SPF Digital Championship 2026

We invite Clubs to enter our 2026 event, run under the same Rules as last year's new format! We made modifications reflecting the comments made after the 2023 event which made for a shorter, more interesting day for everyone. No images will be seen twice, and smaller rounds in both the morning and afternoon sessions.

The SPF Digital Championship 2026 will again be run as two separate competitions, both run on the same day, by three Judges, as an audience event on Sunday 22nd Nov 2026 at Victoria Hall, Dunblane. Full venue details are supplied separately.

Your Club requires to choose which Competition to enter either 'The Plate Competition' or 'The Bowie Competition'. You cannot enter both, so please choose which of these competitions you wish to enter from the following entry requirements.

Online Entry Closes 15th November 2026. We still require paperwork as well as payment to be sent to us, closing date for receipt of these is by 18th Nov. Payment by BACS is preferred.

RULES

The Scottish Club Digital Championship is open to all Clubs whose subscription has been paid for the current year (January to December), who pay the Club Entry Fee of £20.

Any interpretation of the rules will be the prerogative of the Scottish Photographic Federation President or his nominees, and any decision will be final. Submission of entries implies acceptance of all rules and conditions of entry.

Your Club Competition Secretary is required to upload your images through the SPF Website into the Digital Championship Competition entry system for this event. An email will be sent out to your Competition Secretary as soon as the Online Entry System for this event is ready to open; Maximum File size remains 1600x1200.

THE BOWIE COMPETITION

Clubs compete for the 'Ian Bowie Trophy' as Best Bowie Championship Club, together with an invitation to represent the SPF at the PAGB Digital Championship for the winning Club and Runner-Up as the PAGB pre-qualifier event. The following will also be awarded – Winner, SPF Gold Medal; Runner-Up, SPF Silver Medal; 3rd Place SPF Bronze Medal.

- Clubs require to upload a Bank of Images (**40 images** max. *NB – **Only 22** are required to compete, but the extra images allow more choice for your final round selection*) to the SPF website.
- *When completing your Club's entry online all images that look like Nature must be declared as 'looks like nature', whether or not they comply with the SPF Nature Definition. NB – Only obviously creative images are excluded from this.*
- Additionally, Nature images that comply with the strict SPF Nature Definition should also be marked as Nature when uploading your Bank of Images. These images will then be eligible for the Best Nature Award. **Please see 'SPF Nature Definition' supplied later in these rules.*
- Clubs then require to pre-select **10 images** for Round 1 from their Bank of Images in advance from those uploaded to the website.
- Clubs may not enter more than 4 images in each Round, that is declared as 'looks like nature'.
- No author may have any more than **3 images selected** in each Round. (i.e. max 3 in Round 1 and 3 in Final)

- On the day these 10 Round 1 images are Judged, and the total of their top 8 scores carried forward to count in the overall placing. Clubs also use those results to gauge what the Judges were 'going for' on the day before making their final selections.
- Clubs then require to select **12 NEW images** to represent them in the Bowie Competition Final from their remaining Bank of Images (**No Round 1 Images can be reused**)
- At the end of the Final Judging, all scores from the Final Round, and the Total from Round 1 (top 8 scores) will be added together to give the Club's Overall Placing.
- All high scoring Images entered into either Round 1, or the Final will be considered for the Overall Individual Awards.

The total score received from the 20 Images (Round 1 top 8 scores and Final 12 images) will give the overall Bowie Club Placings, winners of the Bowie Trophy and the Invitations to represent the SPF at PAGB Warwick.

THE PLATE COMPETITION

Clubs compete for the 'Kirkintilloch Plate Trophy' as Best Plate Championship Club. The following will also be awarded – Winner SPF Gold Medal, Runner-Up SPF Silver Medal, 3rd Placed SPF Bronze Medal.

- Clubs require to upload a Bank of Images (**22 images** max. *NB – **Only 17** are required to compete, but the extra images allow more choice for your final round selection*) to the SPF website.
- *When completing your Club's entry online all images that look like Nature must be declared as 'looks like nature', whether or not they comply with the SPF Nature Definition. NB – Only obviously creative images are excluded from this.*
- Additionally, Nature images that comply with the strict SPF Nature Definition should also be marked as Nature when uploading your Bank of Images. These images will then be eligible for the Best Nature Award. **Please see 'SPF Nature Definition' supplied later in these rules.*
- Clubs then require to pre-select **9 images** for Round 1 from their Bank of Images in advance from those uploaded to the website.
- Clubs may not enter more than 3 images in each Round, that is declared as 'looks like nature'.
- No author may have any more than **3 images selected** in each Round. (i.e. max 3 in Round 1 and 3 in Final)
- On the day the 9 Round 1 images are Judged, and the total of their top 7 scores carried forward to count towards the overall placing. Clubs also use those results to gauge what the Judges were 'going for' on the day before making their final selections.
- Clubs then require to select **8 NEW images** to represent them in the Plate Competition Final from their remaining Bank of Images (**No Round 1 Images can be reused**)
- At the end of the Final Judging, the scores from the Final Round, and the Total from Round 1 (top 7 scores) will be added together to give the Club's Overall Placing.
- All high scoring Images entered into either Round 1, or the Final will be considered for the Individual Awards.

The total score received from the 15 images (Round 1 top 7 scores and Final 8 images) will give the overall Plate Club Placings, and winners of the Plate Trophy.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

The following Individual Awards will be selected from the highest scoring images from these two Competitions – Best Overall Image, Best Bowie Image & Best Plate Image - SPF Gold Medals; Best Nature*, Best Landscape, Best Creative & Best Portrait - SPF Silver Medals; 6 Judge's Medals (3 per comp.) - SPF Bronze Medals. 3 SPF Judge's Ribbons. **Nature award will adhere to the SPF Nature Definition.*

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GENERAL RULES

- No author may represent more than one club.
- No author may be represented by more than 3 digital images in your Round 1 selection.
- No author may be represented by more than 3 digital images in your Final selection.
- The 'same' image or one so similar as to be indistinguishable' from one entered in any of the following events in previous years is ineligible - *SPF SLIDE KNOCKOUT COMPETITION, SPF CLUB SLIDE CHAMPIONSHIP, SPF PROJECTED IMAGE COMPETITION, SPF CLUB DIGITAL CHAMPIONSHIP*
- Entries are ineligible if they have been used more than 5 years ago, in any PAGB or SPF event, irrespective of medium.
- Please ensure that all entries comply with the Copyright and Data Protection Statement below.
- Each Club must nominate a representative to be present at the event to take charge of their Entry Forms and Image selection on the day.
- Your 'Bank of Images' must be submitted 'Online' through our website by the Club Competition Secretary by the closing date. Images must not be submitted by email.
- All 'digital images' submitted must strictly adhere to the Digital File Rules provided. The filename is not however important, this will be done by the online system from the Title you enter.
- Entry of titles where required on the website must contain full Titles, please do not abbreviate, **but do not exceed 25 characters please.** Please do not use any punctuation marks in your titles only letters or numbers.
- Each Club has been allocated a two-letter 'Club Identifier Code' which you will find on the website. It will be added automatically to your image filenames and paperwork by the website.
- When determining what counts as Nature for the quota of nature images allowed per Round, you should consider that if it 'looks like nature', it is nature for this purpose. i.e., if it is a composite image but looks straight, then it is classed as nature for this purpose. If it obviously looks creative, then do not include it in your nature quota. *Images may be disqualified if they look like nature and are not declared at entry.*
- Best Nature Award - For Nature Images to be eligible for the Nature award they **must** comply with the SPF Nature Definition* and be indicated as such when entering on the website. Nature images that do not comply with this SPF Nature Definition are not eligible and must not be indicated on the website as such. **Please see nature definition supplied later in these rules.*
- We have supplied an Image Bank Collation Form for you to work out your entry ahead of the online entry system opening – This is for your Club use only.
- We require you to send a copy of the paperwork available to you from the SPF website. *After you have completed your 'Bank of Images', selected your 'Round 1' entry, and finalised your entry by Submitting it, you will be given a **Print** option in addition to the **Edit** option where you can print or save a PDF copy of the paperwork.*
    1. **Payment by BACS is preferred**, you can now send your paperwork by email to Libby at libby.neilsmith@googlemail.com Libby will send back BACS payment details to you. Payment and paperwork to arrive by 18th Nov 2026**.**
    2. If you wish to pay by 'cheque', please supply a paper copy of your Forms, together with your cheque payment **of £20 to Joe Prior**, 24, Langcroft Road, Glasgow G51 4JB to arrive by 18th Nov 2026**.** *Cheques should be made payable to 'SPF' and have the Club Code and Full Club Name written on the back.*
- Any Club failing to submit images or forms correctly or submitting forms in a reasonable time for their tie, may forfeit their place, the place will remain vacant.
- Please remember to keep a copy of the paperwork printable from the website for yourself as copies of these will not be available on the day.

DIGITAL FILE RULES

All Digital Images to be submitted in the following format -

- Mode - RGB Colour, 8 bits only or Greyscale, 8 bits only
- Colour Space - sRGB

- File Format - jpeg only
- Please ensure that any labelling or star rating is unlocked prior to submission.
- Image Size – 1600 pixels horizontal, maximum; 1200 pixels vertical
- *(You are welcome to enter smaller sized images*)
- Images must not contain layers or alpha channels; they must be flattened/removed prior to submission.
- The Image area itself must not display the title or author name.
- No file naming convention is required, as long as it is a jpeg, but please do not exceed 25 characters, and that the file is no larger than the website upload limit.

Please Note – It is advised that Clubs and Individuals use Calibration equipment and calibrate their 'laptop & projector' or 'computer & monitor' that they will be using to select their images before submission to get an idea of what their images will look like at the competition.

COMPLETING YOUR FINAL ROUND ON THE DAY

Please ensure you print off a copy of your Bank of Images and first round Entry Form for noting down scores on the day, and making your selections as these will not be available to you otherwise. On the Day: You will be supplied with a Final Entry Form for you to tick your final selection from your remaining 'Bank of Images'. You must hand this completed form in, and have it checked, before going for lunch, to avoid unnecessary hold ups on the day.

TIE BREAKS

SPF TIE BREAK PROCEDURE (Agreed 7 March 2010)

One - No tiebreak will be used in either of these competitions to decide position. If two, or more, clubs tie for first place they will be awarded the trophy equally and there is also no need to separate 2nd, 3rd or lower equal places.

Two - If it is necessary to decide between two or more clubs tied for the same position in order to say who will be invited to represent the SPF at a national PAGB Championship then this will be calculated as follows**.**

Where more than two clubs are tied then any Club which can be separated by that step will be dropped even if two or more have to proceed to the next step.

Step 1. Count the Awards made to each Club in the competition and choose the Club with the most – whatever value the awards are. I.E., 3 HC are better than 1 Gold medal plus 1 Silver medal. If this does not separate the clubs take the Club with most gold medals, then most silver medals and so on until they can be separated.

Step 2. If Step 1 is inconclusive, then count back the highest Scores. I.E. The Club with the most 15s Followed by the most 14s, 13s, 12s etc until the clubs can be separated.

Step 3. If Steps 1 and 2 are inconclusive a Random Draw conducted by the President or his/her nominee will decide the issue.

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY STATEMENTS – *including AI rule (from 2023)*

'Images entered must be entirely the work of the photographer. Composite Images are permitted provided all component images meet this requirement. For the avoidance of doubt, use of images from any source including, but not limited to, royalty free image banks, textures and clipart are not permitted. The use of AI software is allowed provided all images used have been taken by you, and only your own photographs are used in the processing. No modifications are allowed based on AI generated text input or generated using images or elements not taken by the photographer. RAW files or jpegs (incl. neighbouring jpegs) may be requested if there is any doubt of the eligibility of the entry.

Additionally, all images entered must comply with the ethos laid out in our SPF "What is and Isn't Allowed..." document.

See FULL document (*including NEW AI Generative guidance Aug 2025)* on the SPF Digital Championship webpage downloads area or from the following -

https://www.scottish-photographic-federation.org/competitions-guidance

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'To be eligible to enter SPF competitions individuals must be resident in Scotland or via application to the SPF' *An exception is made for members of Clubs close to the Scotland/England border who stay in the north of England provided they indicate they do not wish to enter through NCPF.*
See SPF Competition Guidance website for more details if required.

'By entering, the Photographer consents to the retention by the SPF of information identifying the Photographer as the creator of an Image. Where a Federation, or Club is the Entrant, on behalf of multiple Photographers, then the Entrant warrants that each Photographer has consented to the retention of identifying information as if the Photographer had entered in person. Any photographs submitted may be selected to represent the SPF. By virtue of submitting an entry the entrant certifies the work as his own and permits the SPF to reproduce all or part of the entered material free of charge for publication and /or display in media related to its Competitions, including on its website or by circulation to its member Clubs. The Photographer of each image will normally be credited with any use. The SPF assumes no liability for any misuse of copyright.'

See the following Nature Details for full info. On Quotas and for Nature Award eligibility -

SPF NATURE DEFINITION – *Now for Best Nature Award only. Please indicate eligible images when completing your entry on our website.*

NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archaeology, in such a fashion that a well-informed person will be able to identify the subject material and certify its honest presentation. The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality while maintaining high technical quality. Human elements shall not be present, except where those human elements are integral parts of the nature story such as nature subjects, like barn owls or storks, adapted to an environment modified by humans, or where those human elements are in situations depicting natural forces, like hurricanes or tidal waves. Scientific bands, scientific tags or radio collars on wild animals are permissible. Photographs of human created hybrid plants, cultivated plants, feral animals, domestic animals, or mounted specimens are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation that alters the truth of the photographic statement.

No techniques that add, relocate, replace, or remove pictorial elements except by cropping are permitted. Techniques that enhance the presentation of the photograph without changing the nature story or the pictorial content, or without altering the content of the original scene, are permitted including HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning. Techniques that remove elements added by the camera, such as dust spots, digital noise, and film scratches, are allowed. Stitched images are not permitted. All allowed adjustments must appear natural. Colour images can be converted to greyscale monochrome. Infrared images, either direct-captures or derivations, are not allowed. Images used in Nature Photography competitions may be divided in two classes: Nature and Wildlife.

Images entered in Nature sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above can have landscapes, geologic formations, weather phenomena, and extant organisms as the primary subject matter. This includes images taken with the subjects in controlled conditions, such as zoos, game farms, botanical gardens, aquariums and any enclosure where the subjects are totally dependent on man for food.

Images entered in Wildlife sections meeting the Nature Photography Definition above are further defined as one or more extant zoological or botanical organisms free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Landscapes, geologic formations, photographs of zoo or game farm animals, or of any extant zoological or botanical species taken under controlled conditions are not eligible in Wildlife sections. Wildlife is not limited to animals, birds and insects. Marine subjects and botanical subjects (including fungi and algae) taken in the wild are suitable wildlife subjects, as are carcasses of extant species. Wildlife images may be entered in Nature sections of Exhibitions.

LOOKS LIKE NATURE IS NATURE – *Should be used for the Nature quota in SPF events only, except for those eligible for the Best Nature Award which should comply with the above Definition. Images that only comply with this 'Looks Like Nature' definition should <u>not</u> be indicated on our website as Nature when making your entry.*

Nature means Images where living organisms are the primary subject matter. The story telling value of an Image will normally be weighed more than the pictorial quality.

Nature includes:

- Images taken with subjects in controlled conditions such as zoos, game parks, botanic gardens, aquariums, and enclosures where the subjects are dependent on man for food. Scientific bands, tags or collars are permissible.

Nature excludes:

- Images where the subjects are obviously domestic animals or plants.
- Images where an obviously artistic treatment has been applied.

Processing of the captured image, by cropping, exposure adjustment, colour correction, noise minimisation, dodging/burning, HDR, focus stacking and sharpening, is permitted, as is cloning of image defects and minor distractions including overlapping elements. An Image appearing to meet these criteria will be accepted as Nature. The Judges will normally assume that any Image presented to them is eligible. Access to some biological subjects may be restricted. Where that is relevant, then Photographers warrant that they have followed relevant codes of practices and hold any necessary licences.