

The Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow



Minute of the Annual General Meeting

Meeting held in the Faculty Hall 18th June 2025

Present were -

Dean: Stephen Vallance
Vice Dean: John Bett
Past Deans: Gilbert Anderson, Paul Carnan, Austin Lafferty
Members: Brian Woods, Hilary Steer, Andrew MacQueen, Brian MacBryde, Ahsan Mustafa, Shirley Rhynd, Eileen Sherry, E-Main Fong, Sandy Lamb, Alison McKay, Samantha Miller, Stephanie Christie-Carmichel, John Wilkinson, Craig Donnelly, Victori Savage, Filip Angelov, Steven Docherty and Alan Munro
Staff: John McKenzie

1. Welcome

The Dean declared the Annual General Meeting open and welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2. Notice of Meeting sent out in May 2025

The Dean confirmed that the notice of the meeting had been sent out timeously in accordance with the bye-laws.

3. Apologies

Apologies had also been received from David Lyle, Alison Grant, Emma Arcari, Derick Williamson and Craig Armstrong

4. Minute of AGM held on 23rd May 2024

In accordance with the bye-laws a copy of the minute of last year's AGM was on display in the RFPG Library as well as being available on the RFPG website for the past six weeks. The Dean requested a proposer and seconder to confirm the minutes as an

accurate record of the 2024 AGM. Brian Woods proposed, and Austin Lafferty seconded the motion.

5. **Report by Council and Accounts for year ended 31 December 2023**

The Dean introduced John McKenzie, Chief Executive, who presented an overview of the RFPG's financial performance for the year 2024, and a projection for 2025. The main points of which were –

The overall picture was that the Royal Faculty's finances were currently in good order, with the Royal Faculty recording a profit of £86K in 2024.

Over the past three years, most income streams have remained stable or grown. Membership income has continued its upward trend, increasing by £2K from the previous year, while the Auditor Service remains the Faculty's most significant income source, bringing in £378K (an increase of £26K on 2023). Although seminar income declined slightly due to free CPD offerings for members, rental income remained steady thanks to full-year leases, and sundry income rose by £9K due to increased bank interest.

On the expenditure side, costs for library resources and salaries have remained relatively stable, with only minor increases. However, building-related expenses rose by £27K, reflecting renovation work and higher rates and utilities. Administrative costs also rose slightly, while miscellaneous spending saw a notable increase due to IT, marketing, and event-related expenses.

Looking ahead to 2025, income is projected at £612K, driven by strong performance from the Auditor Service, growing membership subscriptions, and steady rental and interest income.

Expenditure is forecast at £571K, with increased spending anticipated on building works and administration. After accounting for bank charges and depreciation, a pre-tax surplus of £27K is expected. Corporation tax is projected at £69K, reflecting higher taxable income. Overall, the Faculty is on track to end the year in a strong financial position.

Questions were invited on the financial report. There being no questions the Dean requested a proposer and seconder for the approval of the accounts. Brian Woods proposed, and Craig Donnelly seconded the motion. The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 were duly approved by the meeting.

The Dean's Report

The Dean referred to his written report in the Annual Report and took the opportunity to reflect on his two-year tenure, which he described as highly enjoyable. He expressed deep appreciation for the Faculty, highlighting the positive atmosphere at Council meetings and the support and humour of past Deans with whom he had served. He noted several highlights during his term, including the Biennial Dinner and smaller, more intimate events such as a dinner in the Small Library, as well as representing the Faculty at external engagements like the King's coronation event at St Giles' Cathedral.

The Dean extended thanks to Charles Hennessy for his significant contribution to the Faculty's CPD programme, and to Sheriff Principal Anwar and the Sheriffs at Glasgow

Sheriff Court for their warm welcome during his time as Dean. He expressed hope that he had contributed to leaving the Faculty in a stronger position, particularly in terms of increased use of the building for events like "Creativity in the Law," and noted the potential for further development following the current renovations.

He offered thanks to the Chief Executive, the library team, the Auditor and her team, and to Vice Dean John Bett for his exceptional support. He also thanked Council members for their time and commitment, and gave special recognition to outgoing Council members Emma Arcari, Nikki Hunter, Victoria Savage, Adam de Ste Croix, Paul McMahan, and Beatrice Nicholas.

In closing, the Dean reflected on the future impact of AI on the legal profession, suggesting that the Faculty's emphasis on learning and collegiality will be increasingly valuable. He concluded by thanking the Faculty for the privilege of serving as Dean.

6. To elect the Dean

The Dean demitted office and called for a proposer and seconder to elect John Bett as the Dean. Ahsan Mustafa proposed, and Filip Angelov seconded this motion which was approved by the meeting.

7. To elect the Vice Dean

John Bett assumed the chair and expressed his thanks to Stephen Vallance, noting it had been a pleasure to work alongside him. He conveyed his gratitude to the Faculty for the honour of being appointed Dean and reflected on the privilege of having served with three past Deans - Donald Reid, Austin Lafferty, and Stephen Vallance. He stated he was looking forward to working collaboratively with the Faculty staff and Council to continue serving the membership.

He noted that there was one nominee for the office of Vice Dean and proposed that Craig Donnelly be elected as Vice Dean. This was seconded by Alan Munro and was approved by the meeting.

8. Election of new Council members

The Dean went on to note that for a number of reasons there were eight vacancies on Council. The eight members standing for Council were - Craig Armstrong (Arnold Clark); Ahsan Mustafa (Aberdein Considine); Eileen Sherry (Beale & Co.); Hilary Steer (WJM); Stephanie Christie-Carmichael (Curle Stewart); Shirley Rhynd (GCC); Eming Fong (Harper Macleod); and Andrew MacQueen (Robert Gordon Uni.). He proposed that all eight be elected to Council, this was seconded by Steven Docherty and approved by the meeting.

9. Re-election of Gerber Landa & Gee as Auditors

The Dean proposed the re-election of Gerber Landa & Gee as auditors for the coming year. The proposal was seconded by Filip Angelov and approved by the meeting.

10. To elect as honorary members the following – Sheriff Principal Aisha Anwar and Stephen Vallance

The Dean paid tribute to Past Dean Stephen Vallance, highlighting a distinguished legal career that began in 1982. After progressing through various roles in private practice and successfully developing and selling his own firm in 2008, Stephen chose

not to retire but instead shifted his focus to a broader role within the profession. He joined Harper Macleod and played a key part in the growth of the HM Connect network over the past decade.

In addition to his practice, Stephen has made notable contributions to legal education, teaching on the Diploma courses at both Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities, with an emphasis on the evolving skill set required of modern lawyers. He has written extensively on legal technology and business development and more recently has engaged audiences through podcasting.

Stephen joined Council in 2017 and was elected Dean in 2023. Since joining, he has served on nearly every Council Committee and contributed to all aspects of the Faculty's work. His tenure as Dean was marked by a successful push for new members and an increase in educational and social events at the Faculty, all while maintaining a thoughtful balance between tradition and progress.

The Dean was pleased to propose Stephen Vallance as an honorary member of the Faculty. The proposal was seconded by Steven Docherty and approved by the meeting.

The Dean went on to propose that Sheriff Principal Anwar be elected as an honorary member of the Royal Faculty. He praised her academic excellence, strong work ethic, and her determination to challenge traditional expectations regarding judicial appointments.

Admitted as a solicitor in 2000, she became a partner and head of litigation in Scotland for a global law firm before beginning her judicial career in 2011 as a part-time Sheriff. She was appointed a full-time family and commercial Sheriff in Glasgow in 2014, then Sheriff Principal of South Strathclyde in 2020, and in March 2023 became Sheriff Principal of Glasgow.

Taking on the role during a period when the courts were still grappling with the impact of COVID-19, she introduced a new summary case management system which has proved highly effective and is now being adopted across Scotland. Her leadership is marked by a collaborative and inclusive approach, with both herself and her colleagues remaining accessible and open to engagement.

Her style is distinctive, with a deep sense of empathy; for example, personally writing to children involved in a contact dispute to explain the decision made. She understands that the justice system is not only about legal processes but about serving the needs of society, particularly its most vulnerable members.

A strong supporter of the Faculty, she regularly consults on a range of matters, has contributed to CPD programmes, and actively supports the Faculty's mooted competition. Her nomination as honorary member was unanimously supported by Council.

The proposal was seconded by Craig Donnelly and approved by the meeting.

11. Any Other Business

There being no further business the Dean thanked everyone for their attendance and brought the meeting to a close.