



TRUSTEES UPDATES

Annual General Meeting

25 April 2021



Chair Christine Flynn

This report covers the dates from January to December 2020 for the purposes of the next AGM.

Last year started very well with the projects that the SPA had been working on about to come to fruition. The website was successfully launched in March, membership types were re-categorised, the new branding was approved, improvements for Health and Safety for all events was on-going and the new SPA Trail Map was at print in readiness to distribute at Tulliallan. All plans for Tulliallan were on course with our usual three prestigious demonstrators. All good so far.

I would like to personally thank the committee and members of the sub-committees for their outstanding work in these areas. Everything that has been done is a great improvement to the professional image that the Scottish Potters Association are striving to achieve.

Unfortunately, the COVID 19 pandemic hit the country and the wise decision was made to cancel our Tulliallan weekend. It was a great disappointment but everyone from the demonstrators, committee and all members were all in total agreement with our decision.

COVID has had an impact on everything that was in the planning ever since that time. Time and effort have been given to organise many events only for them to be cancelled. As a committee we have therefore strived to be innovative in our ideas to provide for our members with online alternatives and to be supportive throughout this trying time.

Tragically, our treasurer, Steve Hay lost his battle with cancer and passed away. Fortunately, Fiona Robertson agreed to take on the role. Great work has been done to bring our financial records in line with the requirements of the Office of Scottish Charitable Regulator (OSCR) and our first Annual Report and Financial Statement was submitted for their approval in August 2020. This was a major step in readiness for our delayed AGM on Zoom on 1st November 2020.

Being a charitable organisation brings many challenges to the SPA and new regulations. We will be submitting our second annual report which covered 2019 - 2020 in the near future for approval by OSCR and of course our membership at our next AGM. Many lessons have been learned since becoming a charity and will continued to be learned. As a result, the committee have been working on the development of policy documents to support the governance of the SPA. These include the Financial Management Policy,

Complaints Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy and the Health and Safety Policy. These documents will be distributed to our membership for comments and approval.

Our delayed AGM for 2020 took place on Zoom on Sunday, 1st November. Thanks to those on the committee who made this event runs so smoothly. All the documentation for circulation prior to the meeting was uploaded onto the website. It was our first members meeting using technology, but it worked well thanks to the technical geniuses involved. Thanks to all members who attended. Your support in running the SPA is greatly appreciated.

My overview on areas as Chair are as follows-

Newsletter - Our newsletter had to be adapted from our usual content, covering events like Tulliallan to other excellent articles on various areas of pottery activities. Finding articles that will appeal to our readers is still very much a challenge. Juliet McLeod has been a tremendous asset providing us with our professional standard publication that we can all be proud of. She has completed three years as Newsletter Editor and has unfortunately decided to stand down from the committee. Her skills and talent will be sincerely missed. Over the last year, the newsletter is distributed either by post, for those who like to have a paper copy, possibly on our coffee table, for easy reading, or, alternatively, digitally for those of us who are more technically knowledgeable.

Workshops - Several workshops in the planning were cancelled due to the COVID restriction. We initially tried to record demonstrations, resulting in Lesley MacKenzie demonstrating to us all how she forms a hare. These videos, 5 in total, as they are required to be uploaded in segments, were saved for distribution onto our very own Scottish Potters Association YouTube channel. The feedback from the videos was excellent, thank you. However, due to more stringent restrictions actually videoing demonstrations in person has been prohibited. We are therefore approaching members with an appeal to record a demonstration on behalf of our membership. There are several in the pipeline with the first being from Hannah McAndrew and Doug Fitch. It promises to be a wonderful input from two absolutely fabulously talented potters. Maria Nordgren our workshop co-ordinator will explain in more depth what videos are planned for the forthcoming year. Maria will also explain the plans for Tulliallan 2022, as, again, a decision has been made not to proceed with Tulliallan 2021. Apologies again but I know you will all accept the decision.

Exhibitions this is another area where we have had to exhibit online. The first exhibition of 2020 was due to take place at the Barony, West Kilbride. The actual exhibition was cancelled and moved onto our website. We discovered advantages in exhibiting members pots in this way as it attracted members from the more remote areas of Scotland. Our 2nd exhibition, "With in a Space" due to take place at the Bield, Perthshire was also cancelled but did proceed on the SPA Website. Thank you to all the members who took part in these exhibitions and to Fran Marquis for organising and Elaine Hill, our Website Co-ordinator for her hard work in uploading all the images and information. Successful sales were made by many, along with additional request for pots out-with the exhibition. However, there is nothing like an actual exhibition and Fran is working towards our next one at the Watermill Gallery, Aberfeldy in July 2021. With social distancing and relaxed restriction we truly hope this will be able to proceed.

Zoom Coffee Morning - As a result of a suggestion made at the Zoom AGM, in a way to support our membership, especially those on their own, we have introduced a weekly coffee morning every Wednesday at 10.30. This has proved to be a tremendous success with members joining us from Texas, France, Hungary and Poland, as well as all over Scotland. From my personal point of view, I have learnt many tips from others, picked up on potential articles for the newsletter, but, most importantly, I've gotten to know some members through our chats. Normally it would only be events like Tulliallan that would allow this interaction. We have therefore decided to extend from a Wednesday morning to an evening, on a trial basis, for those who are unable to join us during the day. Hopefully this will be just as successful.

Social Media - Social media is a strong way of promoting the SPA in the wider world. Caroline Gault does a tremendous job of making sure at least one post is made every day to keep the SPA in the minds of many of the public who watch our feed. In addition, we have just introduced a private Facebook Group called "Scottish Potters Community" which is for members only.

Membership - Our membership community is growing again with just under 300 members. The pandemic and the simultaneous launch of our new website in March with changes to the categories of membership did result in a drop in our numbers. However, we have strived to attract members to re-join and new members into the fold. Overall this is being successful.

As a result of the trials and tribulations of 2020 with the pandemic and imposed restrictions on our activities we agreed to discount the cost of membership for 2021 to £20 for individual members, £12 for Seniors and £5 for Students.

Potfest - Potfest was a joy to attend and to actually meet and see several of our members. Nine of our members agreed to demonstrate in the large domed tent and other members volunteered as helpers. Health and Safety was a priority and special restrictions through planning were implemented to ensure everyone's safety. Thanks to all involved who made it a very enjoyable experience. We had great weather and it was great to see people smiling.

In conclusion, it has been a privilege and a pleasure to be Chair over the past four years. I have worked with an amazing committee who all share the workload to keep the SPA a viable and thriving organisation and give it the professional image that we have strived to achieve. Thank you all so much for your support.

I would also like to thank the membership for your ongoing support. Please bear in mind anything that you can do to help and actively get involved. We are hoping to come to a state where we can live with this virus and resume some normality. If you can assist with providing video workshops, articles for the newsletter, come on the committee or any other contribution, we on the committee greatly appreciate it.



Treasurer *Fiona Robertson*

Since taking over as Treasurer in May 2020 from Steve Hay, I migrated the SPA finances onto a new platform as the old software was out-of-date - something Steve had discussed with me earlier in 2020. I then prepared our first Annual Return and Financial Statement 2018-19 for submission to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator. This passed through independent examination (an external verification process) and was accepted by OSCR in time for our delayed AGM in November 2020, when it was retrospectively (due to Covid-19 emergency procedures) approved by the membership.

The SPA has now completed its second full financial year and the Annual Return and Financial Statement for 2019-20 has been prepared and submitted for independent examination. It is now submitted for members' approval at the AGM prior to being submitted to OSCR.

It has been a busy but interesting year as Treasurer. The accounts are now on a modern platform making them easy to use, the relationship between the SPA and the Independent Examiner is now well-established and our financial administration and reporting procedures as a charity have also been established both in practice and in writing. In addition, the SPA has ridden the Covid-19 storm reasonably well financially, enabling us to offer almost half-price membership for 2021-22. All-in-all, a good point to hand over the reins to the new Treasurer.



Secretary *Iain Campbell*

Like all other parts of the SPA's work, most of the Secretary's job moved online last year. Zoom committee meetings became the norm and we have just moved to a monthly cycle, in part to enable us to keep more closely in touch, in part to reduce the Zoom fatigue that long online meetings can produce. I am also involved in updating our data storage and communications systems to make them more fit for purpose.

We have now completed the drafting of the policies that we require to have in place as a result of becoming a registered charity, and these are included in your AGM papers for approval.

I am now stepping down from the Secretary role but have agreed to take on the role of SPA Archivist, with the aim of collecting and organising material from our almost 50 years of existence and making it more readily available to members. If any of you have photos, videos or personal memories of past SPA events and activities, or anything that you think might be of wider interest, then do get in touch. I also look forward to contacting some of our longer-standing members to gather their recollection of the early days of SPA. I will stay on the committee in this role for a further year.



Newsletter - Juliet Macleod

We have successfully produced four more newsletters since last year. Thank you for continuing to send us such interesting content and imagery, we really appreciate it.

The option for Digital newsletters has been well received with just under half (*tbc*) our membership now only receiving an online version. If you would like to alter your choice from Print to Digital (or vice versa) please contact the membership Secretary, Kathleen Morison, at membership@scottishpotters.org.

After four years on the committee I am now standing down owing to increasing demands on my time. Thank you so much to everyone who has supported me in this very enjoyable role, and for the lovely feedback I have received both as Social Media Secretary and Newsletter Editor. I am glad to say that a new Newsletter Sub-Group will be taking over from me from March and will divide the work between the team members. Please continue to send content to newsletter@scottishpotters.org and rest assured that anything that is sent directly to me will be forwarded to the new team.



Exhibitions - Fran Marquis

Land, Sea & Fire which was to be at the Barony in West Kilbride in May 2020 had to go online, our first SPA online exhibition. It was an interesting process and about a quarter of the exhibitors sold work. It was successful in that exhibitors from further afield e.g. from Skye, submitted work as they did not have to deliver it.

Within A Space planned to be at the Barn Gallery at the Bield in Perthshire, also went online and over 100 pieces of small ceramic were submitted. About 18 people sold their work.

Sadly **the Craft Fair at the Bield** had to be cancelled completely due to the lockdown rules in November 2020, when it was due to be held to coincide with the AGM at the Bield, which was then held via Zoom. This has been provisionally booked with the Barn Gallery in the Bield in Perthshire for November 2021, dates to be confirmed.

Season's Cycle at the Watermill Gallery had 30 people submit pieces of ceramic. Selection took place on 23rd February and members were informed soon afterwards if their submission was successful. The standard of submissions was very high and included some really exceptional work. The Gallery is limited in size and the Watermill Curator, who had the final vote, was very clear about what would, and would not, fit into the aesthetic of the gallery. We were also aiming to create a selection of items that worked well together to create a high-quality exhibition.

Of the 30 makers who submitted work only 18 were accepted and, of these, not all their work was selected. 57 pieces of ceramic will be included and should make a really good exhibition.

The exhibition is to be postponed due to the new government guidelines and will now run from July 17th to the end of August. We hope that you will be able to visit the exhibition in Aberfeldy, which will hopefully be lively and full of tourists again, as it was last summer. More info will be sent to the selected exhibitors about delivery/ collection points and dates very soon.

Scottish Stories is our next planned exhibition around May/June 2022 at the Barony in West Kilbride. This is to fit the Visit Scotland 2022 theme, and more information will be available in April 2021.



Workshops Maria Nordgren

In 2020 we had to cancel the Spring Workshop Weekend at Tulliallan Castle. In hindsight it is easy to say that we should have seen it coming and should not have waited until the day before to cancel. At that time, however, with no idea of what was coming, it was not an easy decision to make. The committee soon learned that cancelling an event of this size, involves even more work than going ahead with it.

Apart from the demonstrations by SPA members at Potfest, we were not able to arrange any in-person events during 2020. Later in the year, when Covid restrictions were eased up, we video recorded a sculpture demonstration by Lesley McKenzie. The videos were first made available only to members who participated in the AGM on Zoom in November 2020, but it was then made available to all members via the SPA website. Lesley McKenzie, Carina Ciscato and David Wright, who should have demonstrated in 2020, have been invited to demonstrate at Tulliallan in 2022. Since we have also had to cancel the 2021 Spring Workshop Weekend, the demonstrators; Wendy Lawrence, James Oughtibridge and Tricia Thom are invited to demonstrate in 2023.

So far, we have advanced plans for three virtual workshops for 2021: Hannah McAndrew and Doug Fitch's Zoom demonstration is the first to go ahead. The Carving and Water Etching workshop in May with Cathrine Holtet will be recorded as soon as the restrictions allow indoor meetings. The third is a video with Kerstin Gren, which is being recorded at her studio in Portsoy.

During the Spring and Summer of 2021, we are hoping to see the Covid restrictions ease up again after the second lockdown and hopefully we can meet up in person before the end of the year.



Membership *Kathleen Morison*

	2020	2021 (end of February)	New Members From Dec 2020
Individual	158	180	35
Senior Citizen	92	102	5
Student/Apprentice/Intern	4	2	1
Total	254	284	41

This year saw a welcome increase in our membership to a total of 284, an overall increase of 30. This is a healthy total despite the pandemic, and it may be that our reduced fees this year have attracted more people to join us. If someone new joined in December 2020 they were given two months extra on their membership, so they don't have to renew until 1st February of 2022. Seven people joined in December and have therefore been included in the 2021 total. In total we have 41 new members, of whom 7 had previously been members but had not re-joined on the new website until recently.

Only 18 people did not renew their membership before the cut-off point of four weeks grace following the renewal date of 1st February. Not having renewed meant that, under data protection rules, there was no permission to hold personal data, and so these were all deleted from the database.

We still send complimentary newsletters to 26 recipients, and if anyone has suggestions for libraries, galleries, relevant bodies, please send me the details as we are always happy to share our information.



Health and Safety *Elaine Pollitt*

My approach to Health and Safety is to keep the welfare of all of our members my top priority. This role is evolving with new rules and regulations dictating how we work and play. When the time comes to attend workshops again, I am confident that we have the

skills and resources to give all our members a safe environment to work in. A comprehensive policy on health and safety has been prepared for approval by members and is included in the papers circulated to all members for this AGM.



Social Media *Caroline Gault*

The past year has seen a very different way to live, connect, teach and sell. We have expanded our online presence through video conferencing, online exhibitions and online workshops. We've recently started an online, members only, Facebook community to maintain our connections that are the heart of our association. We continue to share your work, advertising exhibitions, pottery equipment and supplies, asking for help/advice from our community and signposting. It's all about promoting Scottish Potters and keeping us connected.

Our Instagram followers:	2061
Our Facebook followers:	3262
Our Scottish Potters Community members:	88



Website *Elaine Hill*

The new SPA website has been up and running for almost a year now and whilst it has been a challenging year due to COVID-19, the website is proving to be a valuable asset to us all. Its user-friendly format has made it much easier to navigate than the old website, and the new sections have added greatly to the member benefits.

The number of Member Profiles has grown to 108 to date, which is just over a third of the total membership, and this is increasing steadily. We had our first public online exhibition, *Within a Space* and an AGM participant-members video workshop from Lesley McKenzie in November. These events received 5,286 and 60 views respectively.

Although there have been a few teething troubles since the launch of the website in March 2020, we've been able to rectify these quickly and the site is now working smoothly.

Google Analytic statistics taken today (both historical and current) show that while we have had less Users over the last year than in previous years, those who have visited the site have viewed almost the same number of pages and stayed longer.

Website Statistics:

<i>1 Feb 2018 to 31 Jan 2019</i>	Users:	13,971
	Sessions:	18,511
	Page views:	60,519
	Av Session Duration:	02.14
<i>1 Feb 2019 to 31 Jan 2020</i>	Users:	15,520
	Sessions:	20,606
	Page views:	69,153
	Av Session Duration:	02.18
<i>1 Feb 2020 to 31 Jan 2021</i>	Users:	11,335
	Sessions:	16,748
	Page views:	67,640
	Av Session Duration:	02.58

The lower number of visitors is most likely due to there being fewer events and workshops over the last year due to COVID-19 restrictions; however, we were able to mitigate some of this loss by holding our online exhibition and offering a video workshop. We hope to provide more online events and workshops in the coming year to continue to build on the value that the SPA website offers.

As always, if you are running classes, participating in an exhibition or event, please do let us know so that we can include this on the website and advertise it across our social media platforms. To add something to the website, please contact Elaine Hill (website@scottishpotters.org).



Merchandise - Anna Kretsinger

Merchandise sales

Potfest 2018	£161
Tulliallan 2019	£150
Potfest 2019	£45
Tulliallan 2020	cancelled
Potfest 2020	£179

The sales for merchandise sales in 2020 were comparable to Potfest 2018 in large part because the committee decided to buy a Sum Up card reader which allowed for contact-less purchases.

Aprons remain our best sellers but if any SPA members have ideas of other merchandise they think appropriate please contact us.

Stay strong, take care.

Thank you for being part of
the Scottish Potters Association.