

### 1. AI/Copyright

Question	Asker Name
How can the RPS call themselves the 'Voice of Photography' when we have heard nothing from the RPS concernig the erosion of copyright preferred by the government? Again no noise regarding AI, the loss of jobs and machine training by scraping and stealing our inages?	Anthony Harris

### Post AGM answers

The RPS has taken an interest in AI as it affects image making for several years and in June 2023 we published a [statement](#) setting out the RPS's position. Later that year we held a conference which considered AI and photography from a range of perspectives: legal, as an application for people working with images, and as a creative tool. Separately we are involved with industry bodies such as the British Copyright Council and Creative Rights Alliance to influence government policy and legislation to protect the rights of photographers and the wider creative sector.

The RPS trustees have recently initiated a new review of AI, reflecting the progress it has made since 2023, and will be consulting within and outside of the membership, with a view to updating the RPS' position on AI and image-making. AI is clearly not going away and it is appropriate, and indeed essential, for the RPS to keep abreast of developments and to educate our members about how it is being used, the opportunities it offers for creativity and, of course, some of the wider legal and ethical concerns around it.

## AGM 2025 'Live Q&A' Session - Summary

### 2. CPhot

Question	Asker Name
<p>QUESTION 1</p> <p>Thank you to Simon for bringing the meeting up to speed on the Chartered Photographer designation.</p> <p>He did answer some of the questions I raised, but not others.</p> <p>Please could Simon or Victoria clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What qualifications and amount of professional practice are required?</li><li>• How are applicants' "knowledge, competence, skills, understanding and conduct" assessed?</li><li>• Who makes the decision on whether someone meets the requirements?</li><li>• What's the application fee?</li><li>• How often will successful applicants be reassessed?</li><li>• How are you going to tell the wider public about the importance of working with a Chartered Photographer?</li></ul>	Martin Keene
Please confirm that Simon Hill has been designated as the first RPS Chartered Photographer.	melissa magnuson
Will CPD be required for Chartered status to ensure continuance?	Des King

### Live answer summary

For the benefit of Members unfamiliar with the Chartered Photographer designation, this is the terminal qualification for professional photographers in the UK and is awarded exclusively by the RPS as the learned society for photography.

The Chartered Photographer designation was included in the provisions of the Royal Charter granted to the Society in 2004, but those provisions were never enabled.

Following a five-year period of negotiation with the Privy Council and with the support of representative bodies for professional photographers in the UK, a formal Regulations document was written and submitted to the Privy Council on 1 June 2021.

A series of formal approvals were then required in order for the Chartered Photographer designation to become active.

The full roll-out of the designation is planned for 2026. In the meantime, any qualified professional photographers who would like to consider applying for the designation can contact the RPS on [chartered@rps.org](mailto:chartered@rps.org) and request information which includes a table of criteria approved by the Privy Council, an FAQ document that we hope will answer any questions that applicants may have, and an application form. The application fee is £70.

Simon Hill was the first Chartered Photographer as the Regulations required a qualified professional photographer to nominate subsequent potential Chartered Photographers (to avoid the 'Catch 22' situation of having no Chartered Photographer to nominate subsequent Chartered Photographers). The Regulations confirming this were approved by the Privy Council. Simon's application for CPhot was reviewed by Dan Jones (CEO) and Andy Moore (Distinctions Manager), and the full £70 application fee was paid by Simon. Yes, evidenced CPD will be required.

## AGM 2025 'Live Q&A' Session - Summary

### 3. Distinctions

Question	Asker Name
When should we expect to hear more about the new distinctions process for ARPS and FRPS?	Andy McDonald
Has the percentage pass rate for LRPS increased since the implementation of on line only assessment. If not why not?	Alan Cameron
The Analogue SIG showed a growth of 296 members, so why has the Society decided that LRPS assessment should be digital only? The decision has caused concern, and even resignation of membership, with 'traditional' analogue practitioners.[VH see additional comment below]	Richard Bradford
what is the timescale for the conclusion of the working group on distinctions criteria?	Neil Purcell
Why are MemCom members embargoed from discussing recent meetings with their committees ?	Tim Hancock
What is the explanation for the large reduction in Distinctions applications, particularly the most important numerically and financially, LRPS?	Robert Albright
Earlier this year in March, I sent an e-mail on three occasions to the Distinctions team. I have yet to receive a response. Does the team manager still work part time? Are there sufficient resources allocated to ensure members seeking distinctions can the support they need. Given what Simon has said about the number of members either holding distinctions or seeking them, I suggest that the Distinctions team is the most important to the future of the RPS. Can the RPS afford to deter those who are pursuing distinctions?	Michael Farley
I was schedule for an LRPS advisory session in august but it was cancelled. Is the "reformatting" that the CEO mentioned the reason for the cancellation and when will this session be rescheduled?	James Kessler
In the new licentiate process, are you using AI?	Mick Yates
During Simon's presentation on distinctions there was a footnote on Photobooks. The slide moved very quickly, so please could you explain the footnote on Photobooks	Neil Purcell
The new distinctions framework has been shared with Mem Com but the members have been sworn to secrecy. How can members input to the process if we do not know what is being proposed?	STEPHEN HARTLEY
The annual report states clearly that the Society prides itself on its "member engagement and wants to ensure that member voices shape the direction it takes in its quest to expand support for all photographers". Following on from that, the Annual Report clearly states the belief that "the strength of the organisation lies in the involvement of its members" As a member serving on a regional Committee, thus far I have been unable to scrutinise, debate or express any opinion on any of the changes to the awards system being considered centrally. What arrangements have been made, or will be, to ensure that members' views are fully known and that any Working Party is held to account in its role in representing the opinions of the wider membership.	Denise Bailey
What is being done to reverse the decline in the success rate for L distinctions?	Alan Cameron

### Live answer summary

Working Group timescale – anticipated to be over the next few months [Oct onwards]. There is a draft Terms of Reference which the Working Group will be reviewing. Working Group will review the feedback and their comments will feed into the second draft. Hoping to start A & Fs (New Framework) in early summer. Wraparound support will be designed once the New Framework is at a final draft/sign off stage.

Confidentiality – the documents are not being shared widely as they are still in draft format. Key stakeholder groups are being consulted but similarly to many organisations draft documents are not shared in the wider public domain in order to avoid rumours, hypotheses and assumptions. It is for common sense/practical reasons as opposed to secrecy.

### Unable to answer on the day, further information now provided

Licentiate pass rate - Approximately 26% of our Membership hold the Licentiate distinction with an estimated 30% either working towards an application for Licentiate or considering working towards Licentiate. Typically, annually there are between 190 and 200 applications for LRPS of which around 84 are successful (around 43% pass rate).

Analogue LRPS - It is not useful to conflate the ambitions or policies of a particular SIG (for example, Analogue Group) with a particular distinction (for example, Licentiate, which is now purely in digital formats). While the Analogue Group exists to encourage, support and celebrate analogue photography, the digital Licentiate has a very different remit - it is a certificate of competency in the art and craft of photography. Photography today is predominantly digital, and it is therefore entirely appropriate that our 'first level' distinction reflects this. It is unlikely that, today, a 'new' entrant to photography would begin with analogue photography. If they did begin in analogue photography, it would not be difficult for them to make digital versions of their analogue work and submit this for assessment at Licentiate. If an analogue photographer already has competency in the art and craft of photography, there is nothing to stop them from bypassing the digital Licentiate distinction and applying directly for an Associate distinction with their analogue outputs.

### Post AGM answers

AI in Licentiate feedback - we use AI in two ways a) to check the grammar and spelling of the written comments submitted by the assessors and b) to create a summary. Whilst I'm aware that AI has its negatives and content produced by ChatGPT and others can sometimes look very 'AI-y', what it does mean is that we can be more efficient with our time which benefits our applicants. For the first time since 1974 (when the Licentiate was introduced) we are now able to offer feedback to all applicants which can only be a positive thing.

Distinctions data and member feedback – we will be sending out a survey to all recent (three years) applicants, and this will help us understand why there is a decline in Distinctions applications as well as provide us with a large amount of other data.

Staffing – the Distinctions team has a headcount of 1.6 FTE, and we are always reviewing staffing levels processes to ensure that our members get excellent service. There will of course be time when we fall short of our standards and in that situation I'd encourage you to contact the Distinctions team and/or me [Victoria] in order to resolve the issue.

Photobooks - My apologies for moving the slide on too quickly [SH]. The footnote stated that the 2005 application and passes figures (correct to 17 September 2025) included those for Photobooks whereas the figures for previous years (2023 and 2024) did not include Photobooks.

LRPS advisory session – this event was cancelled due to assessor availability. We were able to offer some people alternative dates but sadly not for everyone. Those applicants who were unable to be reallocated to a new date have now been contacted and offered a refund.

## AGM 2025 'Live Q&A' Session - Summary

### 4. Governance

Question	Asker Name
QUESTION 2 The notice advising members about the 2022 ( <a href="https://rps.org/about/agm-2022-the-photographer-s-journey/agm-2022/">https://rps.org/about/agm-2022-the-photographer-s-journey/agm-2022/</a> ) said that: Questions will be answered at the AGM and the submitting member will be given the right to reply live at the meeting, whether they are in the room or attending via Zoom. 1)Why has the opportunity for a right to reply been removed? and 2)recognising that the Society values the input and engagement of members, how can the Society reintroduce the right of reply from the next AGM ? Please answer Martin's question rather than avoid it.	Martin Keene
when will the minutes of this meeting be published	Anthony Harris
	Neil Purcell

### Live answer summary

That is a very good question. The answer is that for purely pragmatic reasons, we have chosen to do it this way. This seems to be the only way we can avoid extended discussions on specific topics that might be of interest only to a very small number of members (sometimes a single member) and risk pushing us beyond the two hour time limit for the meeting; which would mean entire agenda items may not get covered or the airtime they warrant.

We do publish all the questions and the answers. Individual members may then pick up, after the meeting, directly with a member of staff or Trustee, to pursue a particular question and answer in more detail, exactly as you (Martin Keane) have done with me. This seems to be the most suitable way of conducting the AGM as it at least gives members the opportunity to raise a topic – in 'full view' of those present at the AGM, and to receive a response, with the prospect of follow-up after the meeting.

If a member can think of a better way of doing this, then do please let me know by email to [president@rps.org](mailto:president@rps.org)

### 5. IPE

Question	Asker Name
If IPE166 was so important why did we not see the president or CEO at the members open evening last week?	Anthony Harris
When I visited IPE 166, all the images appeared to be part of projects, where the aim was not necessarily the pursuit of photography, but in presenting a message. For me, this resulted in a selection of images that lacked appeal. It is the not the first time that I have been disappointed in the IPE. There is little point in entering since the criteria by which images are judged do not appear to be entirely based on photographic merit. What can you say to make me change my mind?	Michael Farley
Like many members I haven't been able to see the current IPE in London, when will it travel to other parts of the UK, especially the North of England? Will other RPS exhibitions also be available to see in different regions too?	Edward Bylina
The Quality of the exhibition shown at the Saatchi is an all time low ... why?	Mike Woodman
I (we) share opinion re IPE members evening. Rather shambolic and unimpressive opening and presentation. Images overwhelmingly 'contemporary' photography with photographic skill, vision and creativity secondary to an idea or project. This is NOT representative of the world of photography. Is this deliberate through choice of selectors by RPS	Tim Rudman

#### Live answer summary

Why were President and CEO not at the Members event? It was a last minute opportunity offered to us by Saatchi. We want to have more members' events, and this was an opportunity to trial it. President had a prior engagement he couldn't cancel. I was on holiday (booked in 2024). Trustees and staff were there.

We plan to tour the IPE exhibitions, as well as other ones, around the country and that is one of the benefits of not being restricted to using RPS House to host exhibitions.

#### Unable to answer on the day, further information now provided

As with all exhibitions not everyone enjoys/likes what they see, however the good news is that we had 65,000 people view the exhibition during August & September and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

None of the images in the exhibition were selected purely on the text, and photographic merit is the primary reason for selection. During the two-day print selection process the prints are examined and discussed, and the text is available for the panel to review if required. All the images in the exhibition have been voted by all 5 selectors to be included in the final exhibition.

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### 6. Journal

Question	Asker Name
The cost of producing 4 magazines a year, along with postage, must account for a significant part of the annual subscription. I suspect many would be happy to receive a pdf version instead of the paper version. Apart from the ecological reasons for a change, is it right for those who would be happy with a pdf only arrangement to subsidise those who still want a paper version? A lower subscription may encourage more to join.	Neil Harris

### Post AGM answers

Part of the member survey will include questions around the Journal – this will include questions about content and format. A Journal review is planned for 2026 and will incorporate the survey findings.



### 7. Membership

Question	Asker Name
Really good to see Victoria. On the issue of market size of photographers what is the the percentage of our market knowledge? For example if our market knowledge is 75% it means that our real market share is a lot lower than that stated in the presentation.	Des King
Sorry, a growth 'to' 296 members. [VH And a further comment below]	Richard Bradford
That should have been 11%, 1 in 8 of the membership.	Richard Tucker
In order to grow our share of the uk amatuer photographer, the RPS needs to offer something that photographers can't get at camera clubs and the PAGB... it can't just be about distinctions, and we can't just be another "camera club"	Clive Watkins
The RPS feels incredibly exclusive. We need to reduce this drastically. Furthermore, communication at any level can only be described currently, as dire. Lastly, attraction and retention; what are the benefits to members. What can we do to address these points or rather, problems?	Phil Davies
To achive the inclusivity you speak of, you first need to address the communication issue.	Phil Davies
Again, with 'recognised' qualifications; these are not transferable and only determined through the maintenance of ones membership. Arguably, ths is not therefore a qualification so where is this benfit? What makes it attractive to new and existing members?	Phil Davies

### Post AGM answers

Part of the member & non-member survey will include questions around the membership offering, our education programme and our communications. All of this will feed into a review that is already underway. As I mentioned at the AGM, we are keen to attract a much wider range of photographers, and we recognise that our current offering won't always appeal to them. Likewise, not everyone wants to do a distinction so we will be reviewing our education offering as well.



## AGM 2025 'Live Q&A' Session - Summary

### 8. Other

Question	Asker Name
Why have you called the new building HERE. It says nothing about its purpose. Also, confusing e.g "can you direct me to HERE?" At least prefix it with RPS i.e RPS HERE.	Iain Blacklaw
Will our new CEO now be motivated to take up photography?	Des King
you should do an L	Simon Maddison

### Live answer summary

Whilst I may not go for an L I have definitely gained a far greater insight into and passion for photography in the last few months and might well enter a photo into the members' challenge!

### Post AGM answers

Now that we have sold RPS House we are in a rented office space. The landlords called the building HERE and we do not have any say in the matter.

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### 9. Regions/Groups

Question	Asker Name
Chapters have no legal status and no funds can be given to them (earlier decisions by RPS). We represent 8% of the membership. In addition to volunteering we have to finance our own activities. Will the RPS consider changing this situation?	Richard Tucker

### Live answer summary

We recognise that the International offering is not great at the moment. We are looking to review the International 'offering' (which includes Chapters) – please feedback using the survey and via your Representatives.

## AGM 2025 'Live Q&A' Session - Summary

### 10.RPS Pro

Question	Asker Name
what is the current state of RPS Pro and how many members did we gain from The MPA merger and how many are still with us	sean conboy

### Live answer summary

Honest answer is that what was promised hasn't materialised. We have been meeting with RPS Pro members and are going back to basics to work out what they want/need and how we can find a solution that works for everyone. Approx <100 members are left.

## AGM 2025 'Live Q&A' Session - Summary

### 11.Website

Question	Asker Name
Timescale for website upgrade?	John Carr

### Live answer summary

Thank you for your patience, we know it's challenging and frustrating. Currently drawing up briefing document in order to get proposals from website companies. In the early stages but we know it is urgent. You will see changes in 2026, and it will probably be incremental as opposed to big bang.

## AGM 2025 'Live Q&A' Session - Summary

### Note

- Questions have been grouped by category – some were answered live but not all, due to time limitations.
- In order to answer all questions, the live answers have been used and supplemented with additional information if appropriate.