

The Northumbrian Pipers' Society ('Society')
(Company Number: 07471625)
Notice of Annual General Meeting

IMPORTANT NOTICE

As a member of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society, you are entitled to attend, ask questions and vote on various matters at the AGM.

Following the recent success of holding our AGMs virtually, your Committee has decided to hold the AGM this year in the same way, giving all members an equal opportunity to attend.

The Society's AGM for 2025 will, therefore, be held by video conference on ZOOM.

The Notice of Meeting is set out on the pages that follow.

If you wish to vote on any resolution to be discussed at the meeting, please return your proxy form in accordance with the instructions provided.

If you are able to do so, please also join the meeting itself by video conference. To do this, you will need to contact the Society at [**agm-voting@northumbrianpipers.org.uk**](mailto:agm-voting@northumbrianpipers.org.uk) to request the access details.

Given that it is now possible for all our members to attend the AGM, wherever you are in the world, I would urge you to do so. It would be wonderful to have the whole piping community represented again, not just those who have been able to get to the physical meeting in the past.

Andrew Davison, OBE
Chairman
The Northumbrian Pipers' Society
Tel: 07802 558693

<https://www.northumbrianpipers.org.uk>

The Northumbrian Pipers' Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with number 7471625.

Charity registration number 1142471. Registered office: c/o Muckle LLP, Time Central, 32 Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4BF.

The Northumbrian Pipers' Society ('Society')
(Company Number: 07471625)
Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society ('Meeting') will be held by video conference call, commencing at 6.00pm on Saturday 15 November 2025 (UK time) to transact the following business:

Ordinary Business

1. To receive and approve the reports of the Chairman and the Chairman of the Cleveland Branch (see page 5 and page 10).
2. To receive the Society's annual accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2025 (see page 14).
3. To re-appoint Baroness Joyce Quin as President of the Society
4. To re-appoint Andrew Davison as Chairman of the Society
5. To re-appoint each member of the Committee subject to re-election and offering themselves to be re-elected for a further term, until the AGM of the Society in the year referred to against their name below:
 - 5.1. Andrew Lawrenson 2027
 - 5.2. Melanie Rothman 2027
 - 5.3. Vincent Syson. 2027

By order of the Committee
Norman Douglas RD
NPS Treasurer 22 October 2025

Notes: Appointment of proxies

1. As a member of the Society, you are entitled to appoint a proxy to exercise all or any of your rights to attend, speak and vote at the Meeting and a proxy form is included on page 12 of this Notice of Meeting. You can only appoint a proxy using the procedures set out in these notes and the notes to the proxy form.
2. A proxy does not need to be a member of the Society but must attend the Meeting to represent you. Details of how to appoint your proxy are set out in the notes on the proxy form. If you wish your proxy to speak on your behalf at the Meeting you will need to appoint your own choice of proxy (not the Chairman) and give your instructions directly to them.

Changing proxy instructions

1. To change your proxy instructions simply submit a new proxy appointment using the method set out in the proxy form. Note that the cut-off time for receipt of proxy appointments as stated in the proxy form also applies in relation to amended instructions; any amended proxy appointment received after the relevant cut-off time will be disregarded.
2. Where you have appointed a proxy using the hard-copy proxy form and would like to change the instructions using another hard copy proxy form, please contact the Secretary.

Termination of proxy appointments

1. In order to revoke a proxy instruction, you will need to inform the Society by sending a signed hard copy notice clearly stating your intention to revoke your proxy appointment to the address stated in the proxy form. Any power of attorney or any other authority under which the revocation notice is signed (or a duly certified copy of such power or authority) must be included with the notice.
2. The revocation notice must be received by the Society no later than forty-eight hours before the time of the meeting (not taking account of any part of a day which is not a working day). If you attempt to revoke your proxy appointment but the revocation is received after the time specified then, subject to the paragraph directly below, your proxy appointment will remain valid.
3. Appointment of a proxy does not preclude you from attending the Meeting and voting in person. If you have appointed a proxy and attend the Meeting in person, your proxy appointment will automatically be terminated.

Appointment of Committee Members and other Officers

The maximum number of Committee members is 13 (unless increased by Ordinary

Resolution). As the constitution permits Committee members to be nominated at any time up to the consideration of the resolution(s) to appoint the Committee, there may be nominations that are not listed in this Notice of Meeting. If there are more nominations than positions available, the election will take place by ballot and the successful candidates will be those who have secured most votes (whether from members present in person or by proxy).

Chairman's Report 2025

Dear Member,

I often stop to think as I write my annual report to Members on behalf of the Committee – “What have we actually achieved in the last year?”

It is so easy just to do what we have always done and think it is enough, but the world continues to change around us and, as the old saying goes, “if you stand still, you go backwards”. Have we done what the membership would want us to? Have we achieved all that we reasonably can in order to promote the objects of the Society? I hope, when you have read this, that you will feel that your Society has been active, doing and achieving the right things. I hope you will also be pleased to see just how much is going on. However, if you think we have not, do please get in touch or, even better, volunteer to help.

During the year since I last wrote to you, the Society has (amongst other things and in no particular order):

- Organised
 - the Annual Concert
 - the annual competitions
 - the annual dinner with Johnny Handle as the guest speaker
 - the monthly Saturday afternoon sessions at The Chantry in Morpeth
 - the monthly Thursday evening session at The Northumbrian Piper pub
 - the monthly Thursday evening session at the Station East pub
 - the annual Wallington Pipers' Gathering
 - the Annual General Meeting
- Had a presence (often including a “try the pipes” opportunity) at:
 - Rothbury Traditional Music Festival
 - The Glendale Show
 - Ovingham Goose Fair
 - The Northumberland Show
 - Bellingham Show
 - Beamish Pipers' Picnic
- Operated an extremely effective pipe hire service, enabling new pipers to try the instrument before committing to buy a set. There are currently 30 sets of pipes out on hire as I write this report
- Provided financial support to the Young Pipers' Group run by Richard and Fiona Johnstone
- Provided the structure within which the Pipemakers' Forum can operate, supporting those who are interested in making/fettling pipes
- Provided sets of pipes for use in schools to support those willing to go into schools to teach young people to play
- Published the monthly electronic newsletter
- Operated the “Buddy Scheme” to provide support to new pipers around the world
- Maintained the Society website

- Managed the Society Archives
- Maintained the Society's office premises at Newbiggin and continued to search for the future physical presence of the Society
- Managed the Society's online shop, offering a wide range of products, including tune books, CDs and pipemaking materials
- Responded to all sorts of general enquiries received through the website and in correspondence
- Managed the finances of running the Society, providing management information and fulfilling annual compliance reporting obligations, and maintaining insurance cover for the Society's assets and activities
- Monitored and responded to policy initiatives, including the implementation of the Ivory Act, the adoption of the UNESCO treaty on intangible cultural heritage, the future of the Chantry building (which houses the Bagpipe Museum and many Society events) in Morpeth and liaising with groups including The Bagpipe Society, The Lowland & Border Pipers' Society, The Heritage Crafts Association
- Acted as a point of support and information exchange between Members and regional playing groups, including the Society's Branch in Durham & Cleveland
- Produced a website where people can listen to archive recordings by Forster Charlton and catalogue the contents
- Started to develop a special initiative to support young people to get into piping (see below)
- Commenced a full review of our policies

I hope you will be impressed.

Of course, "The Society" does nothing. All of this activity is the result of hard work by a relatively small number of dedicated volunteers. I would like to pay tribute here to each and every one of you for making the time to support the aims of the Society in all the different ways you do. Without you, none of the above would happen. Thank you!

One really important development in the last year was the Committee's focus on trying to make sure that the Society continues to be financially sustainable. Like every organisation, we have faced increasing costs. This has required some difficult decisions, not least being the request to Members to approve an increase in subscription fees. Thank you for your support in this at the AGM. Thank you also to all of you who have subsequently agreed to pay your subscription by annual direct debit. This hugely reduces the administrative burden in chasing payments and also makes it easier for overseas members to maintain their membership. Thank you to Norman Douglas (our Treasurer) and Susan Craven (our Administrator) for guiding us through that process.

There is always a worry when you have to increase subscriptions that you lose members as a result. Inevitably, this has been the case. Last year, we had 740 members in total, This year we have a total of 606 of which 441 are paying members (the rest being Life, Honorary, or Junior members, who do not pay subscriptions). Some Members who still pay by standing order have not altered this for many years and are still (despite numerous reminders) paying at an old subscription rate. Rather than cancel their membership, we have created a separate category of "Supporter", so that these former members will

continue to receive the monthly Newsletter but will not be full voting members of the Society. The overall result is that subscription income has increased in line with Norman's projections. Nevertheless, I strongly urge you all to encourage any pipers you know who are not members, to join. Even though most of the time spent on Society matters is volunteer time at no financial cost to the Society, the Society can only continue with the financial support of its Members.

The Journal remains an important publication by the Society, capturing information and sharing research in a more lasting format than the Newsletter, and I remain extremely grateful to John Gibbons for his work on this. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, it was not possible to publish an edition in 2024. However, it is hoped that it will return in 2025. With postage and printing costs having increased so much, with more people finding the convenience of receiving information electronically and also to help treat all members equally (with no higher subscription for overseas members as was previously needed to cover differential postage costs), the Committee has decided that, in future, the Journal will be circulated to every member in electronic format. A small number of copies will still be printed for archive purposes. Any Member who would still like to receive a hard copy will be able to purchase one at cost price from the Society's online shop, through the website.

The Society's website is becoming ever more important as a shop window, a source of information and many other essential services. The current underlying architecture that makes it all work is getting out of date and needs an overhaul. I am extremely grateful to our new Committee member, Alan Douglas, who understands how these things work. Alan is proving to be a hugely helpful addition to the Committee, leading on the project that will soon see us appoint an external company to carry out the necessary work.

Sometimes, the saddest of situations can lead to some really positive outcomes. In the last year, we lost one of our most active pipemakers/reedmakers with the untimely death of Dave Shaw. He is sorely missed by many and it is testament to his influence that The Northumberland Show instigated a new Northumbrian Piping Tent and new set of competitions in his memory and that Beamish Museum held a session in the farmhouse and also established the new Pipers' Picnic to honour his contribution, including bringing the sound of the pipes to this regional attraction. I sincerely hope that both events will now continue, on an annual basis, marking Dave's contribution and bringing the sound of the pipes to many more people. The first Northumbrian Piping Tent and Competitions at The Northumberland Show was a great example of people rallying round to put on a great show at short notice. Ednie Wilson ran her "try the pipes" sessions for anyone wanting to have a go, Andy Lawrenson put on a pipemaking display, Nick Leeming piped at the entrance to the Showfield, there was a session in the tent and Kathryn Tickell judged the competitions. All in all, a great day was had by all. My special thanks to Nicola Davison and Gill Lyons for organising everything.

Looking to the future, there are some initiatives that I believe are really rather exciting.

First is the renewed focus on helping young people to play the pipes. The Society now offers free membership to those under the age of 18. This carries with it the free issue of the NPS First Tune Book. We have also started to build a separate stock of pipes for hire

to/use by young people, distinct from the current Pipe Hire service we have run for many years. This special stock has recently been significantly increased with the donation to the Society of the pipes formerly owned by The Northumberland Music Service and some private donations. We now have around 20 sets available for this purpose and are working on bringing them all into full playing condition. A number of people have been teaching in schools or privately, and we plan to help these (and others) with some sharing of best practice and possibly by using the Society's charitable status to raise funds to support subsidised tuition/pipe hire. The objective is to remove as many barriers as possible and to open up the option of learning the pipes to as many young people as we can. If you would like to be part of this initiative, please do get in touch with me.

Second is the possible evolution of the great work that Greg McCormick has been doing to digitise and catalogue the Forster Charlton recordings archive. Greg has devised a web-based portal for people to sign up to in order to access the recordings as we try to work out what this archive contains, what copyright issues we may need to deal with and how we can make as much of it as possible more generally available. We still have box loads of tapes to digitise and I am sure that this is going to become an increasingly important archive as the programme expands.

Third, we have been considering what to do with our own archive materials (records, correspondence etc). We are not professional archivists and there is a risk that we do not have the skills or resource properly to look after and preserve what we have, especially if we have to move our offices from the current facility at Newbiggin. The current thinking is to try to digitise as much as possible to go onto our website and to deposit the original materials with either the Northumberland or the Tyne & Wear Archives services, where they would be professionally looked after and still be accessible to members and (in time) to the general public. My thanks to the small team, including Julia Say, Richard Heard and Alex Barrass who have been helping to shape and implement this.

Fourth, those of you who are more observant of these things will have noticed that 2028 will be the Centenary of the Society in its current form. This is surely something definitely worth celebrating. Your Committee has started to pull together a list of possible ways to mark the occasion. If you have any suggestions, please do let us know.

There are, of course, still challenges we need to overcome. One continues to be trying to find the right place to base the Society's "office", where we can store useful materials, shop stock etc, as well as potentially developing it as a base for lessons, sessions or whatever people would like to get together to do. We keep looking for the right place, but no formal solution has been found yet. We currently have less than a year to run on our lease of the premises in Newbiggin, so this is becoming more time critical.

As ever, we are always looking for new volunteers. This year, both Julia Say will be retiring from running the Society's online shop and Ann Sessoms will be retiring as our Secretary. As many of you will know, both have been incredible supporters of the Society, having filled many roles over several decades. Both will be hugely missed. We have been fortunate enough to have Louise Woodman volunteer to take over the running of the online bookshop and she is working with Julia on the transition now. We are very keen to

find a new person to take on the role of Secretary, if you think you might be able to help, do please get in touch.

Finally, my thanks not only to the people I have mentioned above but also to everyone else who in one way or another contributes to the work of the Society in promoting our wonderful instruments and their music. Do please keep playing out and letting us know through the Newsletter what you have been doing. I am always delighted to see all the groups who gather informally to enjoy playing together. To me, this is the best bit of piping – sharing a good tune with friends. A sincere thank you to all those who have made donations to the Society (either in cash or in the form of sets of pipes or of archive material), to my fellow Committee members for your tireless work and to Baroness Joyce Quin, our President, for your wonderful support.

I look forward to “meeting” as many of you as possible at the AGM.

Keep piping!

Andrew Davison, OBE
Chairman, 17 October 2025

Item 1b

Northumbrian Pipers' Society, Cleveland and Co. Durham Branch Report September 2024 – August 2025

- 1) The Branch AGM was held in November 2024.
- 2) The committee stood and was elected again, so there were no changes from the previous year.
- 3) Physical meetings of the Branch held on 2nd Wednesday of the month in Ceddesfeld Hall have continued successfully.
- 4) The monthly practice on 4th Wednesday has also continued though intermittently for the last year.
- 5) The Branch Hon. Treasurer organised a special meeting for March 2024 which featured the piping and many useful thoughts on piping matters by Nick Leeming.. This was an entertaining and informative event, and we thank Nick for it.
- 6) The Branch's public playing group completed its performances at the National Gardens Scheme Open Gardens in the summer of 2025. We have four pipers now in the playing group.
- 7) The Branch held a successful Christmas meal event at the Dun Cow in Sedgfield before the December 2024 meeting
- 8) There have been no requests for pipe hire.
- 9) The Chair thanks the Branch committee and members for their work and support.

David Cook
Cleveland and Co. Durham Branch Chair and Secretary
August 2024

Item 2 Accounts of the Society to 31 March 2025

These will be available before the AGM on the NPS website

www.northumbrianpipers.org.uk or on request from treasurer@northumbrianpipers.org.uk

Item 3 To re-appoint Baroness Joyce Quin as President of the Society

Item 4 To re-appoint Andrew Davison as Chairman of the Society

Item 5 To re-appoint each member of the Committee subject to re-election and offering themselves to be re-elected for a further term, until the AGM of the Society in the year referred to against their name below:

Andrew Lawrenson	2027
Melanie Rothman	2027
Vincent Syson	2027

The Northumbrian Pipers' Society Annual General Meeting 2025

Proxy Form – please detach and return once completed (see notes 5 and 6 overleaf)

Before completing this form, please read the explanatory note overleaf

I / We (print name)

.....
being a / member/s of the Society appoint the Chairman of the meeting or (see note 3)
appoint

--

as my/our proxy to attend, speak and vote on my/our behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the Society to be held on Saturday 15 November 2025 at 6.00pm (UK time) and at any adjournment of the meeting.

I/We direct my/our proxy to vote on the following resolutions as I/we have indicated by marking the appropriate box with an 'X'. If no indication is given, my/our proxy will vote or abstain from voting at his or her discretion and I/we authorise my/our proxy to vote (or abstain from voting) as he or she thinks fit in relation to any other matter or resolution which is properly put before the meeting.

	Resolutions	For	Against		
1	To receive and approve the reports of the Chairman and the Chairman of the Cleveland Branch.				
2	To receive and approve the Society's annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2025				
3	To re-appoint Baroness Joyce Quin as President of the Society				
4	To re-appoint Andrew Davison as Chairman of the Society				
5	To re-appoint the following as members of the Committee:				
	Andrew Lawrenson				
	Melanie Rothman				
	Vincent Syson				
<u>8</u>	<table><tr><td><u>Signature</u></td><td>Date</td></tr></table>			<u>Signature</u>	Date
<u>Signature</u>	Date				

Notes:

1. As a member of the Society, you are entitled to appoint a proxy to exercise all or any of your rights to attend, speak and vote at a general meeting of the Society. You can only appoint a proxy using the procedures set out in these notes and the Notice of the meeting.
2. Appointment of a proxy does not preclude you from attending the meeting and voting in person. If you have appointed a proxy and attend the meeting in person, your proxy appointment will automatically be terminated.
3. A proxy does not need to be a member of the Society but must attend the meeting to represent you. To appoint as your proxy a person other than the Chairman of the meeting, insert their full name in the box. If you sign and return this proxy form with no name inserted in the box, the Chairman of the meeting will be deemed to be your proxy. Where you appoint as your proxy someone other than the Chairman, you are responsible for ensuring that they attend the meeting and are aware of your voting intentions. If you wish your proxy to make any comments on your behalf, you will need to appoint someone other than the Chairman and give them the relevant instructions directly.
4. To direct your proxy how to vote on the resolutions, mark the appropriate box with an 'X'. If no voting indication is given, your proxy will vote or abstain from voting at his or her discretion. Your proxy will vote (or abstain from voting) as he or she thinks fit in relation to any other matter which is put before the meeting.
5. To appoint a proxy using this form, the form must be:
 - 5.1 completed and signed;
 - 5.2 sent or delivered to the NPS Chairman at Fir Trees farm, Lowgate, NE46 2NS, UK; and
 - 5.3 received by the Society no later than **6.00pm on 13 November 2025 (UK time)**

As an alternative to completing this hard copy proxy form, you can appoint a proxy electronically by sending an email to agm-voting@northumbrianpipers.org.uk. For an electronic proxy appointment to be valid, your appointment must be received by the Society no later than **6.00 pm on 13 November 2025 (UK time)**.

6. Any power of attorney or any other authority under which this proxy form is signed (or a duly certified copy of such power of authority) must be included with the proxy form.
7. If you submit more than one valid proxy appointment, the appointment received last before the latest time for the receipt of proxies will take precedence.
8. For details of how to change your proxy instructions or revoke your proxy appointment see the notes to the notice of meeting.

You may not use any electronic address provided in this proxy form to communicate with the Society for any purposes concerning this meeting other than those expressly stated.