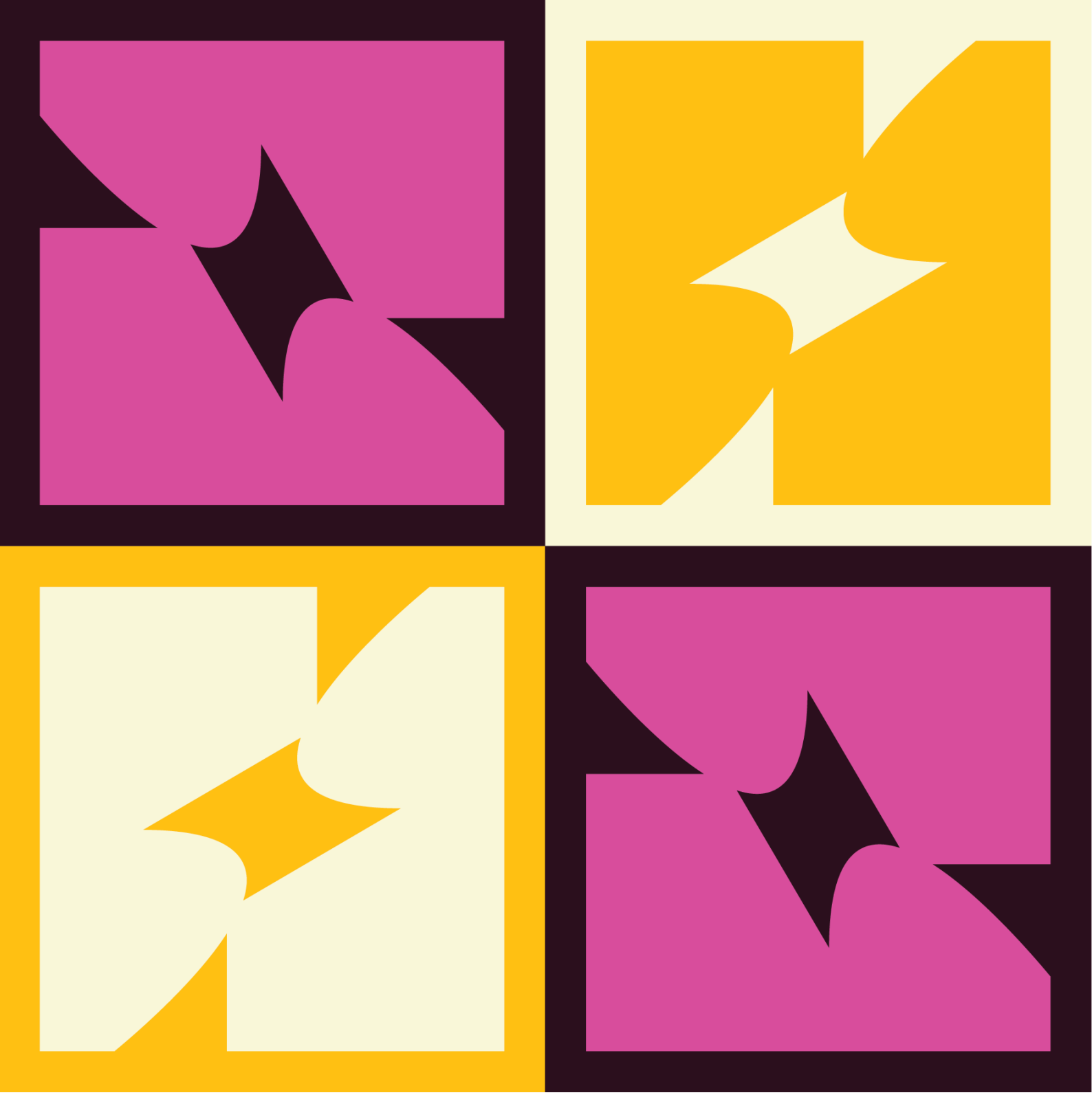


Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society

Review of the Year 2025-2026

ALCS



Our *purpose*

ALCS exists to ensure writers are paid fairly and to fight for their rights.

Our *vision*

We support our members' ability to write by enhancing their income through collective licensing. We fight for their rights and give them a powerful collective voice. We make the complex easy.

1

We support our membership by always being proactive and outward-looking.

2

We strive to be the best we can be in all of our activities and celebrate our successes on behalf of writers.

3

We champion the protection and promotion of authors' rights across the globe.

Our *values* are important to us

We're *bold*

We support our members by being proactive and forward thinking. We develop new streams of income and protect existing ones for the benefit of our Members. We advocate to legislators to better support writers.

We take *pride*

We strive to be the best we can in all of our activities. We are proud to be ambitious for writers and to celebrate our successes.

We have an *impact*

We champion the protection and promotion of writers' rights across the globe and ensure that they are fairly paid when their works are used.



Review of the Year - *Chair*

Having now completed my first full year as Chair of ALCS, I have had the opportunity to develop a much deeper understanding of the organisation, its membership and the important role it plays for writers. Seeing firsthand how the organisation operates has given me a deep appreciation of the work that goes into securing and distributing licensing income for members, protecting their rights and ensuring their interests are represented. I would like to commend the commitment, expertise and professionalism of the ALCS staff, whose work makes that possible.

At the heart of ALCS is a clear purpose: ensuring writers are fairly rewarded when their work is used. As an organisation owned by its members, we have a particular responsibility to keep that purpose at the centre of our decisions, to act in the long-term interests of the writers we represent, and ensure that the organisation has the stable footing it needs to continue its purpose for many years to come.

The Board has an important role to play in that stewardship. As Chair, one of my responsibilities is to ensure that ALCS continues to be well governed, financially resilient and equipped to respond to the opportunities and challenges ahead. I am enormously grateful to my fellow Board members for the time, expertise and judgement they bring to that work. We have a very strong mix of skills and perspectives around the table, alongside a shared commitment to the interests of writers.

Those interests continue to face significant pressures. The ways in which published works are produced, distributed and used are changing quickly, and new technologies continue to test established principles of copyright. It is important that, amid that change, we do not lose sight of the fundamental purpose of copyright: enabling creators to control the use of their work and to share in the value it creates.

There have been encouraging developments over the past year. Following strong and united opposition from across the creative industries, the Government has moved away from its original preferred approach to AI and copyright. This is an important reminder that creators can influence the decisions that affect them, particularly when writers, artists, rightsholders and their representative organisations speak with a collective voice.

There is still much work to do. ALCS must continue to represent writers' interests by helping to shape practical solutions for new ways in which their work is being used. That ability to adapt has always been part of the organisation's role, and it will become increasingly important as new technologies continue to emerge and develop.

The environment in which writers work will inevitably continue to change, but the underlying purpose of ALCS remains clear. We must protect the rights and sources of income writers have today while ensuring those same principles can be applied to new forms of use tomorrow. Having seen the organisation at close quarters over the past year, I am confident that ALCS has the skills, leadership, experience and determination needed to do exactly that.



Lord Clement-Jones, ALCS Chair



Barbara Hayes, ALCS Chief Executive

It is a great privilege to lead ALCS through another successful year as Chief Executive. At a time of profound change for writers and the wider creative industries, the importance of our core mission, ensuring writers are fairly rewarded for the use of their work and that their voices are heard, feels as clear as ever.

One of the most tangible measures of that work is, of course, the money we return to writers, and it has been another fantastic year. We collected our highest ever amount on behalf of our members, and distributed more than £45 million across two distributions.

Review of the Year - *Chief Executive*

Our ability to deliver such impressive payments depends on continually adapting to new uses of writers' works. One example of this is the launch of the Audiovisual Licensing Alliance (AVLA) alongside our partners, creating new streams of secondary income through licensing broadcasts in hospitality settings. At the same time, we face the challenge of unlicensed uses of works – none more pressing than AI.

We have become accustomed to talking about record payments at ALCS, but we should not take them for granted. They do not happen by accident. They are the result of incredibly hard work across the organisation, ambitious and stretching targets, and a determination to keep finding new opportunities to generate income for writers. They also reflect the values we ask our colleagues to bring to their work: being bold, taking pride in what we do and, above all, having an impact for our members.

That determination to find new opportunities is particularly important as the ways in which written works are used continue to change. 2026 has been the year in which AI has become firmly embedded in workplaces around the country. Against that backdrop, I am delighted that we have now made our first payments to writers from the AI workplace permissions introduced last year.

These permissions allow writers to be paid when parts of their published works are used as prompts for AI tools in the workplace. It is the first time ALCS has collected and distributed money for uses involving AI, and an important demonstration that licensing can continue to provide an effective mechanism for paying creators as new technologies and uses emerge.

Of course, the area that has caused the greatest concern among creators is the use of their works to *train* AI systems without permission or payment. This time last year, we reported that we were working with our partners at the Copyright Licensing Agency and Publishers' Licensing Services to develop a licence for AI training. That work has now reached an important milestone, and we have begun contacting the first ALCS members to invite them to participate.

Central to our approach is the principle that authors should have control and choice over what happens to their work. That is why the licence operates on an opt-in basis: creating the possibility of payment for those who wish to participate, while fully respecting the wishes of those who do not. There is still much to be resolved around AI, copyright and the future market for creative work, but our starting point is straightforward: writers should have a say in how their work is used, and they should share in the value it creates.

Representing writers also means listening to them, and one of the great pleasures of the past year for me personally has been meeting so many of our members face to face across the country. These events provide an invaluable forum for hearing directly from members about the challenges they face, how we are doing and how we can better represent their interests.

I'm also excited to look ahead to a major milestone for ALCS. In 2027, ALCS will mark 50 years since its founding. As we approach that anniversary, we have also had to say goodbye to two champions of writers' rights: Maureen Duffy, one of the original founders of ALCS and our Honorary President, and Dr. Jim Parker, who oversaw UK Public Lending Right from 1991 to 2014, both sadly passed away this year.

Their passing is a reminder of the determination and foresight of those writers who established ALCS nearly half a century ago. The world in which writers work has changed profoundly since 1977, as has the organisation they created. But I am heartened that despite all those changes, the founding spirit of those pioneering authors remains as strongly embedded as ever: to champion authors and their rights, and ensure they are paid fairly for the immense value they provide. Rest assured that as we enter our 50th year, that purpose continues to guide us in everything we do.

Our *membership*

During the 2025/26 financial year, the membership of ALCS increased by 2,154, growing from 128,374 to **130,528**.

To make sure we're meeting our members' expectations, we routinely ask our members 'how we did today' after each query. We're delighted that from 1 October 2025 to 1 October 2026, our satisfaction score had an average rating of 4.94 out of 5. We'll continue working hard to do even better in the year ahead.

Engaging with our membership is extremely important to us. Over this past year, we expanded our regional member receptions to connect with our membership across the UK. This year, we held receptions in Oxford, London, Manchester and Bath, alongside focus groups to find out more about our members and their views. We also held a series of online webinars for new members to help them understand the work of ALCS and ensure they get the most out of their membership.



Key figures

130,528 members (as of 31 March 2026)

Amount of money collected:
£47,596,456

Amount of money paid out:
£45,777,136

Number of staff: 42

Overall commission rate: 9%

Our way of working

To ensure members have choice and control over the use of their works around AI, we have developed a Preference Centre within the Members' Area of the ALCS website which allows eligible members to quickly and easily decide which works, if any, they wish to include in the CLA Generative AI Training Solution. The Preference Centre allows members to opt in or out the entirety of their works for ease and simplicity, or to set their preferences on a granular work-by-work basis.

Ensuring the security of our systems and of our members' data remains a key priority for ALCS. As part of our ongoing work to strengthen our digital security, we will soon introduce multi-factor authentication for members accessing their online accounts. Initially, this additional layer of security will be optional, giving members the choice to verify their identity by email, phone or through an authenticator app. This will provide greater protection against unauthorised access while giving members the flexibility to choose the method that works best for them.



Campaigning

Through our campaigning work, we advocate for authors to have their rights recognised and respected. We're involved in projects that raise awareness of copyright, provide educational resources and celebrate and champion the creative industries.

Copyright and support for writers

Copyright is the cornerstone of the creative industries, ensuring that creators retain control over how their works are used by others. Despite this, copyright is often poorly understood, even by rightsholders. Raising awareness of copyright, both in the UK and internationally, is therefore one of our key strategic objectives. We have worked with a number of partners over the year to support this objective.

We're proud partners of the Carnegie Awards, the CLiPPA Poetry Award, National Poetry Day, First Story and the National Reading Champions Quiz. Through these partnerships we are able to reach a wide and engaged audience to ensure the next generation of readers and writers understand the importance of copyright. We also help to support the creative industries by sponsoring relevant projects through our Cultural Support and Development Fund.

Projects we support include Translated By, Bristol, a festival celebrating literary translation, Draw Breath, a month of well-being activities organised by New Writing South and The Arvon Grant Fund, which enabled writers on low incomes to participate in a residential creative writing course.

We also continued to host the ALCS Annual Awards in 2026, featuring three awards that we're proud to sponsor: the ALCS Educational Writers' Award, the UK's only award for creative non-fiction, the Ruth Rendell Award for Services to Literacy and the V.S. Pritchett Short Story Prize. We work closely with The Society of Authors, the National Literacy Trust and The Royal Society of Literature on these awards respectively, and each helps to celebrate authors in unique ways.



Campaigning

Advocacy

Our advocacy work involves everything from engaging with Parliamentarians on policy to gaining media coverage for important issues for writers. We frequently work with other creators' organisations with mutual interests to amplify our voices and ensure writers' perspectives are always considered. Our aim is to protect the secondary rights of UK writers and ensure their rights continue to be respected as new and developing secondary uses of their works emerge.

We welcomed the Government's reset of its position on AI and copyright in March, which followed two years of sustained engagement with ministers, parliamentarians and officials by ALCS and partners across the creative industries. Ahead of this reset, ALCS had been closely involved in the policy process, including through our participation in the Licensing Working Group. Since then, we have continued to work with Government through its new programme of AI and copyright workstreams, including the Independent and Smaller Creatives Working Group, to ensure that the interests of writers remain properly represented as future policy is developed.

Our advocacy work has also continued across a range of issues affecting creators. We contributed to the Government's Good Work Review, helping to develop the Freelancer Champion role and new intellectual property guidance for independent creators. We also helped to establish the new All-Party Parliamentary Group for Freelancers, which has launched an inquiry into the impact of crises on freelance creatives and the support available to them.

Alongside this, we have continued to make the case for new mechanisms to ensure creators are fairly remunerated when their work is used. This has included engagement with Government in support of a UK private copying scheme, through the Smart Fund proposal, which would introduce a system of payments to creators reflecting the value generated by the copying and use of their work on digital devices.

All Party Writers Group

ALCS continues to serve as the secretariat for the All Party Writers Group (APWG) in Westminster. The APWG is a group of Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum who meet to better understand issues affecting writers and represent their interests in Parliament. At the APWG Winter reception in 2025, ALCS Chair Lord Clement-Jones spoke of the need for a fair licensing regime to address the unauthorised use of works by AI companies, while APWG Chair Chris Evans MP paid tribute to the importance of literacy ahead of the National Year of Reading.

Internationally, we provide the secretariat for the International Authors Forum (IAF), which campaigns for authors worldwide. This year, IAF represented authors at key international institutions, including UNESCO and World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), which included hosting an event on Book Resale Royalties during the WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR).



Our *ESG strategy*

ALCS has an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy to ensure that we consider environmental protection, that we embrace social issues and that the company is run in the right way.

Last year, we published our first annual Sustainability Report, providing a clearer and more transparent account of our impact and responsibilities as an organisation. The report looks across six key areas, including governance and ethics, data security and innovation, financial performance, stakeholder engagement, our people and culture, and our environmental impact.

By measuring and reporting on these areas, we can better understand where we are performing well, identify where further progress is needed and hold ourselves accountable. We will build on this work in the years ahead, with sustainability reporting becoming a regular part of ALCS' annual reporting cycle.

Environmental

ALCS offset unavoidable carbon emissions and supported landlord-led sustainability initiatives in energy, waste, and water management.

Social

Reflecting its commitment to equity and inclusion, ALCS maintained a balanced workforce with 52% female employees and 50% female managers. We have a three-year people strategy, including targets for attraction, retention, reward, wellbeing, development, and career pathways.

Governance

The remaining changes following the Governance Review in 2024 have now been implemented. There will be another external review in 2029, with internal reviews taking place every three years.

Governance

ALCS Board of Directors (at 31 March 2026)

Lord Tim Clement-Jones
Chair

Barbara Hayes
Chief Executive

Melissa Franks (Mellie Buse)
Non-Executive Director
(elected November 2025)

Rachael Davis-Featherstone
Non-Executive Director
(elected November 2024)

Chun Kit Fan
Non-Executive Director
(appointed June 2023)

Timandra Harkness
Non-Executive Director
(elected November 2025)

Okechukwu Nzelu
Non-Executive Director
(re-appointed 2024)

Katharine Quarmby
Non-Executive Director
(elected November 2024)

Edwin Thomas
Non-Executive Director
(appointed June 2023)

Board *Committees*

The following Board Committees and their remits were in place for the financial year 2025/2026:

Finance and Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee monitors the financial, accounting, investment, taxation and associated matters affecting the Company's performance and reports back to the Board as requested or as appropriate.

Oversight and Scrutiny Committee

This committee monitors the activities and performance of the Executive team and the supplier who are responsible for developing the new ALCS systems and reports back to the Board.

Nominations and Governance Committee

The Nominations and Governance Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Board on such matters as Committee membership (non-executive and externals), co-options to the Board and recruitment at Board level as and when appropriate.

People and Remuneration Committee

The People and Remuneration Committee reviews, analyses and makes recommendations to the Board on matters pertaining to the remuneration policy.



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