



The Jane Austen Society and the Role of the Treasurer

The Jane Austen Society (the Society) was originally founded in 1940 and was registered as a charity on 6th September 1994. At the Annual General Meeting on 9th July 2022 the membership voted overwhelmingly to convert the Society to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). On 21st September 2022 the Charity Commission registered a CIO having the same name and objects as the original Society under charity number 1200422. The two organisations are currently being run in parallel as assets and membership payments are transferred to the CIO. Once this process has been completed, the original charity will be dissolved.

The Society is a literary charity. Its objects are “To promote the advancement of education for the public benefit of the life and works of Jane Austen and the Austen family, in particular by publications or any other means that the trustees may deem appropriate.” The Society has 7 regional branches. It has no premises and no employees. It does have a number of volunteers.

Specifically, the Society undertakes the following activities:

- finance and treasury, including budgets, annual accounts and investment management.
- responding to queries from members and from the public.
- maintenance of the membership list and associated email addresses.
- organisation of the AGM, the annual conference, and study days.
- editing and publication of the annual report and the two newsletters.
- maintenance of the website and the social media outlets.
- liaison with the Society’s branches and certain groups.
- organisation and minuting of the trustee meetings.
- various sponsorship arrangements.
- occasional projects such as last year’s website revamp, the CIO project, and the forthcoming celebration of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen’s birth.

A number of the Society’s Trustees will retire at the AGM in July 2024. One of the retiring Trustees will be the Treasurer and the Society is accordingly looking to recruit a new Treasurer. Like all the trustee roles, the Treasurer is unpaid save for the reimbursement of expenses. It is envisaged that the successful candidate would work alongside the incumbent as a volunteer, before being appointed as a Trustee in 2024. Trustee appointments are for three years, renewable for two further three year terms. Further information, including the Society’s accounts to 31 December 2022, can be found on the Society’s website and on the Charity Commission’s website.

The Trustees meet three times a year on a Saturday in January (online), April (usually in Chawton, Hampshire), and October (usually in London). The Society’s Annual General Meeting has historically taken place in Chawton on the second Saturday in July, but in 2023 will take place in Winchester. Trustees are expected to attend the AGM. The previous constitution required the AGM to be held in July, but the CIO’s constitution does not specify a date.

The Treasurer is responsible for the following functions:

Book-keeping

1. maintaining spread sheets of income and expenditure.
2. filing bank statements and performing reconciliations quarterly.
3. setting up on-line bank payments, having checked with the responsible trustee, before passing to the co-signatory for final approval.
4. keeping the Society's cheque book secure for use in the increasingly rare need to issue a cheque.
5. liaising with the finance sub-committee and membership secretaries on a regular basis and with branch treasurers as required.
6. submitting gift aid claims to HMRC, annually for the main Society, and as requested for individual branches.
7. managing the Society's PayPal account (members may join online through the Society's website).
8. liaising with the Society's independent examiners (currently Sheen Strickland) in the preparation of year end accounts in April/May to be published in the Annual Report at the end of June.

Reporting

1. preparing financial reports for the January, April and October trustee meetings and responding to any questions.
2. presenting the annual report to the AGM in July and dealing with any questions arising
3. sending the annual online return to the Charities Commission.
4. monitoring the performance of the Society's investments (currently with COIF) and reporting to the trustees to enable them to review it.

Applicants should indicate an interest in the life and works of Jane Austen as well as the professional capability to perform the role of the Treasurer of the Society. Interviews will be conducted by a selection of the trustees either in person or online.

January 2023