

NAWG Annual General Meeting 19-Sep-2026: Technology Report

Incomplete; work in progress. Last edited 17-Aug-2026.

Here is a report on the technology we use at NAWG, for the Annual General Meeting held on 19th September 2026, by Kevin Machin.

I apologise for not attending in person. This is due to prior engagements, which clash with both this AGM and with the festival.

Achievements

Here's a list of achievements made since the last AGM.

New Website

A new website has been developed, to replace the current one. The estimated launch date for this, at the time of writing, is 20th October 2026.

There will be a **tour of the new website**, given as a one hour workshop, via Zoom, on Saturday 14th November at 10:30 am. Free for members and just a fiver for non-members. Details on both websites and in the August edition of *Link* magazine.

The existing website is considered to be difficult and labour intensive to maintain, as well as not being very user friendly for our visitors. The new site will offer many advantages, both for its visitors and for the staff who run it. These include:

- Improved navigation, making it easier to find information.
- Improved organisation and categorisation of the content material.
- Lots of information about the association and its services.
- A smorgasbord of writing related articles, including many from the past with photographs of our events.
- Multiple areas for members-only information, single password protected. No need to have everything crammed onto one busy page.
- Consistent styling, look-and-feel.
- Easier to add and maintain the site's material.

Membership Data Improvements

Earlier this year, a project was created to examine how we manage our membership data, both in terms of the technologies we use, and the way we go about things. As part of this project, investigations revealed many shortcomings. Improvements, both immediately practical ones and longer term ideas, have been identified.

Some initial improvements have already been made, including tidying up the current records which, for a number of reasons, had degraded over time in terms of data integrity.

Unfortunately, due to other commitments, and some degree of disillusionment on my part, this project is currently in a stalled state. I hope to revive it soon.

Future Plans

Here are some of the plans we have for the future, regarding technology.

Website Improvements

At the go-live date, the new website is deemed to be a *Minimum Viable Product* (MVP), despite the many improvements over the old website. We have lots of plans to further improve it in the future. These include:

- Adding features that weren't included in MVP. Some examples:
 - Calendar display of events and competitions.
 - Additional navigation tools, such as a search facility.
 - Tools for finding writing groups within a radius of a particular location.
- Providing facilities to make it easier to submit material for *Link* magazine and the newsletter.
- Develop an interface making it easier for non-technical people to create and edit the site's material.

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New Shop

The new website is still currently separate from the online shop. We plan to replace the existing shop, which is very difficult to use and to maintain, with a new one. Possibly integrating it into the new website.

At the time of writing, some research has been done into possible solutions for ordering and buying NAWG products and services online, but nothing has yet been decided.

Joined-up Data

We have different sets of information that are essentially disconnected from each other. For example:

- Membership records in a spreadsheet.
- Distribution lists for publications like *Link* and the newsletter.
- A directory of writing groups and their chosen contact details.
- Information about staff, patrons, supporters, and friends of NAWG, on the website.

A significant amount of extra manual work is needed, due to the separate nature of these data. The joined-up data project is about integrating things into a single source, thereby improving reliability and reducing errors due to duplicated and/or unsynchronised information.

A single database will be used to hold all of the core information. Things like mailing lists and writing group directories would be automatically generated from the main data. As a result, a lot of the work could be automated.

Your Ideas

We welcome all ideas you have about the website, the shop, and any of the other technologies we use. Simply send a message to it@nawg.co.uk.