



# Annual NEWSLETTER 2025

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## Date for your Diary

### AGM & Conference 2026

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May

2026

Venue TBC

*Details and invitations will be  
issued early in 2026*

# Chairman's AGM Report

AGM Tuesday 13th May 2025. By Roy Hanley, Chair



Following the General Election and change of Government last year, two personnel of significance to our area of activity were appointed by the Government namely: Shabana Mahmood MP as Lord Chancellor & Justice Secretary in addition to being our NAOPV President; and Lord James Timpson CBE was appointed Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending.

**Executive Committee changes:** Sadly, time takes its toll and we have also experienced changes this past year, with two of our executive committee stalwarts Diana Turner and Ingelise McNulty having resigned during the year due to ill health; and our nonagenarian trustee Shirley Clegg is stepping down at this AGM after many years in charge of our publicity material. All three were active regional secretaries and we thank them all for their dedicated service during their tenure on the committee. I am delighted that Kathy Govett has taken over responsibility for the South West England & South Wales region, the largest of our regions in terms of number of prisons and geographical area, and is developing a strategy of seeking to engage 'deputies,' responsible to Kathy who can provide support to prisons and OPVs in their local area within the overall region and with facilitating the appointment of new OPVs.

John Wells, HMP Frankland is the newly appointed Regional Secretary for the North East of England, but we have three vacancies for regional secretaries in the North West of England, Yorkshire & Humberside and the East Midlands. If any NAOPV members in those regions would like to assist either in part, or as actual regional secretary in those areas, please contact me directly, in confidence, via [chair@naopv.com](mailto:chair@naopv.com)

Thanks are due to Nick Holroyd and Jenny Haigh who continue to provide regional secretarial cover for the East Midlands & North West regions respectively in addition to all their other commitments. John Kennett has stepped down as regional secretary for Surrey, Middlesex & Greater London and is replaced by Liz McQuay. Mary Bruton will be responding or redirecting all [info@naopv.com](mailto:info@naopv.com) enquiries.

**HMPPS Chaplaincy Policy Framework document:** The two Prison Service Instructions (PSI 16/2011 & PSI 05/2016) that have informed the OPV scheme are to be replaced by a Chaplaincy Policy Framework document. This has been in development for some time and a second draft has been produced by HMPPS chaplaincy, but they are still working on various ancillary documents. Once these are ready, the NAOPV (who are considered a key stakeholder) will be consulted for input before being released and becoming active.

**Funding:** The Association continues to be financially well managed and whilst the discontinuation of the MoJ Grant has had significant effect, the established working group continues to appraise possible alternative funding sources and have produced a Fund-Raising Appeal '300 Club' leaflet to encourage "friends" of the NAOPV and OPV Scheme to donate monthly, by single donation, or by Will legacy. These leaflets should be available at the conference and please take some with you to assist our cause.

**Future Projects:** There are three significant projects to be addressed by the committee during the coming year post AGM: a) Review of our Constitution. b) Handbook update. c) Incorporated status of the Association.

**Regional Forums:** It has traditionally been considered beneficial that where there are sufficient OPVs in a prison, they should be organised into a formal branch which can enable staff to readily liaise on all matters concerning prison visiting. This can also provide a means whereby those OPVs can meet periodically and get to know their peers in that prison.

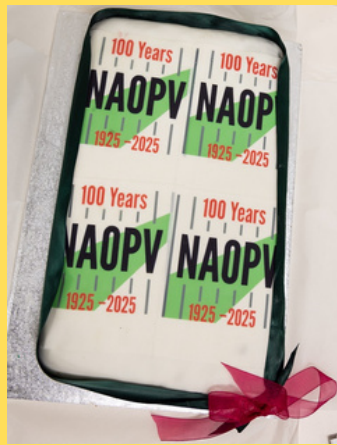
To encourage such camaraderie on a more national basis, various options have previously been mooted such as holding a 2-day conference whereby OPVs could gather in smaller groups to discuss specific topics or even include training sessions. The cost of holding such an event, notwithstanding the individual attendees cost for overnight stays, usually putting the kibosh on any progress.

During the recent pandemic, most official in-person meetings, whether by companies or individuals, had to be cancelled allowing video conferencing to come to the fore. Initially it could be hit and miss, but then attendees became more familiar with the protocols and now most have some experience of providers such as Zoom & MS Teams. Personally, I still prefer in-person meetings especially if they are held with people one has not previously met, but the format is clearly here to stay for the foreseeable future.

In some prisons, often those in geographically remote locations, there may be very few OPVs at any one given time which does not enable them to form a branch; and those OPVs who do visit have little or no contact with other OPVs or the NAOPV in general. In an effort to improve such situations, we would like to trial holding regional forums with OPVs by video conference call, with subject matter to be decided as required, but they can only become reality if there is sufficient support from within a region. Any members interested in such a project, please contact me or Jenny Haigh via the email.

**Promotional Literature:** The trifold leaflet for aiding recruitment of new OPVs has been modified into A4 poster format, which includes a QR code that directs to the NAOPV website.





## James Timpson, OBE, DL, Minister for Prisons

James Timpson, Baron Timpson, **OBE, DL** is a businessman and politician who has served as Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending since 2024. He was the chief executive of the Timpson Group, owned by his father Sir John Timpson, from 2002-2024.



Thank you to all you do, not just so far as visiting prisoners goes, but all the other work that you do as well is very much appreciated. The Lord Chancellor sends her apologies, I'm afraid, but asked me to send her personal thank you, appreciation and admiration for all you do - we recognise how important it is.

It's amazing achieving 100 years. The Timpson business is 165 years old this year. Yesterday I was in HMP Preston which opened on their current site in 1790 - 235 years old. The achievement of what you have done over 100 years is a testimony of how important it is. The relationships that you build up with prisoners is often the difference between someone surviving prison and not surviving prison. Although I haven't done the official role that you do I've been visiting prisons for many years. One of the most important parts of visiting prisons for me is doing what you do - sitting and talking to a prisoner, often on your own, and listening to what they have to say because their voice and their experiences are important. A lot of them are very lonely, very ill, often addicted and the difference that you make having that time with them face-to-face, not judging them for what they've done, but supporting them in the conversations you're having, just offering kindness and friendship, makes a huge, huge difference.

I was in Long Lartin a month ago, going round to see how bad the buildings are and to see what we're doing to fix all the problems with the kitchen and so on. When we were in the visitors hall, I asked if I could come sit with an OPV talking to a prisoner. It was clear that they were starting to build a relationship that over the months and years to come will increase. It won't just make a difference to him, it'll make a difference to the potential that he has to get through this sentence and hopefully move from a Cat A prison further down so he finds it easier to gain more skills and confidence. It's very important that they know they have your confidence because they will be talking about things they can't talk to anybody else about - bullying on the landings, debts they have with other prisoners, issues they have outside prison or just concerns about getting through the sentence and what they can do on the outside. This is a really vital part of the conversations you have: keeping a relevant connection with what is happening outside the prison. I've recruited so many people from prison who, when they get into one of our shops to work, have no idea how a credit card machine works or how a computer mouse works because they've never used one or know what one is. It's those subtle conversations which make such a big difference to someone's confidence when they go through their sentences.

I know you do this with your own generosity and kindness, and what we need to do more of is to support you so when you do get to the prisons to do your visits that the prisoners are there ready so you're not wasting time, I know that is a big frustration. Also ensuring the environment that you're in, the visitors halls, are decent places where people feel safe so they can be open and honest. You are well aware, more than anybody else, of the challenges that we're dealing with - full prisons, delapidated buildings and the general state of the prison estate. You're also aware of the increasingly complex nature of prisoners - we are dealing more than ever with the most complex people in the country. It is the knowledge that you have and the experience that you have built up as individuals and as an organisation which really helps deal with that increasing complexity.

I'm very clear you can't deal with this crisis quickly, it's a long-term problem and it requires long-term solutions. The daily court review into sentencing, coming out imminently, is something I'm sure you'll be wanting to read and see how that affects the prisoners that you're working with. I encourage you to support us on it because what is needed is bold and radical reform and we've taken a lot of advice from lots of NAOPV people and we appreciate that. Hopefully when you see the review's suggestions you will think we're on the right track. It's not just about sentencing reviews, it's about fixing buildings, developing staff, retaining staff and making sure that when prisoners are in prisons with us, they are far less likely to reoffend when they are out. Importantly, it is not just about when people are in prison, but also when they're out on probation as well. Because one of the things that the conversations that you have with prisoners is how they're going to deal with life on the outside and a lot of that is how they work with probation on the ground. It is clear we need to build more prisons, we need to fix the prisons we've got, but we also need to have much more people in probation and being punished there while making sure that they don't go back in to a cycle of reoffending because we're pretty good at giving people a return ticket but we need to give them a oneway ticket instead. Thank you for all you do, congratulations on 100 years, it's an incredible achievement and here's to the next 100 years.



## Nick Ross, CBE, Journalist and Broadcaster

As the presenter of BBC's *Crimewatch*, Nick Ross was for many years one of Britain's most-trusted broadcasters – once described as a 'national treasure' – and is now a writer, non-executive director, conference moderator and campaigner for community safety and evidence-based public policy.



We've just witnessed a rarity—a Minister who knows what he's talking about. His predecessor lasted only 7 months. Before him was David Hines - 6 ministries in 8 years. Since 1989, the average cabinet minister tenure is 8 months. No wonder our institutions, including prisons, are in crisis. Democracy is in trouble, yet no one seems to realize the emperor has no clothes. We're clinging to a medieval system, patched together since Magna Carta, despite living in a technocratic age that demands deep expertise. Ministers come and go - here today, gone tomorrow. At least, for now, we have one who seems to understand his brief.

Amateurism is what I want to talk about today - though here, its virtues are clearly on display. Churchill, allegedly, said "we make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give" Another favourite quote: "Volunteers aren't unpaid because they're worthless, but because they're priceless." I won't waste time thanking and commending you - my parents were serial volunteers, and I regard you as my tribe.

I'm going to speak about Britain's broken justice system - and whether I can include some positives. The answer is: yes to the former, not really to the latter. Not great news for the Ministry of Justice, whose self-proclaimed four missions are all failing.

First, managing courts, prisons, and probation services - a growing shambles. The real issue isn't just decrepit buildings or rising costs. It's not even staff shortages or inefficiency. It's that no one is stepping back to ask: how do we stop this? You can't fix a crumbling system with patchwork solutions. Then there's their claim to promote justice, protect the public, and rehabilitate prisoners. If this were a business prospectus, you'd expect evidence to back those lofty promises. But none of these goals are well-defined or well-measured. Take "justice"—I've chaired multiple ethics committees and still can't clearly define it. In court, justice often amounts to an eye for an eye. It's really vengeance dressed up as virtue. I'm not against vengeance - it's better when the state handles it than a mob. But let's be honest: it's not noble, and it doesn't prevent crime. You can't punish crimes that haven't happened yet.

Yes, prison can warehouse repeat offenders and serve some deterrent function. But the core of our justice system is built on a lie - that justice equals crime prevention. They're not the same. The system assumes deterrence works, that crime is caused by criminals, and that the state is good at changing people. I used to believe all of that. I spent decades on *Crimewatch*, thinking more prison meant less crime. But despite increasing incarceration, crime rose. Then, around 1995, crime began to fall dramatically - and kept falling. You've probably never heard that because news doesn't report crime down? Not newsworthy. Murder down? Not news. But it's true.

Saying crime is caused by criminals is like saying driving is caused by motorists. Yes, personality matters. Prisons are full of people with psychological or behavioral issues. But most of us respond to opportunity and temptation. Human nature hasn't changed, yet crime trends do. That tells us something.

It's not just the poor who commit crimes. White-collar crime, tax evasion, the expenses scandal - temptation crosses class lines. MPs are a good mirror. One survey showed a third wouldn't pay for a second bottle of wine if it wasn't on the bill. Another third wouldn't pay a train fare unless asked. They're not uniquely bad - we are all susceptible when the opportunity arises.

That's why I helped launch the Jill Dando Institute at UCL - to look at crime scientifically, not just morally or ideologically. Because the idea that criminality is deviance misses the point. It's often just opportunity + temptation.

Social theories also had their day when crime was rising. Left or right, we could all blame our preferred scapegoats - welfare, poverty, religion, authority. But when crime fell, all those theories fell apart. In other words, people on either side of the political spectrum were wrong - fundamentally wrong. Their views were ideological, not scientific. Since the mid-90s, crime has plummeted. Burglaries are down 70%. Even unreliable police data confirms the trend. The more credible Crime Survey of England and Wales shows that crime is half what it was - yet it remains invisible in public discourse. Even homicide has halved since its peak 20 years ago.

So if justice didn't reduce crime, what did? The effectiveness of deterrence is far murkier than we like to admit. I can give two reasons. First, as a psychologist, I know how poorly wired we are for term deterrence. If a hot stove only occasionally burned us, we'd keep touching it. We see this in



real life: 75 years after Doll and Austin Bradford Hill showed smoking kills, six million people in the UK still smoke. That's a death-penalty habit, yet people persist. Deterrence doesn't work in theory or practice. Obesity is another example. Even knowing it cuts life expectancy by years, people struggle to change. But drugs like Ozempic are showing promise - not because they change people, but because they change circumstances. The same principle worked in my road accident campaign on road safety. It began as a TV challenge to make a boring subject compelling. We used shocking visuals of car crashes - death on screen, real impact - to make people pay attention and cars slowed down for a bit but then sped up again but it did lead to talks with the Ministry of Transport. I persuaded him that we should set targets, manageable targets, we should be taking empirical engineering and scientific principles, bring in the engineers, bring in anyone we could. Since that time when we started that we were killing 6300 people on the roads - over 6000 is now under 2000. We didn't change drivers; we changed environments. Not by moral appeals or tougher laws, but by redesigning cars and roads. We made vehicles and streets safer even for careless users. The key was not punishment - it was prevention by design.

Here's another reason deterrence fails: people don't know the rules. I asked a man in Pentonville what his maximum sentence could've been. He didn't know. Nor did lawyers or judges I asked. So when politicians demand harsher sentences for knife crime, do they think kids on estates are checking sentencing guidelines before going out with a knife?

I interviewed Enron's CFO - a man behind billions in fraud. I asked if he'd considered the penalties. He said they thought about getting caught, not about punishment. Serious criminals don't know the tariffs, so deterrence fails at the highest levels too.

Right-wing thinkers have claimed rising crime was due to declining religion, respect, or single mothers. But religion has plummeted, most kids are born out of wedlock, and respect for authority is nonexistent - yet crime has dropped. The Left also failed to predict trends. In the '60s, amid prosperity, rising equality, and a growing welfare state, crime rose. Then later, crime dropped even as inequality and poverty increased.

Why does crime rise and fall? Not because of values or social policies—but because of temptation and opportunity. Crime rose when shopkeepers removed counters. My first theft? Spangles—simply within reach on open counters at Woolworths. Car crime rose when car ownership was democratised. Burglary rose when homes became treasure troves. And all dropped when we introduced practical security. Even suicide rates fell when North Sea gas replaced coal gas - less lethal means meant fewer deaths. Opportunity matters.

I teach my students a simple equation: Crime = Personality × Temptation × Opportunity<sup>2</sup>. It's not perfect, but it explains more than most theories. The justice system, meanwhile, plays only a marginal role in crime trends. And yet we treat it like the central pillar of prevention.

Our courts are medieval. I've seen too many cases up close. Juries are chosen for ignorance, barred from outside knowledge, and asked for black-and-white verdicts in a world of grey. Imagine certifying the safety of a Boeing 737 Max using 12 uninformed citizens, guided by two persuasive debaters. You wouldn't. Yet that's how we handle public safety in justice. Trials are shrouded in secrecy. From police investigations to Crown Prosecution Service to jury deliberations - none of it is truly open. We can't research juries. We can't even ask how they made their decisions. It's a travesty of transparency. One day, I hope, we'll separate the emotional need for justice from the practical need to prevent harm. Perhaps we'll even use actuarial tools - like insurers do - to assess risks and guide sentencing. If they can ask a hundred questions to calculate car crash risk on insurance policies, surely we can apply the same logic to crime prevention.

We should also remember policing's roots. In the 1820s, the police had no detectives—that was deliberate. Their purpose wasn't to catch criminals, but to prevent crime. The test of success was low crime, not visible enforcement. Today, it's the reverse. Police focus on prosecutions, not presence. They don't attend when needed unless a conviction seems likely. That's not policing - that's bureaucracy. Still, I'm optimistic. As we realised it was madness to build motorways through cities, we'll realise the madness of our criminal justice approach.

For decades I've said crime is falling - few listened. Now, I believe it may rise again. Why? Because small rule-breaking breeds larger lawlessness. In one Dutch study, when graffiti appeared, littering surged. It's the broken window theory. People take cues from their environment. And right now, we're ignoring the small stuff: fare evasion, red-light running, shoplifting. Staff are told not to intervene. Even law-breaking on roads is routine - cycling through red lights, overtaking on the inside. We risk normalising it all. When breaking rules becomes socially acceptable, more of us will do it. That's what I fear most. The professionals may have lost the plot. But thankfully, we have people like you still trying to make sense of it.

## Charlie Taylor, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Charlie Taylor was initially appointed as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons in 2020 and was reappointed in 2023. Charlie Taylor taught for many years in both primary and secondary schools in London.



It's a real pleasure to be here, especially on the 100th anniversary of this organization. Prison visiting has existed in various forms for a long time, but your continued commitment to an area many avoid is remarkable. You engage with individuals that society often reviles, and that is commendable.

Let me tell you a bit about the Inspectorate. Our core function is scrutiny - we inspect most places of detention across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, excluding police custody and mental health facilities. At its heart, our mission is to answer the question: What's it like to be a prisoner at HMP X? While we recognize the challenges faced by officers and governors, our focus is prisoner experience and outcomes. We also fulfill the UK's obligations under the UN's OPCAT agreement, helping prevent torture and inhumane treatment. We inspect prisons at least every five years - more often if risk indicators spike, such as increased violence or leadership changes. Children's establishments are visited annually. Almost all inspections are unannounced. We arrive, call from the car park, and enter the prison without prior warning, which boosts our credibility with prisoners.

Our inspections take two weeks. Week one involves surveys and initial observations. Surveys are incredibly valuable, and prisoner response rates are high. The following week, our main team inspects the prison in depth. On Thursday, either I or my deputy joins to assess conditions, meet with leadership, and help finalise our report. We use a set of "healthy prison" tests, introduced over 20 years ago that have stood the test of time: safety, respect, purposeful activity, and preparation for release. Respect includes healthcare and fairness, while purposeful activity looks at whether prisoners are meaningfully occupied. Preparation for release includes resettlement and support for family ties - areas where prison visitors often make a huge difference as the prisoner's proxy 'family'.

We grade prisons from 1 (poor) to 4 (good). We also assess leadership, which though not a direct outcome, strongly influences conditions. Strong leadership fosters safer, more effective prisons. Reports are published 16 weeks post-inspection. They include fact-checking, but no interference with our scores or judgments which we discuss at length. Brixton remains poor on safety and purposeful activity, but we noted a bakery initiative where families could commission cakes - a rare positive. Sadly, such good news often gets overlooked by the media.

In serious cases, we issue an urgent notification to the Secretary of State, requiring a formal response within 28 days. We've had to use this more in recent years - for Wandsworth, Rochester, Winchester, and Manchester - due to severe dysfunction, drugs, or violence. Some of these prisons are overcrowded, under-resourced, or deteriorating physically.

Drugs remain a grave concern. The use of drones to smuggle in drugs, phones, and even weapons is increasing. This undermines safety and destabilizes entire institutions. Staffing is another major issue. Recruitment and retention are difficult, worsened by years of underinvestment and the departure of experienced officers. In some prisons, the prisoners have been inside longer than the officers have been alive. Selection processes need reform and governors should be involved in hiring decisions. Staff turnover undermines trust and continuity. In the women's estate self-harm is now nine times higher than in men's prisons. We found much lower self-harm rates in Northern Ireland's Hydebank Wood, a mixed-gender facility with purposeful activity, strong staff-prisoner relationships, and care. Purposeful activity remains one of the system's biggest failings. More than half of prisons received our lowest score in this area. At some reception prisons, only a tiny fraction of inmates attend education. We've seen empty workshops and missed opportunities even in well-equipped jails. This is unacceptable. If people leave prison unprepared, reoffending is more likely. Prisons must protect the public both during custody and after release.

Despite the challenges, there are success stories. Oakwood, near Wolverhampton, is one of the best prisons we've seen - modern, innovative, and achieving excellent outcomes. A prisoner there led a workshop for vulnerable inmates, creating sellable items and building pride. They even held a dog day for eligible prisoners to be reunited with their dogs. Motivation and creativity like this can be transformative.

We've also produced thematic reports like our "Time to Care" report explored women's experience in prison - highlighting high self-harm, insufficient staff time, and long travel distances for visits. Unacceptably, we're still seeing children in segregation for 100 days, as found at Cookham Wood.

To close, the issues we face - overcrowding, drugs, staffing, lack of activity are deeply concerning. But positive examples like Oakwood show what's possible when prisons get leadership, purpose, and respect right, they change lives—for the better.



## **Sima Kotecha, Senior UK Correspondent for BBC News**

UK Editor for BBC Newsnight and Presenter for BBC national news TV and radio covering policy, politics, business, education, defence and social affairs across different outputs (BBC Newsnight, TV news bulletins, national radio, online). She specialises in original journalism and reporting from hard to reach communities.



What you do is truly commendable. To the OPVs, I take my hat off to you. You all have a deep understanding of how our penal system works. Everyone working in prisons - voluntary or not - deserves a medal. It's not an easy job, and having been in over ten prisons throughout my career, I really do admire you. I'm a senior UK correspondent at the BBC, covering criminal justice - courts, policing, and prisons. I've reported in depth on this for a decade, and before that, I lived in the US, reporting globally—from Afghanistan to Haiti and Lebanon during the Syrian refugee crisis. Recently, I was in a Texas supermax prison with the Lord Chancellor. Over the years, I've visited many prisons - Pentonville, Coldingley, Wandsworth, Oakwood, among others - seeing both Victorian structures and private ones like those run by G4S. I've come to understand how these institutions operate, what staff deal with, and how inmates feel about their future - some with hope, others resigned to life orders. Your booklet quotes Winston Churchill: "The progress of a nation is the manner in which it treats its criminals." I often get two reactions when talking about prisons: "Why care?" or "Lock them up and throw away the key." But keeping prisoners in prisons costs the tax payer and most prisoners do reenter society which affects public safety so how we treat them matters.

At Pentonville, during the ongoing severe overcrowding crisis, there were only nine spaces left, it was busy and five alarms went off - the day before was 34 which is normal. Despite low staffing, the officers were dedicated. Selected inmates I spoke to were optimistic, though many described long lockups, gang issues, and lack of rehabilitation. One said flatly that it just wasn't happening—there was hope, but also fear and despair. In Texas, the points system for parole was the main interest. The prison was vast the size of 3,000 football pitches - but cells were tiny. I went with David Gauke, and they seemed open to reforms that reduce reliance on prison time especially the point system where inmates are rewarded for work with time off their sentence.

Oakwood, a privately run prison in the Midlands, was new, clean, and modern—but so are some government-built prisons. It's not about who runs it, but how new it is. Generally, the newer the prison, the better the conditions. The government is taking cues from the US system, but I'd love to visit Scandinavian prisons, where rehabilitation seems to be more effective. With overcrowding and figures like James Timpson pushing for reform, there's a real opportunity to rethink sentencing. Courts are also overwhelmed with backlogs, and many are in prison on remand. Reoffending is high—47% within 12 months of release. Probation officers are swamped, trying to track, tag, and support people. This crisis could drive real change—let's hope it does.

I've thought about writing a book on prisons. News tends to focus on negatives, but we're trying to shift to solution-based journalism. That requires proper access and honest voices. Often, we're shown around prisons in tightly controlled visits - two days, with hand-picked staff and inmates. I have contacts and insight, but real understanding needs more time and access. Compassion - on both sides - is key. A big part of my job is selling stories internally. Even important ones get delayed or bumped. Court stories, for example, are hard to get on air - editors think the public are not interested. I pitch to news bulletins, radio, and online, but it's tough when something more globally important dominates the agenda. Everyone's had important stories sidelined. Still, prison stories do well - people are curious about life inside.

Capital punishment is unsettling. I lived in the US for eight years and visited 50 states. In Texas, there's strong support; in places like NY or California, not so much. It's deeply embedded in some states. Recently, I read they'd run out of the lethal injection drug - it's mind-boggling to do that to a human. With people like Priti Patel calling for its return, perhaps it's not as far off as we think. I can't judge its effectiveness as a deterrent. Documentaries show families supporting it. In southern states, it's part of their identity, and with a Republican government, it's unlikely to change soon.

Probation is vital and under-resourced. I spoke with James Timpson, who called it the "backbone" of rehabilitation. Officers now handle 15 appointments a day, up from 8. I've told the MoJ I'd like to follow a probation officer to show their workload, but filming restrictions make it difficult.

The BBC tends to cover crime from the victim's perspective, especially after conviction. Pieces are brief so we can't always include mitigation unless it's crucial to the story. I presented a Newsnight special on defendants refusing to enter the dock for sentencing. The new Victims and Prisoners Bill allows judges to extend sentences for this. Some argue this adds trauma for victims; others say making them face the victim is necessary. But if someone's serving decades, two more years won't change things. You can't physically drag someone to court. There are many urgent stories - prisoners with nowhere to go after release, so many from the care system in custody, people held on remand far too long. I want to report on all of it, thoroughly and honestly.



# Trustee Review of the year 2024

by Roy Hanley, NAOPV Chair

The Object of the Association will be the relief in need, hardship or distress of prisoners in penal establishments in England & Wales.



**The Mission Statement:** The Association will seek to attain this object by promoting and supporting Official Prison Visiting at all the penal establishments in England & Wales by liaising with the Government Departments and others involved in prison activities, and by bringing Official Prison Visiting together into a national organisation for sharing views and experiences of prison visiting.

**Trustee Statement:** The Trustees have had due regard to the guidance of the Charity Commission on public benefit. The activities reported have been carried out to fulfil both the Object of the Association and the Mission Statement.

**Trustee Board meetings:** In 2024 the Executive Committee held four formal meetings. The January meeting was held via Zoom conferencing and meetings in April, July and October 2024 were held at Resource for London. In addition, there were designated working groups dealing with policies and procedures, HMPPS Memorandum of Understanding, income generation and future strategic development. The Treasurer produced quarterly accounts and financial reports to the EC meetings for discussion and approval. The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 2023 were approved at the 2024 Annual General Meeting held on 14 May 2024. The election/re-election of officers was held in line with the Constitution and Officers and Executive Committee members were approved for 2024-25. The AGM business meeting was held in line with the Constitutional agenda and the AGM documents were uplifted to the website following the meeting. The Charities Commission return was also updated.

**Future strategy:** A formal Structure Review was introduced to provide the basis for subsequent discussion on the structure of the committee and how it should develop to accommodate ongoing challenges.

**Draft Memorandum of Understanding:** A draft Memorandum of Understanding was issued by HMPPS in 2023 outlining NAOPV's delivery and operations within HMPPS prison-based ventures and is essential in facilitating necessary ongoing links with prison chaplancies. The Memorandum of Understanding references how OPVs meet prison service instructions (PSI's), one relating to rules and guidance on managing prison visits and policy (16/2011) and the other to guidance on faith and pastoral care of prisoners (05/2016). As part of the Memorandum of Understanding, data sharing may be possible.

The joint working group met at a Teams meeting on 10 September 2024 with confirmation that the MoU had been signed by the Deputy Director of HMPPS ensuring the continued partnership between the NAOPV and HMPPS. An annual review of the document was agreed.

**Future finances:** The current balance sheet remains healthy, and again, running costs are kept to a minimum. The fundraising working group which started operating in July 2023 to explore future income strands has encountered difficulty in securing sponsorship of the Association. The main source of funds this year has been membership fees, donations and legacies. Options for sponsorship remain on the agenda as the NAOPV is committed to a programme of income generation. At the AGM in May 2024, the Executive Committee proposed that the annual membership fee be increased from £10 to £20, with the retired membership fee retained at £10. The proposal was unanimously agreed and the increase implemented at the individual member renewal date.

The Winter Appeal for donations launched on 1 December 2023 was continued until January 2024 and thanks must go to the generous response of members and non-members.

**Retention & Recruitment:** There has been an increase in OPVs this year and interest in the main, has come via the website enquiries [info@naopv.com](mailto:info@naopv.com). The proposed map of the counties of England & Wales with defined regions and information for interested parties was rolled out and has encouraged website enquiries facilitating a targeted response. One area of increased interest has been from Managing Chaplains asking for support on how to start an OPV group and Regional Secretaries have responded positively with face-to-face meetings, online support and literature. After many years of service, two Regional Secretaries retired this year and there are now insufficient Regional Secretaries in post to support all regions;



several are caretaking more than one region. Present and future strategy for the cover of regions in England & Wales remains a high priority.

**Website & e-bulletins:** Generous legacy donations have supported the expansion of the website, which is under continuous development. Whilst remaining a vital recruitment tool, it updates and informs the membership. The e-bulletins are sent to all OPVs keeping them in touch with the Association.

**Policies & Procedures:** The Associations policies and procedures were reviewed in the first quarter of the year and a Safeguarding Policy and Impact Statement added. All these documents can be found and downloaded from the public access section of the website [www.naopv.com](http://www.naopv.com)

**HMPPS Chaplaincy Policy Framework document:** It is HMPPS's intention to replace the two Prison Service Instructions (PSIs), referenced earlier in the report, with a Chaplaincy Policy Framework document. This has been in development for some time and a second draft has been produced by HMPPS chaplaincy, but they are still working on various ancillary documents. Once these are ready, the NAOPV (as a key stakeholder) will be consulted for input before the document is released and becomes active.

**NAOPV Patron, President & Vice Presidents:** Following the general election, two new personnel of significance to our area of activity have been appointed by the Government: Shabana Mahmood MP Lord Chancellor & Justice Secretary and NAOPV President and James Timpson OBE Minister for Prisons, Probation & Reducing Reoffending who will sit in the House of Lords.

As Patron of the Association, HRH The Princess Royal accepted an invitation to visit the Branch at HMP Norwich and a successful visit took place on 24 January 2024. Thanks go to the Branch Officers and OPVs and also to the Governor and Chaplaincy staff at the prison for their enthusiastic support of the occasion.

In May 2024, following an invitation from HRH The Princess Royal, two members of the Executive Committee represented the Association at a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

## Financial Review of the year to 31st December 2024

by Richard Hemsley FCA, NAOPV Treasurer



These have been circulated to members in advance of the Annual General Meeting and were approved by Trustees at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The Accounts have also been subject to Independent Examination by a qualified Chartered Accountant who has issued an unqualified report as set out on Page 1 of the accounts.

This was the second full year following the cessation of Grant Income from HMPPS in 2022. In the circumstances and despite careful cost control, the annual accounts disclose a deficit of £5144.

Principal items of expenditure related to the costs of the Annual General Meeting (£5095) (2023-£6431) and the quarterly meetings of the Executive Committee of Trustees (£3622) (2023-£4409).

Subscription Income remained steady at £4073 (2023-£4194). In 2025 the Association will benefit from the recently introduced increase in the annual subscription to £20.

Other Income in the year included a legacy of £900, better than expected gift aid receipts of £754 (2023-£588) as well as a contribution of £350 from the sale of greeting cards designed by prisoners.

During the year Trustees created a Development Reserve of £3000 intended to cover necessary database and IT development. £945 of this Reserve was utilized in the year leaving £2055 to carry forward for future development.

Steps are being taken to address the level of Annual Deficit including the increase in Subscriptions referred to above. Meanwhile the Association continues to hold levels of reserves in excess of £30k all of which is represented by bank and building society balances.

# NAOPV Updates

by Jenny Haigh, General Secretary



## Policies & Procedures

Available on the members section of the website:

- Complaints Policy & Procedure – reviewed
- AGM 2025 documents plus archive

## Future funding and sponsorship

With the discontinuation of the grant from the MoJ in 2024, the 300 club was launched at the AGM in an effort to raise additional funds through small regular donations, a single donation or a will legacy. Further information can be found on the website [www.naopv.com](http://www.naopv.com)

At the 2025 AGM the annual Membership fees were increased to £20.

## Honorary Life membership: Dorothy Sterling HMP Stafford

### Recruitment: posters and leaflets

There has been an increase in new OPVs this year but there is always the need to recruit more so we have a new poster with a QR code which will be emailed to all OPVs in the hope that everyone will print off one copy and display it in a prominent place! The poster can be downloaded from the website [www.naopv.com](http://www.naopv.com) There are also some printed copies available from [gensec@naopv.com](mailto:gensec@naopv.com)

## Thanks

The NAOPV wishes to thank the Trustees of The Princess Anne's Charities Trust for their generous donation in support of the Centenary AGM & Conference and HRH for her continued patronage of the Association.

Thanks also go to HMPPS and the MoJ for providing the venue for the AGM at Petty France, which was attended by 103 OPVs, delegates, Managing Chaplains and prison staff.

## 2025-26 priorities

Constitutional review  
Handbook update  
Incorporated status of the Association

## Feedback

**Did you find the AGM interesting & informative? Do you want to give feedback on the day or suggestions for next year's event? Please email [gensec@naopv.com](mailto:gensec@naopv.com)**

# Message from NAOPV Patron Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal



*Having been patron of the National Association of Official Prison Visitors for over 35 years, the need for prison visitors has not diminished despite the continuously changing world.*

*As a solely volunteer association without an agenda other than to visit the person not the crime you remain a force for good.*

*Prisoners need a gradual way to reenter society, and your regular commitment to visiting gives them confidence to return to a life outside. One person visiting a prisoner may seem a small step, but you should never underestimate the value of what you're doing to help and support the prisoners.*

*In the Association centenary year, may I offer you my congratulations and thanks for your many years of support and I hope you'll continue to volunteer for the Association in the future, Anne*



## NAOPV Committee 2024-2025

Front row (left to right):  
Shirley, Jenny, Margaret,  
Kathy, Mary

Back row: John, Liz, Ben, Roy,  
Ian, Richard, Emma, Nick,  
John

## "BRINGING THE OUTSIDE IN" posters and leaflets

You will all have seen the NAOPV handbook and the A3 and A4 posters and A5 leaflets for use inside prisons. These are designed for display on the wings, in the chaplaincy and communal areas to advise prisoners of their entitlement to request to meet with an OPV - "Bringing the outside in" A5 leaflets can also be included in prisoner reception packs.

To aid in the recruitment of new OPVs, a trifold leaflet is available for use externally to publicise the service we offer and to encourage people to become OPVs.

Due to future procedural changes, the revised & printed edition of the Handbook is on hold, but the current version is available to download from the members section of the website [www.naopv.com](http://www.naopv.com) under **Communications/Publications**.

**Free copies of this publicity material are available.**

Contact your Regional Secretary via  
[info@naopv.com](mailto:info@naopv.com)

**BRINGING THE OUTSIDE IN**

*"As an OPV you are not a part of the closed prison community but a representative of the outside world, whose outlook, attitudes and interests can be refreshingly different and who demonstrates that the prisoner has not been forgotten."*

Time to Listen  
Time to Share  
Time to Care  
Could **you** be a Prison Visitor?

OPVs come from all sections of the community

- They are male and female
- They are ordinary people from all walks of life
- They are of every race, religion and colour
- They are unpaid volunteers
- The Official Prison Visiting Scheme is not faith-based.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE? SCAN ME**

Patron  
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS  
THE PRINCESS ROYAL

Visit: [www.naopv.com](http://www.naopv.com)  
E-mail: [info@naopv.com](mailto:info@naopv.com)  
Telephone:  
General Secretary on 01422 376132  
Or write to:  
The Liaison Officer for Prison Visiting  
at the prison in your preferred area

Registered Charity No. 1099041





# National Association of Official Prison Visitors

Registered Charity No: 1099041

NAOPV General Secretary, 33 Daleside, Greetland, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX4 8QD | Tel: 01422 376132 | [gensec@naopv.com](mailto:gensec@naopv.com)

## GDPR Statement

The National Association of Official Prison Visitors hereby clarifies the situation regarding the data we hold on all Official Prison Visitors, both NAOPV members and non-members.

The grant agreement with HMPPS/Ministry of Justice terminated in March 2023, and was replaced with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). We keep an updated record of all OPVs who are registered at prisons in England & Wales but the MoU only requires the NAOPV to provide numerical information, relating to the recruitment and retention of OPVs. The information kept on our database comprises:

- name of OPV
- address
- telephone and email address
- prison at which OPV visits

The database also includes, where relevant, an NAOPV membership number and records payment of annual subscriptions in the case of OPVs who are NAOPV members.

The NAOPV database does NOT include personal information, such as may be given on the OPV application form, nor does it hold bank details.

None of the information stored on our database is ever passed to any outside agencies, nor to any commercial enterprise, nor to any other group or individual.

If, as an OPV, you have any concerns regarding the NAOPV holding the above data, please contact us at [info@naopv.com](mailto:info@naopv.com)

## Who's Who

**Patron:**  
HRH The Princess Royal

**President:**  
The Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice

**Vice Presidents:**  
Prof. Nicholas Hardwick  
Rt. Hon. David Lammy, MP  
The Rt. Revd. Rose Hudson-Wilkin

**Officers:**  
Roy Hanley - Chair  
Elizabeth McQuay - Vice Chair  
Nicholas Holroyd - Vice Chair  
John Kennett - Past Chair

**General Secretary:**  
Jenny Haigh

**Membership Secretary:**  
Margaret Henderson

**Treasurer:**  
Richard Hemsley FCA

**Executive Committee (All Officers & Regional Secretaries plus):**  
Mary Bruton - Elected member  
John Carroll - Elected member

**Regional Secretaries:**  
North East - John Wells  
North West - Vacant (temporary cover - Jenny Haigh)  
Yorkshire & Humberside - Vacant  
East Midlands - Vacant (temporary cover - Nick Holroyd)  
West Midlands & North Wales - Ian Allred  
East of England - Nick Holroyd  
Home Counties North - Ben Benest  
Kent, Sussex, Essex & SE London - Roy Hanley  
Surrey, Middlesex & Greater London - Elizabeth McQuay  
South West & South Wales - Kathy Govett

