

## **Report of the Trustees**

### **For the year ended 2024-2025**

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year 2024-25 and confirm that they comply with the Charities Act 2011 & 2022.

**Charity Name:** The Platelet Society Charity Registration Number 1172202

**Registered Address:** Office 7 35-37 Ludgate Hill, London, EC4M 7JN,

### **UK Board of Trustees** (<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/trustees/>)

Professor Jeremy Pearson (Chair), Professor Alison Goodall (Incoming Chair), Maryam Samina, Crispian Strachan, Bob Humphries, and Professor Adrian Newland

### **Outgoing Trustees**

Dr Gillian Lowe (stepped down June 2025).

### **Executive Committee**

Dr Amanda Unsworth (Chair), Dr Craig Hughes (Financial Officer/Treasurer), Dr Paul Armstrong (Chair-Elect), Dr Julia Sandrin Gauer, Dr Giordano Pula, Dr Matthew Hindle, Dr Marilena Crescente, Dr Sarah Westbury (clinical), Dr Suthesh Sivapalaratnam (clinical), Dr Joanne Mitchell (ECR), Dr Xenia Sawkulycz (ECR) and Dr Lauren Murphy (ECR).

### **Outgoing Committee Members**

Dr Prachi Stafford and Dr Kalwant Authi, (stepping down Oct 2025).

Dr Samantha Montague (stepped down in Spring 2025), Dr Beth Webb (stepped down in July 2025)

### **Secretary/Governance Officer**

Dr Joy Wright

### **Bankers**

HSBC

### **UK Structure, Governance and Management**

The Platelet Society is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission in August 2017 under the charity number 1172202.

## **Organisational Structure**

The charity has a Board of Trustees which is responsible for the governance of the charity. The Trustees set up an Executive Committee that is responsible for enacting strategies that allow the charity to fulfil its key objectives.

**Trustees:** The charity has five Trustees (Jeremy Pearson, Alison Goodall, Maryam Samina, Crispian Strachan, Bob Humphries (joined in April 2025), Adrian Newland). Gill Lowe stepped down in June 2025 and was replaced by Adrian Newland (August 2025). All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the accounts.

**Ambassador:** Lieutenant Colonel Crispin Black MBE MPhil

**Executive Committee** (<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/committee/>)

The Executive Committee currently has twelve members. Amanda Unsworth is the current Chair of the Executive Committee. Paul Armstrong is the Deputy Chair (will take over as Chair in Sept 2026) and Craig Hughes is the Society Finance Officer. Other members include Julia Sandrin Gauer, Giordano Pula and Joanne Mitchell (Early career researcher - ECR) Sarah Westbury and Suthesh Sivapalaratnam serve on the committee as clinical representatives. Beth Webb (ECR) stepped down from the committee in July 2025, Kalwant Authi, and Prachi Stafford will step down from the committee in Oct 2025. We thank them all for their hard work and support of the Society. Matthew Hindle, Marilena Crescente, Xenia Sawkulczyk (ECR) and Lauren Murphy (ECR) joined the committee in the Autumn of 2025. All Committee members have research and/or clinical backgrounds relevant to the work of the Charity and were elected to represent different stages of the academic career track. The Committee remains inclusive and diverse, welcoming applications from its membership, and represents our membership by inclusion of male and female researchers, and Early Career Researchers. The Committee meets quarterly, and is responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the Society. The Committee is focused on facilitating participation of the research community through the Society webpage, newsletters, social media, administering of grants and funding opportunities, and networking, supporting conference organisation and outreach activities.

## **Risk Management**

The Trustees and Executive Committee have reviewed the major risks to which the Charity may be exposed, and appropriate systems have been implemented to mitigate risk. In particular, risks to external funding have led to the development of a plan which allows ring fencing for funding for core activities. All medical-related information provided on our website is general and is covered by a specific medical disclaimer policy. Structures have been put in place to account for recent changes in General Data Protection Regulations. The Trustees are satisfied that arrangements are in place to manage risks that have been identified. The Board of Trustees will be reviewing the risk register in the coming year.

## **Our Aims**

Our Society's purpose is to promote excellence in research, education and public awareness of platelet biology in human health and disease. To ensure that we remain focussed on our key aims they are appraised on a yearly basis in order to review both what we have achieved and evaluate the outcome of our work. The review examines the success of each key activity to ensure that they benefit the groups that hope to serve.

## **The Focus of our Work**

Our main objectives for the year were focussed on further establishing the Society within the research community and creating activities and structures that would help promote our key aims in the future.

The strategies we used to meet these objectives were:

- To facilitate greater communication and representation within the research community
- To facilitate and promote research into platelets and platelet related disorders
- To encourage younger researchers to ensure long-term continuation of platelet research in UK
- To provide the public with accessible information on platelet related diseases
- To improve public understanding of platelet biology

## **Activities and Achievements**

### **How our activities deliver public benefit**

The Society carries out a number of activities in pursuance of its aims. These activities, summarised below, provide benefit to members of the Society and wider society.

### **To facilitate greater communication within the research community**

#### **1. *Communication channels.***

A key element of the creation of the Platelet Society was to create a stronger network of biomedical researchers and clinicians with interests in platelet biology. Provision of communications channels has been an important part of bringing the research community together

- **Website.** The Society website continues to provide key information for both for the research community and the wider public. <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/> Amongst other items, the website is kept up-to-date with information of upcoming conferences, key research findings from around the world, information on available PhD studentships, funding opportunities and research positions. Reports from platelet research conferences are uploaded onto the website
- **Social Media.** The Society has a dedicated social media team, made up of Early Career Researchers and Executive committee members; the team look after all of the social media accounts: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, and are regularly posting new content to engage the public and researchers alike. The Twitter/X account has been left dormant since Jan 2025.
- **Newsletter.** The newsletter, emailed to members, updates the membership with short reports on recent research meetings, funding opportunities, public engagement/STEM activities, and shares the successes of platelet researchers.

#### **2. *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.***

The Society believes that everybody's contribution matters, regardless of their identity, background, experiences or beliefs. The Society aims to develop a culture in which everyone feels welcome, heard and free to fully express themselves. The Society has a dedicated EDI webpage which includes a code of conduct for members and activities of the Society, a series of EDI statements to help us continue on our journey, and a mechanism for reporting concerns. Further information can be found on our EDI webpage. <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/edi/>

### 3. **Early Career Researchers' Initiatives.**

Building a strong sense of collaboration and community amongst the ECRs is important for the future growth and activity of The Society. In 2024/2025 the Working Group membership included: Dr Alex Slater, Dr Beth Webb (stepped down summer 2025), Dr Xenia Sawkulycz (moved from working groups into executive committee ECR position Autumn 2025), Nicola Dark, Hetty Walker, Dr Nathan Asquith, Dr Olha Kostenchak-Svystak and Dr Rachel Lamerton (stepping down Autumn 2025), supported by the Executive ECR committee members, Dr Joanne Mitchell and Dr Xenia Sawkulycz. The Society thanks all previous Working Group and ECR representatives for their hard work in supporting the group. The ECR Working Group has continued to encourage career development, wellbeing, public engagement and social media content to support and promote our members and activities led by the Society. This can all be found on the ECR space on the Platelet Society website: [Early Career Researchers – The Platelet Society](#)

**Probably Platelets:** The Society podcast now in its third season and is available on all major streaming platforms (e.g. Apple Music and Spotify). With several episodes planned throughout the coming year, including a patient perspective episode, aimed to raise awareness of Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP). This project is currently being led by Xenia Sawkulycz and Alex Slater (Birmingham). See: [Probably Platelets – The Platelet Society](#) for more details.

- **Wellbeing Resources:** Wellbeing has been a key focus for the ECR working group this year. Rachel Lamerton (formally Birmingham, but recently moved to Dublin) has been driving this section. We have a list of wellbeing resources including, apps, podcasts, websites and books, that are all available of the ECR space. The beginning of 2025 marked the launch of the #StressFreeJanuary campaign where a new wellbeing resource was shared on social media every day, this was met by a lot of positive engagement. We are hoping to expand these wellbeing resources in the future through other social media channels.
- **Mentoring:** Led by Nicola Dark, we have re-established our mentor-mentee programme. This was launched in 2024 and included a list of potential mentor profiles on the website that mentees could read about and ask to be matched with. Using mentee and mentor forms, applications were collected in late 2024/early 2025. Mentor and mentor pairs were matched and notified in 2025. Feedback so far has been promising with many pairs reporting a good relationship and ongoing meetings. More applications for the next round are being accepted and new pairs will be matched in early 2026.
- **Career Development:** The International Society of Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH) London 2022 Congress generated legacy funds, which we successfully applied for to establish a Platelet Society/ISTH ECR wider skills and development fund. These funds supported invited speakers to discuss alternative career paths as a breakout discussion group session at the annual Platelet Society meeting in Manchester (April 2025). This was very well received.
- **ECR day at the Platelet Society:** The ECR day at the platelet Society conference was organised by a separate ECR committee this year to allow the working groups to focus on Platelet Society initiatives. The event was organised by Xenia Sawkulycz, Azziza Zaabalawi, Bismah Mateen, Beth Webb, Daisy Yates, Emily Horner and Tudor Dimofte and ran by Xenia Sawkulycz on the day. The day was a mix of flash talks that were marked and selected by our ECR committee. There was also a poster session, where ECRs could have practise in presenting their work, before the main meeting. We also had a generic afternoon session of career development talks and breakout rooms. A wellbeing workshop, led by an external company 'We are wellbeing' focused on Positive Psychology and Stress Management. The company provided positive feedback from the event and were

impressed by the engagement of the society members. Overall, there was a very good attendance to the ECR day (>50 ECRs) and the feedback on the day was very positive.

- **Social media content and engagement:** Many of the ECR working group members are also involved in maintaining the social media content for the society (driven majorly by Beth Webb, Xenia Sawkulycz, Nathan Asquith and Hetty Walker). This is something we wish to continue and expand with for the upcoming year. We have recently taken a step back from X/Twitter and started a Platelet Society page on LinkedIn. This has been very well received gathering over 500 followers and a good level of interaction in the short time it has been active.
- **Career Development resources:** The ECR working groups have launched a new initiative in 2025, Led by Xenia Sawkulycz, this initiative focuses on career development and aims to build a repertoire of resources available to our ECRs. These are available on LinkedIn and the society website and include CV building advice and guides, information on funders of grants and different grant schemes available, and alternative career suggestions and advice. So far, these have been well-received and are due to continue in the coming year.
- **Journal Club:** The working groups newest resource is the weekly online journal club (LinkedIn). Run by Hetty Walker, journal club highlights 3 new papers per week and provides a short summary and links to the papers. This has been very popular on social media and calls to highlight relevant publications from followers have had a lot of responses. This has proven to be an excellent resource with a lot of positive interaction and is a good opportunity to raise awareness of the society, and the research carried out by its members .

#### **4. Awards.**

The Society has two awards for members to recognise excellence in platelet research and in achieving the aims of The Society. Named in honour of two internationally well-respected UK platelet researchers, (Gustav Born and Alison Goodall) they provide an annual way for the Society to rewarded excellence. Further details of the awards can be found at <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/platelet-society-awards/>.

### **To facilitate and promote research into platelets and platelet-related disorders**

#### **5. AMRC membership**

The Society joined the Association of Medical Research Charities as an introductory member in 2025. Introductory membership is for 3 years where we will work towards full membership. Membership of the AMRC will allow the Society to access advice and support relevant to grant awarding societies.

#### **6. Fundraising.**

The Society was awarded \$37,500 for the London 2022 ISTH legacy funds to support its work. Funds from this award have been used to establish/support the following opportunities, over a 3 year period (until 2026):

- **Summer studentships:** funded two in 2025

- **Outreach and education grants:** rolling call, open for applications,
- **ECR wider skills training:** available to the Platelet Society Meeting ECR day organising committee to run wider skills sessions.
- **Skills transfer grants:** rolling call, open for applications.
- **Clinical audits:** call opened in 2025.

More details are provided in section 10.

Together, we believe that using the funds in this way helps the Platelet Society achieve its remit in terms of research and education, and provides a healthy portfolio of activities for the next 3 years. The Society is grateful to the ISTH for this support.

We are currently seeking assistance with our fundraising efforts to help us ensure we can continue to offer similar awards and grants past 2026.

To cover Society running costs, annual membership fees are £25 per annum.

### **7. Summer studentships.**

Thanks to the ISTH legacy funds and money raised from the annual meeting, the Society offered three students the opportunity to work in a platelet lab during the summer of 2025. Following a competitive call, and independent review, 3 students and projects at the Imperial College London, Keele University and the University of Reading were selected and funded during July and August 2025. Two were funded by the ISTH legacy funds and 1 by Society funds. Further details of the studentships awarded can be found at <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/studentships/>

### **8. Scientific meetings.**

Scientific conferences facilitate valuable exchange of new ideas and methods.

#### *2025 Platelet Society Meeting - Manchester*

This year our annual meeting was held at Manchester Metropolitan University (23<sup>rd</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025). Thanks to Sarah Jones, Xenia Sawkulczyk, Bismah Mateen, Beth Webb, Tudor Dimofte, Emily Horner and Daisie Yates for organising the meeting. Reports on all Platelet Society meetings, and meetings where Platelet Society researchers have presented, can be found on the Platelet Society webpage, under "News".

The 2026 Platelet Society Meeting will be held at the University of Reading in September, hosted by Professor Jon Gibbins, supported by an organising committee consisting of academics and ECRs from the University of Reading.

### **9. Research Strategy.**

The Society wishes to build on the opportunities made possible with the ISTH legacy funds to support platelet research and education. The Executive Committee has a research strategy document which is reviewed annually and the latest version is available on our website - <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/research-strategy>

### **10. Funding and grant opportunities**

<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/funding/> Thanks to the ISTH legacy funds, the Society currently offers the following funding and grant opportunities to its membership:

- **Summer studentships:** The aim of these studentships is to provide opportunities for high calibre undergraduate students to experience working in a research lab within the area of

platelet biology. This opportunity would be a great way for students considering doing a PhD to experience working on a research project and for ECRs to experience managing and supervising a project. In 2025 the Society funded 3 studentships (Imperial College London, Keele University and University of Reading) each with a stipend of £1500 for the student and up to £500 consumables.

- **Outreach and education grants:** The aim of the Outreach and Education grant scheme is to provide members with support to create and run innovative public/patient outreach and education sessions. These run as a rolling call, with applications accepted year round. Funds of up to £300 are available. In 2025, 2 applications were awarded.
- **ECR wider skills training:** these annual grants are offered to the organising committee of the ECR day of the Society meeting and are available to be used to support wider skills training or development. This year funds were used to support travel and accommodation costs for speakers to take part in a careers discussion section at the Manchester meeting.
- **Skills transfer grants:** The aim of these grants is to promote exchange, training and/or transfer of skills and technologies from one group to another or for the development of a platelet scientist. These run as a rolling call, with applications accepted year-round. 3 applications were successful in 2025.
- **Clinical audits:** Applications for clinical audits were invited in 2025, with a focus on identifying areas of clinical/patient need to improve diagnosis and treatment strategies for patients with platelet related diseases. Applications with a focus on women's health inequalities were encouraged.

To facilitate an open and fair assessment of applications for the above awards, the Executive Committee has established a sub-committee to review applications for small grants for research. In 2025 this panel was refreshed and expanded to include more ECR and clinical reviewers. More information about this committee and membership can be found at: <https://plateletsociety.co.uk/funding/>

## **11. *Clinical perspectives and direction.***

The Society aims to increase its activities in patient focused and clinical activities. To ensure that future activities are relevant and do not replicate what is provided by other charities (especially those with more patient focused remits), we have a clinical focus working group, which includes Dr Gill Lowe, Dr Sarah Westbury and Dr Suthesh Sivapalaratnam. This group covers both bleeding and thrombotic conditions and aims to ensure that activities of the Society have a clinical perspective and to identify appropriate patient-focused activities. Patient/clinical focussed sessions are now included at Platelet Society annual meetings, with the 2025 meeting focussed on the role of platelets in Women's health and bleeding. The allocation of ISTH funds to clinical audits to highlight clinical areas of focus will also be important in driving this forward, and we look forward to the outcomes of the clinical audit(s) funded in 2025/2026.

### **To provide the public with accessible information on platelet related diseases**

The Society does not provide medical advice and when contacted by individuals seeking such advice directs them to the clinician(s) involved in their care pathway. However, the Society does provide a number of fact sheets on the role of platelets in health and disease and platelet related diseases; these are reviewed by the Executive Committee's clinical members. We also provide a number of personal perspectives of patients who live with platelet related diseases to raise awareness of how individual sufferers cope with their particular disorders. Our two clinical Committee members have been in discussions with other relevant societies to help support these organisations, so the Society can undertake more patient-focused interactions.

## **To improve public understanding of platelet biology**

As part of our mission to improve the public understanding of blood platelets and their roles in health and disease our members engage in a number of outreach activities. These activities are undertaken by our members at a local level often in collaboration with their host university and other outside bodies. The Society now has Outreach and Education grants available on a rolling basis to support members who wish to create and organise such activities.

The Society also has an outreach working group chaired by Julia Sandrin-Gauer (Leeds) which has developed a range of suggestions for increasing our public profile and activities.

## **Plans for Future Period**

The Society plans to continue the activities outlined above in the coming years subject to a satisfactory funding position, but also expand the activities into other areas.

- We will continue to enhance our scientific conferences, facilitate workshops and training opportunities.
- Implementation of outreach and education activities following on from the recommendations of the Outreach Working Group.
- Continuing to develop the clinical working group to help determine future directions and opportunities in this area.
- Continued development of the Research Strategy and working towards an application to become a full member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).
- Widening our fundraising profile to ensure growth.
- Continue to ensure that we embed EDI across all Society activities.

## **Financial Review**

At the end of the financial year on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025, the Platelet Society held £51,872.12, which is a net profit of £2,189.80. A significant proportion of our income and expenditure is from the annual meeting.

### **Income**

**Membership income** has increased this year (£5403, up from £3533 in 2023-24). This is due to an increase in the membership fees from £15 to £25 per annum that came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

We have had no charitable fundraising activity in this cycle. The Society needs to develop a strategy to look at increasing this in future years, including the use of JustGiving.

Falls in interest rates and a decreasing financial reserve (as we deplete the ISTH legacy funds) has decreased our bank interest payments this year.

### **Expenditure**

The basic running costs for the society have remained fairly stable this year. Accountancy fees fell slightly from the previous year and website maintenance has not been charged in this financial cycle due to being invoiced after the cutoff date for the financial year.

We received an additional penalty fee associated with the submission of a corporate tax return to HMRC; this is being investigated by the accountant as this appears to be based on an issue with our submission from 2022. Other basic running costs including the Society Secretary salary (which is increased from last year in line with inflation, and approved by the Society

Trustees), and registration payments for the Fundraising Regular and Company House ('Legal fees') remain largely the same.

Other charges include society expenditure on our Summer Studentship scheme, one of which was paid from by the society with the other two paid for using ISTH legacy fund. The legacy funds have also been used to fund several Outreach awards this year.

### **Current Financial Position**

The Society currently holds reserves of £51,872.12 (as of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025) of which £19,434.34 is committed to the ISTH legacy fund initiatives to be spent by the end of 2026. This leaves the society with reserves of £32,437.78 uncommitted funds. This is an increase on last year, due to the Manchester meeting making a profit of £12,015.58, which has covered losses from the previous year's meeting. Our current financial position suggests the society remains sustainable in the short-medium term, although in the face of rising costs, further diversification of income will likely be required to maintain this in the longer term.

Finance Overview – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025

Declaration The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above.