



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, 9 January 2021 at 2.30 pm on Zoom

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of 2020 AGM
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Chairman's report
- 5 Treasurer's report
- 6 President's report
- 7 Election of officers/committee members
- 9 Any other business
- 10 Date of next AGM – 8/1/2022

The AGM will last approximately half an hour and will be followed by a demonstration by Roger Dellar (to join please use the Zoom link provided separately)

In accordance with the constitution two committee members are retiring (Annmarie Shenton and Sue Wright). The following member has offered to stand for election:

- Claire Heapy as Membership Secretary (in post)

A vacancy remains for Secretary.

*If you wish to nominate the above or any other person with their permission, please complete and return the following form **before 31st December 2020**.*

NOMINATION FOR COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Please return to Sue Wright, Secretary, by email to mgwright@waitrose.com or by post to Woodstock, Heathdown Road, Woking GU22 8LX.

We propose and second the following, who have agreed to stand:

- 1 for the post of
- 2 for the post of
- 3 for the post of

Proposer: Second:

Date:



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, 11 January 2020

Present

Held at The Vyne, Knaphill, the meeting was chaired by Chairman, Sue Hinton and attended by a total of 54 Society members, including President, George Otto, officers and committee members.

1 Apologies for absence

Ronnie Ireland, Laney Randell, Sera Knight, Annee Robson, Bara Aylwin, Julia Aspin and Val Thorpe.

2 Minutes of AGM 2019

These were approved by Sue Hinton and seconded by George Otto, with no matters arising.

3 Chairman's report (verbatim)

Welcome everyone and a happy new year to you.

There aren't many organisations around where so many members take an active interest in the AGM so, firstly, I'd like to thank you all for coming today (even if you are only here for the tea and cakes really!).

When I stepped into the role of Chairman a year ago, I don't think I fully appreciated what was involved and all the different directions I'd get pulled in, partly exacerbated by also being Exhibitions Secretary, albeit the two roles overlap a fair bit.

A case of: *'you don't know what you don't know, until you encounter it!'*

So, looking back, what has the year been like for Woking Art Society?

You may remember that this time last year, the Chairman's report alluded to the fact that costs were rising. While the committee had already acknowledged this, it's true to say we'd not really understood quite the extent of this and what it meant for the Society. So, the early part of the year was about exploring our expenditure, examining underlying issues and deciding what we needed to do if the Society was to continue to thrive in a meaningful way.

With subscriptions being our main source of income, it was clear that our biggest problem was not attracting sufficient new members to replace those leaving. And until we could increase our income, we would have to cut our expenditure quite significantly.

So, we set ourselves a proper budget and made sure we stuck to it. As a result, I'm delighted to report that, going into 2020, the Society is in a much better place financially than it was 12 months ago, albeit we still need to keep a tight rein on the purse strings.

Key cost-savings have been made in printing and postage. All communications, including the Broadbrush newsletter, are now sent out electronically only. From 2020 membership will be entirely electronic for all new members, although we will continue to provide printed copies of information to the few remaining members who haven't provided us with an email address. These copies will be available for them to collect from the reception desk at meetings (we won't be posting anything out).

So, please make sure you tell our Membership Secretary – Annmarie Shenton – or me if you change your email address and, if you are one of the 11 people who received your AGM papers in the post and you do have an email address, please tell us.

We ended 2019 with quite a healthy membership of 159, attracting no less than 24 new members over the year. Which is great news, as we've been working quite hard on publicising the benefits of joining the Society at every opportunity – for example at the open studios and at our own exhibitions. Also, our workshops have been advertised more widely to ensure they are full, attracting guests as well as members and some guests have now joined the Society.

While we didn't make as many sales as we'd like at our exhibitions in 2019, this reflects the nature of the art world currently. All our exhibitions have been very well received – which is a credit to you for the quality of the work that's on show.

Unfortunately, the exhibition in Mercia Walk on 14th September will be remembered for all the wrong reasons thanks to the stupidity of youth – in the shape of a teenage skateboarder crashing into and demolishing a good half of our exhibition.

He caused a considerable amount of damage, leaving several of our artists out of pocket, although the Society itself was able to reclaim the expense of repairing and repainting the boards. This was done in double-quick time, so we were able to hold the last outdoor exhibition of the year just two weeks later.

None of this could have been done without the efforts of my committee colleagues, so I'd like to personally thank all of them and, although it's a bit late in the day, to officially welcome two new committee members who joined part way through the year – Elaine Winter and Ros Allen – who've taken on the roles of Outdoor Exhibitions Organiser and Treasurer respectively.

Ros O'Connor, on the other hand, is stepping down from the committee after some 20 years during which time she's offered support and help in all manner of areas from publicity to providing refreshments at private views. So, we owe her a big thank you too.

Enough of the past. Let's look forward to 2020.

We've put together a slightly more varied programme for you – responding in part to the feedback from the questionnaire that went out with the summer issue of Broadbrush.

Workshops are proving popular and these give us a chance to introduce you to new ideas and techniques, as well as to hone your skills in your medium of choice. It's an area we plan to expand and with three already scheduled for 2020 at least one if not two more will be announced in the coming months.

When it comes to exhibitions, some changes are being introduced this year.

The Lightbox – instead of two one-week shows, there will be just one exhibition but for two weeks. It's not just because it means slightly less work for me – it's because we've had quite a lot of people saying one week isn't long enough and it gives us a chance to do something a little different. Details are still to be worked out but we're hoping to have live painting demonstrations as an added attraction. Naturally we'll be monitoring footfall and sales to see if the longer duration helps or hinders sales.

As you know, we've been losing money at our **Outdoor Exhibitions** for some years now (c£500 this year). This is partly due to the cost of transporting the boards to and from Heather Farm – at £270 per event. If that sounds a lot, we can assure you we've looked at alternatives but most are no cheaper and TLC does offer us a very reliable and helpful service that is, in itself, worth a lot.

While traditionally we've not charged hanging fees for the exhibitions in Mercia Walk, we've reluctantly come to the conclusion that, in future, the artists who participate must contribute to the cost of running outdoor exhibitions. We will be imposing a flat fee of £10 per artist – payable in cash on the day – from June this year.

We are also increasing the fees we charge for non-members who attend our monthly meetings (from £4 to £5) and for workshops, where we hope the new charge of £40 (instead of £35) will provide an incentive for guests to become members. The charges for members remain unchanged for 2020 and we're not planning any further increases in subscriptions for 2021 either.

As you know, I nailed my colours to the mast earlier in the year by declaring my wish to see a single class of membership, merging the Society's associate and full member categories. We'll talk more about that shortly.

But there's something else I'd like to make happen and that's the creation of a volunteers' group. There's a lot involved in making this Society work and at the moment it falls mostly on the committee and just one or two willing helpers. So, while I'd really like someone to take on the role of Publicity Secretary on the committee – because I'm struggling to keep up with that along with everything else – it's a task that could be shared by a small group of volunteers.

Similarly, we need people to help set up the hall for our monthly demonstrations and that we can call on at short notice to cover for absences, for example, by helping with the DVD library, taking money on the door or setting up the camera and screen when regular helpers can't do these things.

Many hands really do make light work – so, if you can help in any of these areas, please volunteer your services.

Now, I've talked for far too long. Does anyone have any questions for me?

Kim Page asked about the future of the Lightbox as he had heard it was struggling for money. Sue explained and George confirmed that Woking Borough Council supports and George confirmed that Woking Council The Lightbox and will continue to do so going forward. Alan Manie, who is a Trust Member of The Lightbox confirmed that it was financially stable.

4 Treasurer's Report

Ros Allen confirmed that she was presenting the accounts which have been reviewed by Alison Sanderson.

Accounts for the year ended 31 October 2019.

There is a small surplus of £30 this year. This was due to increases to income across most areas and reduction in expenditure in some areas. However, the small surplus would not have been achieved without the grant of £500 from Woking Borough Council to hold a workshop in Digital Art – this workshop will be held in the current financial year.

The membership subscription for 2020 has increased to £30 and the attendance fee for visitors to the monthly demonstrations has increased to £5. The committee do not propose any further increase in either of these costs for 2021.

Balance Sheet

There is £8,628 in the current and reserve accounts at the end of the year.

Budget for 2019/2020

The budget for 2019/2020 reflects the increase to members' subscriptions, the reduction in number of monthly meetings and a likely increase to insurance costs following the damage claim.

A conservative forecast for income and expenditure arising from workshops and exhibitions has been made, given the move to one Lightbox exhibition and as only three workshops have been arranged to date.

Summary

The small surplus is positive, but we will need to work harder to maintain this position for 2019/2020.

Proposed: Christine Taherian **Seconded:** Elaine Balmer.

6 President's report

George thanked our members for attending this AGM and indicated a good turnout. He praised the Society and thanked Sue Hinton and the committee for their efforts over the past year. He realised Sue was not quite prepared for the role but had done a really great job.

Although growing in strength, George acknowledged the Society has challenges and that the same applies to most other societies. Unfortunately, looking at UK demographics in general and with our own ageing membership, we have tended to lose more members than we've gained; but we are starting to turn that around with more positive promotion of membership and are fortunate in now having some younger members on our committee to continue driving this forward.

He went on to say that, unless we are flexible in our approach and continually adapt to changes, we risk becoming like the dinosaurs and dying out. He agreed that workshops are important and what are key to attracting new members. By adopting a unified membership approach and phasing out perceived barriers (see point 7), we can attract more people with fewer rules to them off.

George highlighted a potential threat to the Society through its dependence on too few people – primarily the committee members – and sighting the fact that for the last year, Sue H has been Chairman, Exhibition Secretary and Publicity Secretary, as well as editor of Broadbrush, which is unsustainable. No-one is paid and help should be provided by society members to lessen the load. He went on to sight the example of Sunningdale Art Society which folded several years ago because it had come to depend on one person alone to run it, with no-one prepared to take over when that individual could no longer do so. George requested that any members who could help, to please offer, however small the task.

In response, David Goodrich suggested co-opting members for certain tasks. Liz Seward said she was a member a choir where there was an established main committee but that she was a member of a sub-committee that reported back to the main committee. She suggested that this could work for the tasks normally attributed to the role of Publicity Secretary. Sue H confirmed she would retain Broadbrush and that she would pursue the plan of a digital workshop, possibly with Woking College.

7 Amendment to the Constitution

A resolution had been proposed by the Committee to amend the Society's to Constitution to reflect the creation of a single status of membership (and therefore to remove all references to 'Associate Member') and the need to be a member of the Society for 12 months before being invited to submit works for exhibitions at The Lightbox.

Further minor amendments were proposed to simplify and modernise some of the language and to formalise some activities – for example, adding '*The Executive Committee will meet at least four times per year*'.

Sue asked if there were any objections and members voted unanimously in favour of the changes; although Ron Best pointed out that the inverted commas around the word *unsuitable* in section 3b) should be removed. This was agreed.

Proposed: George Otto **Seconded:** Hannah Bruce

8 Election of officers

It was reported that, in accordance with the constitution, one committee member (Ros O'Connor) was retiring but that Elaine Balmer as Deputy Treasurer, Julia Goodswen as Webmaster and Sue Wright as Secretary had offered to stand for election. In addition, Elaine Winter and Ros Allen had taken up posts during the year as Outdoor Exhibitions Organiser and Treasurer respectively. They too were offering to stand for election. All proposed Committee members were duly approved.

Proposed: David Goodrich **Seconded:** Brenda Ord

9 Any other business

- a) Presentation by George Otto of a small thank you gift to Ros O'Connor for her long-standing service (over 20 years) as a committee member.
- b) Sue Reynolds again asked if photography could be included as a membership category in the Society; but as there is a Woking Photographic Group it was felt this was a non-starter. Sue and George confirmed that non-painting artists were welcome to join and we would welcome a wider variety of art and craft in our exhibitions. Sue confirmed that this had already been highlighted in the revised copy on the Society's website and that the new leaflets that need to be produced will be designed to encourage non-painting members, including sculptors, potters, print specialists and jewellery and craft workers, to join us.
- c) The DVD library is to be phased out over coming months/years, although initially we will only be selling off duplicated and some of the older, less relevant DVDs. Hannah had priced up many of these and is offering them for sale firstly to members at a reduced rate (at the AGM and the February meeting) before advertising them on eBay.
- d) David Goodrich mentioned that the screen at the Vyne is too low and that some members, particularly those seated near the back of the hall, can't see the demons properly. As we have no control over the height of the screen (it's a fixture on the wall and a shared resource), it was suggested and agreed that the seats be spaced out more, including a corridor down the centre, so the audience would have more opportunity to see between rows and/or move chairs to achieve this.
- e) Hannah Bruce drew our attention to the Victoria Square Art Project, an open call competition being organised by The Lightbox in conjunction with Woking Borough Council and the developers responsible for rebuilding Woking's town centre. She confirmed that all Society members could enter, whether or not they lived in the borough and that there is no specific theme or title so any ideas can be presented in any medium (maximum two submissions per applicant).

Applications are digital via The Lightbox's website where full details can be found, including terms and conditions: eg original artworks will be retained by the artists unless the developers choose to purchase them, with high quality prints being made for use in public spaces and residential properties in the new developments.

9 Date of next AGM

This will be held on Saturday, 9th January 2021 at The Vyne.

Woking Art Society

Treasurer's Report

2019-20

Income for the year

£17,742

Mainly from:

- members sales (almost £12k)
- Subscriptions (almost £4k)

Payments for the year

£14,498

Mainly from:

- Members shares of sales (just over £9k)
- Expenses for exhibitions (c. £2.5k)
- Payments to demonstrators (c. £1.4k)

Surplus for the year

£3244

Other points

- The accounts have been signed off, but I haven't yet been able to go and collect them from her.
- We still owe the Peacocks £2.5k as no invoice has been received (but this has been accounted for in the payments)
- Once this has paid, we will have almost £7k in the current account and £5k in the reserve account
- Last year, we made the princely sum of £6 in interest in the current account
- Do we want to move some of the money from the current account to the reserve account?

Budget for 2020/21

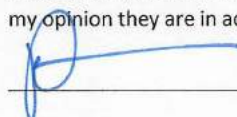
In the face of the uncertainty about when we will be able to meet again, I have set the budget at the same as we had set at the start of last year, with a small adjustment to make it balance. Do we want to make any changes to the budget – there are some obvious ones such as decreasing membership subscriptions to £4k, reducing attendance fees and hire of Vyne by half? We could also increase the members sales income to say £7k and the members shares of sales to £5.5k. This would result in a budget which still balanced but was a little more realistic. See next page

Woking Art Society
Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 October 2020

	Year ended 31-Oct-20 £	Year ended 31-Oct-19 £	Year ended 31-Oct-18 £	Budget for 2020/21 £
Income				
Members' subscriptions	3870	3930	3331	4500
Attendance fees at meetings	729	1195	1170	1200
Exhibitions:				
Members' sales	11908	6922	9131	5200
Handing-in fees and sponsorship	42	2174	1729	1020
Workshops	1100	1847	734	1700
DVD Rental	0	109	40	75
Sundries	87	906	42	0
Bank interest	6	10	3	5
Total income	17742	17093	16180	13700
Payments				
Exhibitions:				
Expenses	2522	4850	5618	4040
Members' share of sales	9082	5558	6705	4220
Payments to demonstrators	1380	1850	1477	1705
Workshops	570	1912	782	1120
Postage, telephone and internet	66	241	202	126
Printing and stationery	157	265	652	140
Hire of Vyne for monthly meetings	460	1150	909	1082
Refreshments	0	41	0	60
Insurance	270	258	484	350
DVD library	0	119	0	0
Committee room hire	0	20	0	0
Sundries / Renewal of equipment	-10	799	4142	857
Total payments	14498	17063	20971	13700
Surplus/(deficit)for year	3244	30	-4791	0

Prepared by Rosalind Allen Treasurer

I have examined the attached balance sheet and the Income and Expenditure Account and notes. In my opinion they are in accordance with the accounting records and explanations given to me.

 Independent Reviewer