



THE ORWELL FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

Registered Charity No 1161563



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION



TRUSTEES

Lord Ken Macdonald KC **Chair**
Kamran Abbasi *joined 30/01/25*
Stephen Armstrong
Najma Finlay *joined 09/10/25*
Janine Gibson *joined 30/01/25*
Kathy Harvey *until 07/07/25*
Gavin Kelly
Deborah Lincoln
Sameer Padania
Andrew Peck
Jack Sedman *joined 09/10/25*
Liz Sich *until 07/07/25*
Su-Mei Thompson
Boyd Tonkin *until 07/07/25*
Andrew Williams *until 06/09/25*
Ruby Alexander *Trainee Trustee until 09/10/25*
Bella Rew *joined as Trainee Trustee 09/10/24*
Noah Robinson *Trainee Trustee until 09/10/25*

COUNCIL

Richard Blair
Bill Hamilton
David Taylor
Hugh Tomlinson KC
Archie Blair *joined as Trainee Council Member 30/01/25*

MANAGEMENT

Professor Jean Seaton **Director**
Liz Wallace **Deputy Director**
Georgina Faulkner **Finance Manager**
Tabby Hayward **Youth Prize Manager**
until 12/12/24
Sam Hill **Youth Prize Manager** *from 06/01/25*
James Tookey **Books Prizes Manager**
Jeremy Wikeley **Communications Manager**
Graham Self **Administrator**

REGISTERED OFFICE

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BANKERS

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London NW1 7PJ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

Gravita Audit Oxford LLP,
First Floor, Park Central 40-41, Park End
Street, Oxford OX1 1JD

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 August 2025. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), *Accounting and Reporting by Charities* (revised 2015 FRS 102) financial statements and comply with the Charity's governing constitution.



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

www.orwellfoundation.com



THE ORWELL FOUNDATION

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Registered charity No. 1161563

Front cover images: (from top left to right)

- Lorna Tucker, Orwell Prize for Reporting Homelessness 2025 judge, and Greg Hurst, Director of Communications and Public Engagement at the Centre for Homelessness Impact, outside Conway Hall^A
- 2025 Orwell Youth Prize judges Manveen Rava and Gary Snapper presenting the 2025 awards^A
- Director of The Orwell Foundation Jean Seaton with Orwell Prize for Journalism 2025 chair of judges Matt Walsh^A
- Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe in conversation at Southbank Centre following her 2024 Orwell Lecture^A
- 2025 Orwell Youth Prize recipients on stage at Conway Hall^A
- 2025 Orwell Prize for Political Fiction judges Laura Battle, Matthew Beaumont and Jim Crace outside Conway Hall^A
- Graphic created for Orwell Youth Fellows project *Songs of Cygnus*^B
- Clive Cowdery, Founder and Chairman of the Resolution Group, announcing the relaunch of The Orwell Prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils at the 2025 Orwell Prize Ceremony^A
- Guests at the 2025 Orwell Prize Ceremony^A
- Surfing Sofas performing at the 2025 Orwell Prize Ceremony^A
- Donal Ryan, 2025 Orwell Prize for Political Fiction winner with Political Fiction chair of judges, Jim Crace^A
- Jenny Kleeman, 2025 Orwell Prize for Journalism winner, receiving her award for Ken MacDonald, The Orwell Foundation Chair of Trustees^A

Image on previous page:

- 'Orwell at work'^C

Photo credits:

^A Facundo Arrizabalaga

^B Orwell Youth Fellows

^C Courtesy of the Orwell Archive, UCL Special Collections

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INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CHAIR



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

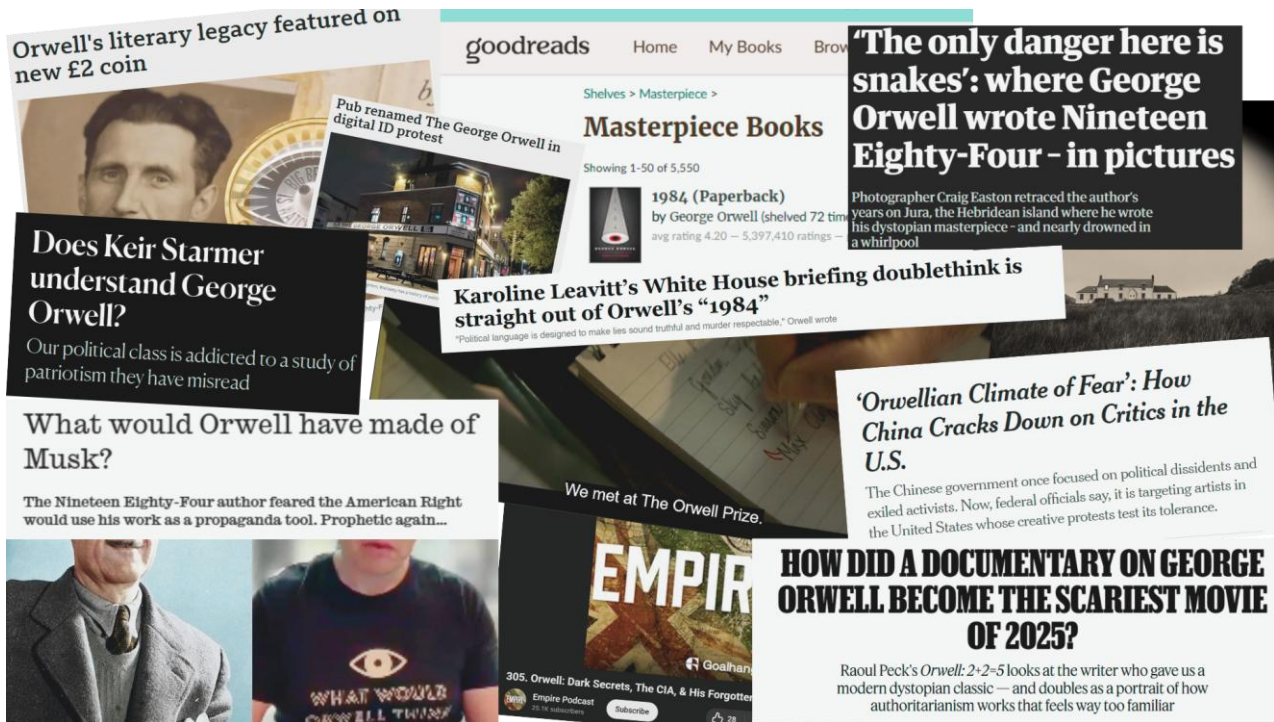
2025 has been another busy and successful year for The Orwell Foundation, which continues to build its reputation for celebrating the legacy of George Orwell, and for awarding the UK's premier prizes for journalism and political writing. Again, my thanks go to our hard working and committed staff and to our enthusiastic and much valued trustees. I also pay the warmest tribute to the continuing generosity of our wonderful donors and supporters. In a challenging environment for fund-raising, the Foundation depends on your far-sighted support. Your generosity means everything to us.

The world remains a place of disinformation and dark propaganda. Assaults on objective truth have a clear aim- to drain confidence that it is any longer possible to distinguish between what is real and what is false. This perversion of human understanding, and its inevitable spawning of cruelty and violence, were foreseen by Orwell in many of his greatest works. In his attachment to truth, clarity and honest writing, he provided a beacon that burns brightly, shaming corruption in public discourse, even in our world today.

So, once again over this past year, our annual festival, our prizes and our lectures have reflected this incomparable legacy, needed now more than ever. Once again, with your help, we are proud to continue our work in George Orwell's honour, remembering always his lifelong ambition 'to make political writing into an art'.

Lord Ken Macdonald KC
Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Orwell Foundation

GEORGE ORWELL TODAY



In Britain in 2025, protestors against Government policies have attacked 'Orwellian' arrests just as right-wing media outlets have criticised France's President Macron for what they perceive as 'Orwellian free speech crackdowns'. It has become impossible to track the many, varied – and often contradictory – uses and abuses of Orwell's name and values in the media and across political life. This is true nowhere more so than in the US. As Orwell biographer and member of our Council, DJ Taylor, commented so astutely in *The Observer*

'The Nineteen Eighty-Four author feared the American Right would use his work as a propaganda tool. Prophetic again.'

Before Orwell's death in January 1950, a statement penned by him appeared across the Atlantic. As Taylor states, it confirmed that his final, and most celebrated, work of fiction was not an attack on socialism per se but rather an exposé of totalitarianism. As the tuberculosis that was soon to kill Orwell took hold, he became acutely aware of the ways in which his dystopian novel would be used by political opponents on both sides of the divide. Yet, it is important to remember that, around the world, George Orwell's writing encapsulates the hopes, as well as the fears and schisms, of our time.

One shining and perhaps little-known example of this, comes in his devotion to environmentalism, decades before the cause was widely understood. In 1946 he wrote:

'The planting of a tree... is a gift which you can make to posterity at almost no cost and with almost no trouble, and if the tree takes root it will far outlive the visible effect of any of your other actions, good or evil.'

The surviving copies of his domestic diaries, housed with the rest of the UNESCO-registered [George Orwell Archive](#) in University College London, detail the goats, geese and chickens kept by George and his wife, Eileen, at their Hertfordshire cottage in the late 1930s. Attention and delight is given to the bounty of vegetables, fruit and flowers they produced and the number of eggs laid.

What is clear as we consider Orwell's legacy, is that, through his writing and the way in which he lived his life, he embodied intellectual courage, valued decency and integrity and, above all, respect for the truth. He believed firmly in the right to freedom of expression and he would seek to engage in difficult conversations, not shut them down. And so, at this moment of great global insecurity, it is a source of hope to all of us in the Foundation that readers continue to be drawn to Orwell's journalism, non-fiction books and novels in such numbers.

HOW THE FOUNDATION WORKS TO KEEP HIS LEGACY ALIVE

The Orwell Foundation is the registered charity, authorised by the estate, to uphold the visionary writer's impressive legacy. In her Orwell Lecture (December 2024), Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, summarised beautifully what our charity exists to do:

"The Orwell Foundation has done remarkable work in bringing together writers, scholars, academics and journalists to acclaim and encourage what meant so much to George Orwell himself, including freedom and truth. Through his graceful explorations of these themes in fiction and essays alike, Orwell warned us of the rise of totalitarianism. It remains important to celebrate freedom, specifically during hard times such as those we currently bear witness to, with democracy in decline and humanity at risk."

It began as a single prize - The Orwell Prize – funded by Orwell's first biographer, the late Sir Bernard Crick. He devoted his royalties to encourage the work of young writers and the first Orwell Prize was awarded in 1994. Soon, the annual lecture in George Orwell's memory was added, thanks to support from *The Political Quarterly*. Professor Jean Seaton took over as Director in 2007 and, with the generous support of Richard Blair, The Media Standards Trust, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and many others, she went on to grow the authority and reach of the charity's work. Professor Seaton launched a suite of respected prizes, grew a Youth Prize and ran wide-ranging programmes of challenging events, dramatised live readings and important lectures.

Three decades on from their inception, the Orwell Prizes are among the most prestigious in the English-speaking world, praised for their independence and integrity. In 2025, the Foundation runs four *adult* prizes in addition to The Orwell Youth Prize:

1. The Orwell Prize for Political Writing (non-fiction books)
2. The Orwell Prize for Political Fiction
3. The Orwell Prize for Journalism
4. The Orwell Prize for Reporting Homelessness (sponsored and supported by the Centre for Homelessness Impact since 2022)
5. The Orwell Youth Prize

In all that we do, we aim to use Orwell's name, and authority scrupulously. Through our writing Prizes, open to all secondary school children and adults in the UK (and students following a British curriculum abroad), we work to inspire and support the current, and the next, generation of clear, brave writers. Orwell's commitment to truth and clarity of expression is rightly valued across the world while his warnings about the corruption of language and the capacity of power and technology to control even consciousness speak to the challenges of our era.

FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC REVIEW 2025 - 2030

In May 2025, the Orwell Foundation's Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board, setting out 3 key aims for the charity over the next five years:

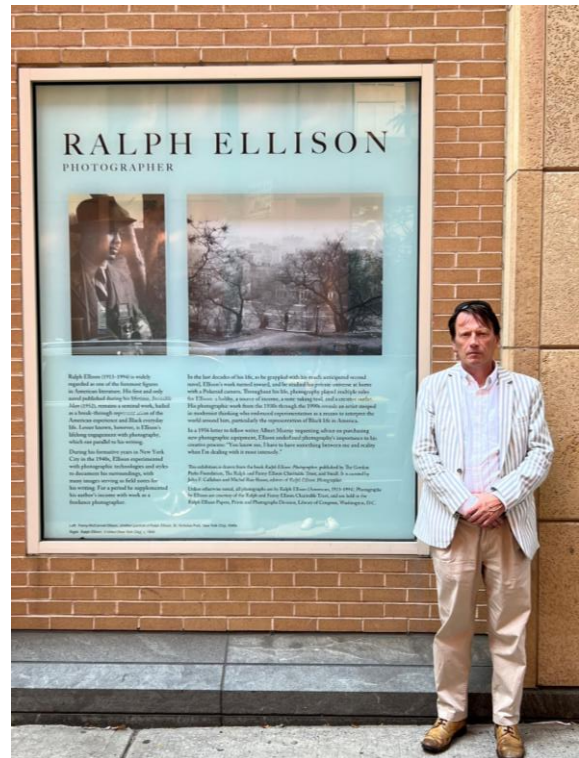
1. Cultivating understanding of Orwell and his works
2. Connecting with audiences on Orwell's values
3. Encouraging courageous, clear new writing and journalism

Please see the attached presentation (appendix 1) for greater detail on the roadmap to achieving these aims but a key element is that we plan to take forward the Prizes and associated events in reach and scope, expanding some internationally. Launching the Orwell Foundation fully in the United States is central to our mission because this is where Orwell is most contested and where we believe his values are best placed to make a difference to public life.

We developed our work in this area with two trips to New York this year. In September 2024, the Foundation's Deputy Director and Council Member, and Orwell biographer, David Taylor visited the Lotos Club where they met Dr. Charles Coutinho, who hosts a podcast on New Books Network and kindly offered his support as a Patron. They also had fascinating meetings with curators at The Morgan Library and New York Public Library and met key faculty members at NYU including its Head of History and lead curator for its Tamiment-Wagner Collections. It was here that the idea for the 2026 Kimmel Windows exhibition took form.

In March 2025, Orwell's son, Richard Blair joined David Taylor and Liz Wallace on a second trip to New York. They held meetings at Columbia Journalism School, with journalists and executives from TIME Magazine and Semafor, and with Russell Pennoyer, direct descendant of JP Morgan who grew up in the house attached to the Morgan Library. The Foundation team gave talks in the city's Lotos Club and to the New York staff of Argus Media (annual sponsors of the Foundation). In all meetings, they explored the potential for setting up an International Orwell Prize for Journalism as well as speaking to potential donors. Among the guests at the Lotos Club talk was New York Literary Agent, Ann Tanenbaum, who generously offered her support as a patron.

KIMMEL WINDOWS EXHIBITION



From March 2026, New York University's Kimmel Windows will feature a timely exhibition – *Orwell and Truth* - the first of its kind - curated in partnership with The Orwell Foundation and University College London. It is set to run through to October 2026.

While many Americans study *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* at school and might already be familiar with the visionary British writer's less celebrated novels and journalism, this exploration of Orwell's life and works takes a closer look, interrogating and celebrating Orwell's core values from being born into what he called a lower-upper-middle class family until his death aged 46 of Tuberculosis. The importance he placed throughout this short life on decency, integrity, bravery and fidelity to truth shine out from this collection of manuscripts, diaries, photographs and keepsakes.

At the exhibition launch in New York will be Orwell's Great Grandson, Archie Blair; Orwell biographer, David Taylor; the Provost of UCL, Dr Michael Spence; senior members of The Orwell Foundation and NYU faculty.

This exhibition will examine where, when and how Orwell developed the interests, experience and characteristics that made him this most exceptional of writers. Though it was in the 1930s and '40s that he warned about the dangers of unchecked power and excessive limits on freedom of expression, the enduring relevance of his warnings around the world and the importance he attached to truth, demand the forensic attention of us all today.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE WRITE AND THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM

We continue to work with teachers across the UK, to help plug gaps in the curriculum and encourage critical thinking. As far as we know, we remain the only national creative writing prize to offer personalised feedback to every student who enters. As one teacher told us recently,

“We use the Orwell Youth Prize as a way of engaging our students’ interest and engagement in the wider world. Like all teenagers, they have an opinion and want to express it... From a pedagogical point of view we have found the feedback students receive on their first drafts to be highly valuable.”

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH UCL

At every opportunity, we seek to use our new global presence to fortify our charity’s finances, while simultaneously cementing our relationship with UCL – *London’s Global University*.

We were pleased to receive a message from UCL’s Provost towards the end of the financial year, reaffirming the deep ongoing relationship between the Foundation and the university. Provost, Sir Michael Spence, and head of Arts and Humanities, Stella Bruzzi, stated that they were excited to renew their commitment to collaboration between UCL and the Orwell Foundation, as they look forward to celebrating their bicentennial, *UCL200*, in 2026. They spoke of the numerous plans in the works, including hosting the Orwell Awards back on campus, a live reading of *Animal Farm* and the exhibition in New York in March 2026. They thanked us for our support and for being so willing to engage with their anniversary.

In addition, the Advisory Group for the George Orwell Archive, comprising UCL faculty and Orwell Foundation management and Council Members, was reformed and held 2 meetings during the year, with a view to making the archive more accessible and, ideally with some of it on a permanent/ semi-permanent display.



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

It was another exciting year for The Orwell Foundation, connecting with audiences up and down the UK and in the United States. In 2024, we grew our membership scheme as a way of engaging with supporters of our work, running events in London specifically for Friends and Patrons able to join. We ran events for anyone interested in the various aspects of our work and/ or the values of George Orwell. We are grateful to everyone who has joined us as Patrons and Friends as well as those who subscribe to our newsletter, our Substack accounts and all who attend our events.

THE 2025 ORWELL PRIZES

The Orwell Prizes aim to encourage good writing and thinking about politics, with our independent judges asked to find winning entries which best meet Orwell's own ambition 'to make political writing into an art'. In addition to their prizes each winner also received a Folio Society copy of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* signed by George Orwell's son Richard Blair, in the 75th anniversary year of the book's publication.

The Orwell Prizes exist to champion creativity and to explore plurality of opinion. We aim to nourish the most courageous, clear new writing and thinking about politics, in its widest possible sense. We curate our independent judging panels, to allow for a wide range of opinions, experience and interests. We are not interested in curating echo chambers but rather, as Orwell did, we seek to hold open the door for difficult conversations. Ultimately, we ask our judges to find winning entries which best meet Orwell's own ambition 'to make political writing into an art'.

Since The Orwell Prize was awarded for the first time in 1994 the number of categories has grown to include awards showcasing writing and reporting which draws on the full range of Orwell's contemporary legacy: for Political Fiction, for social reporting and, since 2023 for Reporting Homelessness. Each Prize is worth £3,000 to the winner, though this will rise to a minimum of £5,000 for each of the 'adult' prizes from next year.

The Orwell Foundation is grateful to all the judges, our founding patron Richard Blair, founding sponsors The Political Quarterly and newer sponsors the Centre for Homelessness Impact, Argus Media and partners University College London and A. M. Heath; also to all our Friends, Patrons and volunteers for making these awards possible.

On Wednesday 25th June, The Orwell Foundation celebrated the finalists and announced the winners of the 2025 Orwell Prizes at a wonderful ceremony at Conway Hall, in Bloomsbury, central London. It was an evening which saw winners and runners-up of The Orwell Youth Prize join the adult celebrations for the first time, rather than having their own separate event. It was an emotional and memorable night for all of them, who stood together on the stage with their certificates and prizes, as it was for the audience cheering them on!

Our Chair, Lord Macdonald concluded the evening by paying tribute to our outgoing Director, Professor Jean Seaton, and her unparalleled contribution to the Orwell Prizes, in what was her final awards ceremony. The applause for Jean at the end went on for some minutes and was rightly extremely raucous!

THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR JOURNALISM

Winner of The Orwell Prize for Journalism: Jenny Kleeman

For long-form journalism and podcasts for The Guardian, The Financial Times and BBC Radio 4.



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

The Orwell Prize for Journalism is awarded to a journalist for sustained reportage and/or commentary working in any medium. Dr Matt Walsh, head of Cardiff University's school of Journalism, Media and Culture chaired this year's Journalism Prize, with panelists Isabel Hardman, Assistant Editor of the Spectator; Maryam Moshiri, Chief Presenter at BBC News; John Pienaar, Times Radio Presenter; and Jonathan Shainin, founder of *The Guardian* Long Read.

Chair of Judges, Matt Walsh said about the winning entry:

"The hallmark of all of Jenny Kleeman's reports is her empathetic analysis of people with extraordinary ambitions or in life-changing circumstances. Her writing brings out the humanity of her subjects with emotional intelligence and great sensitivity. Her writing on American pronatalists, or Israelis who want dead soldiers to live on through harvesting their semen, never stooped to cliché or caricature, even when it shocked. Orwell wanted good prose to have purpose and reject humbug, and Kleeman's writing fits that mould."

THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR REPORTING HOMELESSNESS

Winner of The Orwell Prize for Reporting Homelessness: Simon Murphy
For reportage for *The Mirror* in print and video.



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

Dr Lígia Teixeira Chief Executive, Centre for Homelessness Impact chaired the 2025 Reporting Homelessness Prize panel with judges Robert Booth, Technology Editor at The Guardian; filmmaker Lorna Tucker; and Caroline Wheeler, Political Editor of The Sunday Times.

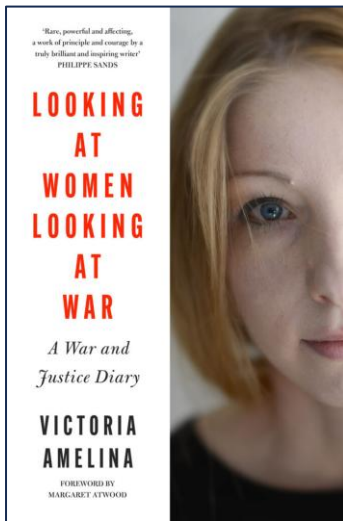
Chair of Judges Ligia Teixeira said of the winning entry:

"It's important and commendable that journalism for a large popular audience challenges misconceptions about homelessness, so The Mirror's reporting of how homelessness impacts women in different ways stood out. Congratulations to Simon Murphy for informing public understanding on the complexities of homelessness."

And judge Lorna Tucker added:

"Simon Murphy's reporting for The Mirror was not only incredibly well written, but also excited me that red top newspapers are highlighting such a pressing issue in such an ethical way."

The Orwell Foundation and Centre for Homelessness Impact continued to offer individual feedback to entrants with lived experience, to encourage them to pursue their writing further.



THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR POLITICAL WRITING

Winner of The Orwell Prize for Political Writing: Victoria Amelina
Looking at Women, Looking at War

The Orwell Prize is the UK's most prestigious prize for political writing and continues to attract judges and entries of the highest quality. The 2025 Orwell Prize for Political Writing was chaired by Kim Darroch, former UK ambassador to the USA during Trump's first presidency. He was joined by the sociologist and political scientist Colin Crouch; ex-Labour MP and Shadow Culture Media and Sport Secretary, Thangam Debbonaire; historian and journalist Katja Hoyer; and Cindy Yu of The Spectator.

The judging panel said of the winning entry:

"Victoria Amelina was a successful Ukrainian novelist, and founder of a book festival, living in the Donetsk region of Eastern Ukraine. The Russian invasion stripped all of this away overnight. Rather than fleeing the country, she travelled it, supporting humanitarian projects, helping others evacuate, researching war crimes, and chronicling the harrowing, sometimes surreal, challenges and experiences of living in a war zone. Then, on 27 June 2023, she was in a pizzeria in Kramatorsk when it was hit by a Russian missile. Sixty-four were injured and thirteen killed. Victoria was amongst them. Her book, Looking at Women, Looking at War, put together after her death by a group of friends and colleagues, is unavoidably fragmentary – a collection of diary entries, interviews, audio files, notes and drafts. But it is all the more powerful for its episodic structure, conjuring up the reality of daily life when mere survival is an achievement. She brings to her narrative the acuity of a journalist and the artistry of a born writer. The result is an unforgettable picture of the human consequences of war."

Amelina's prize was received by her husband Alex Amelin and publisher Arabella Pike.

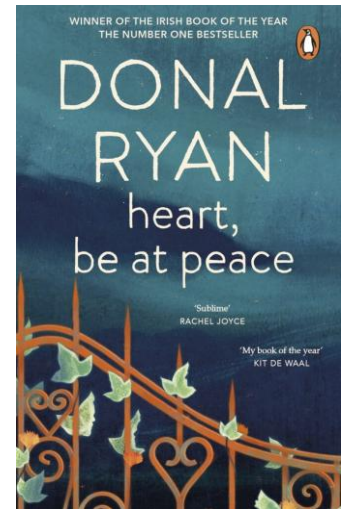


Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR POLITICAL FICTION

Winner of The Orwell Prize for Political Fiction: Donal Ryan
Heart, Be At Peace

Our 2025 judges were award-winning novelist and playwright Jim Crace (chair), Laura Battle, senior editor at FT Weekend; author and professor of English Literature at University College London, Matthew Beaumont; and the author, journalist and critic, Anita Sethi.



Chair Jim Crace said of the winning entry:

“We have an outstanding shortlist of eight political novels for this year’s Orwell Prize for Fiction. All of them are winners. But the single work that has finally emerged as our overall champion is Donal Ryan’s Heart, Be at Peace. For its clarity. For its twenty-one perfectly pitched voices. For the neatness and breadth of its form. For its humanity and kindness. Here is a small, deprived community in rural Ireland – after the Good Friday Peace Accord and the collapse of the Celtic Tiger – suffering and recovering from the bruises of its political and economic past. The boom years – in both senses of that word, might be over – but, in Donal Ryan’s exceptional Heart, Be At Peace, the echoes still reverberate and hum.



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

THE CRICK PRIZE

Winner of The Crick Prize: James Hampshire

'Full-Fat, Semi-Skimmed or Skimmed?' The Political Economy of Immigration Policy since Brexit



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

The Crick Prize, for the best essay in *The Political Quarterly* magazine, is named after the founder of The Orwell Prizes, Sir Bernard Crick.

All of our Orwell Prize winners receive free subscriptions to *The Political Quarterly* magazine, which addresses current issues through serious and thought-provoking articles, written in clear jargon-free English.

THE ORWELL YOUTH PRIZE – A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR!

In 2024-25, we received 1476 final entries, which represented an increase of 661 final entries compared to the previous year. In total, including both feedback and final entries, we received 1893 submissions on the theme, 'Freedom Is...'

The Prize, open to all 11–18-year-olds in the UK and to those studying a British curriculum abroad, is unique among young people's writing prizes. Every entrant can request individual feedback before submitting an improved draft. This is made possible by a wide network of expert readers and judges who are deeply immersed in young people's writing, a network that has been built and developed over more than a decade of running the Prize.

We also ran highly successful regional and mini-hub events in areas of social deprivation, welcoming students from local non-selective state schools. These included a regional hub in partnership with the University of Sunderland and a mini-hub at Barr Hill School in Coventry.

59% of entries received came from non-selective state schools, up from 42% in the previous year. This was broadly mirrored in our final shortlist, made up of 60% state school students.

WINNERS AND RUNNERS-UP



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

THE ORWELL FOUNDATION TRUSTEES' REPORT - YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

Our winners and runners-up were selected by our judges, Manveen Rana, Anthony Anaxagorou, and Gary Snapper. They selected two winners and three runners-up from each of the three age categories: Years 7–9, 10–11, and 12–13.

The winning and runner-up entries covered a full range of forms, including stories, essays, journalism, and poems. Themes included the threat of AI to our personal freedom, protest, battling with health conditions, conflict, and more.

THE ORWELL YOUTH FELLOWS

We continue to be very proud of our ever-growing cohort of past winners and runners-up of The Orwell Youth Prize: The Orwell Youth Fellows. They are an exceptionally collaborative, supportive, and creative group, now ranging in age from 13 to 24.

Through their monthly, facilitated virtual meetings, the Fellows form ideas, start conversations, and develop new writing that responds to the society we live in. They also play an important role in supporting other young writers to engage with the Prize, having had a hand in developing the 2026 theme, 'Truth.'

It has been an incredible year for their project on Substack, which received a total of nearly 20,000 views on the *Songs of Cygnus* publication, with more expected for their next project in 2025–26.

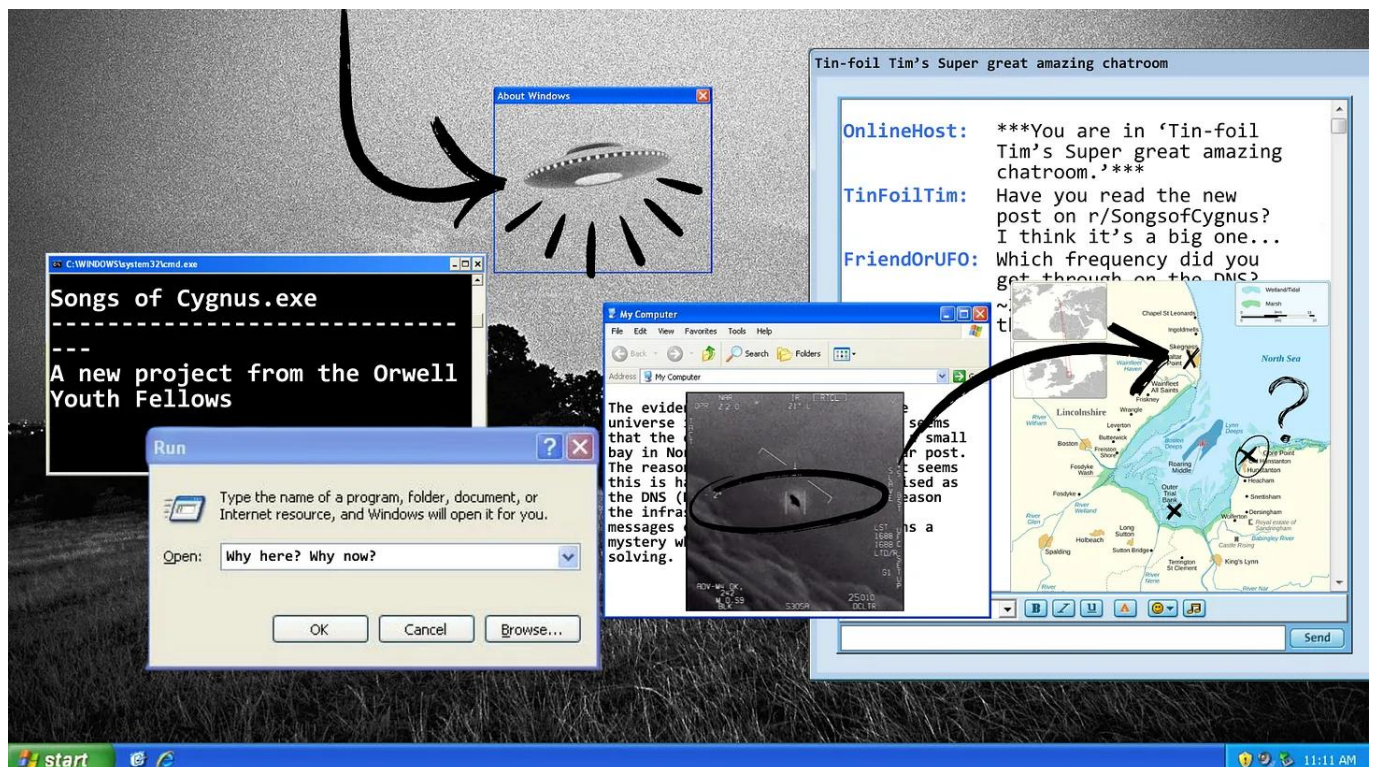


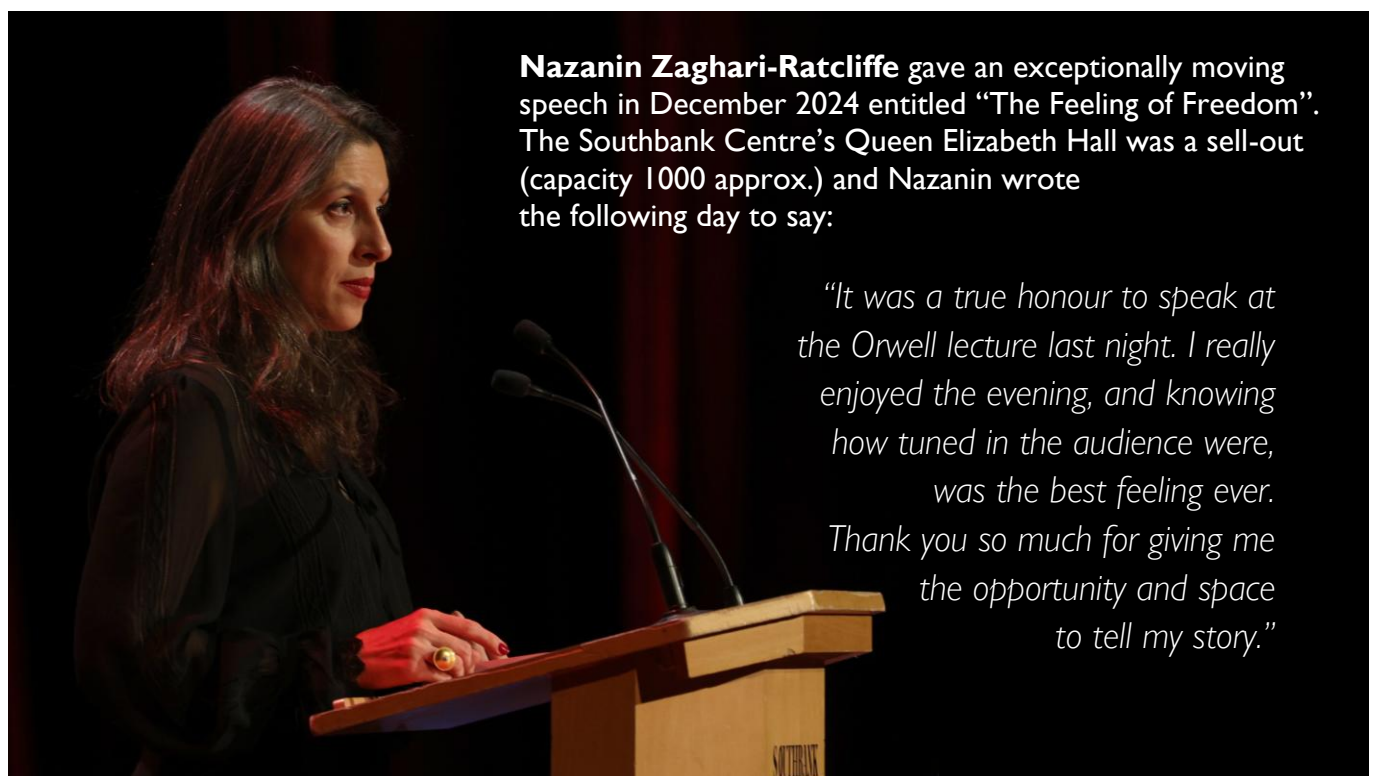
Photo credit: Orwell Youth Fellows

THE ANNUAL ORWELL LECTURE

Through the annual Orwell Lecture, we invite leaders in the fields of literature, politics and religion or people with exceptional life stories to tell, to speak on any topic 'Orwell might have been interested in'. Since its inception in 1989 Orwell lecturers have included:

- **Ian McEwan** - *Politics and the Imagination: Reflection's on Orwell's Inside the Whale*
- **Dame Hilary Mantel** - *More like a castle than a realm: Thomas Cromwell's Radical England*
- **Daniel Finkelstein** - *How to Predict an Election*
- **The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams** - *War, Words and Reason: Orwell and Thomas Merton on the Crises of Language*
- **Tristram Hunt MP** - *Decolonising the Wonder House: Orwell, Empire and the Museum*
Ruth Davidson MSP - *Nationalism should not be confused with patriotism - Our Divided Politics*
Bill Browder - *In Front of Your Nose: Putin, Russia and What We Failed to See*

Our annual flagship event, The Orwell Lecture, was, for many years, held at University College London's Cruciform Theatre. For the first time, on 5th December 2024 it took place in the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall.



Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe gave an exceptionally moving speech in December 2024 entitled "The Feeling of Freedom". The Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall was a sell-out (capacity 1000 approx.) and Nazanin wrote the following day to say:

"It was a true honour to speak at the Orwell lecture last night. I really enjoyed the evening, and knowing how tuned in the audience were, was the best feeling ever. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity and space to tell my story."

Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

The lecture returns to the Southbank Centre in 2025 and plans are already underway to host the Lecture there for a third year running, in 2026.

THE ORWELL FESTIVAL AND OTHER EVENTS

Our annual Orwell Festival offers a mix of free and ticketed events to our Friends, Patrons and members of public. These events draw on the breadth of topics reflected in our shortlists, as well as our expertise of finalists and judging panels, tapping into key contemporary political issues and exploring Orwell's work in legacy. The 2025 Festival ran from 27th May – 25th June, concluding with the 2025 Orwell Prize Ceremony at Conway Hall in Bloomsbury. Several events were presented in collaboration with long-time partners, including The Political Quarterly, Waterstones, Foyles and Pushkin House, while we welcomed new partners and venues, including The Volley and The Frontline Club.

In total, we hosted **nine events across seven partner venues**. We estimate attendance at more than **500 guests across Festival events**, with an additional **250 guests at the Prize Ceremony**, and participation from over **20 speakers**,

Thanks to our partnership model, all Festival venues besides the Prize Ceremony were provided free of charge, with some events sharing ticket revenue with us.

21st January 2025 – Orwell's Final Warning

Months before the Festival, on the 75th anniversary of George Orwell's Death, D. J. Taylor (Orwell biographer), Sandra Newman (author of *Julia*) and historian Jeffrey Wasserstrom discussed the afterlife of Orwell's final novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Are all interpretations of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* equal? What was Orwell's final warning? And what does his legacy mean today? Just some of the questions this knowledgeable panel attempted to answer.



Screenshot from video produced by Theatrical Solutions



Photo credit: Orwell Foundation Staff

27th May 2025 - Propaganda, A New Age?

A full house at the Frontline Club was an early highlight of the 2025 Orwell Festival. The panel featuring Kim Darroch, the UK's former Ambassador to the United States, historian and journalist Anne Applebaum and Orwell Foundation Director Jean Seaton as Chair, asked *Are we living in a new age of propaganda and does the truth stand a chance, in an age of algorithmic echo chambers and return of great power politics?*

28th May 2025 – Orwell and China

A timely conversation about the meaning of Orwell in a Chinese context with a distinguished panel: Isabel Hilton, Founder of the China Dialogue Trust; Jeff Wasserstrom, author of *Vigil: The Struggle for Hong Kong* and *The Milk Tea Alliance: Inside Asia's Struggle Against Autocracy and Beijing*, and Cindy Yu, incoming contributing editor at The Times and The Sunday Times.



Photo credit: Orwell Foundation Staff

The People's Republic of China is a rare example of a “Big Brother” state where Orwell's work is not only available but widely read and discussed. At the same time, dystopian fiction—from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to *The Hunger Games*—continues to inspire protest movements like the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong.

3rd June 2025 - Can We All Belong? The PQ Conversation

An expert panel explored issues of national identity, immigration, and belonging in modern Britain in this year's Political Quarterly Conversation. The panel included Tariq Modood, founding director of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship and a leading thinker on multiculturalism; Sunder Katwala, director of British Future; and Nicola Kelly, journalist and author of *Anywhere But Here: How Britain's Broken Asylum System Fails Us All*, with Orwell Foundation Deputy Director Liz Wallace as moderator.



Photo credit: Orwell Foundation Staff

4th June 2025 - Toward European Unity? A Continent At A Crossroad

In his 1947 essay *Toward European Unity*, George Orwell proposed that a democratic socialist United States of Europe was the best hope for the continent if it was to resist the dominance of the world's nuclear powers: the USA to the West and the Soviet Union to the East.

Judges on the 2025 Orwell Prize for Political Writing Katja Hoyer and Colin Crouch, along with 2024 Political Writing Prize winner Matthew Longo, discussed Europe at a crossroads.



12th June 2025 - *The Politics of Football*

Panellists Philippe Auclair (writer, broadcaster and contributor to The Guardian Football Weekly podcast), Miguel Delaney (chief football writer at The Independent) and chair Matthew Beaumont, (Co-director of University College London's Urban Lab and Orwell Prize judge) discussed the knotting politics of the beautiful game, from sportswashing, social issues, football's place in international diplomacy and Orwell's assessment of the proles in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, that "Football, beer and above all, gambling filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult."

This event was held at The Volley, which self-describes as "the best place to watch football in London"!



Photo credit: Orwell Foundation Staff

17th June 2025 – *Masterclass: Telling Other People's Stories*

This Arvon Masterclass was run in conjunction with The Orwell Prize for Reporting Homelessness and was specifically designed for journalists and non-fiction writers who work closely with other people's stories, particularly reporting on personal and often difficult subject matter. Free places were offered to select Reporting Homelessness entrant.

The masterclass was led by Peter Apps, author of the Orwell Prize-winning *Show Me The Bodies*.



Photo credit: Orwell Foundation Staff

17th June 2025 – *Shortlist Reading: Natasha Brown & Gabriel Gatehouse*

This event at Waterstones Gower Street brought together Political Writing finalist Gabriel Gatehouse with Political Fiction finalist Natasha Brown, to discuss the commonalities of their books, delving into conspiracy, extremism, cult of personality and power of language with Foundation Deputy Director, Liz Wallace.

19th June 2025 – *Mishal Husain & Simon Parkin at Foyles Charing Cross*

Political Writing Prize finalists Mishal Husain and Simon Parkin sat down with prize judge Thangam Debbonaire to discuss their books, both of which explore individual stories in the face of historical fragmentation and war. Husain's *Broken Threads* traces lives shaped by the partition of India and Pakistan, the Raj, independence and a world war. In *The Forbidden Garden of Leningrad*, Parkin considers a profound detail in the devastating story of the longest blockade in recorded history: the botanists who remained in the city's Plant Institute during the darkest days of the siege, risking their lives in the name of science.



23rd June 2025 – *Benefit of Clergy: Art Morality and the “Genius Myth”*

In his 1944 essay *Benefit of Clergy: Some Notes on Salvador Dalí*, Orwell wrestled with two “fallacies”: that no “morally degraded” person can produce good art, and that anyone who raises moral objections to good art has no “aesthetic sense”. Eighty years on, the “middle ground” Orwell sought remains elusive—and Orwell himself is now part of the debate.



Photo credit: Orwell Foundation Staff

Helen Lewis, journalist and author of *The Genius Myth: The Dangerous Allure of Rebels, Monsters and Rule-Breakers*, joined Nathan Waddell, author of *A Bright Cold Day: The Wonder of George Orwell*, to discuss what happens when morality, art, and “genius” collide.

2025 Orwell Prize Ceremony

The Festival culminated in the Orwell Prize Ceremony at Conway Hall in central London. The evening was widely praised, with one regular attendee describing it as the best yet! Youth Prize winners received their awards on the stage for the first time, from Richard Blair, Orwell’s son and our founding patron. The event was superbly hosted by Orwell Foundation Chair, Ken Macdonald.



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

FUTURE PLANS

EXPANDING REACH OF THE ORWELL FOUNDATION

We have discovered through several research trips to the US that Orwell plays an ever-more topical part in American political discussion. His most celebrated novels are still studied widely in the US public school system; his writings used and sometimes abused; his message at times distorted by extreme voices, as also occurs in the UK. Although Orwell was a quintessentially English author, it was his reception in the US which established his global reputation. Thanks to American readers and institutions, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* came to define the twentieth century but also, alarmingly, the twenty-first. We have created an effective organisation that celebrates Orwell's legacy and puts his values to work in contemporary contexts, but the issues threatening Orwell's legacy are global.

Central to our plan to make the Foundation international is the creation of an international Orwell Prize for Journalism. We already run the UK's most prestigious Journalism Prize. Now it's time to lend Orwell's name to the best from the rest of the world. We have also begun having conversations in New York about the piloting of our Youth Prize activities in some of the city's public schools, where there is concern, as in the UK, that critical thinking has fallen off the syllabus.

Our small staff is lucky to have the support of an advisory Council and a dedicated Board, led expertly for the past decade by Lord Ken Macdonald. The end of 2025 will see an extensive refresh of the governance and management of the Foundation, as Kim Darrach takes over as Chair and Liz Wallace takes over as Director, building on Professor Seaton's extraordinary legacy.

SEEKING SPONSORSHIP FOR EVERY PRIZE

From 2025 onwards, the Foundation will be supporting journalists across a wider range of voices and formats, while sharpening our focus on reporting that deepens public understanding of Britain's social realities.

Our aim is to secure sponsorship across every Orwell Prize—including our two book prizes, the Orwell Prize for Journalism, and the Orwell Youth Prize—building on the momentum created by our new partnerships. These prizes collectively represent the breadth of the Foundation's work: from emerging young writers to established authors and journalists whose work shapes public debate.

NEW PRIZES FOR 2025/2026

The Orwell Prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils will return in 2025-2026, thanks to sponsorship by Prospect magazine, while the Orwell Prize for Reporting Homelessness, sponsored by the Centre for Homelessness Impact, also returns with a new remit to celebrate early-career journalists. Together with the Orwell Prize for Journalism, these awards reflect the Orwell Foundation's commitment to championing brave, impactful and evidence-based reporting, in the best tradition of George Orwell.

The return of sponsored journalism prizes marks an important step in the Foundation's long-term strategy. As we embark on an ambitious programme to expand our reach and deepen our impact, we are keen to begin conversations with patrons and sponsors who wish to support excellence in writing and reporting.

SPONSORING AN ORWELL PRIZE

The Orwell Prizes have a long-standing reputation for rewarding excellence from across the political spectrum. We take the independence of the Prizes extremely seriously; it is central to our credibility and to the trust placed in us by writers, judges and audiences alike. Any sponsorship arrangement is founded on these principles and does not compromise editorial independence.

Sponsorship has the power to transform the careers of the writers and reporters who win our prizes, while allowing us to engage a far wider public in their work. Support enables us to:

- increase the value of our awards, raising their profile and reach
- deliver industry-leading publicity for shortlisted and winning work
- expand our programme of high-profile public events, talks and debates

We believe the Orwell Prizes offer a distinctive opportunity for partners to support democratic culture, free expression and brave writing, while sharing in the impact of work that matters.

THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR REPORTING HOMELESSNESS

Sponsored by the Centre for Homelessness Impact

The Orwell Prize for Reporting Homelessness will return with a renewed focus on early-career journalists, recognising the importance of supporting new voices in this vital area. Sponsored by the Centre for Homelessness Impact, the prize celebrates rigorous, data-led reporting that changes the conversation about homelessness in the UK.

The prize's new remit is designed to support reporters at a formative stage in their careers, encouraging careful, ethical and impactful storytelling on one of the country's most urgent social challenges. Alongside the award itself, the Foundation will work with the CHI on a series of masterclasses and events, creating a structured pathway into specialist reporting on homelessness and housing. This initiative helps bridge the gap between the Orwell Youth Prize and the Orwell Prizes, strengthening the long-term pipeline of public-interest journalism.

THE ORWELL PRIZE FOR EXPOSING BRITAIN'S SOCIAL EVILS

Sponsored by Prospect Magazine

The Orwell Prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils will relaunch in 2025-2026, marking the return of a prize that has transformed the Orwell Foundation's journalism awards.

Sponsored by Prospect magazine for an initial three-year period, the prize celebrates journalism that interrogates the UK's social fabric. It recognises outstanding reporting on issues such as poverty, housing, education, disability, welfare, inequality and the long-term consequences of government policy, stories that are often underreported but which carry lasting public significance.

The prize is open to all forms of journalism, including text, audio, video, photojournalism and social media. A new £10,000 prize pot has been confirmed: the winner will receive £5,000 and publication in Prospect, while two runners-up will each receive £2,500.

The decision to retain the previous title of the prize reflects the enduring power of the phrase "social evils", made famous by the social reformer Joseph Rowntree, and its relevance to contemporary Britain. In the words of Sir Clive Cowdery, publisher of Prospect, the prize will celebrate journalism that 'refuses to look away'.



Photo credit: Facundo Arrizabalaga

UCL200 AND THE FUTURE OF THE PRIZE CEREMONY



All this takes place as we prepare for University College London's bicentenary in 2026 (UCL200), a landmark moment for celebrating George Orwell's legacy and the Foundation's long-standing relationship with UCL, home of the UNESCO registered George Orwell Archive.

As part of the UCL200 programme, the Orwell Prizes will be awarded at the Bloomsbury Theatre, allowing us to welcome a larger public audience and to bring together prize winners, partners, students and supporters in central London. The ceremony will also showcase the Orwell Youth Prize, following its successful integration into the awards in 2025, and highlight our partnership with UCL throughout the bicentenary year.

Alongside the awards, we are developing a wider programme of talks, workshops and public events in collaboration with UCL, reflecting Orwell's enduring relevance and the Foundation's commitment to engaging new audiences in debates about writing, politics and freedom of expression. In March 2026, the Foundation and the Orwell Archive will be taking over NYU's famous Kimmel Windows in New York, with an outdoor exhibition "Orwell and Truth" and associated events. We are also working towards a unique live reading of George Orwell's masterpiece, *Animal Farm*, building on our innovative readings of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (2017) and *Down and Out in Paris and London* (2018).

The George Orwell Archive is the jewel in UCL Special Collections' crown. Most of it has been loaned to UCL on a permanent basis by Richard Blair, Orwell's son and Foundation Council member and Sonia Brownell, Orwell's second wife and founder (with David Astor and Richard Rees) of the archive in 1960. Richard Blair and The Orwell Foundation believe it is vital that the archive is made fully accessible to students and visitors. 2025 will see a significant drive to ensure this happens, with a display of reproductions planned for New York University's Kimmel Windows, preparations underway for a 2029 exhibition of original items and the establishment of a UCL/Orwell Foundation Strategic Partnership, to ensure all exhibitions and fundraising involving the archive is conducted jointly, with UCL and the Foundation sharing in the work and benefits of such endeavours.

The Foundation will also transform its digital activities, fundraising for a new, mobile-friendly website and digital rebrand. As well as underpinning our fundraising efforts and events programme, the new site will ensure that our resources for schools and young writers are as accessible as possible. As the official Orwell website, we also have a responsibility to maintain and promote reliable, expert information about Orwell, his life and his works. A new site, integrated with our growing presence on social media, will help us reach the largest possible audience.

VOLUNTEERS

In 2024-25, we worked with 110 volunteers to deliver feedback for students entering the Youth Prize. Volunteers were drawn from a range of places, including international volunteers from Hungary, the United States, the Netherlands, and beyond. We have continued to work with volunteers from University College London, King's College London, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and Penguin, as well as with professional writers, civil servants, poets, and education professionals recruited through our newsletter, and have added to our volunteer numbers with support from the Orwell Society, the University of Bristol, and the University of Birmingham—with those networks set to expand further in 2025-26. We are extremely grateful to all of our volunteer readers, who give their time and expertise to enable us to provide individual feedback to every student who enters The Orwell Youth Prize.

GROWING OUR MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMME

2025 to 2030 will also see intense activity aimed at increasing our Friends and Patrons programme, using volunteer support. We shall also build on the success of our growing subscriber base on Substack for Orwell Daily and continue to boost awareness of our partners, most notably The Political Quarterly.

Typically, we see an increase in people signing up to be Friends of the Foundation in the lead-up to events, such as the Festival and Lecture. On 31st August 2025, we had 27 UK Friends and 14 International Friends – a notable increase from last year - and a further 109 paid subscribers on Orwell Daily, which we update with new material each week. Friends donate £60/\$60 per year or £42/\$42 for concessions. Like Friends, Subscribers donate \$5/month - equivalent to \$6640 USD gross revenue a year.

On 31st August 2025, we had ten patrons, donating £1500/\$1500 per year or more.

THE ORWELL LECTURE



Photo credit: Southbank Centre

In December 2025, the annual Orwell Lecture returns to the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall for a second year, when Harvard-based cognitive psychologist and best-selling author, Steven Pinker, will take the stage.

The Southbank Centre agreed to a more generous financial deal for this second year – meaning the event is not only key to our mission but also generates a modest return. The Southbank Centre has invited us to return in 2026 with potential lecturers already under discussion.

THE ORWELL FESTIVAL 2026

The Orwell Festival 2026 is slated to start circa Monday 18th May, to conclude with our annual Orwell Prize ceremony on Thursday 25th June.

Building on the 2025 Festival, we will seek to present more events with partner venues in 2026. Taking events to capable partners reduces the workload for the Orwell Foundation team and offers benefits from these venues' front-of-house operations, ensuring a smooth, straightforward experience for attendees. Importantly, it allows for combined marketing efforts and helps us to reach new audiences and explore new topics.

Based on the success of this year's events and relationships with the related venues, there is strong potential to return to Pushkin House, The Frontline Club and The Volley for the 2026 Festival, as well as further programming with the Arvon Foundation. We will now have the opportunity to explore using The Resolution Foundation's venue in Westminster – we anticipate hosting an event for the newly relaunched Orwell Prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils there. We look forward to presenting events for each of our prizes, as well as our annual PQ Conversation.

The Politics of Football event proved rich and popular. To coincide with the 2026 FIFA World Cup, we are eager to present another panel event examining new questions around this theme.

The documentary *Orwell: 2+2=5* directed by Raoul Peck is set to be released in the UK in March 2026. We have been liaising with the distributors and publicist and hope to host an event, either at the Festival or closer to the film's release date.

Bookshop events with finalists are a staple of our annual festival – bringing together writers from different perspectives and forms and exploring thematic links that speak to the zeitgeist. Significantly these events also help us fulfill our agreements with publishers. In recent years, we have noticed a drop in attendance at our Waterstones Gower St and Foyles Charing Cross events, so we will be assessing how we might build on the bookshops' marketing efforts, to ensure they are well-attended, including considering working with different branches and other retailers.

OUR YOUTH PRIZE

WORK ON THE CURRICULUM

Over the decade that we have been running The Orwell Youth Prize, we have continued to see exceptional writing. As we have long noted, we have also identified some areas of concern, notably a lack of entries from male students. 25–30% each year come from boys (28% in 2025), and the majority of these are boys studying at private or grammar schools. We believe this speaks to a wider problem in engaging boys in creative writing. To address this, we have pioneered 'Game Design' as a new form, which encouraged 54 entries in 2025. We will look to expand on this success in subsequent years with additional resources, including several under development with our Youth Fellows.

We submitted evidence to the Government's curriculum review in the last year and have seen some engagement from the Department for Education with our suggestions. We continue to learn from our Youth Prize and remain committed to the belief that assessing and interpreting evidence is essential to building resilient young people in the face of the information revolution. These skills are also crucial for the creative economy: imagination, storytelling and expression underpin many important sectors of the UK economy, from gaming to film and television, as well as the arts more widely. Giving young people nuanced ways of expressing their views and approaching difficult subjects is vital both for democratic citizenship and for providing young people with a sense of their own agency. This should also be about excitement, creativity, enjoyment, and equipping young people with the skills they need to thrive.

These insights continue to find expression in our advocacy work. We have published on these issues in *The Political Quarterly* and in the English Association's special issue on the challenges facing boys in education, contributing evidence from our prize work to national discussions about curriculum design, literacy and educational inequality. Building on this, we plan to continue developing our policy and advocacy work around the curriculum, working with educators, subject associations and policymakers to strengthen the teaching of critical reasoning, extended writing, imagination and self-expression for young people.

However, many secondary-age students still need more than the curriculum is currently offering. We will continue to use the Orwell name, and the considerable convening power it brings, to urge policymakers to do more to support young people in developing critical reasoning, self-expression, extended creative and original writing, and a deeper understanding of others through literature and debate.

We also urge them to encourage the widespread study of Orwell on the English and Politics curricula, so that students may question the world around them while also learning to write 'good prose... like a windowpane'.

SCHOOL OUTREACH

We have plans to run events at Kingston Academy and Sunderland University, moving up into Scotland in 2025–26, all the time prioritising engagement with non-selective state schools.



Orwell Youth Prize Hub at Sunderland University. Photo credit: Orwell Foundation Staff

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

STRUCTURE

The Orwell Foundation is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission (*Registered Charity No 1161563*). It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by a constitution. Its Board of Trustees determines the long-term direction of the organisation and works with the Director and Deputy Director to determine and review strategy.

Four former trustees with a special connection to the Orwell estate – Richard Blair, Bill Hamilton, David Taylor and Hugh Tomlinson – have been appointed indefinitely to the Council of the Orwell Foundation and provide wise counsel to the Board and staff.

On 30th January 2025, the Council, Board and staff welcome its first Trainee Council Member, Archie Blair. Archie's thoughtfulness and contribution to events, including school outreach, has been a wonderful addition to our work.

Responsibility for the management of the charity and its activities is delegated to the Director and Deputy Director who are, in turn, supported by a small team. The Foundation has six members of staff, all of them working part-time. The Director, Professor Jean Seaton, generously donates her time.

GOVERNANCE

Trustees

The Board of Trustees, chaired by Lord Ken Macdonald KC, brings a range of literary, journalistic, legal and charitable professional expertise to the body. All Trustees act in a voluntary capacity. They are appointed for a term of four years and may be reappointed for a further four years (or longer in exceptional circumstances).

The Foundation's Board originated from the merger of two previous charity Boards: The Orwell Foundation and The Orwell Youth Prize, in 2020. This resulted in an excessively large number of Trustees. Lord Macdonald, with agreement of the Board, reduced its size and on 31st August 2025, the Board had 10 Trustees plus 2 Trainee Trustees (3 Trainee Trustees in total but with two of those sharing one role, with each attending 50 % of Board meetings).

The Orwell Foundation's Trustees, Council and staff are grateful to Kathy Harvey, Liz Sich and Boyd Tonkin for their service to the Board. All resigned their posts on 7th July 2025. It should be noted Andrew Williams' term is due to end on 9th September 2025 and we are most grateful for his service.

The Board welcomed new Trustees Janine Gibson and Kamran Abbasi to the Board on 30th January 2025.

All Trustees are asked to declare any possible conflict of interest resulting from their involvement in other organisations. The Trustees meet quarterly, to review the progress of the charity, and on further occasions as required. The Constitution of The Orwell Foundation permits the Board to appoint new Council members and Trustees at any time as needs arise. Trustees are appointed by agreement of the Board, with regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective management of the CIO. Two trustees (currently Deborah Lincoln and Gavin Kelly) are nominated by *The Political Quarterly*, according to the constitution of The Orwell Foundation.

New trustees are provided with an induction pack containing information about their duties and responsibilities. Upon appointment, trustees are introduced to the charity's work and provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, including that outlining their responsibilities under the Charities Act (2011).

Liability in the event of a winding-up of the charity is limited under the Foundation's Constitution to its Trustees. Trainee Trustees, Members (Friends and Patrons of The Orwell Foundation) and members of The Council of The Orwell Foundation have no liability in the event of a winding up of the charity.

Committees

Following the creation of a new 5-year strategic plan (signed off by Trustees in May 2025), the Board has dissolved its former committee structure in favour of the direct consultation from the Board. Expert lead Trustee will be appointed, where necessary, using their experience to consult staff and Trustee of relevant matters. This change has reduced duplication, and positivity impacted the workload of the management team.

As of 31st August 2025, The Orwell Foundation was advertising for two Trustee positions: one with professional knowledge to lead on finance; and another with special insight into publishing, filling the gap left by retiring Trustee Liz Sich. Both positions have now been filled.

Trainee Trustees

Trainee Trustees are active observers of The Orwell Foundation's activities at the board level. They have no voting rights. Nor do they have legal or financial responsibilities. Each Trainee Trustee is paired with an existing trustee who acts as a mentor. Each serves a two-year term, attending, either in person or virtually, four Board meetings per year as well as events, where possible. The role is voluntary.

The responsibilities of our Trainee Trustees include, but are not limited to, contributing to discussions, evaluating and supporting areas of our work, championing The Orwell Foundation's events and activities, values, ambition, and strategic direction, helping to safeguard the good name and values of the charity, always acting in its best interests and acting as an ambassador for the Youth Prize and the Foundation more widely.

On 9th October 2024, the Board of The Orwell Foundation welcomed its third Trainee Trustee, Bella Rew. Ruby Alexander and Noah Robinson, appointed for a shared two-year term in 2023, will stay in their roles until October 2025. New Trainee Trustees being appointed yearly for two-year terms, resulting in a deliberately staggered turnover.

Bella Rew was successful after a competitive round of interviews with candidates from The Orwell Youth Fellows. The Youth Fellow are our growing cohort of previous winners and runners-up of The Orwell Youth Prize. Like Ruby and Noah before her, Bella's has brought a fresh perspective and consistently thoughtful insights. Our Trainee Trustees have provided invaluable service to the governance and activities of the Foundation, not least through assisting at our school outreach events, acting as ambassadors in assemblies at schools near their home or place of education and through their participation in Board meetings.

MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity and its activities is delegated to the Director and Deputy Director, who are in turn supported by a small team.

In December 2024, we said farewell to our wonderful Youth Prize Manager, Tabby Hayward, and welcomed her excellent successor Sam Hill January 2025. Sam felt as though he had come full circle upon joining us as an employee, for he won The Orwell Youth Prize as a student, in its inaugural year – 2015 – an experience which made him consider going to university for the first time. Sam then didn't leave university until he'd got his PhD!

In January 2025 Liz Wallace was confirmed as the next Director of The Orwell Foundation. She will officially start in this role on 1st February 2026. Professor Jean Seaton will take on the new title of President of The Orwell Foundation and remain on in an advisory capacity so the Foundation will continue to benefit from her extensive knowledge and interminable enthusiasm. Under Jean's leadership the prizes were professionalised, and the values, range and consequences of Orwell's work were explored through an expanded programme of events and activities, including the launch of the Youth Prize in 2014.

THE ORWELL FOUNDATION STAFF

DIRECTOR

Professor Jean Seaton

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Liz Wallace

FINANCE MANAGER

Georgina Faulkner

ADMINISTRATOR

Graham Self

BOOKS PRIZE MANAGER

James Tookey

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

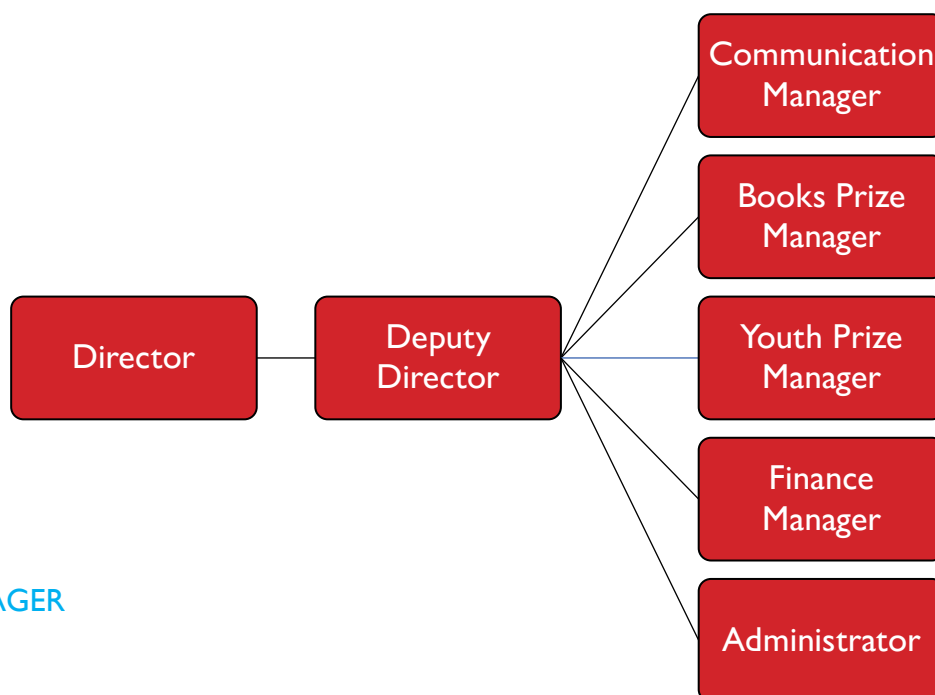
Jeremy Wikeley

YOUTH PRIZE MANAGER *until Dec 2025*

Tabby Hayward

YOUTH PRIZE MANAGER *from Jan 2025*

Sam Hill



VOLUNTEERS

We are supported by around 100 volunteers each year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

SUMMARY

2024 - 2025 saw the charity consolidate its efforts to achieve long-term financial security, with the signing of multi-year prize contracts with sponsors for two of our journalism prizes. This alone ensures £100k p.a. for the next 3 years. Also in 2024-25, we won grants for the Youth Prize from two new funders, in what continues to be a highly challenging fundraising environment, particularly for London-based arts charities. The ongoing cost-of-living crisis, set against rising costs, continued as the backdrop, and the Foundation was turned down for multiple grants on account of what multiple funders cited as our high level of reserves. These factors combined led to the charity spending down some of those reserves. We have claimed Gift Aid on all UK donations and benefited from changes to interest rates. Our subscriptions increased through Substack, bringing higher revenue and publishers whose authors reached the shortlists of our Book Prizes made financial contributions.

The Foundation has developed new sources of funding by engaging with donors in the UK and the US and building individual giving through our membership scheme. The team has continued to raise our profile, and revenue, by moving the annual Orwell Lecture to the prestigious venue of the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall and through a campaign of heightened media exposure.

In May 2025, the Board ratified the Foundation's 5-year Strategic Plan, allowing for greater expansion internationally, particularly in the US with its tradition of philanthropy. This will be undertaken in tandem with increasing efforts to celebrate and promote writers of the best political fiction and non-fiction in the UK and seeking to attract sponsorship from domestic corporate and individual donors.

Meanwhile, work continues to counter misconceptions about the way in which our charity is funded. The facts are:

1. We raise all our funding through grants, donations, membership support and sponsorship.
2. Our charity is authorised by - and enjoys a close relationship with - the Orwell Estate, however Orwell's works are out of copyright in the UK which clearly impacts ongoing funding from the Estate. Similarly, we have no endowment, property or other assets from the Estate.
3. While the name of our charity, *The Orwell Foundation*, might suggest to some that we *distribute* grants, we rely on *applying* for grants to finance our operations. Our organisation has discussed changing our name, to clarify this point. 2026 should see resolution on this matter.
4. We are housed in University College London pro bono, though we receive no major funding¹ from the university.

¹ Across 2024-25 and 2025-6, UCL contributed £10,000 to international travel costs incurred by Foundation personnel while promoting a joint Orwell Foundation/ UCL project.

PRINCIPAL FUNDING SOURCES

Principal partners, sponsors and corporate donors in 2024-25 were The Political Quarterly, the Centre for Homelessness Impact and Argus Media. We are eternally grateful for the financial support, and generosity of time, offered by our Founding Patron and member of our Council, Richard Blair.

The support of all those who have signed up or renewed as Patrons and Friends in the UK and the US has been invaluable in the support of our mission. The Foundation would like to thank our 2024-25 Patrons:

- Ariane Bankes
- Richard Blair
- Charles Coutinho
- Lord Egremont
- Sir John Gieve
- Aydin Hammoudeh
- Kathy Harvey
- Andrew Peck
- Ann Tanenbaum
- Su-Mei Thompson

All patrons receive complimentary tickets to Foundation events, copies of our anthologies, personalised acknowledgement in Foundation publications, a Folio copy of a book by George Orwell and annual copies of our prize-winning books, as well as personal updates from the Foundation team. Further benefits are available, depending on level of membership, including patron events and personalised tours of the UNESCO-registered Orwell archive at UCL.

GOING CONCERN

The trustees have reviewed the charity's financial position and forecasts as part of their assessment of the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. In doing so, they have considered forecasts covering a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. The trustees note that the charity is operating within a particularly challenging fund-raising environment; however, taking into account key factors, in particular, the charity's current financial position, forecast monies flows and balance sheet, management's assessment of the likely outcome of charity's fundraising programme and the availability of mitigating actions which can be taken, if necessary, to reduce expenses, the trustees consider the charity has adequate resources to continue for the foreseeable future and have therefore concluded that it remains appropriate to adopt the going concern basis in preparing these financial statements.

RESERVES POLICY

As at 31 August 2025, unrestricted reserves were £46,353 compared to £120,988 on 31st August 2024 and £165,958 on 31 August 2023. After being turned down for grants on multiple occasions, with grant makers citing the high level of our reserves, the charity's trustees took a decision to rewrite our reserves policy. The Foundation's new Trustee Treasurer has taken the lead on this and has advised that 3 months of operating costs (£41, 970) is a sensible base target level, given that this more than covers the notice period for all staff contracts, as well as one month of additional winding-up activities. The updated reserves policy therefore recommends that our reserves be kept between £50, 000 and £100, 000, with the understanding that, in order to secure grants, funders will expect reserves to be maintained towards the lower end of this range. The reserves policy is reviewed annually by the Board.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The charity has a comprehensive Risk Register that is regularly reviewed and updated by management and Trustees. The principal risk to the charity continues to be insufficient income generation. Economic conditions, together with significant financial pressure in the charity sector and continued restrictions in public funding, continue to pose significant uncertainty over fundraising capability and investment performance. To meet these challenges, the Orwell Foundation has made significant investments in its fundraising capacity, including the launch of a Friends and Patrons scheme, holding fundraising events and several donor relationship-building trips to the United States. This ongoing work, along with the employment of a freelance fundraiser should mitigate against this principal risk. New plans and a prudent budget have been drawn up for the next financial year, and agreed by the Board, with the importance of securing sustained and sustainable core funding in mind.

(signed) 

Lord Ken Macdonald, Trustee (Chair)

Date: 30.01.2026

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE ORWELL FOUNDATION

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of The Orwell Foundation (the charity) for the year ended 31 August 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Charities Act 2011.*
- 2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or*
- 3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of financial statements set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.*

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



(signed).....

Gary Pready FCA
Gravita Audit Oxford LLP
First Floor, Park Central
40-41 Park End Street
Oxford
OX1 1JD

Date: 4 Feb 2026

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

		Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted funds 2025	Total 2025	Unrestricted funds 2024 As restated	Restricted funds 2024	Total 2024 As restated
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	86,012	69,750	155,762	136,054	55,460	191,514
Investments	4	1,801	-	1,801	2,526	-	2,526
Other income	5	35,973	-	35,973	27,788	-	27,788
Total income		<u>123,786</u>	<u>69,750</u>	<u>193,536</u>	<u>166,368</u>	<u>55,460</u>	<u>221,828</u>
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	198,421	69,750	268,171	204,149	62,649	266,798
Total expenditure		<u>198,421</u>	<u>69,750</u>	<u>268,171</u>	<u>204,149</u>	<u>62,649</u>	<u>266,798</u>
Net expenditure and movement in funds		(74,635)	-	(74,635)	(37,781)	(7,189)	(44,970)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 September 2024		<u>120,988</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>120,988</u>	<u>158,769</u>	<u>7,189</u>	<u>165,958</u>
Fund balances at 31 August 2025		<u>46,353</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,353</u>	<u>120,988</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>120,988</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Current assets					
Debtors	12	2,447		2,097	
Cash at bank and in hand		109,762		168,059	
		<u>112,209</u>		<u>170,156</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(65,856)		(49,168)	
Net current assets			<u>46,353</u>		<u>120,988</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds	16		<u>46,353</u>		<u>120,988</u>
			<u>46,353</u>		<u>120,988</u>

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 28th January 2026

(signed) 

Lord Ken Macdonald, Trustee (Chair)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

I **Accounting policies**

Charity information

The Orwell Foundation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

I.1 **Accounting convention**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

I.2 **Going concern**

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

I.3 **Charitable funds**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

I.4 **Income**

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

1.5 Expenditure

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. It is categorised under the following headings:

Charitable activities - comprise those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its services. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such series and those costs of an indirect nature to support them.

Governance costs - comprise expenditure associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the independent examination fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

1.6 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.7 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2025	Restricted funds 2025	Total 2025	Unrestricted funds 2024 As restated	Restricted funds 2024 As restated	Total 2024 As restated
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	59,762	26,750	86,512	40,398	16,500	56,898
Grants	26,250	43,000	69,250	95,656	38,960	134,616
	<u>86,012</u>	<u>69,750</u>	<u>155,762</u>	<u>136,054</u>	<u>55,460</u>	<u>191,514</u>

4 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	<u>1,801</u>	<u>2,526</u>

5 Other Income

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 As restated £
Other income	<u>35,973</u>	<u>27,788</u>

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Direct costs		
Staff costs	165,024	174,667
Prizes awarded, Judging fees & Project costs	88,043	73,778
Other operating costs	11,527	14,980
Trustee expenses	337	429
	<u>264,931</u>	<u>263,854</u>
Share of support and governance costs (see note 7)		
Governance	3,240	2,944
	<u>268,171</u>	<u>266,798</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	198,421	204,149
Restricted funds	69,750	62,649
	<u>268,171</u>	<u>266,798</u>

7 Support costs allocated to activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Governance costs	3,240	2,944
	<u>3,240</u>	<u>2,944</u>
Analysed between:		
Charitable activities	3,240	2,944

8 Net movement in funds

	2025 £	2024 £
The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Fees payable for the independent examination of the charity's financial statements	3,240	2,944
	<u>3,240</u>	<u>2,944</u>

9 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
	6	6

Employment costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	152,042	161,565
Social security costs	8,482	8,701
Other pension costs	4,500	4,401
	165,024	174,667

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
£60,000 - £69,999	1	1

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from taxation on its activities because all its income is applied for charitable purposes.

12 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Prepayments and accrued income	2,447	2,097

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Other creditors	61,993	38,486
Accruals and deferred income	3,863	10,682
	65,856	49,168

14 Retirement benefits schemes

	2025 £	2024 £
Defined contribution schemes		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	4,500	4,401

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

15 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 September 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 August 2025 £
Richard Blair - Youth	-	25,000	(25,000)	-
Centre for Homelessness	-	40,000	(38,697)	1,303
Andrew Peck - Youth	-	1,750	(1,750)	-
Chapman Charitable Trust	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
UCL NYC Visit	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
CHIC Awards Ceremony	-	-	(1,303)	(1,303)
	-	69,750	(69,750)	-
Previous year:	At 1 September 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 August 2024 £
Richard Blair - Youth	7,189	15,000	(22,189)	-
Centre for Homelessness	-	38,960	(38,960)	-
Andrew Peck - Youth	-	1,500	(1,500)	-
	7,189	55,460	(62,649)	-

16 Unrestricted funds

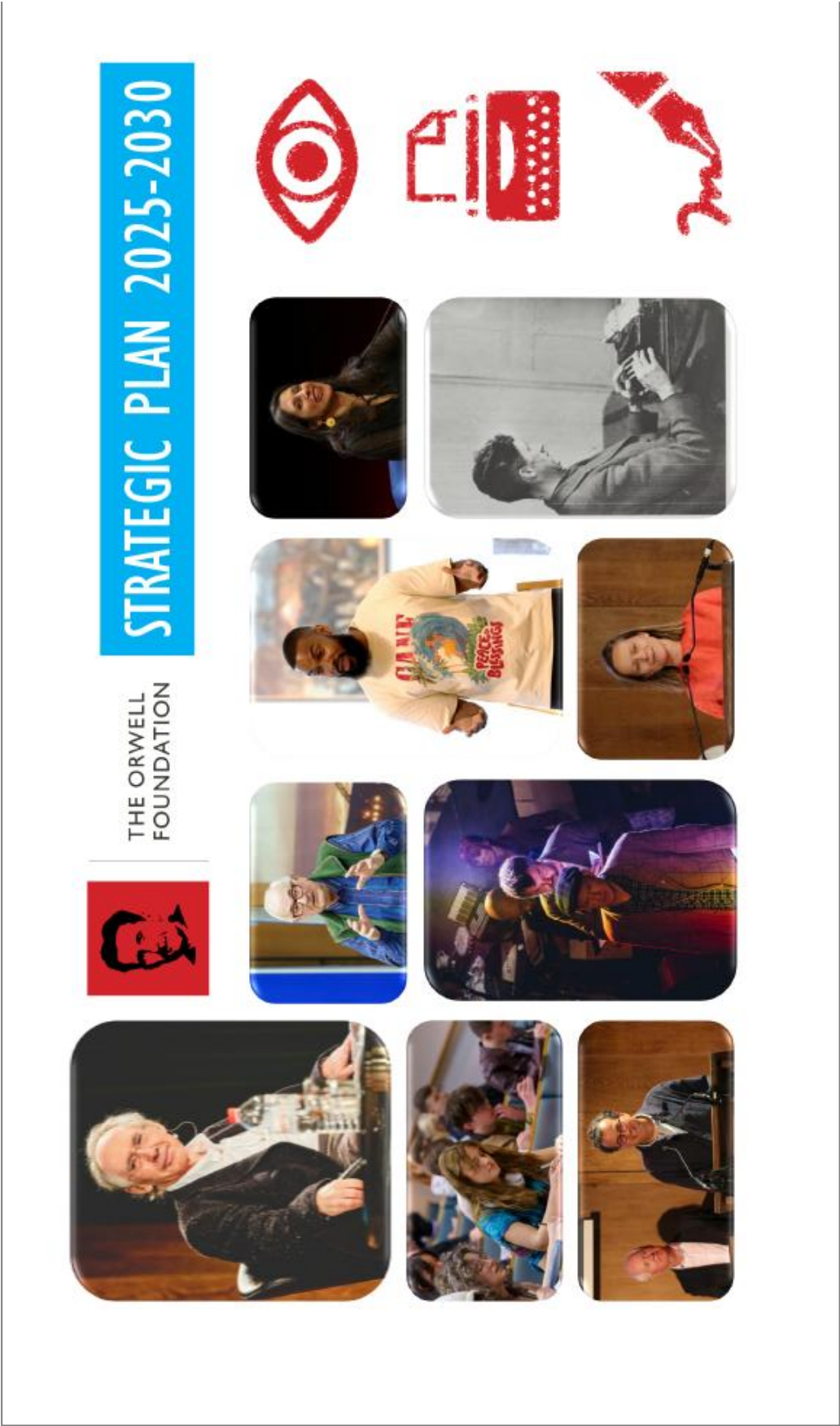
The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 September 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 August 2025 £
General funds	120,988	123,786	(198,421)	46,353
Previous year:	At 1 September 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 August 2024 £
General funds	158,769	166,368	(204,149)	120,988

17 Related party transactions

During the period a trustee was paid a total of £332 for work done on behalf of the charity (2024-£600).

APPENDIX 1: 2025-2030 STRATEGY PLAN PRESENTATION





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*"Two plus two equals four.
If that is granted, all else follows."*

*- Nineteen Eighty-Four,
George Orwell, 1949*

Executive Summary



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

In the UK and around the world, George Orwell's writing encapsulates the fears and hopes of our time. It is worth taking a moment to consider the magnitude of that achievement, given that the most recent of those works was created three quarters of a century ago. Young people and adults alike continue to be drawn to Orwell's novels and essays, which resonate uncannily with modern events. As I write this on a bright cold day in April 2025, media appearances of the name 'Orwell' and the term 'Orwellian' are daily and numerous.

The Orwell Foundation has the privilege and responsibility of upholding his impressive legacy. From Nineteen Eighty-Four to Animal Farm, Orwell's writing remains banned where dictators fear the power of free minds. His commitment to truth and clarity of expression is valued across the world by those who believe in the power of good writing to promote change and challenge orthodoxy, while his warning about the corruption of language and the capacity of power and technology to control even consciousness speaks to the challenges of our era.

The Achievements of our Founders

The Orwell Prize was established by Sir Bernard Crick to encourage the work of young writers. He later added lectures from distinguished experts in George Orwell's memory, with support from The Political Quarterly. Professor Jean Seaton took over as Director in 2007 and, with the generous support of Richard Blair, The Media Standards Trust, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and many others, went on to grow the authority and reach of the Foundation's work. She launched a suite of respected prizes, grew a Youth Prize and ran wide-ranging programmes of challenging events, dramatised live readings and important lectures.

Three decades on from their inception, the Orwell Prizes are among the most prestigious in the English-speaking world, praised for their independence and integrity. In 2025, the Foundation runs four adult prizes, with a fifth set to be re-established for the 2026 prize cycle, in addition to The Orwell Youth Prize:

1. The Orwell Prize for Political Writing (non-fiction)
2. The Orwell Prize for Political Fiction
3. The Orwell Prize for Journalism
4. The Orwell Prize for Reporting Homelessness (sponsored and supported by the Centre for Homelessness Impact 2022 – present)
5. The Orwell Prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils (sponsored and supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015 – 2023, with a new sponsor set to announce for 2026)
6. The Orwell Youth Prize

The Challenges We Face Today

Democracy around the world is under challenge: democratic values under assault, truth itself under attack. The same can be said of the natural world about which Orwell cared so greatly. Many of the contemporary issues faced by societies around the globe are exacerbated by factors identified long ago by Orwell. It is through pointing readers towards his seminal works, by interrogating the ideas that underpin our modern predicament and by celebrating brave, truthful writing that the Orwell Foundation seeks to platform both his values and his warnings.

*"Two plus two equals four.
If that is granted, all else follows."*

- Nineteen Eighty-Four,
George Orwell, 1949

Being educated in how to write clearly is no longer a given, with many children growing up learning to swipe before they turn the pages of a book. In a time when corruption of language is rife and the pervasiveness of AI leads us to question all that we read and view, we strive to maintain the integrity and prestige of all our prizes. This moment provides opportunity as well as concern. Collectively we need to make the case for the writing down and broadcasting of truth, of facts and of quality political writing.

Taking on the Challenges

Over the next five years, we plan to take forward the Prizes and associated events in reach and scope, expanding some internationally. Launching the Orwell Foundation fully in the United States is central to our mission because this is where Orwell is most contested and where we believe his values are best placed to make a different to public life. In 2025 we shall begin the process of establishing a US Board, with the aim of giving the Foundation full charitable status there and so maximising our fundraising potential in America. We intend to use our new global presence to fortify our charity's finances, while simultaneously cementing our relationship with UCL – London's Global University.

We have discovered through several research trips to the US that Orwell plays an ever-more topical part in American political discussion. His most celebrated novels are still studied widely in the US public school system; his writings used and sometimes abused; his message sometimes distorted by extreme voices, as they are in the UK. Although Orwell was a quintessentially English author, it was his reception in the US which established his global reputation. Thanks to American readers and institutions, Animal Farm and Nineteen-Eighty-Four came to define the twentieth century but also, alarmingly, the twenty-first. We have created an effective organisation that celebrates Orwell's legacy and puts his values to work in contemporary contexts, but the issues threatening Orwell's legacy are global.

Executive Summary



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

Central to our plan to make the Foundation international is the creation of an international Orwell Prize for Journalism. We already run the UK's most prestigious Journalism Prize. Now it's time to lend Orwell's name to the best from the rest of the world. We have also begun having conversations in New York about the piloting of our Youth Prize activities in some of the city's public schools, where there is concern, as in the UK, that critical thinking has fallen off the syllabus.

The George Orwell Archive is the jewel in UCL Special Collections' crown. Most of it has been loaned to UCL on a permanent basis by Richard Blair, Orwell's son and Foundation Council member and Sonia Brownell, Orwell's second wife and founder (with David Astor and Richard Rees) of the archive in 1960. Richard Blair and The Orwell Foundation believe it is vital that the archive is made fully accessible to students and visitors. 2025 will see a significant drive to ensure this happens, with a display of reproductions planned for New York University's Kimmel Windows, preparations underway for a 2028 exhibition of original items and the establishment of a UCL/Orwell Foundation Strategic Partnership, to ensure all exhibitions and fundraising involving the archive is conducted jointly, with UCL and the Foundation sharing in the work and benefits of such endeavours.

The Foundation will also transform its digital activities, fundraising for a new, mobile-friendly website and digital rebrand. As well as underpinning our fundraising efforts and events programme, the new site will ensure that our resources for schools and young writers are as accessible as possible. As the official Orwell website, we also have a responsibility to maintain and promote reliable, expert information about Orwell, his life and his works. A new site, integrated with our growing presence on social media, will help us reach the largest possible audience.

*"Two plus two equals four.
If that is granted, all else follows."*

*- Nineteen Eighty-Four,
George Orwell, 1949*

Executive Summary



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

Securing our Future

The Foundation needs to raise £275 000 annually to fund its current activities. It maintains a mixed portfolio of fundraising targets, submitting regular grant applications while also pursuing donations from individual and corporate sponsors, to ensure that it has the resources it needs to function well and to lay the groundwork necessary to provide a sustainable and lasting financial future for the charity by 2026. The Foundation will work to continue on this trajectory through to 2030 and beyond.

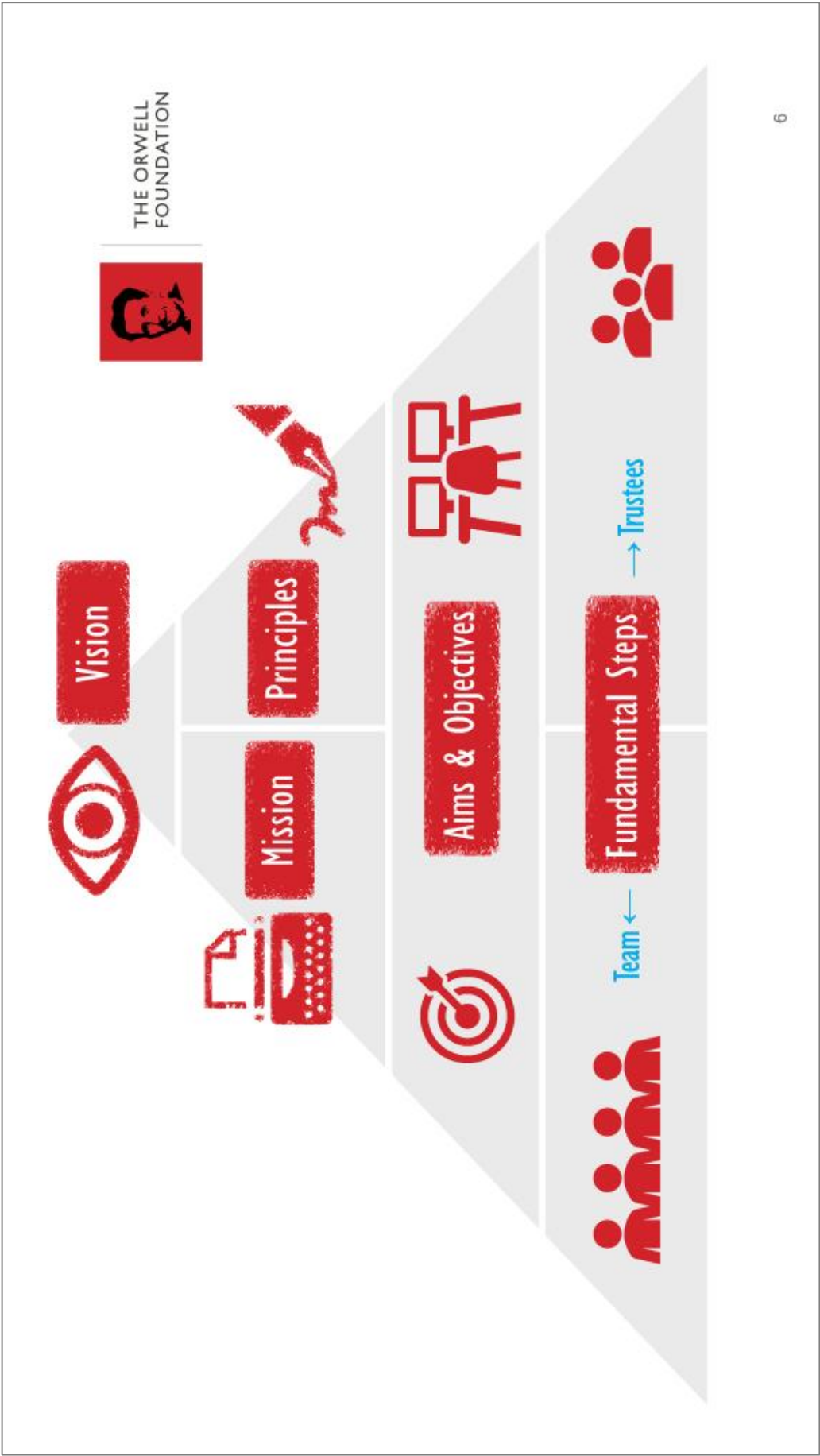
Efforts are underway to secure sponsorship of several of our Prizes in what remains a challenging funding climate for London-based arts charities. Looking further afield, we expect our international endeavours to provide significant opportunities for US philanthropy. In addition, we will work hard to maximise the potential of a series of major events in our UK fundraising calendar, including the annual Eton Gala Dinner and the annual Orwell Lecture, now held in partnership with the Southbank Centre, London.

2025 to 2030 will also see intense activity aimed at increasing our membership programme, using volunteer support. We shall also build on the success our growing subscriber base on Substack for Orwell Daily and continue to boost awareness of our partners, most notably The Political Quarterly.

Our small staff is lucky to have the support of an advisory Council and a dedicated Board, led expertly for the past decade by Lord Ken Macdonald. The end of 2025 will see an extensive refresh of the governance and management of the Foundation, as a new Chair is appointed, and as I take over as Director, building on Professor Seaton's extraordinary legacy.

This plan is unashamedly ambitious and requires fresh financial support. We are immensely grateful to those of you with means, who can offer it. I hope that you find inspiration in this document and I warmly invite you to join us in bringing it to life.

Liz Wallace, Deputy Director





Vision



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

We share George Orwell's vision of a decent society where thought is free, truth is valued and brave writing is celebrated.



Mission



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

We exist to **promote Orwell's** values of bravery, integrity, decency and fidelity to truth. We **champion plurality of opinion and ideas** by running prizes and events which **nourish courageous, clear writing**. We **connect with audiences** on subjects emerging from Orwell's works including poverty, totalitarianism and the dangers posed by the corruption of language and the pervasive rise of new technologies.



Principles



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

The following principles, which shape our aims and objectives, are drawn from our Mission and from our charitable object, namely *“the advancement of education for the public benefit including the provision of cultural events and prizes and the promotion of the education of young people for the benefit of the public.”*

Truthfulness: Truth and accuracy run through everything we do. We work to nourish and promote writers and journalists who share Orwell's values of bravery, integrity, decency and fidelity to truth.

Creativity: We ensure that the prizes and events we run champion creativity, explore plurality of opinion and promote Orwell's desire to 'make political writing into an art'.

Freedom of speech: We facilitate discussions on subjects close to Orwell's heart including freedom of expression, poverty, the natural world, war, totalitarianism, the dangers posed by the corruption of language and the abuse of technology. We hold the door open for difficult conversations.

Impact: We connect with audiences, educating through world-class, and school outreach, events. We bring prize-winning writing and journalism to national and international attention, all for the public good. We work with minimum financial and environmental waste, ensuring donated funds are used to create the greatest possible charitable outcome.



Aims & Objectives



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

Our Charity has 3 key aims:

- **CULTIVATING UNDERSTANDING OF ORWELL AND HIS WORKS**
- **CONNECTING WITH AUDIENCES ON ORWELL'S VALUES**
- **ENCOURAGING COURAGEOUS, CLEAR NEW WRITING AND JOURNALISM**

CULTIVATING UNDERSTANDING OF ORWELL AND HIS WORKS



Details	Objectives:
<p>We aim to promote Orwell's WORKS by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acting as global stewards of Orwell's novels, non-fiction books, essays, journalism and letters and their contemporary significance• Connecting with audiences on subjects about which Orwell wrote• Educating children and adults about Orwell's works	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Open up the UNESCO-registered archive at UCL to more visitors and curate touring exhibitions of archival items for UK and international audiences.2) Encourage and aid teachers and students to choose Orwell on the curriculum3) Preserve Orwell's authority by running events which promote public understanding of Orwell's works, including live readings and discussions4) Examine Orwell's reputation, for example if under attack through misrepresentation; seek event, broadcast and promotional opportunities for Orwell's works.5) Create an UCL- funded Orwell fellowship.

CULTIVATING UNDERSTANDING OF ORWELL AND HIS WORKS



Fundamental Steps TEAM:	Fundamental Steps TRUSTEES:
<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div> <div><div>1)</div><div>Work with the UCL George Orwell Archive Advisory Board to make the archive significantly more accessible. Call for the most important archival material to be on temporary rotating display/ permanent display in UCL, as it is in NYU. Create a strategic partnership ensuring that The Orwell Foundation works with UCL on all fundraising and exhibitions related to the George Orwell Archive.</div><div>2)</div><div>Discuss with UCL how best to become a hub for academics and citizens on Orwell.</div><div>3)</div><div>Grow relationships with partners in the US for a touring exhibition of archive reproductions and archival material, ensuring that receiving institutions/ UCL contribute financially wherever appropriate.</div><div>4)</div><div>Create new educational resources, aimed at easing the burden on teaching staff and encouraging them to choose Orwell; same team to encourage improvements to the curriculum to help students boost their critical thinking skills.</div><div>5)</div><div>Curate high quality events throughout each year relating to Orwell's work and subjects about which he wrote.</div><div>6)</div><div>Work with the Chair to counter any serious instances of misrepresentation, where appropriate.</div></div>	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div> <div><div>1)</div><div>Support the Foundation management in its efforts to make the archive more accessible to all.</div><div>2)</div><div>Share networks in US universities, museums, libraries, embassies and other potential partners.</div><div>3)</div><div>Suggest speakers and share contacts for panel events, lectures etc.</div><div>4)</div><div>Work with Foundation Management to counter any serious instances of misrepresentation, where appropriate.</div></div>

CONNECTING WITH AUDIENCES ON ORWELL'S VALUES



Details	Objectives:
<p>We aim to promote the understanding of Orwell's VALUES to greatest effect by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connecting with audiences on subjects emerging from Orwell's work• Championing plurality of opinion and encouraging civil debate where both sides of an argument are heard through our events and communications.• Supporting and promoting writers who share Orwell's values of bravery, integrity, decency and fidelity to truth	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Grow our high-quality suite of Prizes for books and journalism, including the Orwell Youth Prize,; making some of them international, increasing the prize money on offer.2) Make The Orwell Foundation international prize for journalism, in US schools; launching an international prize for journalism, attracting new international audiences through events and exhibitions..3) Maintain a calendar of high-quality events, big and small, gathering together our writers and supporters and holding open the door to difficult conversations; further enhancing the quality and reach of those events, including through innovative "big ticket events" in the UK.4) Harness member interaction and mobilise members to entice others to join; pilot ventures which attract friends and patrons e.g. through appropriate partnerships.5) Be brave in all that we do.

CONNECTING WITH AUDIENCES ON ORWELL'S VALUES



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

Fundamental Steps TEAM:	Fundamental Steps TRUSTEES:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Attract new sponsorship and so increase staffing or, as a minimum, buy a CRM. 2) Enhance the Foundation team's planning operation. 3) In all that we do, consistently asking, "Are we being brave enough?" 4) Develop a network of Global Ambassadors 5) Set up a US Board, with the help of Trustees. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Offer any relevant expertise / contacts to Management as they work with the Chair to create a US Board, for the purpose of fundraising in the US (securing 501C3 status). 2) Pursue membership (Patrons and Friends) prospects among contacts at home and abroad. 3) Pursue sponsorship prospects among contacts, reporting back to fellow Trustees, Council members and Management at each Board meeting.

ENCOURAGING COURAGEOUS, CLEAR NEW WRITING AND JOURNALISM



THE ORWELL
FOUNDATION

Details	Objectives:
<p>We aim to promote Orwell's desire to 'make political writing into an ART' by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Championing creativity, clarity, and brave writing through our events and prizes, encouraging all Prize entrants to aspire to Orwell's own ambition "to make political writing into an art".• Nourishing the writers, in every generation, who share Orwell's values and enter our Prizes.• Advancing critical thinking and independent creative writing in young people through the Orwell Youth Prize and the Orwell Youth Fellows programme.• Encouraging all Prize entrants to follow Orwell's advice that "Good prose should be like a window pane". (<i>Why I Write</i>, 1946)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Feature exciting new writing at our events, providing opportunities to our Prize-winning writers and finalists in the immediate and long-term.2) Grow The Orwell Youth Prize in a sustainable way, by working with partners to encourage more entries, maintaining a focus on non-selective state schools, in areas of high income deprivation where possible, while maintaining a good geographical reach around the UK and beyond.3) Provide more opportunities reserved for debut writers and/or emerging reporters, ideally working in partnership with other organisations.4) Influence policy-makers to return critical thinking to the centre of the curriculum.5) Create high-quality resources for writers young and old, as well as teachers6) Help young people to write independently without the use of AI.



ENCOURAGING COURAGEOUS, CLEAR NEW WRITING AND JOURNALISM

Fundamental Steps TEAM:	Fundamental Steps TRUSTEES:
<div>1) Through all comms and in judging meetings, remind judges of the importance of celebrating brave, new writing rather than giving out lifetime achievement awards.</div> <div>2) Create a better system of keeping in touch with our prize winners, finalists and judges.</div> <div>3) Work with our Fundraising Consultant to secure sponsorship and/or partnerships to support new writers and/or reporters.</div> <div>4) Develop our relationship with partners who can provide vital funding for more staffing / a CRM system and develop a volunteer network in the US, to enable us to cope with significantly more Youth Prize entries.</div> <div>5) Boost comms and school outreach to encourage more entries to the Youth Prize; increase the percentage of entries from target groups.</div> <div>6) Engage with policy-makers and partners such as NATE, initiating comms around our proposal for UCAS points for students who reach the final of our Youth Prize.</div> <div>7) Produce consistently high quality resources for writers, students and teachers.</div> <div>8) Keep developing our strategy for counteracting and responding to the use of AI in the Youth Prize.</div>	<div>1) Support Foundation events, turning up and inviting their networks.</div> <div>2) All Trustees to contribute ideas for sources of sponsorship on a regular basis, making introductions wherever possible.</div> <div>3) Spread the word on social media and through networks, to encourage prize entries and attendance at Foundation events.</div> <div>4) Help Foundation team at crunch points in the prize cycle by, for example, reading Youth Prize entries or sharing with networks to do the same.</div>



Measuring Impact

Cultivating Understanding of Orwell and His Works		
1) A marked improvement in access to the George Orwell Archive, measured immediately by a rise in the number of visits and increased opening hours; soon after by the existence of rotating/ permanent exhibitions in UCL	3) Development of a UCL-funded fellowship	
2) Securing agreement from the Orwell Archive Advisory Board to take archival items on touring exhibitions from 2027/28	4) Creation of new educational resources	
	5) Curation of brave and wide-ranging, quality events programme	
Connecting with Audiences on Orwell's Values		
1) US Board established	6) Enhanced quality and reach of our events	
2) A move towards increased prize money	7) New domestic and international audiences reached	
3) Creation of an International Journalism Prize	8) Membership numbers increased	
4) Exploration of activities associated with the Youth Prize, in US schools	9) Global Ambassadors secured	
5) Enhanced Foundation planning operation		
Encouraging Courageous, Clear New Writing and Journalism		
1) The showcasing of exciting new writing at our events; making the most of our Prize-winning writers and finalists and keeping them close throughout the years	4) Influencing policy-makers to return critical thinking to the centre of the curriculum	
2) Create new opportunities for debut writers	5) The creation of high-quality resources for writers young and old as well as teachers	
3) The encouragement of more entries to the Youth Prize, increasing the percentage of entries from target groups		

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