

FAA Newsletter

July 2026



Produced by: Jon Alcock, Communications Officer © 2026 FAA & Bectu (Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications & Theatre Union)

New Committee.

The FAA's Annual General Meeting took place at Prospect HQ in London on Saturday, 25th April 2026 and a new committee was elected for 2026/7.

Current Chair Albert Cheah was re-elected after narrowly defeating Dawn Spragg who was returned to the committee along with Jon Alcock, Richie Cheung, Mia Chia, Stuart Matthews, John McKenzie, Charlie Richards and Racheal Tse while Martin

Bratanov and Dawn Gibbons were also elected. Sadly, at the AGM, John, Dawn and Dawn all chose to step down for personal reasons, so the new committee will continue, at least for the time being, with a smaller number.

In fact, it was only a few years ago that the size of the committee was increased so no problems are anticipated in this slimmed-down version.

What Does Your Committee Do?

The first committee meeting of the year took place just 16 days after the AGM and one of the first orders of business was to decide who might carry out each of the important roles. Albert Cheah obviously continues as Chair and the two Vice-Chair positions are retained by Stuart Matthews and Richie Cheung.

Charlie Richards continues as Branch Secretary, a vital role which means taking the minutes as well as coordinating with Bectu and Prospect on things such as conferences. Lots of things that nobody else sees.

Also remaining in the same role is Communications Officer Jon Alcock whose main responsibility is producing the highly informative and thoroughly entertaining tome that you're current reading!

Your Health & Safety Officer is Richie Cheung while Mia Chia is your Welfare Officer. There is some overlap between these two roles as they are both concerned with your physical and mental safety on set and beyond.

New committee member Martin Bratanov joins Richie in looking after Deals, which are those productions that – for whatever reason – are under the mistaken impression that some or all of the terms of the FAA/Pact Agreement don't apply to them. He'll also be sharing the load with Richie on H&S. Stuart Matthews retains the role of Recruitment Officer, another function in which the rest of the committee also gets involved and we would hope that every one of you does, too. Racheal Tse is our representative on both the Disability and the Equality & Diversity LPD committees.

Contacts

Complaints and enquiries: lpd@bectu.org.uk.

New membership enquiries: joinfaa@bectu.org.uk or <https://bectu.org.uk/join/>

Existing member queries: membership@bectu.org.uk.

Office phone number: 0300 600 1878.

Broken Turnaround

Bectu and our French partner unions stood together at this year's Cannes Film Festival to say enough is enough on the culture of extremely long hours in film and TV. They issued a joint statement for an immediate shift in industry practices to prioritise fair working hours, protected rest breaks, and sustainable careers for film and audio-visual workers. The expectation of habitually long working hours has become endemic with broken turnaround (being asked back to work with less than 11 hours' rest between shifts) now an all too common feature.

This is an issue that doesn't tend to affect supporting artists as much as it does our colleagues on the crew, partly because far fewer of us work multiple, consecutive days on a production but also because they have to pay us for breaking the turnaround rules. Clause 18 was amended in 2002 requiring producers to "pay the artiste an overtime rate for each half hour or part thereof subject to a minimum of one hourly overtime payment" if their call time is fewer than 11 hours after the previous day's sign-out and compensatory rest is not offered. It's a relatively small payment but it proved very effective in persuading producers not to do it. Meanwhile, our crew colleagues are reporting burnout, unsafe journeys home, accidents, poor mental health and missing out on family life as a result of long hours becoming part of their job.



Committee members Charlie and Rachael supporting the campaign



Chair Albert and committee member Mia with officials Molly and Naomi on Bectu's "walk of action".

The Broken Turnaround payment is unique in the FAA/Pact Agreement in that it is neither a supplement for something extra that you did (such as getting a haircut) or a penalty for something that you should have got but didn't (like a short lunch). It's a deterrent because it's a Health & Safety issue that shouldn't happen and it's within the producer's power not to let it. As Bectu's campaign stresses, you can say "no". If your call time tomorrow is fewer than 11 hours from when you signed out then it's within your rights to tell them that you do not consider it enough to properly rest and ask for a later one. If it's going to be hazardous to your health and safety, don't do it.

Mileage Allowance

At the end of May, the Chancellor Of the Exchequer announced that the approved mileage allowance payment (AMAP) was to go up from 45p per mile to 55p per mile, backdated to April 2026. This won't affect the Travel Allowance that you get as part of your standard FAA work day as those are linked to Transport For London increases but it should make a significant difference when you come to do your tax returns.

Remember that the rate reduces after 10,000 miles (good luck getting that much work!) and that it's lower for motorcycles and bicycles (still 24p and 20p per mile, respectively).

That's not tax advice, simply advice to keep it in mind when you consult with a qualified tax advisor.

Recruitment

As was reported at the AGM, FAA membership is currently slightly below its peak in December 2024 but overall is 12.7% higher over the period from January 2023 to 2026. We know that we work in a very fluid industry where people come and go all the time so it is perhaps not surprising that numbers are lower during the recent downturn in the amount of work out there.

Many people who are not union members will not decide overnight to join, a lot will make the decision over several months or even years. Please be union advocates whenever you talk to your fellow SAs, particularly those new to the business. You know why you're members, and the many benefits that come with it, so please tell them.

Priorities For The Year

Also discussed at the first committee meeting were those issues on which we should most concentrate.

The first of which is, very obviously, the new Agreement with Pact. Even when that has been ratified, attention still needs to focus on the Rate Card since it was agreed that the scheduled 2027 and 2028 pay rises would be re-evaluated should inflation remain above 2.5%. None of us can predict the future but with war in the Middle East (not to mention within the Labour government!) this seems somewhat likely.

We also need to look at the FAA's rulebook. Some of our rules were amended last year in an attempt to bring them in line with the Bectu and Prospect rulebooks but the National Executive Committee is still not entirely happy so further revisions must be made. Very little of it should actually affect you as members, but it's a matter of dotting and crossing appropriate letters so that nothing is open to misinterpretation.

We're going to be looking at both our Recruitment Plan, to try to swell our ranks, and our Communications Strategy, so that as many people as possible find out how flipping marvellous we are and have access to the best advice when they need it. Most difficult might be tackling the issue of Agency Commission and this is an area where we really cannot promise anything. Our agreement is with the Producers, not the Agents, and the rate of commission is something that everybody agrees to in the terms and conditions that they sign with their agencies. Our members are increasingly unhappy about how much of their hard-earned fees are being pocketed by the middle-man, though, so we will see what we can do about that.

We also intend to look at the current Case Form to see if we can simplify it a bit and, as soon as the new Agreement is signed off, there's the FAA App to be amended.

All in all it's looking like a busy year. Let's hope we can say the same about everybody's bookings.

The (Non-FAA) App

Speaking of the App, there are a couple of unofficial versions out there which you might consider are worthy of further investigation. One of these is called Setsum and appears to produce accurate figures for your day on set. Or in the fitting room. Or your night on set. Or your Bank Holiday. Or your day that rolls into night rates. With appropriate supplements and penalties. The job may not be rocket science but sometimes working out how much you'll be paid for it might seem like it.

How Did We Do?

As you know, rates of pay under the FAA/Pact Agreement increased at the start of the year. It's fair to say that the 3.75% rise wasn't as much as we would have liked but it was certainly more than they wanted to give us. As is the case in virtually every pay negotiation in trade union history.

Generally, there are three reasons why workers should get a pay rise. Firstly: as a performance-related bonus, which is difficult if not impossible to judge in our case. Secondly: to reflect the fact that they are currently being under-paid, also hard to argue when FAA rates are already slightly above our Equity colleagues and when we all know that there are thousands who would do our job for nothing! And Thirdly: the cost of living. That one is rather more straight-forward as we have inflation rates as all-too-unpleasant reading.

So, how did we do? Well, at the time of negotiation in November 2025 the figures for inflation were 3.2% (Consumer Prices Index) and 3.5% (CPIH, which includes housing costs and Council Tax). According to forecasts, though, these were set to fall significantly in 2026 and beyond – it was thought likely to around 2%, so securing 3.75% was a very good increase.

Recently, our parent union Prospect released details of the 30 pay deals negotiated by its members for 2026 and we compared rather well. ITN also received a 3.75% increase while the National Trust got 3.56% and National Trust Scotland only 3% which was also what was secured for Birmingham Rep Theatre, Belgrade Theatre and Sadlers Wells. Overall, we exceeded 17 other organisations and some of those who got higher negotiated rates were likely because they have not had an increase for years or have a stronger membership and bargaining power. Respectably up the table, then. Not quite pushing for Europe but that would be considerably outside the zone!

AI

Unsurprisingly, the subject of AI was brought up at the AGM as members are justifiably concerned about the effect that it might have on our industry. It's extremely frustrating but the current position on this very important subject is about three large helpings of "nobody knows". And that's from all sides.

Your union is attempting to get safeguards included in the latest update of the FAA/Pact Agreement and get the wording aligned with UK Intellectual Property law. The major obstacle to getting it added, though, is that Pact don't understand what AI is going to mean any more than we do. The technology is developing so quickly that nobody has much idea to what extent it can be used in film making. The people banging the drum for it insist that it will replace just about everybody on set – and the set itself – but nobody has yet successfully proved it. And it seems that very few are prepared to be the first ones to risk using it extensively, and fail.

Our colleagues at Equity recently voted 99% in favour of refusing body scans when offered as a contractual condition and FAA members already have the right to refuse such scans but we're still being asked to do them.

More importantly, there is a big difference between digital scanning and AI and that's very much the problem, currently. The producers don't know what they can do or how they're going to use it, so it's all-but impossible to negotiate an acceptable practice with us, the people doing the job.

Across "the pond" SAG-AFTRA recently reached a four-year agreement with major studios which includes AI provisions. Of particular concern was bolstering protections against unauthorized training of AI models using member data to create synthetic performers. Not just digital replicas but unconsented digital replicas! What might be seen as something of a breakthrough for actors, though, creates an uncertain future for Background. Producers specifically agreed not to use a Synthetic in a human role unless replacing a human with a synthetic would bring "*significant additional value*" to the movie. That might mean using an established virtual influencer if he/she/it has millions of followers that equate to "star power" but it could easily stretch to being simply cheaper and faster.

For that reason, actors are being advised that the way to get work is to concentrate not on being versatile but to sell themselves as a strongly-defined "product". To provide additional value over and above that AI Synthetic. Which is great if you're an actor who's supposed to stand out but rather less so if, like us, your job is largely to blend in.

Supporting artists have strengths, too, though. And it could be that now is the most critical time to show them off. We react – and we understand when the appropriate reaction is no reaction at all. We make visible decisions that inspire our actions. We interact, naturally, with the people and objects around us. We know that a real passerby does not simply walk from Point A to Point B. And that there's a reason for that banana! Show the value that we all know we bring.

Dates For Your Diary

It would be foolish to say "save the date" since nobody knows when work is going to come in (or, sadly, disappear again) but here are a couple that you should be aware of:

The next Big Autumn Gathering is scheduled for Saturday 10th October. No details are in place just yet but we hope to hold a branch meeting there and there will be the head shot photographer there as usual.

Bectu is planning the next of its regular Union Weeks for 16th to 22nd November. The most notable feature of these is always the offer of three months free membership for anybody joining the union during that time. Let your non-union colleagues know about it and maybe it will be the push they need to sign up.

Three months of £5 – they could almost buy a gallon of petrol with that.

Film Artistes Association

Respected. Supported. Represented.

Making the difference for all professional supporting artistes

