

Minutes of the 271st RSA Annual General Meeting
Thursday 15 October 2025, 6pm to 7pm
Great Room, RSA House and via Zoom

1. Welcome and Apologies

Sir Loyd Grossman, Chair of the RSA Board of Trustees, opened the 271st Annual General Meeting. Sir Loyd Grossman was joined by Chief Executive, David Joseph as his co-host for the evening.

A quorum of at least 25 Fellows was present in-person and online, and therefore Sir Loyd Grossman declared the meeting open.

The Formal Notice of the Annual General Meeting, together with the agenda and a copy of the Impact Report containing the 2024/25 Financial Statements, had been circulated to Fellows in accordance with the RSA's Bye-Laws in advance of the meeting and was taken as read.

2. Minutes of the 270th Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 10 October 2024 and matters arising

The minutes of the 2024 AGM of Thursday 10 October 2024 were formally approved. As there were no matters arising, Sir Loyd Grossman confirmed the signing of the minutes as a true record.

3. RSA Opening Speech

David Joseph introduced himself to the Fellowship and opened his remarks by expressing gratitude to those attending in person and online. Marking one month in the role, David Joseph acknowledged the RSA's 271-year legacy and emphasised the privilege of leading the institution into its next chapter.

Thanks were extended to:

- Sir Loyd Grossman, Chair, for his experience and shared ambition.
- Andy Haldane, outgoing Chief Executive Officer, for his significant contributions, particularly in social mobility and innovation.
- RSA staff, for their dedication and commitment to the Fellowship community.

David Joseph reflected on a summer of engagement with Fellows, Council members, and Network Leads, noting the RSA's unique value in fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration. David Joseph highlighted the organisation's strength in maintaining a broad, inclusive outlook and its tradition of nurturing innovation across diverse fields.

Key priorities for the year ahead were outlined including:

- Improved communication and transparency.
- Revitalisation of RSA programmes, with a renewed emphasis on the arts.
- Enhancement of the Circle platform to support meaningful connections.
- Elevation of RSA events to become central hubs for thought leadership.

- Further development of RSA House as a cultural and professional centre, alongside strengthened engagement with Fellows across the UK and internationally.

David Joseph reaffirmed the RSA's commitment to addressing major societal issues, such as the future of work, education, technology, and social cohesion, offering a platform for optimism and constructive dialogue. Finally, emphasis was placed on celebrating and amplifying the impact of Fellows' work globally.

David Joseph concluded by expressing excitement for the future and appreciation for the Fellowship's ongoing contributions.

4. To receive and consider a report from the Board of Trustees including the accounts

Sir Loyd Grossman formally addressed the meeting by outlining key highlights of the previous year in reference to the contents of the RSA's Impact Report and statutory accounts.

The 2024–2025 Impact Report was published online in August this year together with the financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2025.

It was noted that we have reported a deficit of £1.0m before accounting for an investment loss of £0.8m. Total revenue remained stable at £12.6m (compared with £12.5m in the previous year), while expenditure increased to £13.7m from £13.2m, driven mainly by the growth in Fellowship activities.

General reserves remain robust, however, at £8.3m. In response to the 2024/25 financial performance, we are focusing on strengthening revenue generation, reducing costs and mitigating risk across the organisation. Investment performance has also improved considerably at the start of the 2025/26 financial year.

Sir Loyd Grossman reflected on a significant year for the RSA, shaped by the 2025 theme of “*connection*”, which followed the previous year's focus on “*courage*”. The theme was central to major events, including the CEO Lecture, Patron's Lecture, and Fellows Festival.

Progress was reported across key programmes. The Social Connections initiative advanced with the *Revealing Social Capital* project and new place-based partnerships in Baltimore, Ealing, and Essex.

The *Prosperous Places* programme continued to promote inclusive growth, notably through the *Creative Corridors* report and the *One Creative North* initiative. The *East Midlands Inclusive Growth Commission* published its final report in September 2025, influencing future regional investment.

The *Playful Green Planet* programme launched, aiming to reconnect children with nature through creative play, with pilots in Dundee and Hull.

Fellowship engagement remained strong, with nearly 400 events held worldwide and 25 UK area hubs supported. The *Pay Fellowship Forward* initiative was launched to widen access. Online community growth was noted, particularly via the Circle platform and the expanding Young Fellows mentoring programme.

The RSA Journal received 13 awards, and RSAJournal+ was introduced as its digital counterpart.

Internationally, engagement expanded in Italy, China, Japan, and Canada, with notable activity linked to Expo 2025 in Osaka.

RSA House has been revitalised as a cultural and public venue, with over 80 arts events hosted and the opening of the *Muse* bar.

Sir Loyd Grossman also highlighted the leadership transition from former Chief Executive Officer, Andy Haldane to David Joseph, who was welcomed to the organisation in September 2025.

Sir Loyd Grossman extended his thanks to Charlotte Oades, Deputy Chair, who has completed two full terms with the Trustee Board and has now stood down from the RSA Board.

Sir Loyd Grossman introduced Simon Thomson from the RSA's independent electoral services provider, Mi-Voice. Simon informed Fellows that the online vote had been open for some weeks as per the bye-laws and closed at 6pm this evening. Simon read the results of the vote, as follows:

Resolution 1: To approve the Trustee Board's reappointment of David D'Souza as a Trustee.

For: 822

Against: 51

Abstain: 72

Total: 945

Resolution 2: To approve the Trustee Board's reappointment of Sandra Boss as a Trustee.

For: 818

Against: 54

Abstain: 73

Total: 945

Resolution 3: To approve the Trustee Board's reappointment of Hosein Khajeh-Hosseiny as a Trustee.

For: 800

Against: 63

Abstain: 82

Total: 945

Resolution 4: To approve the appointment of Michael Davis to the Trustee Board.

For: 817

Against: 36

Abstain: 92

Total: 945

Resolution 5: To approve the appointment of Dame Alison Carnwath to the Trustee Board.

For: 804

Against: 55

Abstain: 86

Total: 945

Resolution 6: To approve the Trustee Board's appointment of Eva Pascoe as Deputy Chair.

For: 854

Against: 30

Abstain: 61

Total: 945

Resolution 7: That the RSA Byelaws be amended as per the Explanatory Notes below.

For: 812

Against: 45

Abstain: 88

Total: 945

Resolution 8: That the Royal Charter be amended as per the Explanatory Notes below.

For: 817

Against: 43

Abstain: 85

Total: 945

Simon Thomson also announced the following notices:

The appointment of Fraser Hardie to the Trustee Board.

The appointment of Dinah Casson to the Trustee Board.

The completion of two full terms of the outgoing Trustees: Charlotte Oades (Deputy Chair) and John Towers (Trustee).

The election results of the Fellowship Council and Trustee Board.

Fellowship Councillors: Asia and Oceania (2 vacancies)

Yan Li: 26

Andy Hsu: 25

Suning Zhang: 17

Tung Hiu Hon: 9

I do not wish to vote in this election: 11

Yan Li and Andy Hsu elected.

Fellowship Councillors: Europe and Africa (2 vacancies)

Vanessa Barros: 24

Francesco Carignani: 19

Nika Brunet Milunovic: 19

Elena Papadaki: 10

I do not wish to vote in this election: 5

Vanessa Barros and Francesco Carignani elected.

Fellowship Councillors: London (2 vacancies)

Eva Pascoe: 193

Stephen Oram: 132

Md Halim Bepari: 55

I do not wish to vote in this election: 24

Eva Pascoe and Stephen Oram are elected.

5. Fellows Question and Answer Session

There followed Q&As from Fellows, facilitated by Sir Loyd Grossman. Sir Loyd Grossman noted that as there was limited time for questions, not all those submitted via the Q&A function would be able to be answered this evening.

Question One: What progress has Playful Green Planet made so far and how can we build on this?

Joanna Choukeir (Director of Design and Innovation) responded that Playful Green Planet is an initiative which is committed to growing, connecting and supporting a movement of stewards and champions across our Fellowship. They are co-producing nature-based places and experiences for local children, particularly in local neighbourhoods. The programme started with two pilot sites funded by the National Lottery in Dundee and Hull. In 6-9 months, these sites have engaged 1,000 children and unlocked over 2,500 hours of nature play for their local children. The sites have also recorded biodiversity observations. Beyond the two pilot sites, we have now invited Cody Dock in Newham and Fairlop Waters Country Park in Redbridge to join the network. Two more sites should be announced in the next month. Aim is to grow reach of the Playful Green Planet to 100 sites and 100,000 children by 2030.

Question Two: How do we create spaces as good as RSA House for the global Fellowship?

Danielle Williams (Head of Fellowship Retention and Services) responded that in the UK and Ireland we have 28 free to access co-working arrangements to provide opportunity for Fellows to come together outside of London. There is also significant opportunity to expand this globally.

Question Three: Are there plans to increase the number of events on AI?

Luke Dorian (Fellowship Engagement Manager Central) explained that AI is such a fast moving topic but we do have a responsible AI network who host a monthly event on Circle. We also have an AI book club. We do have lots of events in the pipeline but our community works best when the Fellows are at the forefront. Please do come forward if there is something you can offer.

Question Four: Stephen Feber – Fellows for 20 years. Stephen explained that the RSA should bring AI right into the centre of the operation. As we are not growing over 30,000 Fellows, the RSA should be connecting Fellows in the AI age should help us focus on that.

Secondly, when we mention the Arts, it's in the Charter but the RSA needs to help us all make a more resilient future. We should have a singular focus on the climate.

Sir Loyd explains that have done too many projects, and assured the audience that to have more impact we have to focus on more projects and projects that people understand and have more demonstrable projects.

David Joseph confirms that we are reviewing all the policy and programmes work and explore the fellowships interests.

An audience member commented that we need to remember the environmental impact of AI before we simply embrace it which was agreed by the panel.

Question Five: Julia Davies – Why aren't we inviting children and young people to become Fellows of the RSA?

David Joseph explained that the RSA is reviewing the value proposition for Fellows. A team of nine people in the House who are aged 18-25 years are developing a proposal. In terms of the younger children, they aren't the current focus but we certainly need to think about them especially through engaging projects such as Playful Green Planet.

Question Six: I applaud all of David and Loyd's intentions but still a gap outside of London in terms of rural Fellows.

David Joseph suggests setting up a call to explore and ensure we meet the needs of Fellows in rural spaces.

Question Seven: Duncan McCathy - In 2012 persuaded an environmental impact report glad to see is still included however three major areas are missing no plan to go to net zero, no mention of paper, financial omissions metrics exist i.e. our banking.

David Joseph discussed that the RSA receive mixed reports about the Journal – to some they say it's the most important thing that RSA provides but others not. David posed whether we go down to

two or three issues a year and what impact will that have. David Joseph noted that he was mindful that to a lot of Fellows the journal is valuable. The panel noted Sunca's question and committed to coming back to Duncan directly with more information.

Question Eight: Martin Percy - RAIN is very technical and for those who know a lot of jargon. Martin suggests we need a series of workshops for everyone to debate together including the ethical debate including the climate emergency which the panel agreed with.

Question Nine: Colin Wright Fellow for 25 years. For many years the encourage of manufactures and commerce has been absent. Royal Designers for Industry (RDI) are barely known amongst Fellowship. What do you propose?

Sir Loyd explains that he has put a lot of effort in making sure the prominence and importance of RDI's is central to the work of the RSA. Dinah Casson, RDI Trustee has been appointed to the Board which is key to engaging and representing RDIs. Sir Loyd explained that lots of effort has been put into making sure the importance of the RDIs is central to the works of the RSA and confirms that we will be hearing more from the RDIs over the coming years. These are very important people and are influential in society, many have changed the world and we want to recognise that more.

Question Ten: Wen Fellow for two years – I am interested in Social Connections project. Is there any plans to make it more accessible and bring more Fellows in and make it more transparent for Fellows to get involved?

David Joseph explained that we often complete projects with reports but we need to do more. David Joseph confirms plans to expand the team who will be looking at school exclusion. Social mobility is one of the biggest problems in this country and the RSA should have a major role in that.

David Joseph confirmed that the RSA should provide tools for people to have the knowledge and take forward.

6. Conclusion

At the conclusion of the 271st RSA AGM Sir Loyd Grossman thanked Fellows for attending, and as there was no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

Approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.



Signed: _____

Sir Loyd Grossman CBE
Chair of RSA Trustees

Date: 31 October 2025 _____