

Have your say: Time to vote for Editor of The Journalist

It's election time at the NUJ, as members are invited to cast their vote for the Editor of The Journalist 2024-29.

An important update from the National Union of Journalist:

Owing to postal difficulties leading to severe delays in receipt of ballot papers across the island of Ireland, the union's Emergency Committee has decided to halt the present election process and set in place a new ballot to take place digitally to ensure all members get the same opportunity to vote.

A consequential decision was also taken to include in the re-run a candidate, Samantha Downes, whose application had not been received by the union as it was blocked by spam filters, and was therefore not shortlisted.

It is important to note that previous votes cast by postal ballots will NOT be included. Links for the new ballot will be issued by email, so please ensure that the email details that we hold for you are correct.

Elections are held every five year in accordance with the NUJ Rule Book available on the NUJ website www.nuj.org.uk

The following are the **NEW** voting arrangements.

Emails containing ballot links go out on:	Tuesday 13th August 2024
Voting opens on:	Tuesday 13th August 2024
Voting closes on:	Noon, Thursday 5th September 2024
Ballot result:	Friday 6th September 2024
NEC endorsement:	Friday 6th September 2024

CANDIDATES Q&A

There are now 9 candidates in the election, and to help you make up your mind, all have been invited to submit answers of no more than 100 words per question, in a Q&A set by the NUJ President, Natasha Hirst. 8 candidates submitted answers to our questionnaire.

You may also read the applications submitted by each candidate in the members section of the NUJ website at.

VOTING IN THE ELECTION

In order to vote in this election, you must satisfy the following criteria:

- Be a full member, dual member, member of honour or life member of the Union and
- not be three calendar months or more in arrears.

Emails containing your voting link will be sent from takepart@cesvotes.com and appear as being sent from Civica Election Services. So, to help avoid it going to your spam, create a contact for **Civica Election Services** and add the email address: takepart@cesvotes.com.

Where we do not hold an email address for you, ballot papers will be mailed to your home address.

Please contact us as soon as possible, at editorelections@nuj.org.uk if you do not receive your ballot email or have visual accessibility requirements.

The election of editor is unique to the NUJ. It affords members the opportunity to influence editorial content and policy for the next five years.

MICHAEL GRAY



Sean Bell

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

In addition to continuing the excellent work The Journalist has done in covering issues which impact our members across the UK, my major goal would be to dramatically expand our coverage of developments in journalism internationally, from unionisation drives in New York to press censorship in Hungary. This would, I hope, not only establish The Journalist as an internationally recognised force within labour journalism, but remind our members that though they may feel isolated, they are nevertheless part of a profession and a movement that spans the entire world.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

The best way The Journalist can promote greater participation in the union's democratic structures is by reporting on the concrete consequences of that participation – by demonstrating that the NUJ is not an organisation where edicts are handed down from above, but a vehicle for workers to articulate their hopes and put them into practice. We can provide a forum for journalists to speak of their struggles and their hard-fought victories – the results should speak for themselves.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

Any time an editor contemplates a significant change, their first act should be to discuss it with those who will be the ones to implement it, as well as the journalists and photographers whose work would be affected by that change. With that

in mind, I will make no commitments to drastically alter the design or layout of The Journalist at this stage, except to say I am always looking for any potential means of increasing the amount of writing we can feature, without sacrificing readability, clarity and a distinctive aesthetic.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

Much mainstream press coverage of union activity focuses on dramatic developments – in particular, strikes and their resolution – but overlooks the context vital to understanding them, or in the words of the American labour journalist Sarah Jaffe, “the particulars of agreements, demands, tensions, and the realities of power.” While coverage of industrial action should always feature within The Journalist, the magazine's unique position demands it prove in-depth explorations of that wider context, a greater comprehension of which would heighten solidarity across our profession, and leave members better equipped to fight for themselves.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

As I am strongly committed to increasing the diversity of those contributing to The Journalist, I would initially set out to do so through expanding our pool of freelancers; however, as open calls and good intentions can only do so much, I would also liaise with the NUJ's equalities councils for advice on a long-term strategy to improve not just the diversity of our contributors, but also our coverage of, and opposition to, all forms and instances of discrimination, inequality and oppression in our industry and society.

PAT STOCKLEY



Christine Buckley

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

The Journalist is the TUC's best union journal of the year. Here is the winning edition:

<https://tinyurl.com/NUJ-aug-sept-flip>

I will build on that success and ensure the magazine appeals to as many members and potential members as possible with quality journalism and relevance. There are many more stories to tell and challenges to face. AI is a game changer; Trumpian lies, and social media disinformation threaten to make the vision of our former member George Orwell a reality. The Journalist must be a key source of information and debate. See more at votechristinebuckley.wordpress.com

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

It's important to highlight the union's democracy in action – at regional and national TUC meetings; at specialist conferences on issues such as disability, gender, and race. We also have reports from student conferences because their participants are our future.

It's also good to feature democracy in the workplace because that is where most people will first encounter the union's structures. In June I reported from a great reception at the FT where the NUJ chapel invited past officials along to learn from their experience and help build the future.

This helps inspire people to get involved.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

It would be good to add value to the digital edition with interactive

buttons, and links to videos and other features that are not possible in print. It would make the digital magazine a richer experience. It would also be an improvement to redesign the magazine for use on mobiles and tablets along with desktops.

We would need further investment for these changes.

It's worth noting though that in 2022 The Journalist (in digital form) was commended in the TUC communications awards and the design and layout were praised. This is a credit to our part-time designer.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

Industrial activities such as organising, pay claims, disputes, and dealing with health and safety issues are bread and butter union work, and so are prominent in The Journalist. In the current magazine we have the inspiring strike and pay win at Springer Nature which gathered support from an array of Nobel Prize winners. We also hail the success of the PA Media chapel who fought a long battle to win union recognition. And we have a great feature by the chair of our South-West England branch on the importance of getting active across the union.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

I am always open to contributions from all members. And I try to ensure that the breadth of our membership is represented. We have had pieces on disability by our president and carry reports on our black members council and the George Viner bursary scheme which promotes diversity in journalism. We have a wide range of contributors and welcome new writers and visual journalists. We have only two regular columnists – Ray Snoddy who is a renowned expert on the media, and Chris Proctor who ends the magazine on a lighter note, which is also important.

CRAIG GREENSLADE



Tessa Clarke

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

THE JOURNALIST will help advance the democratic value of press freedom.

This unites all NUJ members at this critical time. From the culture wars and online press rules to challenging NUJ leaders and the new government, no topic is off limits.

The magazine will be digitally interactive. NUJ members can debate with each other on Zoom online talks, re-broadcast on Youtube, advertised widely on international social media, links published in THE JOURNALIST.

NUJ members of all backgrounds and views are encouraged to engage, even if they disagree.

Press freedom and free speech – if not now, when?

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

FREE TALK: To promote free discussion I will set up THE JOURNALIST Whatsapp groups for members to chat independent of NUJ leadership. Whatsapp groups include "New Online Laws", "Get More Pay" and, "Press Freedom Right Now."

DEBATE PUBLICATION: THE JOURNALIST will help inform the democratic debate about the NUJ. The magazine would publish and broadcast debates for and against setting up an English Executive Council, the UK region missing from the NUJ's Geographic councils. And debate for and against setting up a Working Class Council in the NUJ's Equalities councils.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

AIM: THE JOURNALIST will widen readership beyond NUJ members.

The magazine will become a talking point. More media workers will be attracted to its content and join the NUJ.

NEW DIGITAL FORMAT:

1) The magazine's front page will be a new "MEDIA NEWS," on media issues of the day, plus photos and videos. The Editor's letter becomes a separate "EDITOR'S COLUMN" on the right hand side.

2) Coverage of membership news should be under one heading – "INSIDE THE NUJ,"

3) Add a new "JOIN NOW" button on the top right hand corner

4) Add a "MEMBERS ONLY" section.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

THE JOURNALIST is a key tool for members to instantly read, interact with each other and reflect on issues during industrial activities.

Under the heading "THE JOURNALIST: instant coverage, feedback and progress" I propose:

MEMBERS ONLY: In a "MEMBERS ONLY" section, THE JOURNALIST should have box summaries of the facts (eg Freelance Chapel voted 75% to strike). It should ask for volunteers to write up the arguments members consider within the NUJ's forums.

WHATSAPP GROUP: A new THE JOURNALIST Whatsapp group INDUSTRIAL ACTION – for members only – can be used by members to chat "live" and seek support.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

As Editor, building on the existing diversity of contributors, I would: BROADEN COMMUNICATION - advertise opportunities for members to contribute to THE JOURNALIST in a wider range of forums including on the new THE JOURNALIST Whatsapp groups I propose.

INCREASE VISIBILITY - add photographs of contributors beside bylines and encourage a video version of their articles on social media, to increase visibility of contributors.

TRAIN CONTRIBUTORS - ensure a larger pool of contributors by training them in the new online media initiatives for THE JOURNALIST.

JUDITH CREIGHTON



Phil Creighton

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

In an age where newsrooms are shrinking and technology is blurring roles, it is vital the union has a strong publication to unpack issues and cheerlead or run a critical eye over new developments. It should fuse news, columns and features to help members with all aspects of modern journalism. It would be a shareable resource, offering primers on all aspects of journalism, and advice from experienced colleagues. It would champion the importance of press cards, seek to boost engagement between members and chapels, have wit and swagger and make people proud of the Union. For more, visit: philcreighton.uk

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

It is bizarre that in the 30-plus years since the internet became part of our lives there is no dedicated for The Journalist on the NUJ website, when it is a link between member and chapel. The magazine is a key part of membership recruitment and should be showcasing how the union can help all who work in the sector. We should look at facilitating helpful discussions online, such as closed Facebook or WhatsApp groups. The magazine should inspire readers and answer questions. It should feature successful Union actions and engagements, from the small victories to the large ones.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

The online version is hidden at the bottom of the NUJ website homepage, it is not in the website menu and needs rectifying. The

format should be either A5 or A4 to make it easier to print at home. The union should be championing print; if The Journalist was A5 it could be posted at Royal Mail letter rate. Links in the online version should be clickable, and the magazine should have a separate website. The Journalist should be a voice that reacts to breaking developments while presenting a thought provoking read for those passionate about all forms of journalism.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

The Journalist currently does not have a section dedicated to the union's activities. Each chapel, branch and council should be encouraged to blow its own trumpet with updates on meetings, action days, new members, talks, retirements, anniversaries and fundraising. By sharing regular news be it in the magazine or on the website, including NUJ campaigns and Parliamentary endeavours, we can help members stay informed and inspired. It is possible to launch tailored email newsletters highlighting stories and features relevant to branches, chapels and disciplines. This will help encourage participation and pride across the union.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

I am deaf, so have an innate understanding of how hard it is to be a disabled journalist, and how technology can help. I have always encouraged diverse newsrooms. Enhancing representation starts at grassroots level: chapels, branches and councils will know of people who should be contributing to The Journalist. The recent series of Doctor Who shows how this can work: cast and crew came from many backgrounds without anyone batting an eyelid. We all have experiences and knowledge we can share. Working together, the Union can be fully representative of all its members, for the benefit of us all.

GERARD CUNNINGHAM / GUTH PUBLICATION



Gerard Cunningham

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

The Journalist must become a "digital first" publication, if it is to remain relevant. This would mean that while it would still publish a scheduled print edition, it would report first and foremost online, reaching members with up to date news using a combination of web publication, newsletters, and where appropriate other means such as podcast and social media where necessary. I want to reimagine The Journalist as a publication that people read first on their phone or computer screen, and can catch up on later in print.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

Everyone knows what the problems are which the news industry and the NUJ face. The Journalist needs to show not only the problems facing journalists and media workers, but to highlight the solutions the union can offer, provide profiles of union members and activists and the work they are doing, and advocate for increased participation to encourage more members to contribute time and expertise.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

Stop publishing a PDF.

It's that simple. A PDF is a format designed to tell a printer what a page should look like. It is a terrible experience for anyone using anything but the largest computer screen, barely readable on most tablets, and impossible on a phone. Meet people where they like, with an interface which presents well designed, readable articles where people read them, on phones,

screens, and smaller laptops as well as in print. Digital First. Not a PDF. There are numerous software options to achieve this, such as Wordpress and Ghost.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

As I noted above, The Journalist needs to show not only the problems facing journalists and media workers, but to highlight the solutions the union can offer. Covering the work of the union at all levels, from chapels and branches to the national (and international) stage is a critical part of The Journalist's mission.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

Invite pitches from first time writers and photographers and arrange for open pitching exchanges. I would also look at audit to identify any systematic, conscious or unconscious biases and ways to overcome them. To this end I would be particularly interested in any inputs from the Equalities Councils.

OZGE EKIN PHOTOGRAPHY



Samantha Downes

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

To grow its readership by using it as a recruitment tool to attract new members to the union and to extend its coverage to reach more of the current membership. While the print version is read by members - TJ needs to have a truly digital version. I would also monetise some of The Journalist's content by putting it around a newsletter paywall; a 'Substack' free to members but with a small fee to non members. This content would include useful guides, training content, union updates and would help bring on board new contributors.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

I would put in place a formal structure where all branches are required to update The Journalist's editor on their work and campaigns. This is also something a more structured website could be used to facilitate. It could bring all the branches together and act as a conduit for campaigns, or potential campaigns.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

I would need to know the budget the union has allocated for TJ before making any unrealistic proposals. I've already suggested a website which can act as a conduit, a 'webzine' with regularly updated content and resources which can also bring together all the microsites which I know some of the branches have. I feel the print version's format could be tweaked but within an editorial strategy - which will have to incorporate budget constraints. In my extensive experience having a

well-run website means the print version will evolve organically.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

This is one of its fundamental roles, and goes hand-in-hand with increasing The Journalist's readership - so that the activities of the union can be seen by more members and more prospective members. My first task if I were elected would be to contact all branches and conduct a survey, which would take the form of a wish list. I think any new editor would need to work alongside key union groups as I believe the editor cannot act unilaterally in this role. I would like to explore what members want before making any more promises.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives, how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

I have a fairly extensive network of freelancers - both online and in real life. I would start by looking for new talent - this is something I've done successfully with other publications I've worked for. Like sourcing a story - I'm an investigative journalist so I know the legwork is needed. Nothing beats real-life networking and approaching and reaching out to different groups - for example Women in Journalism among others. Talent scouting is something I'm very familiar with and I'm prepared to do a lot of that if I'm elected editor.

HELEN PARTON



Helen Parton

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

To champion journalism and provide NUJ members with the insight to future proof the profession, while acknowledging past achievements. I would survey you, the readers, to discover where and how you consume information and adapt The Journalist accordingly, whether that's in print, online or even through social media and live events. I see the magazine as a trusted, professional advisor, giving practical advice for journalists from entry level to the highly experienced. I would meaningfully campaign around issues such as staff pay, freelance rates, clarity on AI, diversity within the profession and better conditions for those juggling family commitments.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

As someone who has been a union member for decades but not held a union position, this would be an opportunity to learn with you, the readers, about what those democratic structures are, how they work and what opportunities there are. Putting faces to those democratic structures is key, so I would again look at how members best consume information and invite union officials to participate accordingly, whether that's through written Q&A, live events, video vox pops or webinars. I'm the questioning, fresh pair of eyes on the tried and tested routes to increase participation!

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

When I edited a trade magazine with very little budget, I worked with the art director to improve the title's

design and layout. We incrementally overhauled the entire look and feel of the publication, from the logo and section headers, down to the font choice and point size. I could do the same for The Journalist's digital format, in the first instance by simplifying the page furniture to have fewer, smaller elements. I would use embeddable flipbook tools to improve readability and make it easier to share content via links. I would also explore sharing bite-size content through social media.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

While it's important to recognise the individual efforts of chapels, branches and councils up and down the country, perhaps this could be largely consolidated into content for The Journalist based around common themes and causes e.g. better pay, saving jobs, inroads towards greater diversity and inclusion. The Journalist should be a unifying force, after all, and we have more that brings us together than the output of the separate mechanisms of the union. That said, rotating a focus, for example of a different geographical area each edition, could be a useful editorial tool in highlighting particular industrial activities.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

Three words: do your research. I successfully broadened out the contributor base as editor of the 100-year old Journal of the London Society by using my existing networks to seek out groups and individuals that offered different perspectives. I could do the same at The Journalist. Being humble and open to suggestions is key, as is in-person networking, as well as being honest about one's own unconscious biases. One of my current areas of interest is neurodiversity and as such this has also led me to a greater understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion. That said, I'm still learning!

KEVIN COOPER / PHOTOLINE



Brian Pelan

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

My vision for The Journalist includes my belief that our magazine must remain available to members in print and digital format. It also needs to be a vehicle for ensuring that journalists are defended in being able to report freely, The Julian Assange case was all about the right for the public to be informed. Our magazine must be to the fore in defending the 'Julian Assanges' of the future. Over the next five years I want The Journalist to be a strong advocate for encouraging more involvement from our members.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

The pages and stories in The Journalist need to be used to promote why our members should be involved in the NUJ. My own branch – Belfast and District – has more than 600 members. The vast majority do not participate in the workings of the union. I am sure this is a similar situation with many other branches. We need to explore the reasons why many members do not get involved. Our stories should reflect this reality. Let us not be afraid of debate. We have everything to gain if we stimulate greater involvement from our members.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

- 1, All stories in The Journalist should be available, for reading purposes, as a separate item.
- 2, We should embed more videos into the magazine.
- 3, We need more long-form journalism rather than lots of small briefs.
- 4, Our front page should mainly

focus on the two biggest challenges facing our members – wages and conditions.

5, 'A photograph is worth a 1,000 words' is still true. I want great photography to play a central role in the magazine.

6, Our magazine must be accessible, in terms of its articles and images, to all members.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

We need regular reports on the activities of chapels, branches and councils. If the situation is weak, we must report it. If our members get involved in industrial action, we need to provide insightful reports on the dispute and the reasons behind it. We need to ensure that we have a good spread of NUJ activists who are willing and able to report on industrial disputes. If our members win, no matter how small the victory, we must shout about it in the pages of The Journalist.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

I would try to establish what is the current diversity of reporting within The Journalist. We should report if the situation is fragmented. We should also actively seek out the voices of the marginalised and those on low wages and encourage them to write for the magazine. Debate should be the life blood of the magazine. Let us start to make some noise that will stimulate our members. Our message should be – It's your paper. Use it and get involved.

CRAIG THOMAS



Craig Thomas

No submission received