

LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH MEETINGS

Cancellations, unprecedented times, stay safe!

DUE to the current coronavirus (covid-19) emergency and the need for social distancing, the London Freelance Branch meetings scheduled in **April, May and June** are cancelled. So is the New Members' Meeting planned for **Thursday 30 April**.

New members who need advice urgently should contact one of the Membership and New Members Secretaries, whose contacts are at www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/contact.html

The NUJ head office, where Branch meetings are normally held, was formally put on lockdown the day we went to press, until at least the middle of June.

For updates on when meetings will resume and for confirmation of themes and speakers for forthcoming meetings when they do, see the

Branch calendar web page www.londonfreelance.org/lfb/meetings.html and LFB's Twitter feed [www.twitter.com/NUJ_LFB](https://twitter.com/NUJ_LFB).

The *Freelance* emailed all members earlier to confirm the March meeting was on, expect email updates from us, possibly at short notice, about meetings.

LFB's Committee will be looking into the feasibility of putting at least some elements of Branch meetings online, if only recorded talks by speakers. The Branch Standing Orders (its constitution) do not as far as we are aware currently allow voting other than by a show of hands

This went to press on **31 March**
Your deadline for the May online only issue: **1 May**.

in a face-to-face meeting.

Monthly meetings of the LFB Committee continue by email, conference call and online video conferencing platform.

The Committee may empower its officers to make interim decisions where necessary, to be later confirmed or rejected by a subsequent Branch meeting.

Regular LFB meetings (when they resume) will be on the second Monday of the month, from 6.45pm to 8.45pm in the basement of the NUJ's HQ at **Headland House, 72 Acton Street, London WC1X 9NB**, accessible to people who use wheelchairs. The nearest Tube is King's Cross or Chancery Lane. If you need the Branch to pay for care for a dependent so you can attend a meeting, contact a Branch officer.

EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

The NUJ working from home

AFTER long preparations to enable all of its operations to be run by staff working from home, the NUJ's London headquarters at Headland House went into full covid-19 shutdown on 23 March. The offices will remain closed until mid-June at least.

The NUJ switchboard number 020 7843 3700 will ask you to leave a message for Paul or Deirdre, the NUJ's receptionists, now working from home. They will call you back or put you through to whoever it is you need to talk to, who will also be working from home.

The direct line numbers for NUJ departments and officers including the Freelance Office – see www.londonfreelance.org/nujone.html – will also take you to the relevant NUJ staff working from home. Be mindful that the Freelance Office

has been inundated with calls: it may be a while before they get back.

At the time of writing, the latest Freelance Office advice on support for freelance journalists affected by the covid-19 lockdown is at www.nuj.org.uk/news/covid-19-update-from-the-nuj-freelance-office/ – it includes advice on getting financial assistance.

Expect more updates from the Freelance Office and Freelance Industrial Council, the body that deals with freelance issues in England and Wales: check www.nuj.org.uk/news and click on the tag "freelance" at the bottom of that page.

The *Freelance* online at www.londonfreelance.org/fl will link to these updates, as will the London Freelance Branch Twitter feed at [www.twitter.com/NUJ_LFB](https://twitter.com/NUJ_LFB)

DELEGATE MEETING

No Delegate Meeting

AS WE went to press, NUJ General Secretary Michelle Stanistreet confirmed that Delegate Meeting (DM), the NUJ's conference, is cancelled. The next is not due until Spring 2022.

Elected officials will now stay in post until the next one, whenever that is. Meanwhile, Michelle is "investigating various technologies to maximise union democracy in this difficult time." Some sort of online consultation of delegates elected by NUJ Branches on some of the more urgent issues is possible. The pressing issue of the proposed rise in union subscription rates to avoid financial disaster comes to mind. (See www.londonfreelance.org/fl/2002dm.html for background).

Within living memory, but before the dawn of the Age of Internet, the NUJ has held an emergency Special Delegate Meeting to allow delegates to vote on very urgent issues only. Such a meeting could be in London and last a single business day.

SALON

Freelance Salon

Watch this space for details of Freelance Salon – a mix of talks by experts and networking opportunities for journalists. As we went to press, a Freelance Salon with a theme of reporting on climate change is planned provisionally for an evening in July. Provisional dates are either 16 July or 21 July, with St Anne's Hall, Dean St, Soho W1 as the venue. In view of the covid-19 emergency, an announcement about the climate change reporting Freelance Salon special – and whether it is still on, postponed or in another form – is expected around the beginning of May.

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TECHNOLOGIST and freelance journalist coaches and assists colleagues that need training and refresh on databases and quality data sources in STEM, law, social sciences and current affairs, history and humanities, trademarks and patents. Prices for one-to-one sessions start from £35 per hour. Contact Brunella Longo at bl@brunellalongo.co.uk

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