

Minutes of the ASB 39th Annual General Meeting

Performing Arts Centre, Redmaids' High School

Tuesday January 10th 2023 at 7.40p.m

Committee Members (present and future):

Henry Alpass (HA), Mary Alpass (MA), Frances Brown (FB), Lin Cobb (LC), Kate Floyd (KF), Liz Jarvis (LJ), Susan Merelie (SM), Jinx Newley (JN), Debby Sandow (DS), Suzy Sibley (SS), Lin Standen (LS), Keira Stobie (KS), Stella Victory (SW)

1. Welcome (Miss Susan Hampton)

Good evening and welcome to the 39th AGM of the Arts Society Bristol. Thankfully, the past year has resumed a form of “normality” and numbers attending lectures face-to-face again have been encouraging. It is pleasing to report that the residential visit to Liverpool was successful, as was the twice re-scheduled visit to Northern Italy in September. We have a special year ahead with the National AGM taking place here in Bristol in May.

As always, I extend my personal thanks to Henry, the Officers and Committee Members for their magnificent determination in ensuring that the Society flourishes.

2. Apologies (HA)

Lin Cobb

Alison Lunt

Lin Standen

78 Members had been registered at the venue by this point and so the meeting was declared quorate.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 12th January 2022 (HA)

These had been made available via the ASB website for the specified period prior to the meeting. No matters arising or amendments had been received and there were no comments from those in attendance. Therefore, the Minutes of the last meeting were accepted as approved without comment and will be signed by the Chairman.

Proposed: Maureen Dickens

Seconded: Marion Hill

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

4. Chairman's Report (HA)

As this would be HA's final AGM as Chairman, thanks were extended to all members for their support throughout his time in this role. The Society had continued to flourish, offering a highly enjoyable programme, persevering through Zoom lectures, and welcoming a return to meeting in person.

Thanks were given to KF and JN for a highly successful trip to Liverpool, and for all their preparations for the Autumn trip to Nottingham and the National AGM in May. In addition,

funds accrued during lockdown mean that the Society can continue to contribute to a range of community programmes while keeping membership fees constant for the year ahead. Thanks were also given to Richard Brown for his assistance drafting changes to the constitution enabling the Society to meet the requirements of both the Charity Commissioners and the CAF bank.

LC was thanked in her absence for ensuring members were kept informed and in contact via newsletters and the Society website, as well as pioneering lectures by Zoom and managing the membership process.

DS was credited with providing a stimulating and widely appreciated lecture programme, as well as leading the Society's Heritage Volunteering and the recent quilting exhibition.

SM had coordinated a wide ranging Community Arts Programme, and it was hoped highlights of this could be shared as video clips with delegates at the national AGM.

MA had established a strong programme for the Society over numerous years and had provided a wise sounding board when challenges were faced.

LS would be stepping down from her role as an invaluable secretary, a task that had grown as the number of committee meetings increased and the committee were grateful to KS for taking on this role.

FB would also be stepping down having led her final foray abroad to Northern Italy.

LJ would be looking at exciting ideas for 2024 and beyond as she joins the committee this year and SS was also being co-opted onto the committee, with a particular focus on showcasing the talents of Society members.

KF would be taking over as Chair with this refreshed team and HA expressed his confidence in her successful leadership of the Society.

Members were encouraged to register their interest in participating in the wider programme for the National AGM via the national Arts Society website. HA and KF would represent ASB as voting members and so would be seeking the views of members once proposals were published.

5. Treasurer's Report and appointment of External Examiner (SV)

The full report was displayed for those attending the meeting and had also been published on the Society's website for the specified period prior to the meeting.

The verbal report began with an overview of the Society's financial situation, which is still good. The 4 year period from July 2019, before the pandemic, to 30th June this year, 2023 was illustrated. Reserves at the opening of that 4 year period were healthy, and in excess of £17,000 (seventeen thousand pounds). Due to restricted expenditure during the pandemic, reserves increased further to over £25,000 (twenty five thousand pounds). By 30th June 2023, they will have dropped back from that high point, but are still expected to be in excess of £21,000 (twenty one thousand pounds), rather higher than pre-pandemic.

For the year ending 30th June 2022, the Society made a surplus of £850 (eight hundred and fifty pounds). Total Income was recorded on the left (under the column headed 2022) as £16,625 (sixteen thousand, six hundred and twenty five pounds). The majority of the income is Subscription income of £10,364 (ten thousand, three hundred and sixty four pounds) and Gift Aid of £1,727 (one thousand seven hundred and twenty seven pounds) and

was similar to that of the previous year. Income from Study Days and the Summer Party were recorded separately, but are approximately equal to the expenditure on these activities (which is shown under expenditure on the right). There were some Guest Donations (£288 (two hundred and eighty eight pounds)), and Miscellaneous income included the generous donation of £400 (four hundred pounds) to purchase computer equipment which was used in the subsequent year. Expenditure on the right (under the column headed 2022) included costs totalling £15,775 (fifteen thousand, seven hundred and seventy five pounds). The most significant of these were Speakers fees of £4,216 (four thousand two hundred and sixteen pounds) and lecture room hire of £2,412 (two thousand four hundred and twelve pounds). These were slightly lower than a normal full year's expenditure as one lecture was by Zoom only. Another cost, essential to the provision of lectures, was The Arts Society Affiliation fee of £3,139 (three thousand one hundred and thirty nine pounds), which was kept artificially low to help local societies' finances for a second year. Our excellent lecturers are all sourced through The Arts Society, as well as additional online lectures and other material. The Arts Society also holds the membership database. Young Arts activities ceased during the pandemic but in 2021-22 support was given to 3 projects, a total donation of £1084 (one thousand and eighty four pounds). This consisted of £550 (five hundred and fifty pounds) for Somali Instruments, £234 (two hundred and thirty four pounds) to Art Bytes for St Mary Redcliffe Primary School and £300 (three hundred pounds) for Happy Mondays at the RWA. Miscellaneous costs included the purchase of the booklets "50 Treasures of West Mercia" which are still being sold at meetings.

The balance sheet at the bottom of the page shows that the Society started the year at 1st July 2021 with high reserves of £24,031 (twenty four thousand and thirty one pounds) and, by 30th June 2022, the surplus for the year, together with an adjustment relating to previous years, further increased reserves to £25,344 (twenty five thousand, three hundred and forty four pounds).

The forecast for the year to 30th June 2023 shows that, compared with last year, income has fallen and costs have risen. Membership numbers have fallen so subscription and Gift Aid income is projected to be perhaps £1500 (one thousand five hundred pounds) lower than last year. In addition, the Arts Society has reverted to recharging more of its costs, so the Affiliation Fee has risen by about £1000 (one thousand pounds). Lectures are expected to all be delivered in person, so room hire and lecturers' travel expenses are for the full lecture season. The cost of a new computer appears in Miscellaneous costs, using the donation which we received in the previous year.

Overall, a deficit for the year to 30th June 2023 of around £4000 (four thousand pounds) is expected. However, bearing in mind that at the start of the year there were exceptionally high reserves, it is still likely that the Society will end the year with reserves in excess of £21,000 (twenty one thousand pounds).

While it is difficult to project too far ahead, if membership numbers remain constant, it is anticipated that for 2023-24, a further loss of about £4000 (four thousand pounds) will be incurred. This would bring reserves down to approximately pre-pandemic levels, which would still be adequate for financial prudence. Therefore, unless unforeseen circumstances arise in the next few months, it is not recommended that subscription fees are raised for the forthcoming year, although this will probably need to change from July 2024.

SV expressed her gratitude to Barry Wilkinson for having acted as the Society's Independent Examiner for the year to 30th June 2022. He has very kindly agreed to act as Independent Examiner for the year to 30th June 2023 as well.

The committee recommends that the signed accounts for the year ended 30th June 2022 be adopted by the society.

Proposed: Mary Alpass

Seconded: Tig Jarratt

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

The committee recommends that Barry Wilkinson be appointed to the position of Independent Examiner for the year ending 30th June 2023.

Proposed: Jinx Newley

Seconded: Dinah Bernard

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

Thanks were extended to SV for maintaining the Society's sound financial position and for enabling such an extensive programme of community support to be continued.

6. To consider the following resolution: Update of the Society's Constitution in accordance with the draft made available to members on December 10th 2022 (SV)

Proposed by Lin Standen and seconded by Lin Cobb

The Constitution is the document on which the Charity Commission rely when granting an organisation its charitable status. To maintain that charitable status ASB needs to be able to comply with its constitution. Unfortunately, the Society has been finding it increasingly difficult to comply in full, and that was noted by the bank during a review last year. The Constitution was last redrafted based on a much larger membership, so the committee propose that changes are made to make it more relevant to current circumstances.

Proposed changes

1. At present the committee should comprise at least 11 members which has proved to be unfeasible to maintain at all times. It is therefore proposed that the minimum number of members of the committee should be reduced to 6 (the 4 Officers: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, together with 2 more members). The maximum number of committee members would remain unchanged.

2. Currently, and rather unusually, all committee members are automatically Trustees of ASB so, when failing to recruit sufficient committee members, the Society has also failed to have the correct number of Trustees, which has concerned the bank. It is therefore proposed that the Trustees of ASB should just be the 4 Officers: The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

3. It is proposed that the rules on extending the terms of office of Officers and Committee Members should be slightly relaxed. It is still intended that there should be a turnover of

committee members to ensure ASB does not stagnate, but there are times when replacements are not immediately forthcoming.

4. It is proposed that the current 5 year restriction on a President or Vice President's term of office should be removed.

5. It is proposed that the manner of conducting elections of committee members, where there is more than one candidate for a post, should be widened from paper ballot only to whatever other method seems suitable (online ballots were never envisaged at the time of redrafting ASB's current Constitution).

6. Other proposed changes are minor and mostly to wording to reflect the changes detailed above.

All these proposals were agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

Thanks were given to SV and RB for their work on this complex area.

7. Election of Committee members (HA)

Re-election of SV as Treasurer.

Proposed: Michael Edwards

Seconded: Jinx Newley

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

Election of KF as Chair from the end of the current lecture season.

Proposed: Jinx Newley

Seconded: Debby Sandow

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

Election of KS as Secretary.

Proposed: Maureen Dickens

Seconded: Marion Hill

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

Election of SS to the committee.

Proposed: Susan Merelie

Seconded: Debby Sandow

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

Election of LJ to the committee.

Proposed: Stella Victory

Seconded: Frances Brown

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

8. AOB (HA)

No other resolutions were proposed and, as there was no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.07pm p.m., thanking all those present for attending.

9. Date and time of 40th Annual General Meeting (HA)

Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 1940.