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## LPC President's Report AGM 2026

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Members and Supporters of the Lewisham Polish Centre!

I am pleased to present a report summarising our Centre's activities over the past 12 months. This has been a period of intensive work on restructuring, putting our financial affairs in order, and expanding our offer to the local community.

### Management and Organisational Structure

- In June 2025, a new Board of Directors was formed: I assumed the role of President, and the position of Treasurer was entrusted to Eliza Nowosielska and Agnieszka Bozzao remained the Secretary.
- The Committee's membership has changed, we have welcomed Ewelina Ongen and Bożena Krasowska to our ranks, accepted Agnieszka Kopeć's resignation and relieved Anna Prusińska of her duties.
- We have established specialised working groups (on the Bylaws, Communications, Building Administration, and Education), which have helped us manage our day-to-day operations more efficiently. Additionally, Joanna Gos was involved in the work related to preparing documentation e.g AGM documents, editing and checking the content and legal aspects of the current documents.
- We updated the bank authorisations, removing of Remigiusz Szarama from the list of signatories while maintaining his access as a trustee, and granting full operational rights to the Treasurer.
- By decision of the Committee, we raised the annual membership fee to £50, a 20% increase, and we have also begun advanced discussions on a more comprehensive reform of the membership system. This was the first increase in over a decade.
- In March, with vice chair Tomasz Zarzycki, we proposed new operating procedures for the Committee, drawing up a series of documents to streamline the work of both the Committee and the Centre. We introduced monthly online Committee meetings, whilst retaining the quarterly hybrid meetings.

### Finance and Cost Optimisation

- I worked together with Eliza Nowosielska, Treasurer of LPC, we successfully implemented the modern QuickBooks accounting system, which has significantly simplified the monitoring of cash flows.

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- We identified necessary operational savings by switching energy suppliers and reducing the overall insurance premium. This was led by Ewa Dembkowska, LPC committee member
- Together with Eliza Nowosielska we have done a great deal of work to recover funds from HMRC via Gift Aid for the last three years, consolidating the documentation with a plan to submit it in the next quarter of 2026.
- Ula Ejsmont-Jenczelewska secured financial support from the Institute for the Development of the Polish Language through our collaboration with the Jan Olszewski Foundation 'Help for Poles in the East' for the 'Academy for the Development and Improvement of Skills – POL' initiative.
- Together with Ula Ejsmont Jenczelewska, we have developed an application for funding for the Center's work. We have initially received information about funding for our activities from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We are awaiting further developments and confirmation of the amount and purpose of the funding.
- Thanks to Małgorzata Zalejasz, booking and calendar management, as well as communication with potential and current tenants have been improved

### **Investments, Renovations and Building Safety**

- Together with the vice-chairman Tomasz Zarzycki and Urszula Ejsmont-Jenczelewska we have drawn up a detailed investment cost estimate, whilst amending our application for funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to request a grant solely for renovation works. We welcomed the Chairman of the Jan Olszewski Foundation "Help for Poles in the East" to the Centre, an organisation which is our partner and intermediary in applications for funding from Poland. The Chairman was hugely impressed by our Centre and our work. This is a huge success for our organisation and for our community.
- A serious challenge arose when the annexe cracked due to problems with the foundations.
- We responded swiftly to health and safety requirements by investing £500 in new fire extinguishers and signage within the building. This was done through our Adam Mickiewicz Polish School.

### **Education, Cultural Events and Centre Image (PR)**

- On 1 October 2025, the Academy for Development and Skills Improvement – POL successfully launched its activities, expanding our educational initiatives. A series of workshops was held in collaboration with three Polish schools: the Adam Mickiewicz Polish School in Forest Hill, the White Eagles Polish School in Streatham, and the Karol Chodkiewicz Polish School in Norwood.

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- In March 2026, Easter Workshops were held, organised by the Academy of Skills Development and Improvement-POL with the help of Committee members Gosia Lisik-Hulak, Gosia Zalejasz, and Ewa Dembkowska. Young volunteers also participated. The event was a huge success. Thank you for this wonderful initiative.
- Ticketed events, such as evenings with Stand-Up, which I co-coordinated, the Christmas Carols and Pastorals Concert (coordinated by Gosia Zalejasz with the Polish Music School in London named after Andrzej Panufnik), the Valentine's Day Evening organized mainly by Bożena Krasowska, were very popular
- On October 4, 2025, we celebrated World Animal Day. To mark the occasion, Małgorzata Lisik-Hulak organized a meeting for animal lovers. It was the first event of its kind at the Center. Several people brought their pets.
- We have begun preparations for the important celebrations marking the 1000th anniversary of the Polish State, part of which was a poster competition for children entitled 'My National Hero' was held, organised by Agnieszka Bozzao, our current Secretary. We presented the prizes during the Independence Day celebrations in November 2025.
- I worked together with Bożena Krasowska, LPC Committee Member to significantly improved our branding efforts: LPC Bulletin is now being edited, we have streamlined our social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), and a modernised description of our organisation has been included in the official Atlas of Polish Organisations, compiled by the Federation of Poles.
- As a result of this work In January 2026, we received awards in the Teraz My: Polish Influencer in the UK 2025 poll. We received a commendation in the 'Community' category and came second in the 'Audience Award' category. This is a huge success for our Centre; it is now a fact that we are becoming increasingly recognised and visible within the Polish community organisations in the UK
- As every year, the 80s and 90s-themed Disco for the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity, organized by Gosia Zalejasz with the help of Bożena Krasowska and myself, was a huge success. Eliza Nowosielska, Gosia Lisik-Hulak, Aneta Gruszewicz, Marcin Libera, and other volunteers also helped on the day of the event.
- New LPC website created by Marcin Berent , LPC member is almost ready to be published. It is a result of cooperation between Marcin, myself and Bożena Krasowska.
- Since September 2025, the Lewisham Polish Centre newsletter has been regularly edited and published, available online and in print. Joanna Gos has been working with me on the newsletter, adding content and proofreading it from the very beginning. We also use content created by Bożena Krasowska, Ula Kiermasz, and other people who organize events at LPC.

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- Thanks to the involvement of Marcin Libera, we have photo reports from events and constant technical support at events at the Center
- This year was a record-breaking one in terms of the variety of events at the Centre; there was an increase in the number of participants, private bookings, and also the number of organisations wishing to meet at our Centre. This has been coordinated by Małgorzata Zalejasz, committee member.
- Polish Women's Network (Joanna Gos and Katarzyna Szade, who are also members of the LPC Committee) organised several workshops that took place in our home
- Families - Helping Poles In Need offers free monthly support to those in need. The meetings leader is Katarzyna Jurkun
- The Polish Stand-Up group in the UK also began its activities thanks to the LPC, and its founder, Wojtek Winnicki, also volunteers at LPC events. The group has expanded its activities throughout the UK, and we are partners, helping group members promote their events, and they promote LPC events.
- Thanks to the Lewisham Polish Centre's reputation and its dynamic activities, I have had the pleasure of attending several events on behalf of the Federation of Poles, of which we became a member in 2025, as well as events organised by the diplomatic services in the United Kingdom, including a meeting with the President of the Republic of Poland
- Local councilors and the Lewisham Speaker are increasingly eager to attend our events. It's crucial that we have the support of the local community. Last year, I also met with Ellie Reeves MP, who has been supporting our community since 2022.
- In April 2026, I participated, along with Marcin Libera, a long-time LPC Committee member, and Urszula Ejsmont-Jenczelewska, director of the Academy for Skills Development and Improvement (POL), which is very active in raising external funds for the Lewisham Polish Centre, in the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Karol Chodkiewicz School in Norwood. This was a great honor for our organization and a testament to our partnership.
- The Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Group (PTG) held its events at the Centre twice. We made the center available to the public, no fees charged, but participants made voluntary donations to the Centre.
- In April, as part of their community service, Gosia Zalejasz and Gosia Lisik-Hulak initiated a project to renovate our garden and apply cosmetics to the front of the Center. Urszula Ejsmont-Jenczelewska, Ewa Dembkowska, Mariusz Krajewski, Ewelina Ongen, Marcin Libera, Artur Kołodziejczak, Arek Lisik, and other volunteers joined the initiative. Thanks to this, our garden looks much better.

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- This year, we joined the Polish Heritage Days campaign through the London Cultural Days event, which we hope will become a regular event. This event is organized in collaboration with the Polish Women's Network (Joanna Gos) and Bożena Krasowska.
- Thanks to our recognition and public trust, we have established a partnership with 5AM Heroes, who organize training at our Center for leaders and volunteers of social organizations.
- Using our contacts, we will soon organize Children's Day in cooperation with the Polish Women's Network (Joanna Gos) and the Association of Polish Technicians (STP) in the UK.
- I also count my nomination for the Polish Diaspora Personality of the Year award and my nomination for the Stars Night Awards 2026, organised by Wyspa.TV, among the successes contributing to the LPC's recognition.
- We have received very positive comments about our organization, its resilience, and its interesting events and initiatives from leaders of other organisations, the consul, journalists, local councilors, and individuals involved in and participating in various events in London and at the Centre.
- Sponsors, including Polish local shops and small businesses, continue to support events at the Center. We have also established partnerships with new sponsors. Without them, many events would not be possible. We thank our sponsors and those who connect with them.
- We have expanded our media partners, including: MyPolska, Radio Islanders, Decks Radio, Londynek.net, Radio Wnet, and others.
- The Club of All-Purpose Games Enthusiasts Grammy w Londynie continues its activities under the leadership of Mirek Kraszewski, a member of the LPC Committee

## Summary

The year drawing to a close has been marked not only by successes, but also by a period of challenging internal discussions regarding our shared mission and mutual respect within the organisation. We have come to understand the importance of our people, which is why we have accelerated work on an official volunteering policy to ensure we can properly protect and recognise those who selflessly support the Centre.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the entire Board, the members of the Committee, the Trustees and, above all, our irreplaceable Volunteers and Centre Members who support our activities.

Agnieszka Łokaj

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President