

North West Translators Network Annual General Meeting

7.30pm Tuesday 15 June 2021

Present

Sarah Glendenning, Nicole van den Wittenboer, Mike Hanson, Markus Henseler, Marjolein Thickett, Laurence Bisot, Kathryn Slater, Katell Sevellec, Kate Lo, Janice Crossfield, Deborah Borderiau, Courtney Pesche, Angela Sigee, Andrew Wilson, Andrea Dewhurst

1. Apologies for absence

Heidi Kershl, Kasia Beresford, Sue Kenwell and Sarah Bowyer, membership secretary

2. Approval of last year's AGM Minutes

The minutes were approved by show of hands.

3. Chair's Report

It has been a strange year, with challenges and opportunities to get closer to the members within restrictions. Many members, including new members and students, have participated in online events. A few standout examples: our first hybrid event, the Boost Day, a ground-breaking experience for NWTN and ITI. The Book Chat has made us realise how much we are readers. The quizzes were a great way to meet members of other groups. All events are good for reducing isolation. We have convinced some students to stay in the network after they graduate. The mentoring scheme has had three members so far: a mutually enriching experience. Laurence thanked the committee members for helping each other including with technology, which has been so important for delivering events. The network is buzzing.

4. Treasurer's Report

The auditor has not yet had time to look at the accounts for the last financial year. The network is in a very healthy financial situation. The financial statement is pretty self-explanatory. Virtual events require very little spending. We have also spent very little on speakers' fees this year. Only one member claimed the training grant this year.

5. Membership Secretary's Report

Membership update from Sarah. The 2020 membership year had been extended by 6 months till September 2020. We decided to start a normal membership again from September 2020 with arrangements for people in hardship. Subscription rates have not been changed for more than 20 years. Numerically membership is slightly up. Online initiatives have made it easier for some people to get involved. Feedback is that leaving the NWTN is to do with personal circumstances not the NWTN's offer. We are planning to pilot direct debits or cardless payments for subscriptions to make it easier.

6. Events Team Report and events planned for the next year

Kate reported that we had a brimming list of things that we wanted to do this year and she felt nervous about the practicalities, especially 35th anniversary plans. As a team it was felt that we should survey members in July 2020 to ask about the kinds of events that people would like. Mike had already put a lot of work into the Boost Day in September 2020, which was a hybrid event, with a speaker at Manchester Conference Centre and a speaker at home. We might have set a high bar for members' expectations! Boost Day is a whole day of CPD events on a particular theme, which last year was post-edition machine translation (PEMT).

Bake Off chats were a lovely way to keep in touch and beat isolation in uncertain times. After feedback the format became Working Lunch with CPD themes: a great way to offer advice and support and bitesize CPD. It has been wonderful to see new faces and offer some support and advice. Kate thanked the team for assistance in hosting the sessions and putting on a varied programme.

Janice's and Laurence's idea of book chats have also been a great way to find out about members' passions. It is more accessible as it is based around themes and people can talk about things that they have read on that theme. The pub quiz started off as a small idea that grew into a challenge with other regional networks.

Katell put on a popular event to do with note taking led by Rebecca Tipton. It was our first foray into Zoom breakout rooms. Interpreters are keen for us to run other kinds of events and the committee would be grateful for suggestions.

Over Easter 2021 we reached out to local universities and Katell put together a video presentation of the NWTN. This is really useful for anyone who wants to know what the NWTN is about.

We are also hoping to run an in-person creative writing event following the event in March 2021. We tried a CAT tool overview event online in April 2021, which was very informative and the presenter was surprised at the length of the lively discussion. It was great for more experienced attendees to see what other products are on the market. We are hoping to run in-person CAT tool clinics. In July 2021 Kate is participating in a webinar on delivering online coworking events, which some NWTN members might like to attend. The end of lockdown picnic will be on 24 July in Heaton Park, followed by a walk with the West Midlands Group of about 6.5 miles.

We have thoughts about future events on audio-visual translation and anniversary celebrations. Wild swimming has also been discussed with the YTI and north east groups, with an event potentially in September 2021 when the water will still be reasonably warm. Sarah mentioned that there is lots of great training about at the moment e.g. Zakon and modern slavery.

Kate thanked the events team and the committee for their amazing support.

7. NWTN Academic Liaison report

Katell reported that we have had two events to reach out to university students. We have strengthened links with the academic world and can benefit from this

relationship. The Manchester University event happened online collaborating with Dr Anna Stowe, who Katell knows from when she was a student. The panel was a great mix of experiences.

Janice liaised closely with Kirsty Heimerl-Moggan regarding the presentation to UCLan. Some NWTN members generously gave up their time to be on the panel, including Heidi Kerschl. The feedback from attendees was very complimentary. 18 new student members joined NWTN this year, mostly from Manchester University but also Monash University and the Open University. We can also benefit from the academic partnership: more speakers to lend their expertise at events.

8. NWTN Communications

The communication role has become more well-rounded and now includes two people doing tech support, weekly social media, working lunch copy etc. Lots of translators, interpreters and industry professionals use Twitter though as a general rule Facebook is no longer much engaged with. Now we have more regular emails and LinkedIn posts in our private group, in which members have to be manually approved. We are looking into getting a page so people can share news from it. Member Mondays continue; members can have any amount of experience. We will also continue with the blog and welcome articles from members e.g. CPD, events and tools. There is also a forum, initially as a repository for Book Chat and Working Lunch tips.

Janice gave her report and said that she is confident that there will be a regular flow of information and feedback about the Update is encouraging.

9. Website features and content

Laurence mentioned that the Forum feature is serving its purpose for the Book Chatters and Working Lunchers.

We now have a disclaimer so people can see who we are and what we are responsible for. Apart from checking that a member has qualifications, we do not vouch for them or their work. We would like the website to be a bit cleaner and clearer and we have a taskforce doing work on this. The database was imported from a previous website. It would be good to link the Member Monday feature to the member's profile on the website.

10. Election and appointment of Network Officers and Committee Members

We can officially appoint Marjolein as communications officer with her experience in marketing and social media.

The membership secretary position is vacant and will be advertised in the next update as well as in a separate communication.

Laurence thanked the committee members for all their work.

11. Straw poll of members' thoughts on what they want in terms of online events

Sarah has sent Kate information about training.

12. Any other business

The NWTN has received an email about events being on different days of the week. People like a regular event like the Working Lunch at the same time and day each week so they don't have to follow their calendar so closely.

We could discuss the NWTN subscription rate in more detail at another meeting, as long as it is before the membership renewal bulk in September. We can do a poll via Teams regarding the date.

These days our costs are more to do with technology subscriptions and the website though they are still to do with subsidising events. What do we do about the subscription for next year given that in person events are unlikely or people could be reluctant to attend them?

The £25 training grant could be applied by the NWTN rather than people claiming it for themselves.

We could reduce the membership cost to £25 a year. ITI regional groups charge much less but do not have the same directory and website features.

It would be good to have more online events so that more members can attend if they are unable to travel to in person events, so that people can get more for their membership fee.