

Council for British Archaeology

Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting (152nd Council Meeting)

The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 8th February at 09:30am via Zoom. The meeting was chaired by Mrs Gail Boyle, Chair of Trustees. The CBA Executive Director, Mr Neil Redfern, and staff members were in attendance.

A recording of the AGM can be watched at <https://youtu.be/6I3Y5KsXBIY?si=zA7cjSTNdZwjMGoB> and the following de Cardi lecture with Dr Claire Nolan can be viewed here https://youtu.be/PeTTkAy_BCo?si=WnXd17XMKLzU4ZBA.

1. Confirmation of appointments to the Board of Trustees

This AGM marks the standing down of three CBA Trustees Fiona Gale, John Schofield, and Kirsty McCarrison. GB offered thanks on behalf of the CBA for their hard work and commitment during their time as Trustees.

New Trustees: As the number of candidates for election did not exceed the number of available places no ballot is required. The meeting was asked to ratify the election of Amanda Jones, Guy Schofield and Mary Howarth as new Trustees of the CBA.

Members RATIFIED the election of the above Trustees.

The meeting was also asked to ratify the re-election of Sefryn Penrose and Phillip Pollard for a second term as Trustees of the CBA.

Members RATIFIED the re-election of the above Trustees.

In addition to being elected a Trustee Amanda Jones stood for the position of CBA Honorary Treasurer. The meeting was asked to ratify Amanda Jones as CBA Honorary Treasurer.

Members RATIFIED the election of Amanda Jones as CBA Honorary Treasurer.

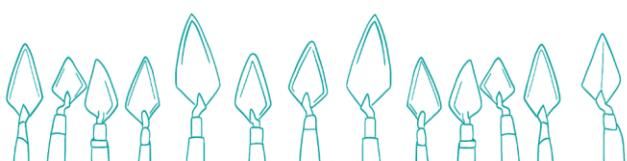
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 10th February 2024

The Minutes of the 151st Council Meeting held on Saturday 10th February 2024 were APPROVED.

There were no matters arising.

3. Strategic overview from the Chair of the Trustees, Mrs Gail Boyle

The Chair reflected on her first year as a CBA Trustee and Chair, particularly the 80th anniversary celebrations and the CBA presentation at the Society of Antiquaries in London in December 2024.



Following the general election and proposed changes to planning and educational curricula, there are challenges for the future of archaeology. The CBA's vision is to promote grassroots archaeology, participation and innovation, offering anyone the opportunity to develop their skills and tell their stories.

The Chair commended the work of the staff in achieving significant impact with a small team.

The CBA is financially stable, but relies on grant funding, so a fundraising consultancy has been appointed to explore new sources of income. A focus is also on offering member benefits for joining the CBA, and the chair has been meeting with the heads of affiliate members.

The Youth Advisory Board have been helping to feed into the CBA's strategic planning, including plans to launch new student and digital-only member offers.

The Chair thanked members for their support of the CBA's work and the wider impacts on the sector which it enables.

4. Annual Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

Members were provided with access to the Annual Trustees' Report and Financial Statements in advance of the AGM.

The Trustees' Annual Report for 2023-2024 was APPROVED.

The Annual Trustees' Report is available to read at <https://www.archaeologyuk.org/resource/cba-annual-general-meeting-2025-resources.html>

5. Executive Director's report on current and future activities, with an opportunity to discuss issues of concern to members.

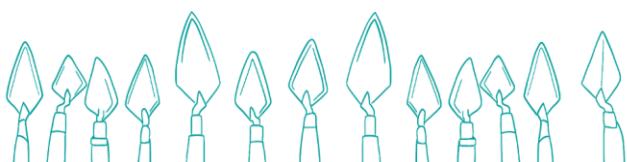
NR noted the need for the CBA to continue to reimagine its role to continue to support the network of individuals, groups and societies and to create a more cohesive and supportive community, from the bedrock of grassroots archaeology in the UK right through to some of the larger projects.

The Reconnecting Archaeology project is doing audience research to understand what the public, British Archaeology magazine readers and the CBA's partners want from the organisation, working with catalyst partners to understand what makes their projects successful.

We will be working to better understanding the organisational carbon output, and how this can be reduced, and how we can support our wider network to do the same. Other work will help fostering inclusion and equity within the organisation and wider network, to reduce the barriers for people entering archaeology

A new governance committee chaired by the vice-Chair of Trustees, Peter Buxton, will be reviewing the CBA's Articles of Association, ensuring that these are fit for purpose for a modern organisation.

Reimagining the CBA's membership will help to ensure that the voices of members and affiliate organisations are heard, that younger people are able to join the organisation, and will help facilitate a move towards a more sustainable membership offer.



Following the Executive Director's report there were several questions:

This feels like a large amount of work on top of the CBA's existing responsibilities and engagement. Can you share a headline project plan with indicative timescales?

The Reconnecting Archaeology project will complete in November 2025. This project will help shape the next phase of activity which is likely to include a further application to the Heritage Fund in April 2026. The CBA's current five-year business plan ends in 2025, and we will begin developing a new business plan which will take us from 2026-2031 later this year.

Grant aid currently underpins our three core impact areas – events including the Festival of Archaeology, youth engagement including the Young Archaeologists' Club, and casework and planning advocacy. We know what it takes to deliver these programmes and have the funding to do so. Development focus will therefore focus on our wider advocacy work, our membership and network, and our communications and voice.

What is the level of engagement with UK universities? Are many archaeology departments affiliated to the CBA?

Yes, the CBA also provides the secretariat for University Archaeology UK (UAUK), and the Executive Director regularly attends their meetings. Last year University Archaeology Day coordinated by UAUK was moved to take place during the CBA's Festival of Archaeology which enabled better joint promotion and we continue to look for other ways we can develop our relationship. Promoting and supporting archaeology through university departments is important, and two of our Catalyst for Change partners within the Reconnecting Archaeology project are based in universities.

What will be the criteria for the new special student digital subscription? Is this something we can promote with the older cohort of YAC members?

Yes, this will be something you can promote. While we have focused on students at this point, we are interested in looking at how we create an offer for young people more broadly, up to the age of 25. We now have a Young Associates Network and are looking at how a young person's offer would align with that. Work is also underway to develop a young leader's pathway. We would like to develop a model that encourages young people to join the CBA and gives them a voice to help shape our messaging and how we move forward.

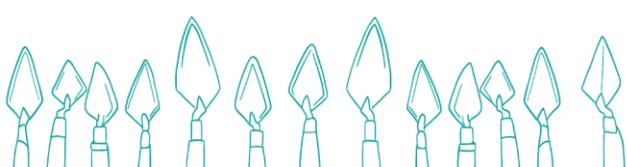
Would the overseas subscription be reduced with a digital only offer as it is already much higher than the proposed normal membership?

Yes. The digital only offer will be the same price wherever you are in the world. Overseas costs are high due to the price of postage, and we hope the new digital only offer will be attractive to members outside of the UK.

How do you access the members' area of the CBA website?

There is a login button on the menu bar of the CBA website. If you have not logged in before you will be asked to set up your online account. Once you have done that you will have access to your members homepage and member only content on the website. If you have any questions on accessing the members area of the website, please email info@archaeologuk.org.

Will you be looking at why individuals join CBA? If it is for the magazine and that goes digital, is there a risk that people will share a digital copy, reducing the membership?



To access the digital version of the magazine you need to go to a bespoke site and access is password protected so we would need to look at how we manage that. When we look at the statistics around the magazine younger audiences don't buy paper copies. This has been reinforced by our magazine distributor Warners who are the largest magazine printer and distributor in the UK. They have shared that print copy magazine sales, particularly in news outlets, are dropping by an average of 8% year on year at the moment. Our intention is not to lose the paper magazine for as long as possible, but to actually understand how we can support it with more digital access and engagement.

Have you thought about moving to a low-cost monthly subscription model like Dig Ventures and Time Team?

Yes, we have, and we still are. One of the biggest challenges we have that we currently have over 500 members who don't engage with us digitally. Moving towards a more flexible subscription solution would also need to look at how we continue to engage with this important group in our membership. The Reconnecting Archaeology project will help enable us to look at this in more detail and develop possible options to take forward into the next phase of development.

When you say the size of groups is decreasing, is that paid members, or does that include volunteers?

Taking the Temperature showed that the average size of groups is decreasing whether they have paid or non-paid membership. The number of active volunteers, i.e. those who take up committee roles or are actively involved in organising activities, are also decreasing. This means running a group is often falling to an ever-decreasing number of individuals. There are some groups that don't fit this trend who have subtly different structures. We hope developing a more active network for groups will help cross-fertilise successful ideas and create a place for groups to discuss issues and offer support.

It would be interesting to see the changes in age demographics for groups alongside their shrinking numbers, is there a particularly aged demographic shrinkage?

There isn't a clear age demographic shrinkage but there is a drift. Archaeological groups and societies have always attracted a slightly older audience, and the surveys suggest a general drift upwards in age. What we are also seeing is younger people having a radically different approach to how they join things, how they engage and their motivation. We need to learn what works for each of these different audiences so that we see people engaging from a young age throughout their lives.

Do you have a way to engage with students directly?

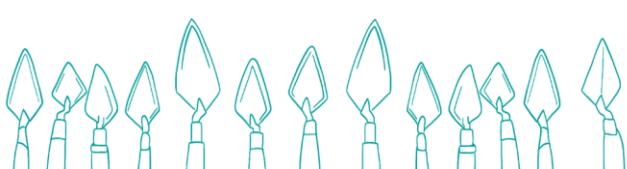
Yes. We have regular contact via university archaeological societies. With the new student rate we will have a more attractive proposition to talk to those audiences. This year we will have an early career intern for the Festival of Archaeology who will help manage our social media channels and focus on reaching younger audiences. We want to continue to raise awareness of the CBA as a place that can showcase the work students and young people are doing in archaeology.

What is the cost of the magazine per copy delivered to the door?

We have been doing some work on this and if you take it on the membership alone and don't include any additional income, it costs around £20 per year. So £20 of your annual membership goes into producing the magazine.

Have you considered student membership for mature students?

We are not defining student membership by age. We are very aware of the age issue, for example for the early career archaeologist award in the Archaeological Achievement Awards we have defined early career in



so it is as inclusive as possible and includes people who may have changed career or have had a career break and come back into archaeology. If you are a mature student, you could take advantage of the student offer, but what we don't have at the moment is an offer for young people not in education.

Could you have a membership offer for societies with a low or no fee, no magazine, etc that would help increase the number of societies the CBA represents?

At the moment anyone can join up to the CBA newsletter for free and you can also choose to give a monthly donation of any amount. There absolutely could be a membership option that doesn't include the magazine and focuses on supporting our advocacy work and cause. If you are interested in that as a membership option, please do let us know.

Universities across the UK have seen a decrease in international students this academic year. How do you plan to engage with young global audiences, especially since we now have funding cuts that have led to archaeology departments like Sheffield being closed?

The CBA is a UK based charity, and we are interested in promoting archaeology in the UK. We are aware that there is a much bigger global market out there and we hope to engage more with this audience through the digital membership offer. As a UK charity with a focus on promoting UK archaeology and UK archaeologists, we will never have a global remit, although we always welcome anyone to join us from around the world.

6. Membership and subscription rates 2025-2026

CBA Trustees having considered the financial position of the CBA and the burden of increasing costs proposed increasing the standard membership of the CBA.

This would result in the following changes:

- Standard membership will increase from £46.50 to £50.
- For institutional memberships the increase in subscription rates will be between £4 and £10.

In addition, the Trustees proposed introducing a new Digital Only membership of £40 (Digital Membership would include access to an electronic version of British Archaeology Magazine). Trustees also proposed to reduce Student Membership to £5.

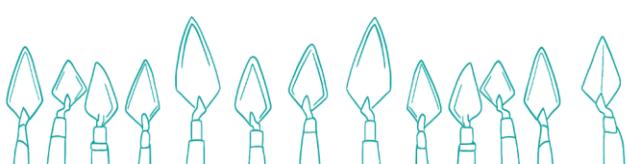
The range of membership rates were shared in advance of the meeting in the document 'Proposed CBA Membership Rates 2025-26'.

Members APPROVED the 2025-2026 Membership rates as proposed by the Board of Trustees.

7. Appointment of Auditors

Members were invited to approve the appointment of Streets Chartered Accountants as auditors for the coming year.

The appointment of auditors Streets Chartered Accountants for the coming year was APPROVED.



8. Dates of future meetings

The next Council for British Archaeology AGM will be held in February 2026. The provisional date is Saturday 7th February.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

END OF MEETING

