

Winchester Art Club AGM March 21st 2015
Held at All Saints School Hall

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

- 1) **Apologies:** George Davies, John and Joan Reynolds, Ivan Bellchambers, Jillian Smith, Diana Snagge, Gill Collymore, Jean Morris, Ron Alan, Joan Willingham, Dorothy Holden, Stephanie Crisp and Richard Plincke.
- 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 saying that she was sorry to see so few members present, (~34) but blamed a combination of the confusion over parking caused by building work in the school and international rugby on TV. Nevertheless she is proud to be Chairman of such a great, old art club and to work with such a wonderful Committee.
 - ii) Hilary then warmly welcomed Ken Potheary who has agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee for which he will be a great asset. Ken has helped hang most Club exhibitions during the past few years and has been especially useful because he can reach heights that are beyond the reach of the rest of the Committee.
 - iii) Next Hilary asked the meeting for a volunteer to help Christine Compton with the compilation of the 2016 programme. Christine had been helped with this year's programme by Diane Reeves who had, very ably, provided knowledge of artists and speakers to build an excellent programme for 2015. Diane is unable to continue the work and Christine, who is new to the area, needs this support. No volunteers came forwards, and Tony Hunt intervened to ask members to think about the request and to contact the Committee after they had had more time to think it over.
 - iv) Helen Benjamin has indicated that she would like to step down from the position as Activities Secretary and Hilary asked members to consider filling the vacancy that this will leave on the Committee. She pointed out that the work for this year is well on with the summer outing already arranged and that Helen would be available to offer advice. Hilary complimented Helen on the wonderful work that she has done during her many years and asked for a volunteer.
 - b) **Hon. Treasurer:**
 - i) At last year's AGM Simon Churchill forecast a budget deficit of ~£1,030 for 2014, but at the end of the year the deficit was only £551.43. This was due to a number of factors, including increased membership during the year, a greater surplus on catalogue sales for the annual exhibition, and a good uptake on courses. This left our year-end funds at £4,089.85, just over £1,000 above our reserve level. Retaining the overall subsidy of 15% on sales at the annual exhibition for a further year, my budget forecast for 2015 is a deficit of ~£1,000 which would bring our year end funds to around our reserve level of £3,000, and the committee agreed to retain the sales subsidy on this basis.
 - ii) Maria Calcagno-Coleman asked why there should be a deficit. The Treasurer replied that the Committee had taken a policy decision to maintain a reserve in the bank of £3000 to cover the Club's liabilities and give the Treasurer flexibility in paying some expenses in advance of income. Since the reserve was above the policy level the Committee had decided to spend the surplus for the benefit of the Club members by subsidising the commission taken by the gallery from exhibition sales.

- iii) Robin Cooper noted that the charity donations varied widely between years. The Treasurer replied that this was because the timing of the amount paid to Hospital Charities varied and was sometimes just before or just after the year end.
- c) **Exhibition Secretary**
- i) Sheila Bushnell told the meeting that she was pleased to be able to say that the 2014 Annual Exhibition had been successful in spite of the fact that we had had a day less than usual to set up and hang the exhibition. She said that there were many favourable comments in the visitor's book and from visitors in the gallery.
 - ii) Sheila said that the Hospital exhibitions still attract interest but that they are hung and taken down by the same (mostly old) people every time and it is about time that some other Club members came to help. Derek Snowdon said that he very much appreciated the work done by the Committee and that he would be willing to help, when a problem with THE mobility of his leg had cleared up. The next handing-in at the RHCH is scheduled for the 18th April, but this Clashes with an all-day JAMEL Akib workshop which will involve many of the regular helpers. It was therefore agreed that handing-in should be rescheduled for Sunday 19th April. This will involve communicating with all members who are likely to submit paintings.
- d) **Membership Secretary**
- i) June Mott reported that 23 new members had joined the Club since the last AGM. The total membership now stands at 271, but 29 members have yet to pay their sub for 2015 and 8 members still pay £9 per year by banker's order in spite of numerous attempts get their attention. June said that using space in the Club newsletter to appeal for prompt payment of subs by January 1st had been a mistake, because it clearly had no effect. The number of people leaving the Club roughly equates to the number joining. June thinks that some new members join in order to exhibit and sell paintings and they become discouraged when their work is not selected for the Annual Exhibition or they do not sell anything.
 - ii) June then paid tribute to Irene Dowding who has made herself responsible for obtaining and bringing supplies for the tea break to all Club meetings. June also pointed out that Irene has, with no assistance, compiled and posted 234 envelopes for the recent Club mailings.
- e) **Courses Secretary**
- i) Tricia Spink reported on the difficulty that there had been at the Paul Banning workshop on 14th March when members arrived to find that the School playground, normally used for parking, had become a building site. Parking was eventually arranged and the workshop started 30 minutes late. The subsequent discussions with the school authorities indicated that the school planned to discontinue letting the school hall once the building work is completed. They did, however, agree to honour the four bookings planned for this summer. In a separate negotiation, the All Saints Church administrator agreed that Club members could park in the Church Hall car park, whilst working in the school hall for all by 2 hours on morning July 4th when there would be a church function in the Church Hall. Tricia has been investigating alternative venues for the Workshops and is now negotiating with the people who run Littleton Village Hall.
- f) **Programme Secretary**
- i) Christine Compton praised Diane Reeves for the work that she had done in helping Christine put together the 2015 programme. Dianne's knowledge of the art community and the potential speakers and demonstrators had produced a fresh and interesting series of meeting throughout the year. Christine pointed out that she is comfortable to carry out the administrative part of her role, but as a relative newcomer to Winchester, she is not yet sufficiently informed to compile the 2016 programme alone. She would therefore need a volunteer with that knowledge to come forwards in order for her to continue. Her most immediate problem is that Paul Banning is unable to perform a critique on 27th June and a replacement must be found.

ii) Diane Reeves told the meeting that she was sorry to not be involved in the next programme. In 2015, she had tried to include some new faces to keep the programme fresh and it was generally agreed that this had been successful. Diane warned that the person, who is to help Christine, should start quite soon, because most professional speakers and demonstrating artists would have their bookings in place by August of this year.

g) Activities Secretary

i) Helen Benjamin told the meeting that after many years serving on the Committee she felt that it was time for some fresh thinking and new ideas. She said that she would be willing to support the new Activities Secretary until that person was confident to take full responsibility.

ii) Helen told the meeting that a visit to Tate Britain has been planned for 28th June. She had had a great deal of help from Delphine Wilson and her daughter in setting up the visit and researching the facilities. Forms for members and friends to sign up were provided for the meeting and will be available at subsequent Club meetings. The form has also been sent to those members who have registered their email address with the Club Secretary.

h) Publicity Secretary

i) Chris Sealey reported that most of his effort in the past year had been directed at promoting the Annual Exhibition and Lecture. He thanked members who had publicized the events in a variety of ways and thanks were also due to the staff of City Space for producing some eye-catching publicity materials. There had been good coverage in the local press in which a prominent report of Joyce King's 100th birthday celebration at the club had been followed by pieces on the exhibition and on the private view and lecture. A club member, Les Nicholson, had provided the photograph of the private view used by the press.

j) Attendance at the Douglas Skeggs Lecture had been disappointing, possibly because of the subject, the sculptor Bernini, and possibly because advertising needs to start earlier. The roadway signs seemed to work well but one had disappeared. It was hoped that the number of signs might be increased this year.

k) The number of adverts in the exhibition catalogue had slightly increased. There is substantial competition for sponsorship and advertising from other voluntary organisations and charities in Winchester. Some businesses are relying exclusively on social media to advertise.

l) There is the question of how to engage with the public throughout the year and attract new members. The club website and journals like the Leisure Painter already provide a very important means of achieving this end but perhaps the club should not ignore the potential of social media, especially in relation to attracting younger people. Chris said that he had therefore opened an Art Club Twitter account. He assured the meeting that the content will be informative and will not, he hoped, sink to the level of banality that seems to characterise most of the conversation on Twitter. Tweets can be accessed on Google at Winchester Art Club (@ArtWinchester)Twitter.

5) Election of Club Officers

a) the following have agreed to stand for re-election:

- i) Chairman – Hilary Archer
- ii) Vice Chairman – Lucinda Graham
- iii) Hon. Secretary – Mr. Derek Butler
- iv) Hon. Treasurer – Mr Simon Churchill
- v) Hon. Exhibition Secretary – Sheila Bushnell
- vi) Hon. Programme Secretary – Christine Compton
- vii) Hon. Courses Secretary – Patricia Spink
- viii) Hon. Membership Secretary – June Mott
- ix) Hon. Publicity Secretary - Chris Sealey

b) The Chairman asked members to vote for the officers in a block since there were no opposing candidates.

c) Derek Snowdon proposed and Robert Frost seconded. The vote was unanimous.

6) Proposal to Elect the Hon. Activities Secretary

a) The Chairman asked the meeting for a volunteer to take over from Helen Benjamin. None of those present felt able to volunteer. Helen Benjamin said that she would continue in the role until a volunteer was found.

7) Any Other Business

a) Arrangements for the Annual Exhibition handing-in.

i) Undertake handing in and judging in the Discovery Centre as usual, but with the reduced space of a single Learning Room.

This was rejected because it does not provide enough space.

ii) Use an alternative room within the Discovery Centre for handing in and judging.

No other suitable space is available.

iii) Proposal by Mike Ellis that each member can have one item accepted automatically, and one further item to be judged. This would reduce the number of items to be judged, and therefore the amount of space required in the Discovery Centre.

If more than 170 members submitted pictures then we would have an insoluble problem, unless we implemented a 'first-come first-served' policy.

The standard of the exhibition would, to some extent, be compromised since it is inevitable that some less accomplished artists would submit a painting that would be hung.

This proposal was rejected as it would not avoid the need for all paintings to be viewed by the judges, as this is required to pick prize winners in each category and would, thus, not save space

iv) Proposal by a member that judging is performed on photographs of artwork, rather than the artwork itself.

This proposal was rejected because it would exclude members who do not have cameras and email, and because of the difficulties members will experience eliminating reflections on the glass to produce good photographs of their work. Tony Hunt described the difficulties of judging photographs of artwork as there is no sense of scale, difficult to see any detail, and lacking presentation if mount and frame are not included. Also the additional workload on the club to ensure that artwork delivered for hanging are those selected by the judges.

v) Use an alternative venue for handing in and judging, which would both be undertaken on a single day.

This proposal was rejected because it would require members who do not live in the vicinity to wait around for many hours until judging had been completed before they could collect their work. It would also require members to make an additional journey to deliver accepted work to the Discovery Centre prior to handing in. Also the additional workload on the club to ensure that artworks delivered for hanging are those selected by the judges.

vi) Use an alternative venue for handing in and judging, undertaken over two days. This would entail paying a Removal Company to transfer pictures to the Discovery Centre after judging.

This proposal was rejected because of the cost and logistical difficulties of moving the pictures to the Discovery Centre after judging in time for hanging.

vii) Change handing in from Sunday to Saturday

This is this is an option, but not ideal, particularly because of the parking difficulties in the Library Car Park on a Saturday. It was suggested during the AGM that the club could ask St Peter's Church if we could use their car park.

viii) Negotiate with Discovery Centre for the existing booking for the Learning Room to be changed to an alternative venue, freeing up the space for the club. The club is willing to pay for any difference in cost to the group which has made this booking.

The Discovery Centre is considering this option, given that changing to Saturday is far from ideal. We are waiting to hear back from the Events Manager to see if this is possible.

- ix) Our preferred option is to have the handing in on Sunday 6th in the Discovery Centre, as usual, if this is possible. The alternative option is to change the handing in to Saturday 5th. We will know in due course which option will be selected.
 - x) The Secretary drew member's attention to the increased cost of the Club's three mailings per year. Three mailings per year cost approximately £3.12 per member. At present only 42 members have opted to receive their mail electronically, saving the Club £131 per year. Since about 180 Club members have email addresses, it would seem that there is the possibility for much greater saving in money and effort. In the following discussion the Secretary said that the Club would continue to use postal services for those who need it, but he would like to see many more members using email. Whilst it is true that sticky labels programme cards cannot be sent by email, it is certainly possible to meet those needs by having such items available at meetings around the time of the mailing. At the close of the meeting, a further four members signed up for email delivery.
- b) Arrangements for Christmas lunch
- i) Some members had complained that the Potter's Heron Christmas Lunch in 2014 had not been up to its usual standard and so Tricia Spink had been investigating alternative venues. The Running Horse pub/restaurant offered a good menu and pleasant environment for £18 per person. There is plenty of parking and the venue is nearer to Winchester. The general consensus was that Tricia should proceed with the negotiation.

The Chairman thanked everybody for their attendance and participation and closed the meeting at 3:45pm.

The informal competition with the subject as "Colour" was won by Barbara Frost with an exceptionally colourful floral painting. The runner up was Hilary Archer and Derek Butler was third.