

Annual report 2025-26

www.writersguild.org.uk

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CONTACT US

If you want to contact any of the WGGB Officers, Craft Chairs or National or Regional Representatives featured in this annual report, you can find their details on our website:

www.writersguild.org.uk/about-us/our-people

You can also follow us on our social media channels:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thewritersguild

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/WritersGuildGB

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/the-writers-guild-of-great-britain

Instagram: www.instagram.com/writersguildgb/

Threads: www.threads.net/@writersguildgb

Mastodon: [@WritersGuildGB@union.place](https://union.place/@WritersGuildGB)

Bluesky: [@writersguildgb.bsky.social](https://writersguildgb.bsky.social)

JOIN US

If you are not a WGGB member, and would like to join, you can do this online:

www.writersguild.org.uk

Or by phone: **020 7833 0777**

Summary

This report covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 (and information in this report was correct as of 31 March 2026).

The WGGB Executive Council comprises democratically elected Officers, Craft Chairs and National and Regional Reps, in accordance with the union's Rule Book.

You can find detail of the activities of these elected representatives in the pages that follow, and a summary below.

CAMPAIGNING AND LOBBYING

- Our policy work ensures that the views and experiences of working writers are shared with decision-makers across Government and the creative industries both nationally and internationally, supporting our campaigns to improve writers' terms and conditions. It involves undertaking and supporting research; producing briefings; providing evidence to Government consultations and Select Committee inquiries; meeting with Civil Servants and Parliamentarians; attending events at Westminster and the devolved Parliaments; and working collaboratively with other unions, stakeholders and affiliates, including the International Affiliation of Writers Guilds, the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe, the Creators' Rights Alliance and the Broadcasting, Arts and Entertainment Unions (BEAU) All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG).
- Our campaign and policy priorities are currently focused on writers and AI, Standing up to censorship, arts funding reform and BBC Charter renewal.
- In the past year we have also been involved in campaigns and lobbying work around cuts to continuing drama (including the closure of *River City*), and to Save Audio Drama at the BBC.
- Find out more about our current campaigns and ways you can get involved at www.writersguild.org.uk/campaigns and our policy work at www.writersguild.org.uk/wggb-policy-work

CLIMATE CRISIS

- Following a motion passed at a previous AGM we continue to look at ways to tackle the climate crisis as an organisation, including providing only vegetarian/vegan food at events, reducing plastic and utilising digital technology like Zoom for our events and meetings. In April 2025, our Film Committee ran a 'Greenwriting' event and in November 2025 WGGB General Secretary Ellie Peers joined 200 authors, public figures and scientists by signing an open letter to COP30 calling on the cultural sector to take a greater role in tackling the climate crisis.

DIGITAL RIGHTS

- We have been involved in sustained campaigning and lobbying around AI to maintain and strengthen existing copyright protections and ensure that tech companies gain explicit consent to use writers' work to train Large Language Models, and that writers are properly remunerated.
- In June 2025, we negotiated new rights for the digital exploitation of playwrights' work under our ITC Agreement (alongside a 24% uplift in minimum fees). We are in continual negotiation to improve terms and conditions for writers under all our agreements, including on digital rights.
- Writers Digital Payments, set up by WGGB and the Personal Managers' Association in 2015, has now paid out over £14 million to writers for use of their work on BBC iPlayer and ITVX.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- Throughout 2025 we continued to run online events for under-represented writers, including the following Member Networks: Challenging Ageism, Challenging Sexism, Challenging Class Privilege, Writers of Colour, Returning Writers, LGBT+ Writers and Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent Writers. We are currently in the process of re-evaluating our Member Networks.
- WGGB delegates continued to attend TUC equality conferences, including TUC Black Workers' Conference, TUC LGBT+ Conference and TUC Women's Conference.

Summary

- WGGB supports the Together Alliance against the far right and members took part in a historic demonstration in London in March 2025.
- We took part in the launch of the new Broadcasting, Entertainment and Arts Unions All-Party Parliamentary Group in December 2025 where WGGB President Jack Thorne spoke about ‘access to the arts’.
- Our Equality and Diversity Committee has supported internal and external stakeholders with their equality and diversity work.

EVENTS

- We continue to run our programme of events via the Zoom platform, and were delighted to host our sixth virtual AGM, plus member-only training workshops on a range of subjects including Making Tax Digital, how to manage the script feedback process, communication around access requirements and how to build lasting industry networks. We are currently developing a series of in-person training events for writers around the UK, sponsored by ALCS.

NATIONS AND REGIONS

- Our branches in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales continued to make headway with their work on a range of issues and you can find out more in their reports – and those of our Regional Reps – from pages 30 onwards.

NEGOTIATIONS

- We negotiated a 3.25% rise on minimum fees for playwrights working under our TNC agreement (covering the Royal Court, National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Company).
- We negotiated a 3% rise on minimum fees for writers under our UK Theatre agreement.
- We negotiated a 24% rise on minimum fees for playwrights under our ITC agreement, and a major update to the agreement, which included new digital rights for playwrights.

- We negotiated a 2% rise on minimum fees for ITV writers.
- We negotiated a 2.3% rise on minimum fees for audio and TV writers at the BBC.
- We negotiated a new collective agreement with Teledwyr Annibynol Cymru (TAC) – Welsh language independent TV producers – for writers commissioned by TAC producers and the Welsh language broadcaster S4C.
- We continue our work on re-negotiating our national agreements with Pact.

NEW PLAY COMMISSION SCHEME

- Our New Play Commission Scheme (NPCS) inspired the launch of the Jerwood Royal Court Commissioning Scheme, which was launched in November 2025. This past year saw further plays from our NPCS make it to the stage.

RECRUITMENT

- Recruitment has continued to be a priority for our Organising Team.
- We ran a social media campaign encouraging our members to recruit a fellow writer during #HeartUnions Week.

WRITERS’ GUILD AND OTHER AWARDS

- We awarded our annual Olwen Wymark Theatre Encouragement Awards. We also presented the Tinniswood Audio Drama Award with the Society of Authors.
- Our annual Writers’ Guild Awards are currently on pause while we review them – keep up-to-date with news via our website and social media channels.

General Secretary's report

The past year has seen continued challenges across all areas in which our members work. Long held and fought for rights have come under threat, too, at both a national and global level.

But it is our job as a trade union to rise to these challenges, and to fight to protect those rights. That is exactly what we have been doing and will continue to do.

High on the top of that list of course is AI. In the past year, we have been involved in sustained campaigning and lobbying work on this issue, alongside allies including our sibling unions and the Creative Rights in AI Coalition. We have seen Big Tech engage in large-scale theft in plain sight, using writers' work to train their Large Language Models. And, as I write, we have just heard back from the Government on its response to its consultation on copyright and AI. This signalled a win for collective action for all of us who campaigned hard for the Government to row back from its initial preferred option of a copyright exception in which creators would have had to opt out of their work being used to train Large Language Models. Much work remains to be done in this area and you can keep up-to-date with what WGGB is doing and ways you can get involved via our special Writers and AI campaign page: www.writersguild.org.uk/writers-and-ai

Standing up to censorship is another priority area for us. We know that more and more writers are under pressure to change their work for what feels like 'political' rather than creative reasons. Writers' contracts are placing limits on what they can say on issues they care about and even restrict their right to protest too. We are taking a stand against this increasing censorial cultural landscape in the UK and encouraging our members to join us. You can find out more on our special campaign page, which includes a writers' checklist to help you spot problematic clauses in your contracts or other areas of your work – and take action against this. Find out more at www.writersguild.org.uk/wggb-campaigns/censorship

Censorship is creeping into funding decisions, too, and reform of arts funding is something we are also campaigning and lobbying around. We



welcomed Baroness Hodge's independent Review of Arts Council England (ACE) in December 2025 and we have now heard the Government and ACE's response. Many of our members have told us how difficult it is to navigate the ACE application and reporting process so we were delighted to see a commitment to this being streamlined and simplified, particularly in the light of the Grantium application portal IT crash which affected our playwright members, and which I wrote to ACE Chief Executive Darren Henley about. You can read our full statement on the Hodge review and the Government and ACE's response to it in the news section of our website.

Last but very much not least on our list of policy and campaign priorities this year is BBC Charter renewal. As many of our members know, the BBC Charter is up for renewal once again and during this period we are working hard to address issues relating to funding, governance, editorial standards and to ensure that the BBC is free from political interference. It is vital that the new Charter enshrines the principles of universality, accuracy and impartiality, creativity and innovation and of course fair treatment and terms for writers.

Updating our collective trade union agreements underpins all our work to improve the terms and conditions for writers across the UK. This past year I've been actively involved in negotiations for a new TAC agreement for Welsh language TV writers and a major update to our ITC agreement for playwrights, which establishes new digital rights. We've also been working hard to update our Pact agreements, too. Where we don't have minimum terms agreements – for example, in

books, animation and videogames – we provide detailed best practice guidance for writers and those who work with them. And we are developing work around non-broadcast audio and vertical media, too. We continue our annual pay negotiations in audio, TV and theatre – and we’ve seen uplifts in minimum fees across all of these this year (see the Summary on page 4 for details).

Equality and diversity lies at the heart of all our work. As we see the rise of the far right on the global and national stage, this work becomes more important than ever. At the WGGB, this work is led by our elected Equality and Diversity Chairs and you can read their full report on page 13. This year we’re proud to have signed up as a supporter of the Together Alliance against the far right and our members picked up their placards and flew the WGGB flag on a march in London in support of ‘love, hope and unity’ in the spring of this year.

Equality and diversity is a subject that we know is close to the heart of our new President Jack Thorne, who we were delighted to welcome at our 2025 AGM. Jack spoke about ‘access to the arts’ at the launch of the new Broadcasting, Arts and Entertainment Unions (BEAU) All-Party Parliamentary Group at the end of last year, and at an online event attended by over 100 members to welcome in the New Year. Thank you to all who came to this or have attended other WGGB events or member training workshops. We’ve got exciting plans in progress on

in-person member training around the UK, sponsored by ALCS, and we’ll be keeping you posted on that in coming months.

Meeting and speaking with members is one of the great privileges of my job – as is working alongside our elected Officers and Reps. I want to thank all of our activists for their passion, dedication and time. I will leave it to our Officers and Reps to fill you in on everything they have achieved this year – and you can read all of their reports in the remaining pages of this annual report.

I also want to thank every single member of the WGGB – just by paying your annual subs you are contributing to our vital work in improving the terms and conditions of writers across the UK and campaigning for a better, fairer industry. And thanks to all of you who have signed petitions, written to your MPs, attended a protest, recruited another writer to join WGGB or made your union stronger in another way. I’d urge all members to check out the ‘Get involved’ section of our website.

Attending our online AGM is another great way to get involved and hear from your Regional, National or Craft Rep on issues affecting you in your local area or specific craft sector. Keep an eye on your weekly ebulletin for details of the AGM – and I very much hope to see you there.

Ellie Peers
General Secretary



We’ve been involved in sustained campaigning around copyright and AI this year. Other priorities include censorship, arts funding reform and BBC Charter renewal

Photos: (left) Em Fitzgerald; (top right) Shutterstock.com/Fox_Ana; (bottom right) Shutterstock.com/mikecphoto

Chair's report

As I write this, my third annual report as WGGB Chair, I am conscious of the need to stress the positives. Our union continues to grow ever stronger; in numbers, in diversity, and in the determined commitment of our members. Thanks to the tireless work of our staff, Executive Council, committee members and other activists, we have had many wins, as detailed elsewhere in this report. We have negotiated many pay rises, lobbied and campaigned on a wide variety of issues, including standing up to censorship, ethical use of AI, BBC Charter renewal, protecting creative copyright, fighting the climate crisis, and arts funding reform. Our regular online events, including networking sessions, panels and interviews on a wide variety of craft and industry topics, continue to thrive.

But I am also very aware that these are challenging times for most of us. Fragmenting audiences, sector disruption, changing habits, polarisation and, above all, budget cuts and the scarcity of work, have led to a situation where risk aversion is rife, and bad behaviour by employers is grimly tolerated by freelancers who need the work too badly to speak out. 'Breaking in' is harder than ever; meanwhile, experienced, highly skilled veterans are leaving the creative industries in record numbers.

In television, shows are being cancelled, despite critical acclaim and excellent viewing figures, because the companies involved simply cannot afford to make them. Just as, during Covid, I first heard the term 'un-greenlit', I recently learned of the concept of the 'grey slate' – projects which major broadcasters are keen to make from an artistic perspective, but which they cannot afford to finance.

The available slots for radio drama have been slashed. Non-broadcast audio drama is thriving, but, without a WGGB agreement in place, we cannot guarantee satisfactory terms for writers (it's something our Audio Committee are working on).



As for stage, Indhu Rubasingham, Artistic Director of the National Theatre, spoke for many of us in her Jennie Lee lecture this year when she warned of the dangers of 'playing safe'. In Rubasingham's words, "If we are conservative in style, in content, in process, we might balance the books today but we will kill the future of theatre". This is a warning which could be applied to every single one of our craft areas.

Our film, videogames and books members face their own unique challenges, too, as you will see in their reports.

What can we do? Well, we can and must continue to campaign, negotiate and speak out. When I look at our union's list of priorities, it strikes me that we are not just protecting our own interests as professional writers, but addressing much more profound issues. The stories we tell are not just how we make our living; they help to shape the world around us. When we form our policies on important issues such as responsible use of AI or standing up to censorship, we are not just calling for the protection of writers' rights, but larger societal protections, too. This is not some airy-fairy abstract issue; it directly impinges on how we live our lives.

For example, where AI has been used for decision-making purposes (for example, in the awarding of benefits), we demand a right to human review (as AI may not be able to correctly take into account the highly nuanced way in which freelance creatives work and deny benefits incorrectly). We have all watched in dismay as governments serve the interests of an unelected plutocracy whilst simultaneously avoiding accountability.

By continuing to create, tell our stories and communicate using our own chosen words, we are defending our humanity against a nightmare future where machines control the population for the benefit of a tiny elite.

We know that our work can make a difference. Last year, we honoured Gwyneth Hughes with an award for Outstanding Contribution to Writing. Her drama, *Mr Bates vs The Post Office*, had a huge impact, not just in speeding up long-delayed compensation for the victims of the Post Office scandal, but in exposing the pitfalls of over-reliance on flawed technology and demanding greater accountability from the people in charge. And this year, we are delighted to welcome Jack Thorne as our new President. He has, of course, written many acclaimed and influential dramas for stage, television and film, but his recent series for Netflix, *Adolescence*, broke out of the arts section of the media and became part of a much wider political conversation.

Jack has already made a huge impact in promoting the WGGB and our work. As you will see from his report, he is passionate about supporting the next generation of storytellers in all our complex, human diversity.

As I write, we are in the midst of consulting on the green paper for the BBC's Charter renewal. We recognise that some of our members have concerns about the process and consultation documents, and how the results will be assessed, but we have decided that it is more constructive for us to respond to the Government consultation and

encourage our members to do so, too. The BBC is a major employer and a vital part of our industry as writers. We have held two town-hall style meetings at which members were invited to have their say. Both were well-attended and very ably chaired by our Deputy General Secretary, Lesley Gannon.

We hope that by taking part in this consultation, we can both protect the BBC and bring about positive change. We are demanding the restoration of quotas for various types of programming, including a genre close to my heart – children's and family. We know that in these stressful times, kids and teens are living turbulent emotional lives. They need content that nourishes, enriches and empowers them, and experiences that they can share.

Of course, the need for shared experiences is not confined to young people. For audiences of all ages, it is vitally important that we are able to tell UK stories – not in a reductive, backward-looking way, but in addressing the things that are happening in our country right now. We must resist the demands to make our work blander, less specific, more seemingly palatable in the (often vain) hope that that will appeal to 'the international market'. We must continue to be brave – and to encourage our employers to be brave, too!

In solidarity

Emma Reeves
Chair



We have lobbied and campaigned on a wide variety of issues this year, attended events in Parliament and our members have been involved in protests, including on copyright and AI

President's report

This is my first report and I'm not sure whether to be uplifting and positive or downbeat and reflective. I think I'll aim for something in the middle.

I just watched Harrison Ford's speech to his union when they awarded him the Lifetime Achievement prize. It was basically about the joy of living as an actor. As he says, his life wasn't always hit films and took him 15 years, moving between carpentry and small parts, before he really made a living out of it. But that every stage of that life has brought him true joy. That is the way I feel about writing, that we are lucky to be able to sit in our heads and make stories up. My nine-year-old writes a lot of poetry, about things like cats, and watching him string words together reminds me of the delight I get stringing words together.

Of course, the necessary rejoinder to that is – and to be fair to Harrison he made this point explicitly himself – “those that can make a living out of it”. The industry is in a dreadful place, the recession we're in seems to have made it even more exclusive, and I'm aware I'm part of the problem in that regard. How we encourage commissioners to look beyond crime drama as the only drama they want to make, how we encourage commissioners to think beyond the same old names, how we encourage commissioners to truly seek the unusual and create models of excellence that are about returning dramas that bring both regular work for brilliant writers and encourage new voices to flourish, that is one of the core drives of the next few years for our union.

I hope the future can be a more beautiful place for all. At the TV Access Project (TAP) – my other hat – we are fighting for full inclusion by 2030. A world for disabled creatives beyond quotas and access coordinators and access funding where truly the industry is representative because it wants to represent. The same must be true for writing too, that the need for agitation fades away because commissioners realise the value in the plurality of voice of our country. Sadly, the dream for both still seems far away.



Photo:
Em Fitzgerald

And AI is the cloud that we must all be wary of. I was lucky enough to be part of a WGGB delegation that went to Parliament to speak about it at the end of last year. What we want to keep shouting is that copyright is not about protecting the royalties of the rich and powerful, it's about a future talent stream. In my speech I referenced one of my writing heroes, Michaela Coel, talking about her journey from the Edinburgh Fringe, the National, to E4 to the BBC. At every stage money was required to invest in the brilliance of her talent. If a Michaela Coel-type script can be AI-generated, will the same be true for people like her in the future? Copyright is our patents, patents are maintained so drug companies keep investing in future drugs. The next generation depend on us making sure the Government will listen.

It is such an honour being President of the WGGB. I've had such an amazing time listening to impassioned people debate what direction their union should take. Please keep leaning in, and joining in. The united voice is the voice that is always heard. Let's shout for ourselves and each other.

Thank you.

Jack Thorne
President



WGGB President Jack Thorne joined our Writers' Bloc on the Together Alliance march against the far right in the spring and a delegation to Parliament last year

Treasurer's report

It's been a challenging year for writers, having to deal with a changing professional environment, with people leaving the industry and money being squeezed. But we're all still here, and together we'll get through it.

I want to assure you that the staff and Finance Committee are being careful with your money. We make sure that all WGGB funds are used for core functions and for the benefit of members.

We had expected to run at a deficit, which is why the AGM voted to raise the subscription rate at our last AGM in 2025. That rise didn't come into effect until 1 December 2025, and it's based on members' annual renewal dates. Since everyone's renewal date is different, we won't see the full effect of the rise until 30 November 2026, when every member will be on the new rate.

In the meantime, we have been able to draw on our reserves but, as Mr Micawber would tell us, that's not a long-term strategy.

In addition to our subscription money, the WGGB earns interest from our bank accounts. We've also had income from much appreciated bequests from members.

To further cut expenses wherever we can, the majority of WGGB meetings are on Zoom, saving on travel expenses and members' time. The Writers' Guild has this year been granted funds for member training purposes from ALCS, for which much thanks. Our members are getting more benefits from their membership than ever.

The General Fund, the amount WGGB has in its main bank account for paying wages, rent, legal and committee costs, events and other expenses, saw a balance carried forward at the end of the 2025 WGGB financial year of £596,544.



Our Welfare Fund remains ringfenced for members who need help during these trying times. In 2025, the Welfare Committee awarded £6,505 in soft loans and £3,985 in grants. Please remember that our Welfare Fund is always confidential, and there for members who suffer urgent financial difficulties. Please check for details on the WGGB website.

All of this work is made possible thanks to the dedication of the Finance Committee, who take time away from their writing to keep an eagle eye on members' money. We are all volunteers. All our meetings are on Zoom, so we even provide our own tea. I want to thank Emma Reeves, William Gallagher, Katharine Way, Lisa Holdsworth, John Wilsher, Richard Pinner, Rupert Creed and Antony Pickthall for their good judgement and good humour.

The best way that you can help your union is to recruit more writers to join. You'd be doing them, as well as the WGGB, a big favour.

Gail Renard
Treasurer

Equality and Diversity Committee report



Miranda Walker (left) and Tom Wentworth (right), Co-Chairs

The Equality and Diversity Committee is now co-chaired by Miranda Walker and Tom Wentworth, and the committee has recently re-formed. We held a discussion about members' passions and what we hope to achieve in the next year. We have much to do! If you'd like to get involved, please drop a line to ED@writersguild.org.uk We are currently dropping in on Craft and Regional Committees to introduce ourselves and the support we can offer.

Future campaigns under discussion include joining with the TV Committee to mark the 10th anniversary of WGGB's Equality Writes campaign, alongside collaboration on a potential children's TV campaign. The latter would see our committee broadening its focus in calling for equality for audiences, as well as diverse and under-represented writers. We plan to campaign for accessible networking events with the launch of our accessible networking guidelines (currently being finalised). We also intend to do some work on the dire state of Access to Work, including signposting members to support.

Our packed programme of Member Networks ran for a second year with good take-up, and will resume for a third year after an upcoming review of the structure and aims.

Committee member Bec Boey is now our Champion for TUC equality conferences. Happily, we had interest expressed for all the TUC equality conferences this year, apart from the Young Workers' Conference. We also have a new policy on the selection of delegates – following a motion at last year's AGM.

We will review the list of mental health resources for members currently on the WGGB website to see if we can add to or help curate them, and a sub-committee is compiling a glossary of terms specifically around writers and access in all its forms.

Miranda Walker and Tom Wentworth Co-Chairs



Bec Boey is now the Equality and Diversity Committee's Champion for TUC equality conferences (she is pictured above at the 2025 TUC Black Workers' Conference). WGGB delegates attended other TUC equality conferences, including WGGB Deputy Chair Katharine Way and South West Rep Sarah Swords (pictured at TUC Women's Conference 2026)

Craft committee reports



Nicola Baldwin (left) and Lucy Gough (right), Audio Co-Chairs

AUDIO

Co-Chairs Nicola Baldwin and Lucy Gough were re-elected by WGGB members for a second three-year term in September 2025. Since then, the Audio Committee has met quarterly. As before we have used informal sub-committees between meetings to develop specific initiatives. Co-Chairs also met frequently on Zoom to discuss members' priorities.

We have continued dividing meetings between BBC, and non-broadcast audio drama, supporting all writers working in original drama, dramatisation, comedy and adaptations who work in audio. In 2024-2025 our Save Audio Drama at the BBC campaign to preserve the longform BBC audio drama slot resulted in an emphasis on BBC audio; this year we have turned our attention to focus on non-broadcast audio.

Regarding non-broadcast audio, we have begun work towards establishing WGGB industry guidelines for non-broadcast scripted audio drama, following a survey we carried out last year. We have been talking to audio writers about their working conditions, opportunities and rates of pay in the sector. We look forward to two new members joining our committee with non-broadcast experience and further conversations with many writers in this area. We hope to complete best-practice guidelines (including suggested minimum rates) for non-broadcast writers later in 2026. Our aspiration is that by the time of next year's annual report, we will hear less of the term 'Wild West' bandied about in relation to the flourishing sector of non-broadcast audio drama.

Regarding BBC audio drama, our committee has been active in the BBC Audio Forum, where we secured a 2.3% increase on minimum fees for writers commissioned under the WGGB BBC radio drama agreement. The original drama rate per minute rises to £69.33 for one transmission (established) and £45.98 (beginners). *The Archers* rate rises to £1,159.

There are also increases to minimum fees for short stories, abridgements and podcast drama, plus new attendance rates, and the rates are effective from 18 December 2025.

In 2026 our focus has also been on the BBC Charter renewal, and we have participated in meetings on WGGB's response to the Government green paper and consultation on the future of the BBC. We also attended the BBC Audio Drama Awards in March 2026 where we presented the Tinniswood Award once again, which this year went to the late Oliver Emanuel for *One Hundred and Fifty Days*.

This year we welcomed Niharika Pore as the new WGGB Assistant Organiser responsible for liaison with the WGGB Craft Committees and the Audio Co-Chairs have also met with WGGB Theatre and WGGB Comedy Chairs. We recognise the value of inter-committee initiatives, which reflect the reality that most writers work across genres in 2026. We remain grateful for the ideas and enthusiasm of our committee members, plus the support of WGGB Organisers Eleanor Dawson and Kate Glasspool and all WGGB staff.

We have been planning online and in-person events for members and non-members, to include craft events on audio writing tied to specific new broadcasts and releases; panel discussions with writers on navigating the industry; and in-person networking. We want to showcase audio drama and

offer advice to writers navigating the sector for the first time. We have been mindful of recruitment, particularly of non-broadcast writers. We were as ever grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication of our committee in joining discussions, encouraging student and new writers, and participating in new initiatives.

As ever, we were glad to share the role as Co-Chairs.

**Nicola Baldwin and Lucy Gough
Co-Chairs**



We presented the Tinniswood Award for best audio script at the BBC Audio Drama Awards once again this year. The winning entry was *One Hundred and Fifty Days* by the late Oliver Emanuel (pictured left) and the award was collected by Oliver's life partner Victoria Beesley (pictured above) at the ceremony in March 2026

Photo of Oliver Emanuel (bottom left): Steve Beesley; other photos: Tricia Yourkevich

Craft committee reports

BOOKS

I was elected as Books Chair in the autumn of 2025, and obviously, there's a lot that needs to be fixed about the publishing industry, especially in this National Year of Reading that the National Literacy Trust has organised. In terms of where my focus will be in the coming months, I've been thinking a lot about these three issues:

1. A big consideration for authors is the use of AI. In February 2026, literary agents issued a statement saying they've noticed authors are using AI in their submissions and it's noticeable. Books have been scraped from torrent sites to train certain LLMs like Anthropic, OpenAI and Meta. Translators have voiced their concern that publishers in France are using AI to translate books. AI is currently the Wild West in publishing. People are using it without admitting, paying for licensing or copyright and ultimately training LLMs to push writers out of jobs.
2. I and a bunch of colleagues have recently noted that various diversity initiatives have been rolled back recently. In the last year, The Good Literary Agency, Knights Of and other organisations that specialised in diversifying publishing have had to close, citing market forces, publishing not investing in people from minoritised backgrounds and a significant dip in sales/interest. This is worrying given all the hard work writers and others in the industry have done, in addition to writing, at a great cost to their careers/selves, to push diversity and inclusion to the top of the agenda. We risk re-entering a monocultural period in publishing.
3. And obviously money. The dirty reality about money. It's an evergreen topic: writers don't earn enough money. Advances are still down. The top 10 biggest earners in publishing still earn around 90% of all the money in publishing. How do we make writing a career that benefits and pays writers? Looking at the scheme Ireland has introduced to pay a basic living wage to artists, we need to think about freelance/portfolio writers who overwork themselves earning rather than writing.



Photo:
Fabrice
Bourgelle

Going forward, I need to put together a Books Committee to talk about these and other important issues. So, if you're a member, a book worker and want to join, give me a shout, I would love to hear from you (you can email me at books@writersguild.org.uk). Then, we can start talking about the issues: AI, money, diversity and inclusion. I've been liaising with the Theatre and Audio Chairs around AI and look forward to continuing this conversation across the entire Guild.

I'm very passionate about solidarity movements and unionising. I co-founded the Jhalak Prize (celebrating writers of colour in the UK and Ireland) and The Good Literary Agency, which came about to create more opportunities for marginalised writers to break through and to shift the industry's shortcomings on diverse publishing. I have also worked with Fossil Free Books, where workers are organising for a books industry free from fossil fuels and fossil fuel finance.

The workers united can never be defeated.

Nikesh Shukla
Chair



Authors' work is being used on an industrial scale, without permission or payment, to train AI. WGGB continues to campaign on this issue, and it is one of three priority areas for the Books Committee this coming year

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Craft committee reports

COMEDY

Having recently taken on the position as Chair and formed the new committee in the last quarter of 2025, we have found there to be many industry issues our comedy members are concerned about, but equal amounts of energy committed to positive change.

Broadcast opportunities appear to have stagnated and whilst certain commitments to double spending on slots by 2027/28 (for example, in the devolved nations, by the BBC) would include comedy, major indies reported a fall in commissions and revenues, and comedy writers have felt the impact of the general downturn. Furthermore, there seems to have been little improvement to the oft cited 2018 statistic (from independent research commissioned by WGGB) that only 11% of comedies written for TV were by women. We have some research projects proposed to investigate representation within comedy, including class, gender and diversity more broadly, to make such striking inequalities better known.

The lack of traditional routes to broadcast in TV and radio has seen more writers move to digital platforms and we have begun collaborative discussions with the other Craft Committees to make sure comedy writers are at the table when new rate cards are being drafted, particularly in the digital arena, so our members have a firm and fair basis for negotiations. Other items on our agenda include working with production companies to find new and



innovative – but paid! – ways to give a professional credit that will help new writers break through.

At the time of writing, we are discussing plans for a WGGB presence at the BBC Comedy Festival in Liverpool and hopefully at other similar events, where we plan to: recruit new members, talk to producers and commissioners, and arrange some jolly networking and social events. It's been a difficult few years and the horizon isn't exactly sunny yet. In this age of digital (dis) connection, we've heard that our members crave IRL events to build community, brainstorm constructive approaches, pitch and above all have a laugh! Despite the anxiety, there remains a good-humoured spirit to push us all forward and I say here's to that!

Frog Stone
Chair

There is an appetite amongst members for in-person events, and the Comedy Committee has plans in the coming year. Previous WGGB in-person comedy events have included a joint panel discussion at the Women in Comedy Festival on 'How to get that comedy break'



Craft committee reports



Tosin Otudeko (left) and Gary Thomas (right), Film Co-Chairs

FILM

Recalling the words from our new President, Jack Thorne, at the last AGM, it was clear during our handover with previous Film Chair Tom Williams that we would be bracing ourselves as a committee and industry as a whole for ‘the fight of our lives’.

This did not only present a mild amount of trepidation, but also unnerving excitement at the prospect of being involved with such an active and progressive union, to help shoulder the various causes that will see us continue to represent and advocate for the rights and conditions of writers in the UK.

The AI technological revolution that once loomed has now firmly and unabashedly established its presence as one of the many threats to our sector – and, one could argue, the main threat.

Notwithstanding, the Film Committee continued its active engagement with the industry – spearheading key events in the last year (and ensuring that, if anything, we continue to win with our words and will!).

Our Greenwriting symposium in London in April 2025 brought together a team of panel experts: Zsofia Szemeredy (sustainability consultant), Paul Goodenough (founder and CEO for Rewriting Earth), Catherine Ellis (Head of Climate Content for Bafta albert), Elham Ehsas (Bafta-nominated filmmaker) and Sam Perry (writer and actor) in a session facilitated by former Film Chair Tom Williams on the process, impact and outcomes of climate storytelling.

A live agenda item on the Film Committee for many years, it was good to see these talks culminate in a valuable discussion that developed into actionable next steps. These include steps towards a Greenrider Writer’s ‘Handshake’, a climate storytelling roundtable and a future workshop.

The symposium was followed by a session organised for our members with Hayley McKenzie, founder of Script Angel, who took those in attendance through the development/feedback process gathered from her decades of experience helping writers through a coaching strategy that helps them build confidence and take their script to the next level. This is something we seek to champion, particularly as time between green-lit projects means that writers are having to be proactive in seeking development opportunities and putting their best foot forward with their spec scripts.

In June 2025 we also held our ‘Spinning plates’ event in London, which was the perfect platform to celebrate and send off three long-standing Film Committee members, who had all previously served as Committee Chairs. The WGGB and Garden Cinema fundraiser event and Q&A, hosted Olivia Hetreed (*Girl with a Pearl Earring*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Mrs Harris Goes to Paris*), Line Langebek (*The Girl with the Needle*, *I’ll Come Running*) and Andrea Gibb (*Swallows and Amazons*, *Miss Austen*, *Elizabeth is Missing*). It was a rare and inspiring opportunity to hear more about their writing journeys, their award-winning films and TV shows and the undeniable impact they have made in their careers and at the Writers’ Guild.

For the third year running, the WGGB sponsored the London Film Festival’s, ‘Fade in – Emerging writers in

Craft committee reports

conversation' panel event in October 2025, another chance to support the fantastic initiative by the BFI in their hugely popular item on the festival's calendar. The six writers were Rachelle Atalla, Maryam Hamidi, Zia Holloway, Noel McCann, Jenny Takahashi Stark and Chris Urch. They represented a broad range from diverse fields, with their unique perspectives and paths, in an engaging session that was informative and inspiring. The panel was swiftly followed by a networking event with the Film Committee Chairs (old and new) and current and prospective members. It was an evening of lively conversation, meeting and reconnecting with writers and a chance to re-enforce the benefits of being part of the WGGB.

At the beginning of the year, we invited BBC Writers' Head of New Writing, Jessica Loveland, to meet with the Film Committee and understand how BBC Writers works with and discovers new writers, as well as developments in the organisation in response to the industry. Garnering insights

into BBC Writers' multi-route entry points, from early career to spec script and pilots, it was an opportunity for members of the committee to ask questions on subjects such as diversity markers, the BBC's stance on AI and to further engage with one of the leading commissioners of new writing in the UK.

We are excited to continue with these initiatives, particularly through our newly formed sub-committees on re-envisioning the Writers' Guild Awards, updating our publications (short film and writing film guides), uncovering writer-producer insights and the development of a writer's Greenrider.

Amidst our evolving landscape, the opportunities to ensure film writers are adequately recognised and supported are still very much for the taking.

And that's a battle worth fighting for.

Tosin Otudeko and Gary Thomas
Co-Chairs



WGGB sponsored the BFI London Film Festival's 'Fade In – Emerging writers in conversation' panel event once again. Other events included the 'Spinning plates' Q&A fundraiser at the Garden Cinema in London, which hosted former Film Committee Chairs Andrea Gibb, Olivia Hetreed and Line Langebek, pictured above with current Film Co-Chair Tosin Otudeko and former Film Chair Tom Williams

LFF Photo: Tosin Otudeko

Craft committee reports

TELEVISION

It was an honour to be elected the TV Chair at the AGM in September, and I would like to thank my predecessor, Sukey Venables Fisher, for her sterling service. I hope to continue the work she had set in motion. I'm pleased to say that Sukey remains on the committee along with other experienced committee members and some very welcome fresh faces.

At our first meeting we set out some priorities for the coming year. The dominating concern is the current contraction of the TV industry. It is important to acknowledge what a tough time for TV writers, both established and emerging, the last few years have been.

The Film & TV Charity's second Money Matters survey was a bleak read with some startling headline statistics. They discovered that 46% of freelancers working in TV and film are struggling financially, with 74% considering leaving the industry altogether. It is heartbreaking to hear that 43% have already taken steps to do so by retraining or applying for jobs outside the industry. That is up from 32% in 2023. The WGGB continues to campaign for better safeguards for freelance workers, which would go a long way to alleviating the stress and uncertainty of the current situation.

A pressing matter for the near future will be the BBC's Charter renewal. This is an opportunity for writers to make their voices heard and to secure opportunities in the industry for the future. It was encouraging to see so many people attend our town-hall style meetings to discuss what the WGGB's positions should be on the initial Government consultation. It's clear that the BBC is still valued and valuable and there is a commitment to protecting it from those seeking to dismantle it. However, the consultation does offer an opportunity to voice our concerns about the erosion of work for UK writers in children's TV and continuing drama.

Children's television is something that continues to be a concern for the TV Committee, with homegrown productions becoming rare. The scrapping of the Young Audiences Content Fund



by the previous Government also dealt a blow to that sector. It is clear that the 'twens' audience, aged 9 to 14, has been particularly affected, with little content now being aimed at them. And with increasing concerns about the effects of social media and online content on that age group, it is important that they are provided with suitable programming.

The TV Committee plans to campaign on this matter when the initial part of the Charter renewal consultation is completed. We would like to see the return of quotas for children's and youth programming and the re-establishment of the Young Audiences Content Fund.

We continue to monitor the decreasing opportunities on the soaps and continuing dramas. Last year saw a WGGB campaign to Save River City, following the announcement that the show would close. We worked with the BBC to mitigate the impact on writers, and the broadcaster has now launched a development programme aimed at affected writers, with future opportunities on a Scottish returning drama. We also supported members affected by cuts to *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street*. It has been another year of shrinkage in the sector, with fewer episodes meaning fewer opportunities. We continue to be concerned about the effect this also has on the working conditions of soap writers and are monitoring the situation whilst raising it with both the BBC and ITV.

It's hard to believe but it has now been eight years since the WGGB Equality Writes campaign, following an independent report we commissioned into the representation of female

Craft committee reports

writers in TV and film. At the time the report was released, all the broadcasters made promises that they would do better. It is clear that the initial flurry of schemes and competitions was little more than a public relations exercise. In the run up to the 10th anniversary of the report, the TV Committee will be assessing the current situation and asking commissioners to explain their broken promises.

Promises were also made to global majority writers in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement's resurgence in 2020 and the TV Committee will put those under scrutiny, as well as making sure access riders for disabled writers are honoured.

The TV Committee is also looking into emerging opportunities for writers online. Vertical drama is becoming increasingly prevalent, and it will be important to establish minimum terms and conditions for this new platform.

And we continue our negotiations with broadcasters too. This past year WGGB negotiated a 2.3% rise on minimum fees for BBC TV writers and a 2% rise for ITV writers. Writers Digital Payments – the scheme set up by WGGB and the PMA – has now paid out over £14 million to writers whose work has been shown on BBC iPlayer and ITVX, since it launched over 10 years ago.

It is most certainly a time of change and uncertainty for TV writers, but I believe that WGGB continues to be a force for good and the TV Committee continues to play a key role.

Lisa Holdsworth
Chair

Craft committee reports



Cuts to continuing drama (and children's programming) are priorities for the Television Committee. WGGB ran a campaign to Save River City last year and also supported writers affected by cuts to *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street*

Photos: (top) Shutterstock.com/Craig Russell; (middle) Shutterstock.com/James Copeland; (bottom) BBC

Craft committee reports



Photo:
Mathushaa
Sagthidas



Photo:
Jennie
Scott

Sonali Bhattacharyya (left) and Morgan Lloyd Malcolm (right), Theatre Co-Chairs

THEATRE

It's a tough time to be a playwright in the UK. Research by the National Theatre's new work department shows a 70% decline in theatres receiving open-to-all submissions throughout the year between 2014 and 2024. A 76% decline in new writing festivals, 44% in playwriting courses, as well as a 44% decline in new work on stages outside London and 30% in the capital. We know our members are struggling.

And yet, the ACE-supported report by playwrights David Edgar and Dan Rebellato (David, a hardworking member of our Theatre Committee), *British Theatre Before & After Covid*, published in November 2025, as we took over from Richard Pinner as Co-Chairs of the Committee, offered a more complex picture. The report found that new plays declined in terms of numbers of productions between 2019 and 2023, but those plays that did get produced had longer runs and made more at the box office. So, what we're seeing is arguably a mismatch between the commitment of theatres and venues to programming new work, and the appetite of audiences for engaging with it. We agree with National Theatre Artistic Director Indhu Rubasingham that "Playing safe will be the end of us. If we are conservative in style, in content, in process, we might balance the books today but we will kill the future of theatre."

This is the context for the Theatre Committee's agreed priorities for the next 12 months:

- Protecting and improving the situation for new writing.
- Campaigning for greater transparency from theatres regarding new writing opportunities and commissioning.
- Supporting WGGB's campaigning on AI.
- Defending writers' freedom of expression, particularly with regard to our right to critique Government policy.
- Recruitment of new members.

The declining support for new writing is of course impacting minoritised voices the hardest, so we are committed to incorporating strategies for greater inclusion and equality in all of our work on the committee.

NEW CO-CHAIRS

We're pleased to say that all existing Theatre Committee members have opted to remain, and we've also been joined by three new Full Members, meaning the committee is now full. We'd like to thank Richard Pinner, the outgoing Chair, for all his hard work and dedication to the committee over the years, and for being so supportive and welcoming to us as new members to the committee and now as Co-Chairs. We're really pleased he has chosen to remain on the Theatre Committee with us.

Craft committee reports

NEGOTIATIONS

We joined David Edgar and Poppy Corbett, who sit on the Theatre Committee, plus additional negotiators Tamsin Oglesby and Nick Dear, for the latest meeting with the Royal Court, Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre for negotiations on updating WGGB's TNC agreement for writers. These are progressing well. Discussions include new best practice guidelines for a 'play plan' section to support writers with the development of their plays, which we are proposing for the new agreement. We have established a working group to develop these guidelines and hope this will be a useful resource for the committee with our ongoing priority of promoting and resourcing new writing in UK theatre.

In the past year, WGGB theatre negotiators secured a 3.25% rise on minimum fees for playwrights working under our TNC agreement, a 3% rise on minimum fees for writers under our UK Theatre agreement, and a 24% rise on minimum fees for playwrights under our ITC agreement. The team also negotiated a major update to the ITC agreement, which includes new digital rights for playwrights.

OLWEN WYMARK AWARDS

Richard Pinner represented the Theatre Committee at the Olwyn Wymark Theatre Encouragement Awards lunch in London in November 2025, with attendees nominated by WGGB members for going above and beyond in offering encouragement of their work. This year's winners included Kelly Jones, a valued member of the Theatre Committee. We have agreed to review the entry criteria for these beloved awards this year and will be announcing nominations in the spring of 2026.

EVENTS

We have been discussing an online workshop/meeting for members about practical steps we can take to defend our work against AI and are hoping to organise this jointly with other Craft Committees. Eleanor Dawson from the staff team has suggested formats for this meeting. We've agreed the best timing for this will be after the outcome of the current Government review on copyright and AI is known in early spring.

NEW PLAY COMMISSION SCHEME (NPCS)

WGGB's response to the decline in new plays following the pandemic launched in 2022 with 18 new commissions, five of which have come to the stage and been on tour since then. In November 2025, WGGB supported the new Jerwood Royal Court Commissioning Scheme, which was inspired by the NPCS.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

We spoke at the Front & Centre festival, celebrating the work of women and gender expansive playwrights in Northern Ireland in March 2026, and have been speaking with the organiser, Karis Kelly, about how the committee can support writers in Northern Ireland. Committee members are working closely with the Midlands Committee on plans for a conference in the region this summer, led by stakeholder theatres and companies who've played such a big part in establishing the Midlands New Writing Initiative.

We'd like to thank our current committee members for their dedication and commitment.

**Sonali Bhattacharyya and
Morgan Lloyd Malcolm
Co-Chairs**



Five plays from our landmark New Play Commission Scheme have now been performed in theatres or on tour. This year we were also delighted to celebrate our Olwen Wymark Theatre Encouragement Awards once again (top)

Top photo: Kate Glasspool

Craft committee reports



Ben Sabin (left) and Florencia Minuzzi (right), Co-Chairs

VIDEOGAMES

Without meaning to sound like a broken record, the videogames industry is in trouble. Though not suffering the same amount of mass layoffs as 2024, in which around 15,000 employees lost their jobs worldwide, the numbers are still not looking good. Jobs remain scarce, and those that are available require applicants to relocate for insecure office-based roles. Given that job security is at an all-time low, many question the viability of uprooting their lives, and the lives of their families, to accept such positions. Those that are still employed express concern over their roles, with the anecdote of the Sword of Damocles being ever applicable.

Given this, there's another, more long-term issue that few in positions of power appear to be taking seriously: the lack of entry-level roles and training of the next generation. With a wealth of seniors now available in the job pool, many of whom having no choice but to accept mid-level roles at significant pay cuts, it's little wonder why those hiring put fewer and fewer low-level roles out, but this is a major issue, the effects of which we won't truly feel for the next five to 10 years.

The games industry is still relatively young when compared to film and TV, and as such, its 'veteran' members usually only have 10 or so years under their belt. Poor pay, intense working hours, and unsafe working environments for marginalised employees often cause high rates of burnout and

churn within the industry, even before Covid and the recent years of layoffs. Given this, inducting new talent and retaining existing talent was always tough, but the roles were there. Now, with that pipeline shutting off, it's hard to see how the industry will be able to sustain itself in the upcoming years.

So why has this happened? Most will talk about over-hiring during Covid, when games had an especially profitable boom; but this is only half the story. Over-inflated budgets, poor management decisions, mismanagement of existing funds, predatory business practices, and a disconnection between the top levels of studios and their audience all play a role in explaining why the standard employee now finds themselves in such precarious times. The next, and most obvious cause, is the rise of Artificial Intelligence. Funding in the industry all but dried up in 2022 and 2023, with the public release of Large Language Models, as venture capitalists and other channels of capital went to inflate the ever-expanding AI bubble. As with other industries, those at the top saw AI as the miracle they'd always wanted: the ability to make a product without the need to pay humans or provide them with benefits.

Now, as almost every developer will tell you, you cannot make a game with AI, at least not in the way non-developers envision. But when has that stopped a leadership team from 'realigning' their businesses and 'making their teams more agile'? The sad reality is that the games industry is suffering from a massive, self-made brain drain, and by the time a course correction occurs, it'll likely set us back years as we relearn the lessons lost in this short period of time.

Craft committee reports

However, not all is doom and gloom. Some within the industry recognise these issues and believe the mismanagements of the past should not be repeated. The Chinese Room was recently able to pull themselves out of their Sumo Group ownership, allowing them control over their business for the first time in years, and other well-known studios are following their lead. Couple that with the explosion in micro studios, headed by veteran developers affected by the layoffs, and the landscape appears ripe to see a second 'Indieapocalypse', akin to the one which surged out of last decade's uncertainty. There were already several big indie hits in 2025, including such titles as *PEAK*, *Blue Prince* and *Wanderstop*.

In conclusion, it's a worrying time for many, and the WGGB is busy helping those narrative folk caught up in layoffs and acquisitions, but there's always more to do. That said, we'll likely see many innovative games coming out of these smaller studios, the ideas and mechanics no longer being shackled and stifled by mega studios whose focus is on mass marketability, rather than experimenting and pushing the bounds of the art form.

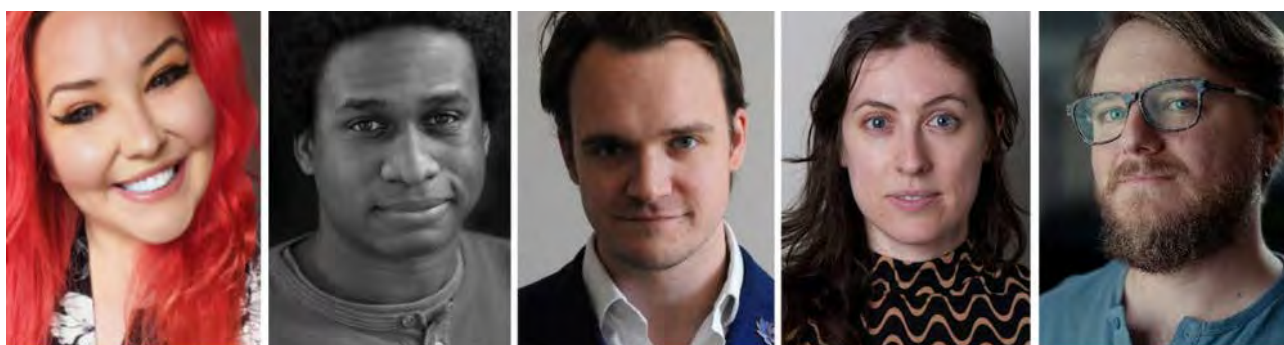
Though it's extremely unlikely that we'll ever go back to the numbers of hires we had in Covid times, the levels will steady, especially once the AI hype dies down, which appears to be happening

already: companies are starting to admit that using AI has not saved them money nor made them more efficient, while consumer sentiment remains mostly negative when it comes to AI use in products.

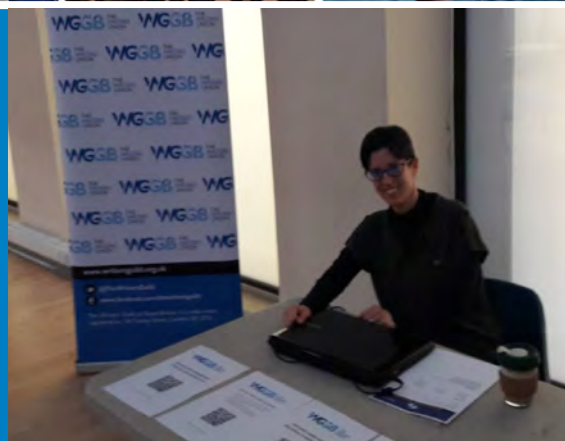
On another positive note, the WGGB Videogames Committee has been busy this year and we organised a couple of successful and well-attended events. In October 2025, we hosted 'Shaping your game narrative', sponsored by articy:draft X, a free set of online lightning talks featuring Kim MacAskill, Will Aryitey, George Lockett, Rose Behar and WGGB Games Co-Chair Ben Sabin. Earlier in the year, in May 2025, we hosted an in-person panel event in London, again sponsored by articy:draft X. The subject was 'Working as a games writer', and you can find videos of both events on the WGGB YouTube channel. And in January 2026, WGGB Videogames Co-Chair Florencia Minuzzi hosted a stall at the Global Game Jam event at Goldsmiths University in London.

The Videogames Committee also issued a statement on the censorship of videogames content, reflecting our increasing concerns about this issue. The statement is part of the wider WGGB 'Standing up to censorship' campaign. You can read it in full via the 'Get involved' section of the WGGB website.

**Ben Sabin and Florencia Minuzzi
Co-Chairs**



Despite another difficult year for the sector, the WGGB Videogames Committee has organised a series of events. Co-Chair Florencia Minuzzi hosted a WGGB stall at the Global Game Jam in London in January 2026 (right), while Co-Chair Ben Sabin featured on a panel event organised by the committee on 'Shaping your game narrative' (top)



National reports

CYMRU/WALES

Once again it has been a very busy year for WGGB in Wales. Manon Eames stepped down as Chair in September 2025, and the Wales Committee wishes to express its gratitude to Manon for her years of outstanding service.

Throughout the year we have continued to negotiate terms for writers in Wales and have represented and supported members on their contracts and with issues raised through the excellent WGGB casework team.

Our relationship with other creative unions in Wales remains strong and fruitful, and we have regularly attended meetings with CULT Cymru and BEAU Cymru (Broadcasting, Entertainment and Arts Unions). At the end of December 2025, the first Creative Industries Social Partnership meeting was held with Welsh Government, with the intention of getting the Social Partnership up and running after many months of laying the groundwork.

CULT Cymru have funded a WGGB Union Learning Rep in Wales again for this year. We have run two successful Final Draft courses, as well as a pitch writing course through this scheme. We also co-hosted an event under the CULT Cymru banner in February 2026 as part of HeartUnions Week.

A new TAC agreement, including new terms for linguistic adaptation and new Video on Demand rates, has been finalised between WGGB, S4C and TAC, and we have continued to hold regular

meetings with the Arts Council of Wales and *Pobol y Cwm*.

A very successful face-to-face event was held at the Sherman Theatre in June 2025, with many members in attendance. We also opened the event to non-members as a recruitment drive. In August 2025 we had a presence at the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham, including coverage in the media and on social media of the benefit of WGGB membership.

As I write, with Senedd elections approaching in May 2026, the next year is a crucial one for the funding of the arts in Wales, and we are working hard to ensure that the arts are kept at the forefront of discussions leading up to, and following, the outcome of the election – whatever that may be.

We are also working to strengthen ties between WGGB Craft Committees and the Wales Committee, and I wish to thank the Chairs of those committees with which we have been in touch so far for their support.

The Wales Committee holds a monthly Zoom meeting, open to all members in Wales, so to those who may not yet have attended a meeting, you are more than welcome to join us: keep an eye out for the monthly e-mail invitation.

Diolch yn fawr iawn to members who have informed the Wales Committee of issues and, as always, to the WGGB Officers for their continued support of members in Wales.

Diolch

Angharad Devonald
Cadeirydd/Chair



National reports



The Wales Committee has had a busy year on the events front, including a presence at the Eisteddfod in Wrexham, organising an in-person panel event at the Sherman Theatre (pictured above) and co-hosting an event themed around AI, under the CULT Cymru banner for HeartUnions Week (left)

Top photo: Shutterstock.com/BillyStock

National reports

NORTHERN IRELAND

WOMEN OF THE NORTH AND FRONT & CENTRE: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PLAYWRITING FESTIVAL

Local WGGB members have been active in highlighting issues affecting women writers in the local theatre industry; organising symposiums in Belfast and Derry to that effect. The Northern Ireland Chair PJ Hart was present at Women of the North, while WGGB Theatre Co-Chairs Sonali Bhattacharyya and Morgan Lloyd Malcolm attended Front & Centre: International Women's Day Playwriting Festival in March 2026 remotely.

BELFAST MEDIA FESTIVAL

The Northern Ireland Chair was again present at the Belfast Media Festival, meeting existing and prospective members and liaising with colleagues from other unions.



CASEWORK

The Northern Ireland Chair and the WGGB casework team continued to support local members with a variety of issues.

PJ Hart
Chair



Northern Ireland Rep PJ Hart returned to the Belfast Media Festival once again this year

National reports

SCOTLAND

Since becoming Scottish Rep in September of last year, we attended the State of the Nation event at the Citizens Theatre in October. Hosted by Mull Theatre, it brought together stakeholders from across the creative industries in an enlightening conversation about funding and the future of the arts in Scotland.

We hosted two events in Glasgow. Our Christmas social brought together new and established writers from all disciplines for some much-needed festive fun.

While the axing of *River City* has dealt a hammer blow to the Scottish writing community, we sponsored an event at the Partick Film Festival in January 2026 on 'How to avoid the mid-career abyss – a writer's guide'. It was well-attended (with a wait-list, no less!)



and more events designed to help writers negotiate the challenging current climate are planned for 2026. These include a surgery open day where members can drop in and ask questions on a plethora of topics, from contracts and residuals to advice on working conditions.

Kim Millar
Chair



The WGGB Scotland Committee sponsored an event at the Partick Film Festival in Glasgow in January 2026 on 'How to avoid the mid-career abyss' as a writer. It featured WGGB Scotland Rep Kim Millar, Former Film Chair Andrea Gibb, WGGB member Maryam Hamidi and Producer Kathleen Isaac

Regional and branch reports

EAST ANGLIA

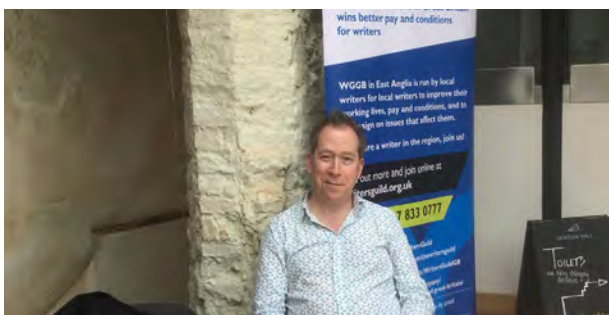
This year in East Anglia we've been continuing to run our Imperfect Storms writer scratch shows at Norwich Theatre Royal twice a year, and we've widened submissions to all East Anglian writers, which has encouragingly led to new memberships as a result.

We've held further meet-ups at Norwich Playhouse, and we also encouraged members to get together at the monthly writers' socials at the National Centre for Writing (NCW). We've continued to have a presence at the NCW publishing fairs, and in February 2026 I went to the HighTide Rising event at the New Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich, where I spent a day talking to other attendees about the WGGB and what we can offer.



If there are any regional members who need support or have ideas for events we should be running, then – as ever – feel free to contact me at ea@writersguild.org.uk

Stephen Keyworth
Chair



WGGB East Anglia Rep Steve Keyworth (above) continued the Branch's presence at the National Centre for Writing Publishing Fair, while the Imperfect Storms scratch shows in Norwich have now been extended to non-members too

EAST MIDLANDS

The Chair of this committee is currently vacant. Anyone who is interested in leading WGGB's work in the area (or indeed would like to make a contribution to the committee) should email admin@writersguild.org.uk and put 'East Midlands Chair' vacancy in the subject field.

Regional and branch reports

LONDON

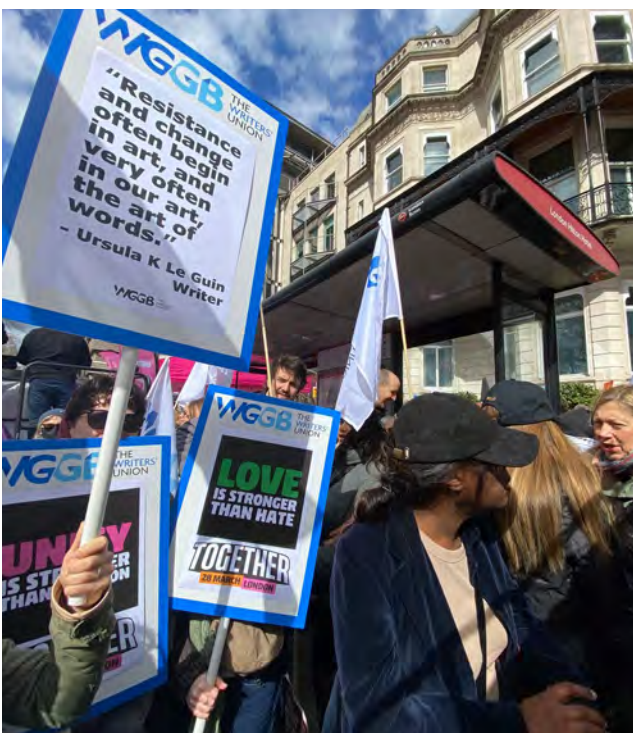
It has been a quieter year for the London region while I have been completing my PhD alongside other professional commitments. I am grateful to members for their patience during this period and keen to rebuild momentum over the coming months. One opportunity for members (which will have happened by the time you read this report) is the Together Alliance march against the far right on 28 March 2026, which WGGB has supported, alongside many other unions.

Looking ahead, at the time of writing I am planning a simple London writers' spring social evening on Wednesday 8 April, with the aim of reconnecting with existing members, welcoming new writers and re-energising our regional activity.



If you are based in London and would like to share ideas, raise concerns, or get involved in shaping regional plans for the year ahead, please do get in touch at london@writersguild.org.uk – I would be very glad to hear from you

Jamie Rhodes
Chair



TOGETHER
28 MARCH LONDON

London members took part in the Together Alliance march against the far right in March 2026, alongside a spring social

Regional and branch reports

NORTH EAST

Our region is very spread out, and arts funding can be inconsistent, with a tendency to focus on events that bring tourism into the cities. As a result, development for new writers can be challenging and focused on heritage or third sector organisations. Connecting with local writers and hearing their stories and how the WGGB can be involved is therefore a priority – to help inform events and opportunities to network, to hear what issues are affecting them and formulate and feed into campaigns at a national level. And the WGGB casework team in Head Office in London is always there to help support with writers' contracts and provide advice.



If you're a writer in the North East, I'd love to hear from you. In the first instance, drop a line to WGGB Assistant Organiser Joe Abel: joe@writersguild.org.uk

David Napthine
Chair



Durham is just one area covered by the WGGB North East region

Photo: Shutterstock.com/NicolaPulham

Regional and branch reports

NORTH WEST (MANCHESTER AND LANCASHIRE)

Over the past year, activity in the region has focused on strengthening connections between writers, broadening access beyond London, and ensuring members are informed and supported in an increasingly complex political landscape.

Earlier this year, I hosted a WGGB meet-up alongside HER Productions – a women-led theatre company that produces VIGNETTES, a series of short plays by female writers. The event was hosted at Hope Mill Theatre with brand-new-to-the-Guild writers and other long-standing members who shared their knowledge and experience of the industry and the union.

We are continuing to prioritise opportunities for writers to meet one another and expand their networks. In July 2025, alongside the WGGB TV Committee, I hosted a WGGB Manchester writers' summer meet-up at Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre, which was open to both WGGB members and non-members from Manchester and surrounding regions. The collaboration feels significant in bringing a national committee-led event outside of London, reinforcing WGGB's commitment to regional visibility and inclusion.

Engagement with emerging writers has also been a focus. I delivered a talk at the University of Salford to final year students on the Careers & Professional Pathways module. The session explored routes into the industry, the realities of freelance life, and the importance of understanding contracts and being part of a collective movement. Students were encouraged to consider union membership as part of their professional development from the outset of their careers.



I also attended a TUC Education anti-far right/populism regional briefing for union representatives. The session included an overview of the TUC's strategy for challenging far-right populism, led by Regional Secretary Jay McKenna, followed by presentations and activities exploring how to identify far-right narratives in the workplace and how unions can respond effectively. Charlie Pullinger from the TUC Solidarity Hub facilitated practical discussions on building solidarity. The briefing was a valuable opportunity to connect broader political awareness with the day-to-day realities faced by members in unions across the UK.

In addition, I fed into the Northern Culture APPG's Northern Culture Untapped inquiry, contributing regional insight into the challenges and opportunities facing writers and cultural workers in the North.

The coming year will continue to focus on strengthening regional networks, supporting writers at all stages of their careers, and ensuring the Writers' Guild's presence remains visible and active across Greater Manchester and Lancashire. If you would like to get involved or stay updated on regional activity, please email manchester@writersguild.org.uk

afshan d'souza-lodhi
Chair

Regional and branch reports



WGGB Regional Rep afshan d'souza-Iodhi, alongside the WGGB TV Committee, hosted a summer meet-up for writers at the Manchester Royal Exchange Theatre in July 2025

Regional and branch reports

NORTH WEST (MERSEYSIDE)

It has been an honour to continue my term as the Regional Representative for the WGGB in Merseyside and speak to local writers about the issues they face. Liverpool continues to strengthen itself as a centre of TV and film production on the world stage, and so it is important that they are not forgotten.

I am stepping down at the next AGM, and if you are interested in becoming WGGB's Rep in the North West (Merseyside) region, keep an eye out for details of elections that will be coming (via email and in the WGGB member ebulletin) later in the year. You can also drop a line to Joe Abel, WGGB's



Assistant Organiser – Nations & Regions:
joe@writersguild.org.uk

Lisa Gifford
Chair



Dean M Drinkel (left) and Jonathan Morris (right), Co-Chairs

SOUTH EAST

It is our pleasure to be the WGGB Co-Chairs for the South East region – though having only been in post a couple of months, there isn't a huge amount to report.

Working closely with the WGGB Office, early discussions are, however, taking place with various screen commissions/agencies in the region, with webinars, talks and hopefully in-person events all planned to occur later in 2026 and early 2027.

With our combined experience (over 50 years – very scary!) across publishing, journalism, film,

theatre, comedy, radio, audio and graphic novels, we still feel we have lots to learn, so will be setting up a small committee where we can really delve (and even to some small possible extent solve – yes, our ambitions are that grand) into the specific challenges facing our writers where, other than London, the cost of living is the highest in the UK.

If you are interested in potentially joining us, or if you want to highlight an issue we should be looking into, then please don't hesitate to contact us at:
southeast@writersguild.org.uk

Thanks for reading.

Dean M Drinkel and Jonathan Morris
Co-Chairs

Regional and branch reports

SOUTH WEST

This is the first annual report for the South West region which incorporates Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset, Somerset and Bristol (all formerly under the Wessex banner) and Devon and Cornwall.

It is a massive area, but merging Wessex, Devon and Cornwall in March 2025 has enabled us to cast a wider net, with physical meet-ups wherever and whenever possible.

'The Writers Room' I set up in Bristol, based at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, goes from strength to strength, as does 'The Writers Block' in Frome. These initiatives encourage local writers to come in, have a coffee and a chat and I also use it as an opportunity to talk about the work of the WGGB and try to recruit new members.

WGGB Assistant Organiser Joe Abel continues to make inroads with Bristol Old Vic's Early Career Writers Programme and the five-year plan to support new writers. They announced a new cohort of five writers in January 2026.

Sadly, the WGGB panel discussion planned with Puppet Place Chair Matt Gibbs in Bristol in April 2025 had to be postponed due to the lack of suitable premises, but the plans are still in motion for it to take place this year as it's such a good opportunity for members and non-members to get together. The theme will be videogames design/writing, puppetry, animation and interactive.

I went to the TUC South West annual conference on 14-15 March 2025 as they are keen to embrace members of smaller unions. I was also elected on to their Women's Committee.

I attended The Script's the Thing Festival for the second time in Dorchester on 3 May 2025, which was a very well-attended weekend of readings of new writing and talks. At the festival, I spoke to David Byrne, Artistic Director of the Royal Court, to talk about potential WGGB projects in the region. We have kept in touch since and will be meeting again shortly to discuss plans further.

I am also meeting Ed Viney, organiser of The Script's the Thing and Dorset-based writer, to pick



his brains about organising something for writers in the region.

I have had meetings with various filmmaking and writing groups around Bath, Cheltenham and Bridport to encourage writers to join the WGGB. The Bridport Literary Festival and film festival are keen to stage an event where we can have a presence.

I met with independent producer Sarah Radclyffe about setting up one of my Writers Rooms in the Messums West art gallery/studio space, and Helen Birchenough, Chair of Arts Council South West, about various ideas. We are meeting again to discuss further. Ashley Pharoah's play *Exe Men* was a resounding success at the Northcott Exeter and he and I are actively seeking to set up another Writers Room there. Again, these will be another chance to talk to writers about the WGGB.

Bath Film Office is open to discussions for encouraging script writers into their orbit and giving us a space for a workshop.

WGGB Assistant Organiser Joe Abel and I have been discussing having monthly Zoom meetings with members in the South West to let them know what is happening in their area and advising on wider WGGB news. It seems a sensible idea and whilst progress might be slow initially, I feel it will gather pace, resulting in good networking for members in this large area.

WGGB Deputy Chair Katharine Way and I attended the TUC Women's Conference in Bournemouth in March 2026, along with delegates from the Musicians' Union and Equity. I was at the forefront of the motions, and I shall be writing a separate report on this event for the Executive Council.

Regional and branch reports

I am attending the TUC South West conference again at the end of March 2026.

In summary, there is a lot more to be done to draw writers together in this large area. I am keen to meet with various bodies/sources of funding, ie the Arts Council South West, Channel 4, BFI.

I am planning on a couple of trips to Devon and Cornwall to meet up with writers who have set up groups, for example, the 'The Writers Block' in Redruth.

I am also involved with the online Devon and Cornwall Screenwriting Group run by BBC Writers.

**Sarah Swords
Chair**



Cornwall is just one of the areas included in the WGGB South West region, which was extended last year to cover members in Wessex, too

Photo: Shutterstock.com/IanWoolcock

Regional and branch reports



Tim Stimpson (left) and David Broster (right), Co-Chairs

WEST MIDLANDS

This year saw writer, theatre-maker and academic, David Broster join longstanding rep Tim Stimpson as Co-Chair of the West Midlands Branch. David is based in Worcester and is spearheading our efforts to reach beyond the Birmingham/Black Country/Coventry conurbation to meet the needs of writers in the shire counties.

TUC MIDLANDS CREATIVE AND LEISURE INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE (CLIC)

The CLIC consists of regional representatives from WGGB, Equity, Musicians' Union and Bectu. Over the past 12 months we have been working on an updated Cultural Manifesto, which will be published shortly. The manifesto highlights the lack of funding and investment in the Midlands creative economy (both East and West). Per capita funding by organisations such as Art Council England and the BBC is amongst the lowest of anywhere in the UK. The manifesto urges those in power to lobby for our fair share of investment as a key means of driving wider economic growth. It also argues strongly for the proper payment and treatment of artists and freelancers, and the adoption of agreements such as the Memorandum of Understanding that was recently signed between the CLIC and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This commits the WMCA to abiding by union agreements when commissioning work (such as festivals) and has already been copied by other authorities around the country.

(NO LONGER BANKRUPT) BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (BCC)

The CLIC recently met with the leader of BCC, John Cotton, now that the Council has had its Section 114 notice lifted. In its effort to balance the books, the Council had cut 100% of arts funding, including to organisations that commission writers such as the Birmingham Rep. While the Council admitted funding wouldn't immediately be restored to previous levels, £1 million has been allocated to arts and culture in the new budget, as well as an additional £1 million for libraries and £800,000 for museums. The CLIC emphasised the importance of cultural investment, not just as a nice add-on, but as a key part of supporting creatives to build their careers in the city and contribute to its economic growth. BCC said they were keen to have further conversations with the CLIC, and we are looking at ways to establish a regular dialogue in a similar way that we have with the WMCA and the West Midlands Mayor, Richard Parker.

MIDLANDS NEW WRITING INITIATIVE (MNWI)

Together with former Theatre Committee Chair, Richard Pinner, we continue to work with 18 theatre companies across the Midlands (East and West) to find new and innovative ways to support the staging of new writing. Thus far, MNWI has proven to be a useful forum and an effective way of bringing companies together to focus on new writing, at a time when economic and commercial pressures make this increasingly hard. While we can't announce anything yet, we are working on ways to move beyond discussion to coming up with concrete actions. We are also eager to connect our

members (as well as writers more generally) with the initiative, so watch this space! Hopefully there will be news soon.

OTHER ACTIVITY

The Branch continues to make its voice heard wherever we can, including contributing to WGGB's response to the BBC Charter consultation, introducing ourselves to new cultural leaders such as Joe Murphy, the recently appointed Artistic Director at the Birmingham Rep, collaborating with other groups like the Campaign for Regional Broadcasting, and supporting events like the Chainmakers' Festival. We continue to be members of Birmingham TUC, Culture Central (a collective voice and development agency for the creative industries), and More Than A Moment (a group of organisations pledged to support the inclusion of Black artists). We have also held events such as a members' get-together in Birmingham in January 2026.

As ever, thanks to the WGGB staff for all their support, as well as our marvellous committee members, several of whom are working on Branch projects we hope to tell you about in next year's report. If you're interested in joining the committee and helping us do even more in the West Midlands do get in touch. And if you're in the East Midlands and think you could helm the Branch there, the seat is currently vacant. As you can see, we're already doing a lot across both regions.

David Broster and Tim Stimpson
Co-Chairs



The West Midlands Branch held a members' get-together in Birmingham earlier this year. They have also been talking to Birmingham City Council, are involved with other creative unions and activity in the region and continue with ongoing work around a Midlands New Writing Initiative

Photo: Shutterstock.com/Trabantos

YORKSHIRE

The Chair of this committee is currently vacant. Anyone who is interested in leading WGGB's work in the area (or indeed would like to make a contribution to the committee) should email admin@writersguild.org.uk and put 'Yorkshire Chair' vacancy in the subject field.

Remembering WGGB members



We were extremely sad to learn of the death of Sir Tom Stoppard (above right) in December 2025, a giant of post-war British playwriting, an Oscar-winning screenwriter and a writer for radio, too. He was also a long-time member and passionate supporter of WGGB. You can read an obituary by fellow playwright and former WGGB President David Edgar (above left) on the WGGB website.

We were also sad to learn of the deaths of the following former WGGB members: comedy and TV writer Gavin Petrie, playwright and TV writer Jack Shepherd and playwright and screenwriter John Antrobus.

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The Writers' Guild of Great Britain has made best efforts to ensure all information in this annual report is correct at the time of going to press.

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