

National Association of Jewellers – Chairman’s report

Annual Review

I am delighted to report the Association has completed another successful year. Despite some setbacks and tough trading times, we have positive news to report.

In early 2017 we found ourselves without a CEO; it took six months and the help of a really competent interim business manager, but after a nationwide search and several rounds of interviews we found ourselves a superb replacement.

Simon Forrester started in January 2018, after an award-winning career as a highly successful Association CEO. We are working closely with Simon to ensure his skills are put to best use in the Jewellery industry following an extensive induction process.

We have also unfortunately lost our Head of Education, who handed in her notice late in 2017. We are in the process of recruiting as I type this report.

This role is particularly important as we made a decision in 2017 to continue to support and assist in designing the framework for Jewellery manufacturing apprenticeships, and once ready to be involved in ensuring quality is maintained. In other good news NAJ plans to deliver retail apprenticeships in late 2018.

Losing key management for extended periods has had some negative impact on both membership numbers, education sales and ultimately finances. We are acutely aware of our targets and goals for 2018 moving forward and have plans in place to turn the situation around.

I am pleased to report that behind the scenes the entire the NAJ team’s hard work and effort has ensured we continue to delivering a number of key achievements.

We took an active part in two major trade shows and also organised a number of regional shows under our ‘NAJ Live’ brand to promote the Association, attract members and support those members attending.

We have introduced a revised Code of Conduct, and re-written and launched both the JET certificate and diploma. Both of these qualifications are now fully fit for purpose across the whole jewellery supply chain.

In 2017 new started work on a fantastic Practical Valuation Techniques course for members to enhance their skill set.

We set up our ground-breaking Better Business Group which is developing materials, resources and tools for all our members to be able to improve their business. More on this later in 2018.

We continue to persevere in our plans to bring a ‘Made in Britain’ mark to the UK jewellery industry and are still working with the British Hallmarking Council to deliver that.

We have forged new and reinforced existing mutually beneficial relationships with key industry players.

We've also managed in all that to take members on trade delegation trips to Antwerp and Sri-Lanka, and are hoping to have news soon about a trip to Colombia.

Once again we hosted our annual NAJ awards alongside the Benevolent Society Christmas Ball in December in Solihull and are delighted to support an event that contributed to Benevolent Society funds.

We also continued to support our Trades craftsmen and women by sponsoring awards at the Goldsmiths' Craft and Design Awards Live, the 'Oscars' of our industry.

In September we held our largest and most successful Loughborough Conference for Valuers and the jewellery trade with over 200 delegates, speakers and workshop leaders in attendance.

The Jet Business Network Annual Congress took place in June 2017, providing the opportunity for JBN regional group members to meet members from other JBN regional groups; along with NAJ members who were either interested in seeing first-hand what the JBN was all about or wanted to hear from the speakers that included a world record holder, an award winning under 30 entrepreneur and a former senior manager from McDonalds, who shared their experience and expertise on the topic "How to unlock your staff value". Over 50 people attended on the day and over 20 met for dinner the night before.

Our steering groups continue to deliver amazing results and I wish to personally thank members who have given their time and expertise freely to help the Association move forward.

Finally, I want to thank Michael Donaldson for his sterling work as interim, Simon Forrester for accepting the role and the entire NAJ team for the achievements of 2017 and encourage them and all our members to set our sights even higher for 2018 and what we can deliver in the year ahead.

Simon Johnson

NAJ Chairman