

# Winchester Art Club

## Annual General Meeting

Held at Littleton Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016

The meeting was chaired by the Club President, Mr Tony Hunt VPRI, who opened the meeting at 2.30pm.

1. **Apologies:** Helen Benjamin, James Nairne, Diana Hickson, Dianna Snagge, Bob and Barbara Frost, Barbara Duxbury, Liz Seward and Joanne Seward.
2. **Minutes of Previous AGM:** The Chair reminded members that the minutes had been available on the Club's web site for some time and asked for comments or concerns. None were offered and so the minutes were accepted.
3. **Matters arising:** The Secretary reported that there were no outstanding actions from the previous minutes and asked the meeting if there were any questions. None were forthcoming.
4. **Reports:**
  - a. **Chairman:**
    - i. Hilary Archer opened her report by thanking those present for attending the AGM and for coming to the splendid new venue (even though the heating had not yet taken effect and it was freezing cold). She commended the Secretary for the map on the back of the agenda which showed the route to the hall and for the signs put up to guide members.
    - ii. Hilary then paid tribute to our oldest member, Joyce King, who had died on 1<sup>st</sup> March and whose funeral many members had attended on the previous day. Later Simon Churchill projected a picture of Joyce celebrating her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday at a Club meeting in August and also some of Joyce's superb flower paintings.
    - iii. Hilary reported that Douglas Skeggs would be unable to deliver his customary lecture in conjunction with the Annual Exhibition, but she had been able to book Dr Anne Anderson who is a superb speaker and who will deliver a lecture on Art Nouveau for us. It is worth looking her up on Google and Facebook to find out more about her.
    - iv. The meeting was reminded that we needed a picture for our Annual Exhibition publicity. It will have to be bright, eye-catching and interesting so as to project the Club's image. Members were invited to submit candidate picture to the Secretary by the end of May, in time for the June Committee meeting when the choice will be made. The Secretary would prefer submissions to be made in digital format. In response to a question from Diane Reeves, he said that he would also welcome hard copy from those who were not equipped with digital cameras.
    - v. Members were also reminded that there is a planned Club outing to the National Portrait Gallery on 26<sup>th</sup> June that will be organised by Jane Nicholson.
    - vi. Members were reminded that handing-in for the next Hospital Exhibition will be on 16<sup>th</sup> April.
  - b. **Exhibition Secretary:**
    - i. Sheila Bushnell reported that the 2015 Annual Exhibition had been successful and that there had been many pleasing comments in the visitor's book. On a less happy note, there had been some cases of damage to frames that occurred during the many picture movements that are an inevitable part of handing-in, judging, moving from the activities room to the gallery, laying out and then hanging. This had brought about some bad tempered exchanges with artists who had suffered and who did not understand the amount of work involved, the care taken by the few volunteers who were doing the work or the fact that the entry form clearly states that artists are responsible for their own insurance. The Committee have now negotiated a deal with the Gallery whereby handing-in will be directly to the Gallery and judging will take place in the Gallery, thus reducing the number of times a picture must be moved and, we hope, the risk of frame damage.
    - ii. Sheila said that the Club exhibitions in the Hospital corridor continue to be appreciated by staff and patients and that sales have been steady. She thanked Jane Nicolson for taking on the task of managing the sales and she also paid tribute to Peter Warner who turns out, when asked, to take down sales and put up replacements.
  - c. **Membership Secretary:**
    - i. June Mott thanked Irene Dowding for her considerable help with bringing the supplies and organising the teas at Club meeting. She also noted that Irene prepares and sends out the Club's entire hard copy mailing three times each year; a task that takes two days each time.

*There was applause from the members.* June also thanked Simon Churchill and Trish Spink for their help, especially for taking over her responsibilities when she was ill.

- ii. This year there had been a healthy number of new members with 43 joining since the last AGM. This was offset by 6 members who paid by banker's order had not renewed their subscriptions and 23 other member had not sent cheques despite reminders. There are also 6 members who are paying £9 per year some 5 years after the subscription fee had increased. The people had not responded to reminders or had moved to an unknown address. The Hon. Treasurer smiled and said that he did not mind.
- d. **Courses Secretary:**
  - i. Trish Spink reminded members of her comments in the recent newsletter where she drew their attention to the low take-up of the course places. Since then she had cancelled one course and had a few more applications for places on others, but more applications were needed to reach break-even cost to fees. There was then a general discussion concerning course content, length and timing with the implied conclusion that more work was needed. It was noted that the matter had been addressed in a survey carried out on a large sample of members by the Hon. Treasurer and so it was agreed to continue the discussion during his report.
  - ii. Trish asked members to keep an eye on the Club's website because this is where they would find out the latest information on courses should any of the tutors make changes to course equipment required or subject matter. She concluded by saying that she hoped to see many more of them on the courses.
- e. **Programme Secretary:**
  - i. Derek Snowdon told the meeting that now the 2016 programme is running, he is beginning to compile the 2017 programme and he would welcome ideas from members who knew of good speakers and demonstrators who would be of interest to the Club.
  - ii. The 2016 Programme had started well with an excellent talk by our President, Tony Hunt VPRI. This had been followed by an exceptional demonstration by Danny Byrne who taught us how to draw cartoons and showed us his considerable skill as a caricaturist. This was all accompanied by an extremely amusing joke-a-minute commentary. The third meeting was an appraisal by Ron Riley. This fell flat when the appraiser forgot to appear. Instead the meeting improvised with each exhibitor showing his or her picture and then inviting the audience to comment. The format worked well although one new member expressed disappointment because he had been hoping for a professional critique. Derek pointed out that there would be three more opportunities for appraisal and that the alphabetic allocations were only guidelines and that most appraisals could easily accommodate a few extra participants. Diane Reeves, who had helped Derek's predecessor, suggested that it could be good practice to phone visiting speakers a week before their appearance because artists are not well known for organising their appointments. Derek agreed.
- f. **Activities Secretary:**
  - i. In the absence of Helen Benjamin, Jane Nicholson was asked to speak on her behalf. Jane drew the attention of members to the upcoming trip to London to visit the National Portrait Gallery. She asked members to contact her by email or phone if they intended to join the group so that she could make firm arrangements.
- g. **Publicity Secretary:**
  - i. Chris Sealey said that if you ask people in Winchester what they know about the Winchester Art Club a great many will reply that they have visited the annual exhibition and then go on to comment on the high quality of the work. And so it's with good reason that every year a great deal of effort is directed at publicising the exhibition. This year we were helped in that by some excellent posters produced by the Hampshire Cultural Trust using the image "Face of Nepal" by Tricia Spink and by good entries in the Hampshire County Council brochure of events for the exhibition and the public lecture. Additionally we had been able to fulfil our long standing ambition of resurrecting and displaying the club banner on the railings outside the Discovery Centre where remarkably it remained throughout the period of the exhibition - unlike the roadside signs. For the first time the Club had an A-board outside the Centre thereby perhaps catching a few more eyes. More revenue was raised from the sale of advertising in the exhibition catalogue through a small increase in the number of advertisers and by greater number of colour adverts. And of course both the annual exhibition and the hospital exhibitions are advertised on a number of What's On websites and in the press. In reviewing the year he wanted to mention particularly the publication in the Leisure Painter magazine last summer of a painting by John Reynolds together with an article on the club itself.

- ii. At last year's AGM Chris reported that he had set up a Twitter account for the club as a first venture into the use of social media to publicise the club and its activities. It hadn't exactly been an outstanding success in terms of the number of messages (tweets) posted and the number of followers but it had spluttered into life from time to time. And now thanks to Simon there was a Winchester Art Club Facebook page. Chris went on to say that however unwillingly we use social media we have to accept that it will become an essential tool in attracting new members as well as promoting the club more generally. And so if members did have time to have a look, there just might be something interesting and informative on it. They might even be moved to make a comment or report. Other ways of spreading the word included the use of business cards to be given to anyone who shows an interest in the club and a fresh supply had recently been ordered by Mike Ellis. But as always the principal means of publicising the club rested with members who can tell others about the benefits of joining - for example those who attend art classes or whilst on the desk at the annual exhibition Finally Chris thanked all who had helped in those and other ways throughout the past year.
- h. **Hon. Treasurer:**
  - i. At last year's AGM Simon Churchill forecast a planned budget deficit of about £1,000 for 2015, but at the end of the year the deficit was only £625.66. This was due to a number of factors including an increased number of new members during the year, a large attendance at the Douglas Skeggs lecture, more advertisers in the exhibition catalogue, and a reduction in course tutor fees due to one course being cancelled when a tutor found he was double booked. This left our end of year funds at £3,490, about £500 above our reserve level.
  - ii. Simon presented a budget forecast for 2016 and 2017 which, if the club retained the sales subsidy at the annual exhibition and waived the 5% sales commission, which the club has done for the past three years as a planned way of reducing the club's funds to a level nearer the reserve level, it would have resulted in a deficit in 2016 of around £2,000, and a further deficit in 2017 of around £1,685, even if membership fees had been put up to £15 next year. This would result in the club running out of funds towards the end of next year, and was untenable. Simon presented a deficit reduction plan drawn up by the committee to make a number of small changes in addition to discontinuing the sales subsidy and reintroducing the 5% sales commission at the annual exhibition. These include an increase of annual exhibition hanging fees from £3 to £4 this year and increasing membership fees to £15 next year. Various aspects of the recovery plan were discussed by the meeting and the general conclusion was that the changes were necessary and acceptable.
  - iii. Simon also presented an overview of the membership survey which had recently been conducted. The response from members has been extremely good, with responses from more than two thirds of the 190 members who were contacted by email, representing about half of the total membership of the club. The feedback will be reviewed by the committee and changes to the club's activities considered.

## 5. Election of Club Officers

- a. Chairman – Hilary Archer
- b. Vice Chairman – Lucinda Graham
- c. Hon. Secretary – Derek Butler
- d. Hon. Treasurer – Simon Churchill
- e. Hon. Exhibition Secretary – Sheila Bushnell
- f. Hon. Programme Secretary – Derek Snowdon
- g. Hon. Courses Secretary – Patricia Spink
- h. Hon. Membership Secretary – June Mott
- i. Hon. Publicity Secretary – Chris Sealey
- j. Hon. Activities Secretary – Jane Nicolson
- k. Activities Secretary Emeritus – Helen Benjamin  
(NOTE Helen Benjamin offered to provide help and support to Jane for as long as is necessary)  
The Chairman asked the meeting to consider re-electing the Committee as a group since none of the posts were contested. Ken Potheary proposed, Ron Allan seconded and the motion was carried with no votes against.

## 6. Any Other Business

- a. Mike Ellis proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for all of the work that they carry out on behalf of the Club. The proposal was seconded by Sandy Parry and carried with general applause.
- b. Tony Hunt drew the attention of members to the upcoming RI Exhibition at the Mall Gallery between 6<sup>th</sup> April and 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016. He also promoted the new Friends of the RI appeal whereby supporters can join for an annual fee of £30 and receive the following benefits:

- A Tri-annual Newsletter detailing exhibitions
  - talks, demonstrations, and workshops by RI Members
  - Information and discounts on available RI Workshop places
  - Emailed water colour tutorials
  - 'In the Spotlight' interviews with RI Members about their working practices
  - '5 minutes with'... a quick light hearted interview with members.
  - Art materials /equipment / book reviews
  - Invitations to Private Views
  - Competitions
  - Water colour problems helpline.
- c. Derek Snowdon reminded members that the deadline for pictures to be submitted for “The Art Club of the Year” Painters Online competition is 21<sup>st</sup> April.
7. **Competition Winners**
- a. Tricia Spink and Lucinda Graham shared the honour of winning the most popular picture in the informal competition.
8. The meeting Closed at 4.45pm.