



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

SOCIETY OF EDITORS

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CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS



Next year the British Library is planning to put on a major exhibition celebrating the news industry in this country.

It is more than 400 years since the first “news papers” were published.

Indeed, this really is an opportune moment to think again about the real importance of news in society.

The nature of news, who makes it, how it is produced, and who consumes it, has changed so much over the years - and, of course, it is still changing all the time.

However, the key values of trusted, responsible, edited news which informs as well as entertains are more important than ever, especially in an era of “fake news” and “disinformation”.

And that is why the Society of Editors is constantly working to defend press freedom and maintain the high standards we all believe in.

We are passionate about working with colleagues across the UK to fight any moves which will interfere with the public’s “right to know”, the right to be told what is really going on in our communities.

We care deeply about the challenging issues facing our industry like resources, diversity, online bullying of journalists and proper training.

We are committed to rewarding excellence and celebrating success, most notably with our annual regional and national awards.

As I write this we are in the middle of our 2020 annual conference which is being run “virtually” because of Covid-19, the virus which has affected so many of us and our families.

It has been strange having the discussions and debates online and spread out over several weeks.

But I think it has been a phenomenal success, allowing us to engage with a much wider group of journalists than ever before, tackling the subjects that really matter.

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The main focus for this report is 2019 of course, and that was also an eventful year - partly because it was our 20th anniversary.

It culminated with our annual conference which took place at the majestic Stationers' Hall near St Paul's.

It was fantastic to see so many people there including editors from the Telegraph, Mirror, Independent, Sun and BBC amongst the panellists.

Also taking part in the debates were former Culture Secretary John Whittingdale MP, the Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham and the Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu.

It is definitely THE industry conference to be at. It is the one that really matters.

In the evening we had a fabulous gala dinner, where the Society presented a lifetime achievement award to Katie Adie who gave a compelling speech.

The Society also presented a special award to the Sun in recognition of the £100m that its readers have raised for charity since the paper's launch in 1969.

In a recorded message from New York, Sun owner Rupert Murdoch spoke of his delight at the award and the importance of "championing good causes".

Meanwhile, the Society's press awards for 2019 were a huge success again, highlighting all the excellent work in newsrooms across the country.

"We are passionate about working with colleagues across the UK to fight any moves which will interfere with the public's right to know."

In the nationals, the Telegraph won the news website award, and the Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday won the newspaper honours.

In the regionals, it was great to see the hard work of the teams at the Yorkshire Post, Western Mail and HullLive being rewarded for their success.

The other major event of the year was our second "Satchwell lecture", given on this occasion by Times Editor John Witherow.

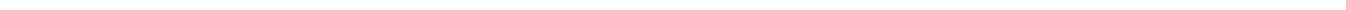
He spoke passionately about the importance of the press in public life and highlighted the risks many journalists take in reporting the truth, especially abroad.

As ever, I would like to thank executive director Ian Murray, the Society of Editors staff, and the board members, for their incredible work and support.

So much effort goes into these awards, campaigns and communications. The team really did make our 20th anniversary a year to remember with pride.

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Ian MacGregor
Chairman of the Society of Editors
Editor Emeritus at the Telegraph



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



The year 2019 proved a very active one for the Society of Editors as it reconfirmed its role at the centre of the news industry in the UK. The Society staged several events throughout the year as well as organising its annual conference, Satchwell Lecture, and both the National and Regional Press Awards.

The Society strove throughout 2019 to ensure it maintained a high profile on behalf of the industry enabling it to promote the Society's core ideals and aims.

The Society was consulted by government and other bodies on several issues throughout the year and was able to lobby ministers and departments on the news industry's behalf.

The activity level for the Society's small team was at times frenetic and I am a grateful as always for the support of such a dedicated, hard-working body.

We are also extremely grateful to our sponsors and supporters without whom the Society would not be able to carry out its vital work in protecting media freedom in the United Kingdom.

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Below is a list of some of the activity undertaken during the year.

- Society responded quickly and proactively to the publication of the Cairncross Review into the future of the UK media which placed special emphasis on supporting the regional press and regulation for the digital social media giants as well as proposals for support for public interest journalism and even an academy to decide such measures. While broadly welcoming the report and its aims to support UK media, the Society expressed concerns over whether regulation of the digital giant with an appointed regulator and code would impinge on the freedom of other media who also publish online. The Society also raised concerns over what would constitute public interest journalism and who would decide.
- There was a similar response from the Society to the DCMS Committee report into fake news and disinformation which covered much of the same ground as the Cairncross Report, again calling for the digital giants to be regulated and for fake news to be targeted. The Society, while welcoming the report as a whole, expressed concerns over who would decide what was fake news and again pointed out the risk to mainstream media publishing online from any new regulation targeted at the social media giants.
- The Society staged a lunch with the Secretary of State for DCMS Jeremy Wright shortly before the March 6 Board Meeting (March 4) at which representatives of the Society and the wider media had the opportunity to raise questions regarding both the Cairncross and DCMS reports and their possible impacts on press freedom and the public's right to know.

“The Society was active - and remains so - in the debate over the Online Harms Bill and drew national and international attention.”

- The Society continued to be engaged with the Department of Justice and attended a meeting with the Crown Prosecution Service which is looking to overhaul guidelines for providing information to the media. The Society expressed its concerns that no changes should be made to guidelines that would reduce or impair the ability of journalists to obtain information from the CPS and indeed that wherever possible access to information should be enhanced.
 - The Society is also continuing its work with the Courts and Tribunals Service following the successful overhaul of its guidance to courts and tribunals on information and access available to journalists and media attending or covering courts and tribunals. The Society organised regional lunch time events with HMCTS during the year - Bristol, Manchester, Cardiff, Birmingham and Sunderland - with the aim of bringing together journalists and court/tribunals staff from particular regions to discuss access issues. A final joint event was staged at The Old Bailey in London.
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- The Society once again staged the successful National Press Awards which were well received by the industry.
- Later in the spring the Society staged the annual Regional Press Awards which were again considered a great success.
- The Society was active - and remains so - in the debate over the Online Harms Bill and drew national and international attention when its letter to the Secretary of State for DCMS Jeremy Wright attracted an open letter from the minister. The SoS requested a meeting with the Executive Director before the closing date for submissions to the Online Harms white paper.
- The Society responded to the consultation on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) draft proposals to apply age-appropriate standards to media online sites. The Society also responded to the ICO call for submissions regarding the Journalists Code regarding Data Protection.

Society of Editors | **CAMPAIGN FOR REAL NEWS**
www.societyofeditors.org • @EditorsUK

- During the year the Society launched its Campaign for Real News as an umbrella device for its several ongoing initiatives to support the news media in the UK. Central to the campaign's message was to persuade those in government and powerful positions that supporting the mainstream media was essential to combatting the rise of fake news and misinformation. The campaign is ongoing.
 - The Foreign and Commonwealth Office engaged with the Society over the then upcoming International Conference on Media Freedom in London in July (10 and 11) which the Society attended, and also the campaign as a whole. The Society agreed to stage a briefing lunch for editors and senior journalists with representatives of the FCO.
 - The Executive Director wrote to Clive Marshall at PA to thank the organisation for its tremendous support in hosting the Society for meetings, lunches and events over many years and wishing PA well in the move to its new premises at Paddington. The Society received a positive reply that there may be scope in the future to still have the use of space at PA on some occasions. Going forward, however, we will need to look for new venues and grateful thanks to Paul Clarkson and News UK for hosting the June 5 board meeting at their headquarters.
 - The Society responded to the DCMS's Online Harms White Paper. A letter to the Secretary of State, Jeremy Wright, outlining the Society's concerns on behalf of the industry surrounding the proposals and our call for exemptions for the media resulted in an open letter of response from the SoS. The Society's concerns and the SoS response
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achieved national publicity. The Society made a formal submission to the DCMS shortly before the deadline of July 1. President Alison Gow and the Executive Director then met with the SoS at his offices with a number of his advisors to discuss the Society's concerns. The then SoS, Jeremy Wright, (who is no longer in post following the arrival of a new PM) gave assurances again that the Online Harms legislation was not aimed at the media and felt certain that any body - media or otherwise - already adhering to recognised regulation would not be affected by the new regulator.

- The matter of the Online Harms White Paper was raised at a lunch held by the Society with John Whittingdale MP. Several guests attended the latest of our roundtable discussions held under Chatham House Rules. John, a firm supporter of the media, spoke of continued support for the industry.
 - The Society announced closer links between the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) and the Society. ISWNE has some 500 members scattered mostly across the US but with some in Canada, the UK, Australia and Nepal. The agreement offers linked membership to each other's members. Under the scheme ISWNE members would become associate members of the SoE, but SoE members with weekly associations would have full membership of ISWNE. For SoE weekly associated members their full membership of ISWNE gives them access to the ISWNE chatlines and support groups. Each year one SoE member from this group will be invited to attend the ISWNE conference in the US - sometimes Canada - on a scholarship.
 - The summer saw the Society stage the second annual Satchwell Lecture at Stationers' Hall which was presented by Editor of the Times John Witherow.
 - There was a rush of activity following the response to the Met's Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu's threats to take action against the press if it published leaked government documents in the wake of the resignation of the UK ambassador to the Washington. The Society issued a quick response which was picked up by several media culminating with me appearing on BBC TV news, ITV, Channel 4 News and Sky News as well as live on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 5 as well as BBC Radio Wales on the following Monday. The Society's objections to the statement were mentioned by the Independent on the day and by The Observer on Sunday. Response to the Met's heavy-handed approach came hard on the heels of national coverage for the Society's response to the sentencing of Tommy Robinson and his claim that his conviction for contempt of court was an act against journalism. The Society issued a statement that Robinson had simply broken the law in a manner any trained junior reporter would understand was not acceptable and underscored the value of real training for journalism in the recognised mainstream media.
 - The Society wrote to the new Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, welcoming him to his new post and inviting him to engage with the SoE in the same manner as his predecessors.
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- The main event in the Society's calendar - the Society's Annual Conference and Gala Dinner - took place in November, both marking the SoE's 20th anniversary. Both events took place at Stationers' Hall in London on November 12 and were extremely well attended and received. Feedback was universally positive. The venue proved apt for the occasion, being the traditional home of the UK's newspaper industry, and we were grateful to the staff and management at Stationers' for their professionalism in staging the conference and dinner. The Conference attracted wide media coverage, a large part concerning the comments made by Met AC Neil Basu regarding press coverage of terror incidents and leaked documents.



The SoE's awards to Kate Adie and The Sun also received coverage. The SoE's social media presence was gratifyingly significant during this period. The conference also saw the Society's AGM at which Alison Gow was confirmed as President for 2019/20 and Paul Clarkson as Vice President for 2019/20. Ian MacGregor was confirmed in the new role of Chairman.

- The Society engaged with NESTA, the body given the task by the DCMS to oversee granting of the £2m fund to support regional and local media.
 - The Society helped stage a meeting with IPSO and major industry figures to discuss the regulator's proposed Reporting Islam guidelines. The Society made clear it was in no way supporting the draft guidelines nor accepting the need for them, but was able to enable the
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industry to have input. The result was a robust debate with IPSO agreeing to consult further, to include the Editors' Code Committee and to enable stakeholders to see further drafts of the guidelines before publishing.

- The Society hosted a lunch with the Queen's Communications Secretary Donal McCabe, generously hosted by the Evening Standard. The aim of the event was to introduce Donal to representatives of the regional and local press.



Ian Murray
Executive Director
Society of Editors

HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

As a members' organisation the Society of Editors does not seek to make a profit but it is important that the finances can support its crucial campaigning work and services to members.

The Society also plays a major role in supporting the industry as a whole and the financial underpinning of this work remains essential.

While the Society's accounts for 2019 remain fundamentally sound, despite making a small loss on the year, they do show that the Society relies heavily on the support of the industry and valued partners for which members remain deeply grateful. Without this support the Society would be unable to carry out its vital work.

The year 2019 saw the Society face challenges in increasing its workload while attracting sufficient support from sponsors and other revenue sources. A noticeable reduction in subscriptions was one of the underlying causes for a reduction in income along with the loss of some major sponsors. Steps have been taken to address these issues throughout 2020, a year of global pandemic crisis, which has presented its own unique challenges to the industry and our organisation. We are continuing to take action to find new ways of working to serve the industry and to safeguard our financial position.

Despite the tight margins in 2019, the Society was able to make a generous contribution to the Journalists' Charity of £7,000 during the year and continued to support trainee journalists with awards to the NCTJ.

Sponsorship dropped significantly due to the loss of some major supporters, from £68,856 the previous year to £42,193 in 2019 and subscriptions reduced from £16,266 from a previous figure of £22,020.

The overall income figure did see a rise to stand at £420,564 in 2019 compared with £412,061 in the previous year due to increased income from the Society's events.

The Society's increased activity during the year saw costs rise from £382,176 in 2018 to £433,636 in 2019, due mainly to the Society's increased expenditure on event costs, charitable donations and increased administration costs in the most part due to an additional member of staff throughout the year.

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Overall, the Society made a loss of £13,072 in the year.

The Society has retained financial assets of £62,333.

While the Society is a not-for-profit organisation, it is not desirable that it makes a loss in any one year. Steps have been taken to address this issue including a staff reduction, the launch of a new membership initiative, a sponsorship drive and reductions to administration overheads.



Jonathan Grun
Honorary Treasurer
Editor Emeritus Press Association



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

SOCIETY OF EDITORS COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

This is an extract from the full company accounts which are available for inspection at the Society's office.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The principal activity of the company during the period was to represent newspaper editors and their counterparts in broadcasting as a professional organisation.

DIRECTORS

S C Whitehead, P J Clifton, J D Grun, D Martin, I D Murray, S J Ryan, M R Sleight, Fran Unsworth, D Wills, A S Gow, M Breen, C A Garside, I C MacGregor, Paul Clarkson, Caroline Waterson, Kamal Ahmed, Polly Curtis, Joy Yates, Oliver Duff, Ceri Gould, Eleanor Mills.

Company Secretary I Murray

Registered Number 03047323

Registered office The University Centre, Granta Place, Mill Lane, Cambridge CB2 1RU

Auditor Price Bailey LLP, Chartered Accountants, Tennyson House, Cambridge
Business Park, Cambridge CB4 0WZ

DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of the profit or loss of the Company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies for the Company's financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Each of the persons who are directors at the time when this Directors' Report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as the director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Company's auditors are unaware, and

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- the director has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a director in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND RETAINED EARNINGS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

| | Note | 2019 £ | 2018 £ |
|---|------|-----------------|----------------|
| Turnover | 3 | 420,564 | 412,061 |
| Cost of sales | | (203,701) | (164,743) |
| Gross profit | | <u>216,863</u> | <u>247,318</u> |
| Administrative expenses | | (229,935) | (217,433) |
| Operating (loss)/profit | | <u>(13,072)</u> | <u>29,885</u> |
| Interest receivable and similar income | 5 | - | 3 |
| Profit/(loss) before tax | | <u>(13,072)</u> | <u>29,888</u> |
| Profit/(loss) after tax | | (13,072) | 29,888 |
| Retained earnings at the beginning of the year | | 75,405 | 45,517 |
| (Loss)/profit for the year | | (13,072) | 29,888 |
| Retained earnings at the end of the year | | <u>62,333</u> | <u>75,405</u> |

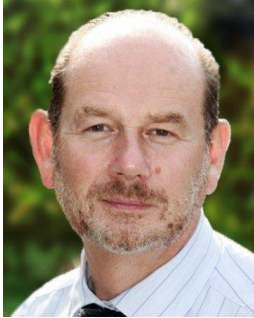
DETAILED PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

| | 2019 £ | 2018 £ |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Turnover | 420,564 | 412,061 |
| Cost of sales | (203,701) | (164,743) |
| Gross profit | <u>216,863</u> | <u>247,318</u> |
| Less: overheads | | |
| Administration expenses | (229,935) | (217,433) |
| Operating (loss)/profit | <u>(13,072)</u> | <u>29,885</u> |
| Interest receivable | - | 3 |
| (Loss)/Profit for the year | (13,072) | 29,888 |

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**SCHEDULE TO THE DETAILED ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019**

| | 2019 £ | 2018 £ |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Turnover | | |
| Sponsorship | 42,193 | 68,856 |
| Subscriptions | 16,266 | 22,020 |
| Events income | 358,974 | 320,628 |
| Book sales and other income | 3,131 | 557 |
| | 420,564 | 412,061 |
| | 420,564 | 412,061 |
| | | |
| | 2019 £ | 2018 £ |
| Cost of sales | | |
| Events costs | 197,009 | 164,743 |
| Lecture costs | 6,692 | - |
| | 203,701 | 164,743 |
| | 203,701 | 164,743 |
| | | |
| | 2019 £ | 2018 £ |
| Administration expenses | | |
| National secretary | 146,391 | 125,599 |
| Charity donations | 19 | 320 |
| Books & publications | 775 | 1,396 |
| Rent and water rates | 11,976 | 11,976 |
| General office expenses | 1,069 | - |
| Insurances | 3,115 | 1,574 |
| Meeting expenses | 9,055 | 13,977 |
| Accountancy fees | 6,650 | 7,200 |
| Auditors' remuneration | 3,950 | 4,200 |
| Consultancy fees | 5,000 | 20,000 |
| Legal and professional fees | 1,120 | 655 |
| Telephone and fax | 6,153 | 11,861 |
| Advertising and promotion | - | 8 |
| Bad debts | 1,754 | - |
| Hotels, travel and subsistence | 20,835 | 11,934 |
| Entertainment | 5,829 | 464 |
| Printing and stationery | 3,065 | 3,379 |
| Sundry expenses | 949 | 1,590 |
| Bank charges | 2,230 | 1,181 |
| Depreciation | - | 119 |
| | 229,935 | 217,433 |
| | 229,935 | 217,433 |



Ian Murray
Executive Director



Claire Meadows
Campaign and
Advocacy Officer



Mariella Brown
Events and Communications
Coordinator



Angela Upton
Administrator



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