a Staff Coordinator from the SoA staff.
- To work in collaboration with the Senior Policy Manager (Scotland) to represent our membership on policy issues affecting the Scottish membership. Current examples include: contributing to our work to regularly increase the Live Lit rates from Scottish Book Trust; feeding back on funding and freelancer rates to the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and Scottish Government via the Senior Policy Manager (Scotland) who attends their meetings; and planning our campaigning around funding for the arts and specifically authors, illustrators and translators, in the runup to the next election.
- To direct and contribute to strategic decision-making and planning activities of the SoAiS in collaboration with the rest of the committee.
- To develop meeting agendas for the SoAiS committee in line with the strategy decided upon by the committee members.
- To effectively chair meetings and allow all committee members to have a voice in meetings.
- To represent the SoAiS committee and membership to the Board at Management Committee meetings and other meetings and SoA sub-committees as appropriate. The Chair may nominate a representative or representatives from within the committee to perform these duties.

At times, this role may be shared between two members acting as **Co-Chairs**. Ideally, they would be elected as a pair and be comfortable working with each other collaboratively. The Co-Chair option can work well if the Committee and each co-chair agree to the arrangement. Where Co-Chairing is considered by necessity (through illness or persistent unavailability) please discuss the options with your Staff Coordinator.

## TERM OF APPOINTMENT

Committee members are elected into post by members of the Society of Authors living in Scotland (as determined by postcode).

Although the exact term is defined by the groups' own Terms of Reference (or equivalent), the suggested terms are for two years, with the option to renew twice for a further two-year term by agreement with the rest of the Committee. After a two-year gap in service, Committee members can be re-elected to serve another two-year term, with potential for re-election twice more. Therefore, in a period of 14 years, it would be possible for a member to serve on the Committee/Steering group for a maximum of 12 years.

Committee members will take part in an induction programme at the start of their term.

Although the Committee members are not Directors of the Company, they may attend Management Committee (board) meeting as a non-voting nominated representative of their committee, and in doing so will be bound by the Management Committee Code of Conduct [Link to document not in public domain [here](#).]

## DUTIES AND TIME COMMITMENT OF THE ROLE

- To chair SoAiS committee meetings which occur once every two months, for 2 hours.
- To draw up meeting agendas and circulate necessary documentation ahead of committee meetings, in collaboration with the SoAiS Secretary and Staff Coordinator.
- To chair committee meetings fairly and effectively, and share any required documentation or further information after meetings.
- To represent the SoAiS committee at SoA Management Committee level through contributions to discussions. This post is a non-voting position, but the Chair will be subject to the Board Confidentiality Agreement and Code of Conduct. A representative can be nominated to attend Management Committee meeting if appropriate. The Management Committee meetings are 3 hours every two months, with detailed reading and admin required before and after.
- Chairs will report on the Management Committee meeting to the SoAiS committee at the next SoAiS committee meeting. SoAiS committee meetings are scheduled two weeks after each ManCom meeting, so this report can be discussed and any action taken forward in a timely fashion.
- Where appropriate, to join an SoAiS or SoA sub-committee on a particular issue or campaign.
- To contribute to the SoAiS newsletter, which is arranged by the SoAiS Secretary and distributed by the Staff Coordinator.
- To suggest and/or arrange events, as required, in collaboration with the rest of the committee and managed by the Staff Coordinator.

- To attend an annual training session/refresher course.
- In collaboration with the rest of the committee, and with the administrative and organisational support of the Staff Coordinator, to plan and run the annual SoAiS elections and SoAiS AGM.
- The SoAiS committee Chairs should encourage other members of the committee to contribute ideas towards shaping the strategy of the group for the next twelve months, and support those who would be prepared to take ownership of one or more strategic areas, such as Equality Diversity and Inclusion, representing the group at SoA Sub-Committee meetings, or attending a local chapter as a representative.
- In addition to attending committee meetings, committee Chairs are encouraged to attend networking and local group meetings to connect with members. Attendance at meetings with members may provide a helpful means to connect with members and gather informal feedback to help keep the committee connected with members' concerns. This activity can be shared with the Staff Coordinator, other Steering Group members and, when appropriate, with the Management Committee (board) and the Chief Executive.
- **The total time commitment for the SoAiS committee chair should not exceed 2 days per month.**

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The committee Chair's point of contact within SoA shall be with their Staff Coordinator. If there is an issue with the Staff Coordinator, the chair can approach the staff members' line manager (if known), Head of Membership and Author Communities, the Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive Officer, as appropriate.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Committee Chairs may not communicate any confidential information known to them by reason of their position that has not been made public, except with the permission of the Head of Communications, or the Chief Executive Officer. More information about this can be found [here](#).

## EXPENSES

The role of Committee Chair is a voluntary role and is not remunerated. Out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed in line with the [SoA Expenses Policy](#).

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Committee Chairs are elected from within the committee, who are themselves elected from within the relevant section of the Membership.

## VALUES

- To represent all members within a specific interest group or nation group from every background, and career stage.
- To uphold the highest ethical standards of integrity and probity. See: the Book and Publishing Industry Professional Values (add link) and the [Nolan Principles of Public Life](#).
- To listen sensitively to the views of others.
- To gain the trust and respect of members, Management Committee and staff.
- To seek best practice wherever possible.

## SKILLS & APPROACH

- Good understanding of the issues faced by authors within a specific interest group or nation.
- A desire to contribute to the strategy and campaigning work of the SoA to protect and further the rights of authors.
- Excellent communication skills: a talent for communicating clearly and with the confidence to speak in front of groups of all sizes.
- An approachable personality with the desire to meet with members from a range of different communities, backgrounds and career stages.
- Capacity to attend committee meetings, group events, meetings, etc. as appropriate – in-person or remotely – throughout the UK.
- Experience of handling sensitive, complex or confidential issues with integrity.

## WORKING WITH THE COMMITTEE

We would anticipate the Chair or Co-Chairs of the Committee to have closer links with staff co-ordinators, especially when setting dates for the next meeting and drawing up the agenda. If the staff co-ordinator is writing up the minutes, or action points, it may be circulated in draft form to the Chair of the committee prior to being circulated with the whole committee. However, any work expected of the staff co-ordinator(s) should be dictated by the action points coming out of the committee/steering group meeting. This is important as any action points should be agreed by the majority of the committee as representatives of the whole group, rather than at the will of one committee member – whether chair or not.

## IF THINGS GO WRONG

Queries with your staff co-ordinator: you can view our Complaints procedure [here](#). Any informal issues or queries can be raised with the staff co-ordinator's line manager. If you are uncertain about who this is, please contact the Head of

Membership and Author Communities in the first instance, or the Chief Operating Officer.

Queries with other committee/steering group members or Chair: the best route is to raise issues during a committee/steering group meeting as this will be minuted. It is worth re-reading our [Dignity and Respect policy](#) to effectively challenge any unacceptable behaviour.

You might also find [these notes](#) helpful regarding the conduct of those in public office. Although Committee members are not in “public” office, they are elected from within the membership of the Society of Authors and this is a good base level of acceptable standards of behaviour.