

SoAiS COMMITTEE SECRETARY

ROLE DESCRIPTION



PURPOSE OF THE ROLE OF A COMMITTEE SECRETARY

- 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 contribute to strategic decision-making and planning activities of the SoAiS, in collaboration with the rest of the committee.
- To produce the SoAiS newsletter and the SoAiS entry in The Author, in collaboration with other committee members and the staff coordinator.
- To represent the SoAiS committee and membership at meetings and in sub-committees as appropriate. Current examples including attending SoA policy sub-committee meetings and sitting on the board of Literature Alliance Scotland.

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 attend SoAiS committee meetings which occur once every two months, for 2 hours. (There is no need to take minutes, as the minutes are taken by the Staff Coordinator).
- Where appropriate, committee members may also wish to join an SoAiS sub-committee on a particular issue or campaign.
- To circulate meeting agendas and other necessary documentation ahead of committee meetings, in collaboration with the committee chair(s) and Staff Coordinator.
- To organise and produce the quarterly SoAiS newsletter, which is composed of short entries supplied by all committee members, and then distributed by the Staff Coordinator.
- To write our entry to The Author every quarter.
- To suggest and/or arrange events, as required, in collaboration with the rest of the committee and managed by the Staff Coordinator.
- 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.
- In addition to attending committee and sub-committee meetings, committee secretaries 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 committee members and, when appropriate, with the Management Committee (board) and the Chief Executive.
- Committee members may contribute ideas towards shaping the strategy of the group for the next twelve months, and as such may be asked if they would be prepared to take ownership of one or more of those strategic areas, such as Equality Diversity and Inclusion, representing the Committee at SoA Policy or other Sub-Committee meetings, or attending a local group as a representative of the Committee.
- The total time commitment for the SoAiS committee secretary should not exceed 10 hours (ballpark 8-10 hours) per month.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The committee secretary's point of contact within SoA shall be with their Staff Coordinator. If there is an issue with the Staff Coordinator, the secretary 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 Secretary 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 secretaries 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.

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.