

The Arts Society Huntingdonshire
Minutes of the 40th Annual General Meeting
held on Wednesday 14th June 2023
at 2pm in the Corn Exchange, St Ives

Present: Clare Fox (Chair), Jane Woods (Secretary and Vice-Chair), Carole Pook (Treasurer), Alison Clough (Membership Secretary), Claire Sarkies (Acting Programme Secretary), Rosemary Huckle (Young Arts), Mary Knowles (Holiday Secretary), Bob Woodham (Web Master), Mary Anderson (Member), Elaine Clarkson (Member) plus 69 members, nine visitors and two guests.

1. Apologies for absence: Diana Baldwin, Ros Gale, Suki Pye.

2. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes were approved as a true record; proposed by Patricia Grice and seconded by Elizabeth Barker. Carried nem. con.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's Report

The Chair welcomed members to the 40th AGM of The Huntingdonshire Arts Society. According to the Constitution, reports had been posted on the website in advance of the meeting, and hard copies provided to those with no computer access. There were no questions from the floor, and none had been submitted prior to the AGM.

She firstly thanked Sassy Skinner, for organising the varied and stimulating programme of lectures which members have enjoyed throughout the past year.

Also very popular have been the visits, organised by Margaret Gledhill and Mary Knowles. In June 2022, an outing to Wightwick Manor and gardens, and in November of that year, an introduction by its curator to Murray Edwards College's Womens' Art Collection. In February 2023, a first visit to London since the pandemic, with the choice of a guided tour of St Paul's cathedral, or Tate Modern, and the Cezanne exhibition.

In addition to these visits, a Textile Study Day on spinning and weaving was organised in February 2023 by Carole Pook, to whet members' appetites for the forthcoming Isobel Lattimore Textile Prize.

This prize has been established in memory of Isobel Lattimore, a gifted needlewoman, who for many years led the society's Embroidery Group, and it was agreed that a prize for a creative work using textiles be awarded annually. Her husband, Colin Lattimore, has started the fund with a generous gift of £1,000.

Only two members had been brave enough to submit work this year, so the committee has organised an exhibition of both ecclesiastical vestments (embroidered or conserved by Isobel and her group) and secular garments (theatre costumes, and other items submitted by the committee, and other members), at the rear of the hall. Angela Payne, the Regional Chair, presented the certificates and prizes to Janet Farish and Mary Smallhorn (in absentia), for their knitted cardigan and quilted cushions, respectively.

Furthermore, it was agreed to award a bursary of £200 to an A level student at Long Road Sixth Form College who had already been accepted on a degree course in textiles, and who had shown an interest in using embroidery in his or her work.

In February 2023, the annual CAYAC exhibition was held in Hinchbrook House School, displaying works by artists aged from four to eighteen years - with thanks to Rosemary Huckle for all its planning and organisation.

Attendance at some of the Arts Society regional days had enabled the Chair to learn what other branches were doing, and to make comparison with our own situation. Many societies were struggling to maintain their numbers, and to recruit to their committees. Some have had to amalgamate to survive, and some, sadly, have folded. HuntsArts is rated a small society, and new members are therefore always most welcome. Its committee members are all volunteers who work quietly behind the scenes, whilst juggling other aspects of their lives - and next year will see changes in committee roles, resulting in even fewer hands on deck. The Chair therefore encouraged members to consider what help they might feel able to give, to ensure that the society was able to continue to offer its current range of lectures and events.

She thanked committee members not so far mentioned for their support and commitment:

Jane Woods, Secretary and Vice-Chair; Alison Clough, Membership Secretary; Claire Sarkies, Acting Programme Secretary (who had already organised next year's programme of talks); Bob Woodham, Webmaster, and Elaine Clarkson and Mary Anderson, Committee Members. A special mention to Margaret Gledhill, a longstanding member of the committee, who has had many roles in the society, in particular Young Arts and more recently, Visits, and who has now resigned.

Not forgetting grateful thanks to Joe Masters and his Corn Exchange colleagues, whose support has ensured the smooth running of the lectures.

Finally, she announced that she would be standing down from the committee, and wished them every success in the coming year.

5. To receive and approve the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2022-23

The Treasurer's Financial Statement was posted on the website, and together with a simplified version, projected on screen. The accounts had already been approved by the Auditor.

She reported another financially challenging year for the society. The decision to extend the membership period because of Covid had required us to subsidise our Current Account with £1,000 from our Deposit Account, and we were given no advance warning of the national Arts Society raising its fees by £5 per head per member, which wiped out other economies. The Current Account is therefore showing a deficit of £1,413.66. The Deposit Account shows a credit balance of £6,258.84, and it is intended to contribute £1,000 from this account to the IL Textile Fund.

Given the pressure on the Society's finances, the Treasurer therefore proposed an increase in subscription to £50 per person. This was put to the vote, and unanimously approved.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Elspeth Gibbon, seconded by Jill Donnelly. Carried nem. con.

The Treasurer proposed that Dr K Sneath be re-appointed Auditor for the coming year, to which there were no objections.

6. Election of Committee Officers

Nominations were as follows:

- i) Chair - Jane Woods. Proposed by Jennifer Davies; seconded by Thelma Clarke. Carried nem con.
- ii) Treasurer - Carole Pook. Proposed by Elspeth Gibbon, seconded by Richard Probyn. Carried nem con.
- iii) Secretary - Jane Woods. Proposed by Jan Probyn, seconded by Judith Christie. Carried nem.con.
- iv) Confirmation of remaining committee members
Elaine Clarkson (Member), Alison Clough, (Membership Secretary), Rosemary Huckle (Young Arts), Mary Knowles (Holiday Secretary), Claire Sarkies (Acting Programme Secretary), Bob Woodham (Webmaster).

Re-elected en bloc, and carried nem. con.

7. Votes of thanks

- 1. The Chair again warmly thanked Joe Masters, and the staff of the Corn Exchange.
- 2. Grateful thanks were due to Dr K. Sneath for once again acting as auditor.

Gifts were to be made to both colleagues.

8. Any other business

There was no further business.

9. Date of the next AGM

The next AGM would be held on 12th June 2024.

The business of the meeting being completed, Mary Knowles reported that preparations for the May holiday to the New Forest were falling into place. The group would be based in Winchester, where they could visit the cathedral and castle, and would visit, among others, Exbury Gardens, Kingston Lacy and Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight. The trip would cost £725. She intended to have the full itinerary and application form available at the first talk in September.

Claire Sarkies gave the vote of thanks to the outgoing Chair, Clare Fox, with regret that she was having to stand down so soon, but thanking her for her energy and enthusiasm throughout the past year.

She then invited the lecturer, Bridget Flanagan, to give the last lecture of the season, on 'Artists along the Ouse, 1880 - 1930: an artists' colony around St Ives', after which the meeting would conclude with refreshments.

Clare Fox
Chair

Jane Woods
Secretary

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