

Minutes of the ASB 42nd Annual General Meeting

Performing Arts Centre, Redmaids' High School

Tuesday January 13th 2026 at 7.05p.m

Committee members:

Henry Alpass (HA), Mary Alpass (MA), Lin Cobb (LC), Liz Davies (LD), Kate Floyd (KF), Heather Fry (HF), Susan Merelie (SM), Viv Munday (VM), Jinx Newley (JN), Debby Sandow (DS), Suzy Sibley (SS) and Keira Stobie (KS).

1. Welcome (Susan Hampton, President)

Good evening and welcome to the 42nd AGM of the Arts Society Bristol. A special welcome to all who have joined, or re-joined, since last September, many of whom came to a lecture as guests and decided to stay.

The programme of lectures over the past year has again covered a wide variety of topics, always giving enjoyment and pleasure, occasionally inspiration too. This is all thanks to the thoughtful planning and research of the Programme Secretary. In addition to lectures, members have participated in a number of local visits and also undertaken several projects in the community. None of this could happen without the meticulous planning and resourcefulness of the whole committee - more details from Kate in her report. I express my warmest thanks to them all for their commitment. In particular, I give special thanks and personal appreciation to Chair Kate for her huge contribution and boundless enthusiasm, ensuring the continued success of the Society. Thank you, Kate!

It has been a great privilege to be your President for a number of years, but I now step down from the role but, of course, continue my membership. Happy New Year to you all!

2. Apologies (KF)

Apologies had been received from:

- Liz Davies
- Dee Gardner
- Suzy Sibley (acting as host for Guests and Lecturer)
- Stella Victory (acting as host for Guests and Lecturer)

118 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 14th January 2025 (KF)

These had been made available via the Arts Society Bristol 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 and approved without comment and will be signed by the Chair.

Proposed: Jinx Newley

Seconded: Viv Munday

Agreed with no votes against and one abstention.

4. Chair's Report (KF)

The Arts Society Bristol has had a good year, with stable and now increasing membership and financially has made a profit, which will be discussed by Viv our Treasurer.

The range of lecture topics has continued to be wide ranging and of high quality due to the exacting process by which new lecturers are appointed by head office. Particular highlights in the last year for me have been Charlie Waite on Landscape Photography and Chris Aslan Unravelling the Silk Road wearing Uzbekistani costume and with a table of wonderful textiles for us to look at. You will have a different selection, but it's often the unexpected that makes a lecture memorable.

In May we had a walk along the seafront at Clevedon followed by lunch and a talk about the restoration of the pier from one of the Trustees.

In September we went to Manchester, enjoying the art galleries, Cheetham's Library, a visit to the Hat Works in Stockport and a stately home on the way there and the way back. We are starting to plan the next UK tour for 2027.

Our Heritage Volunteers started a new project at Bristol Cathedral in September, which many of you saw displayed before the December lecture. We will continue our support for this and will keep you informed as it progresses.

Our support for local charities has continued and has become an important part of what we do. The profit made during the last financial year will enable us to be even more active in this area.

This year we have given grants to Art in Motion, which provides studio space for artists with learning difficulties. We supported them in setting up an exhibition at Spike Island during their open studios weekend. The group has now moved to The Arnolfini and we hope to continue our support.

Via a Patricia Fay Award grant of £2000 (two thousand pounds) we facilitated a project at St George's called Artists in Schools in which musicians presented music workshops in primary schools in less well-off area of Bristol.

We have maintained a link with Bridges for Communities and their Stitching Together groups who made the beautiful birds which were displayed on the Treefest Christmas tree a year ago. They are now making a quilt and we have given them a donation for materials. We also hope that Treefest will return again at the end of this year.

Last autumn we started sponsoring Teatime Tours at RWA, monthly hands-on art or gallery tour sessions for people with dementia and their carers. The involvement of an expert facilitator makes this a costly initiative and we have been glad to provide assistance for this.

The last year has also been one of change for The Arts Society head office after the complete replacement of the main Officers and the Board of Trustees the previous year. I attended the National AGM in London in September and it was good to find morale high and highly efficient leadership with a real desire to listen to the membership and promote the Arts Society to a wider audience, while also addressing common misconceptions. We all left feeling very cheerful about the future of the Society nationally.

Looking forward in Bristol, we have a coffee morning later this month to which all are welcome, a Study Day on Spanish Art in March and, in the autumn, our tour to Madrid and Toledo. A high number of bookings have already been received for the Study Day, but the spacious venue means a large audience can be comfortably accommodated.

None of this would happen without the dedicated team - your committee - who are full of ideas and then organise lecture topics and lecturers, trips and arts-related sponsorship, balance the books, record committee discussions, keep you informed every month, organise refreshments in the foyer as well as doing all the tasks that keep lecture evenings running smoothly. They are all sitting behind me and I thank them for making my job so interesting and a lot of fun.

Presentation to outgoing President, Susan Hampton

When I became Chair of The Arts Society Bristol, I became the custodian of three lever arch files of the collected minutes of committee meetings from 2005 to 2020. They make interesting reading and there are a few names that are there in every document. One prominent one is Susan Hampton, who has taken several roles, going from Vice Chair to Chair and then to President. She has been a staunch advocate for the Society, most recently in her role as President, and so we would like to give her a small thank you as well as Honorary Life Membership. I hope you will continue to enjoy the lectures for a long time to come.

Susan Hampton came forward to express her thanks and recounted that when she sought to first join 25 years ago, she was informed that there was a waiting list, unless she was prepared to become a committee member, in which case membership was immediate. This led to her first role, and she has been thrilled to continue from there.

Welcome to new President, Maureen Dickens

There is another name that appears in those meeting minutes, following Susan into each role, so it seems appropriate that she should now follow Susan and become our new President. And that is Maureen Dickens - the whole committee are delighted that you have accepted the role.

Maureen Dickens introduced herself to members and recalled her astonishment when first approached regarding the role. She thanked all involved and emphasised that she was looking forward to talking to members about the Society.

5. Election of committee members and Officers (KF)

Members were informed that the following were standing for election for their first Term of Office:

- Liz Davies as Membership Secretary
- Heather Fry as Programme Secretary

Proposed: Liz Floyd

Seconded: Lin Cobb

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

The following committee members were standing for re-election as Officers for their second Term of Office in the position specified:

- Kate Floyd as Chair
- Keira Stobie as Secretary

Proposed: Michael Edwards

Seconded: Debby Sandow

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

6. Treasurer's Report and appointment of External Examiner (VM)

A summary of the full report published on the Society's website for the specified period prior to the meeting was displayed for those in attendance.

For the year ended 30th June 2025, we incurred a profit of £2515 (two thousand five hundred and fifteen pounds) which was more than forecast and is largely because of the increase in membership fees, an increase in membership numbers and reduction in room hire costs.

Income

The total income was £15, 220 (fifteen thousand two hundred and twenty pounds). Most of this was subscriptions of £11, 015 (eleven thousand and fifteen pounds), together with guest donations of £1045 (one thousand and forty five pounds) and Gift Aid of £1716 (one thousand seven hundred and sixteen pounds). Thanks to all members who have been able to sign the forms necessary for this to be collected. All of these are up on the previous year because of the increase in subscription fees and strong uptake on membership and guest attendance through proactive publicity and promotion.

Income from Study Days balanced out the expenditure. However, the decision was made to cancel the Summer Party after deposits had been placed with the venue and these were

therefore lost. This cancellation was agreed by the membership because of falling support. Instead, drinks and nibbles were provided at Christmas and at the lecture in June. This resulted in a small loss for these events but feedback from attendees has been very positive.

Miscellaneous income was marginally higher than the previous year due to generous donations at the Christmas and summer drinks.

Expenditure

Costs totalled £12,705 (twelve thousand seven hundred and five pounds). Speakers' costs of £4354 (four thousand three hundred and fifty four pounds) remained consistent with the previous year, however, changes to the Redland High School timetable resulted in us using the PAC more than expected. Room charges for the PAC are significantly less than for the Redland Hall, resulting in a significant saving.

Another cost, essential to the provision of lectures, was The Arts Society affiliation fee of £3135 (three thousand one hundred and thirty five pounds) which saw an unexpected reduction on previous years. Unfortunately, fees will be increasing this year. As you know, our excellent lecturers are all sourced through The Arts Society, which also supplies online material and holds our database and insurance.

Study Days and Summer Party costs have been explained above.

We had no expenditure this year on equipment. Support costs therefore reduced despite a small increase in card reader charges.

Community and Young Arts awards totalled £933 (nine hundred and thirty three pounds). This included a £113 (one hundred and thirteen pound) donation to the Stitching Together Project, an organisation that is helping to break down cultural barriers by bringing refugees and locals together to learn stitching skills. They produced an amazing display for our tree at Treefest in St. Mary Redcliffe to which a donation of £80 (eighty pounds) was made. £740 (seven hundred and forty pounds) was donated to Art in Motion, a dynamic organisation that collaborates with learning-disabled and neurodivergent artists to create artwork. We also awarded grants totalling £2500 (two thousand five hundred pounds) from The Arts Society (The Marsh Award of £500 (five hundred pounds) for our Heritage Volunteers and £2000 (two thousand pounds) from the Patricia Fay Award which we gave to St George's for their Artists in Schools project). A planned donation to Bristol Museum and Art Gallery was deferred into this financial year and has supported a related exhibition as their bid for the Turner painting was unsuccessful in the summer.

Balance

We started the financial year on 1st July 2024 with reserves of £22,905 (twenty two thousand nine hundred and five pounds) and this has increased to £25,421 (twenty five thousand four hundred and twenty one pounds). This is higher than we would like and we will take steps to reduce this to a more acceptable level in the coming months. It means there will be no increase in subscription fees this year.

Forecast for 2025 – 2026

Membership numbers remain very positive at around 220, so our major source of income from subscriptions will remain consistent. However, we are seeing increases in costs for room hire, The Arts Society affiliation fee and for bank charges and financial software. Our Community and Young Arts awards will also increase in line with our Gift Aid donations. This leads to an estimated deficit of £2000 (two thousand pounds), which will reduce reserves to the more acceptable level of £23, 000 (twenty three thousand pounds).

Independent Examiner

I am extremely grateful to Edward Corrigan for having acted as our Independent Examiner for the year to 30th June 2025. He has kindly agreed to continue in this role for the year to 30th June 2026. This is an important function to check that the figures all appear to be reasonable. Although he is unfortunately unable to attend tonight, we extend our sincere thanks to him for his support.

No questions were raised by members.

The committee then recommended that the signed accounts for the year ended 30th June 2025 be adopted by the Society.

Proposed: Geoffrey Clements

Seconded: Jinx Newley

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

The committee also recommended that Edward Corrigan be appointed to the position of Independent Examiner for the year ending 30th June 2026.

Proposed: Lin Cobb

Seconded: Henry Alpass

Agreed unanimously with no votes against or abstentions.

Thanks were extended to VM for preparing and presenting these accounts.

7. AOB (KF)

No other resolutions were proposed in person at the meeting or prior to it via e mail. Therefore, it was assumed there was no other business and the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7. 30 p.m., with thanks extended to all those present for attending.

8. Date and time of 43rd Annual General Meeting (KF)

Tuesday 12th January 2027 at 7.00 p. m.