



Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting
held in the Performing Arts Centre, Redmaids' High School on Tuesday
January 14th 2020 at 7.30p.m.

Welcome by the President, Miss Susan Hampton.

'Good evening and welcome to the 36th AGM of the Arts Society Bristol. We have an encouraging number of new members and they are all most welcome this evening.

The new venue here at Redmaids' High School continues to be both convenient and popular for the majority of members and the opportunity to socialise with fellow members over coffee or wine before lectures has been appreciated. Thank you to Maureen Dickens who oversees these arrangements and organises a rota of helpers.

We have enjoyed another entertaining and fascinating programme of lectures on a diverse range of topics, thanks to the meticulous research and planning of Mary Alpass, Programme Secretary.

On behalf of the membership I express my warmest thanks to Henry, our superb Chairman, and to his committee for their commitment - the Society is in good heart and in good hands!'

The Chairman, Henry Alpass took over the meeting from Susan.

Apologies - Frances Brown Lin Cobb Marion Hill Katharine Jewell Bill and Christine Redmond

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on Monday 8th January 2019

(previously circulated)

Neither matters arising nor amendments had been received therefore the Minutes of the last meeting were accepted as read and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Allison Stevens and seconded by Amanda Bath, there were no objections recorded.

Chairman's Report

Henry gave the following report to the members



'Thank you Susan for your welcome and encouragement over the past twelve months.

Thank you all for your support for the society during the last year. We seem to have settled into this new venue, which offers the opportunity to socialise over a drink before the lecture.

Many members have spoken highly of the events. Mary thank you for organising a varied programme of high quality. I am pleased that Debby Sandow has agreed to step into your shoes with support from Jinx Newley and that you will have continuing involvement as Speakers' Secretary.

Please remember that this is your society and that feedback on all our events is vital. We report back to Guilford Street on every lecture.

Susan Merelie, our Young Arts Secretary, arranged two worthwhile projects for us to support. It was heart warming to appreciate the Young Carers' paintings which were displayed in the foyer of Southmead Hospital during the Summer. The Shakespeare Schools Festival at the Tobacco Factory demonstrated that even children with learning difficulties can perform complex plots with gusto and have a lot of fun in the process.

Allison Stevens and Karen Zold organised a thought provoking visit to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, where our skills of deduction were put to the test.

Frances and Richard Brown's trip to Dresden & Leipzig opened our eyes to the Northern Renaissance and showed the reconciliation achieved since the war and the uniting of formerly divided Germany.

In October we visited Bletchley Park, Cambridge, Ely, and Waddesdon. We learnt about stained glass and visited the Fitzwilliam Museum and Kettle's Yard amongst other delights. Our thanks to Stella Berkeley and Kate Painter for organising this busy trip.

I would also like to thank all who have taken on new responsibilities including Maureen Dickens & her band of drinks servers, those who register members & guests at lectures, and everyone on your committee. Kate Floyd has arranged a group to record Holy Trinity Church, Stapleton, where the initial visit is tomorrow. Please speak to her if you would like to participate. Debby Sandow's group of embroiderers continues to be much in demand at Bristol Cathedral.

Lin Standen, our Honorary Secretary, has given tireless service in keeping the committee, especially me, in order and organised with Mary a most enjoyable Summer Party. Thank you.



The society owes thanks to Lin Cobb for the rolling slides, IT support, updating our website and the regular newsletters, whilst still being Membership Secretary, a considerable administrative role in itself.

We all need to continue efforts to maintain a membership of at least 250, so please spread the word amongst friends. Combined with controlling the cost of speakers this should enable us to keep increases in subscription close to the rate of inflation, about which Stella Victory will be talking.

Please talk to one of us if you feel you might be able to join the committee. We meet four times a year and everyone seems to enjoy their role. Sadly Frances Brown, Stella Berkeley and Kate Painter will be retiring after many years arranging our trips. We need new Visits Secretaries now if we are to continue travelling, as arrangements need to be planned with the tour company 12 months in advance.

I am grateful to Stella Victory, our Honorary Treasurer, who not only keeps our finances in good order, but presents figures in a clearly understandable format. I now hand over to her for presentation of the accounts.'

Treasurers Report for the year ended 30th June 2019

Signed Accounts (copies attached)

'Before we look at the accounts, I would first like to record my thanks to Bill Redmond. He can't be here tonight but he has been our Independent Examiner for very many years, quietly acting behind the scenes to ensure the books were kept accurately, and giving helpful advice. He has decided to stand down from the role, but I, and the rest of the committee, are indebted to him for all his time and help over many years.

Slide 1 shows the signed accounts for the year ended 30 June 2019

-Income on the left, Expenditure on the right.

-Left hand column of figures is for 2018/19. Right hand column is for the previous year, by way of comparison.

2018/19 was a financially successful year. We had a substantial surplus of income over expenditure of £4,060, compared with £429 the previous year.

Our main source of income was membership fees. The number of members declined slightly between the years, but the combined income from subscriptions and guest fees for both the years was similar at just over £13,000.



The increase in profit was therefore mainly due to the heavy reduction in the cost of hiring the lecture halls and the associated lecture set-up costs. For 2018/19 at Redmaids these were just in excess of £2,700, whereas for the previous year they were over £6,000 for use of the University Chemistry lecture theatre.

The rest of the income and costs were, very broadly, similar between the years:

Gift Aid remained an important source of income.

The surplus on the Summer Parties, look a little high because the 2018 Summer Party was later than normal so two parties fell into the 2018/19 year and none in the previous year. There is usually a small surplus on Study Days, but in 2018/19 one of the Study Days had to be cancelled because of lack of interest, so the cancellation fees wiped out the surplus on the other Study Day, giving a small loss. There was a small surplus on the visits

ASB net expenditure on Young Arts was particularly low in 2018/19 because most of our costs were covered by very kind donations from Peter Stoppard and Susan Hampton, to whom we are very grateful.

Turning to the Balance Sheet at the bottom of the page, the members Funds were increased by the year's surplus of £4,060 and also by the writing back of a provision of £1,691 created in earlier years which was no longer needed. (It seems that at some time in the past there was some confusion in the billing for lecture rooms and money was set aside in case of an extra bill. We have now ceased to use the University lecture rooms, so the provision seems to be no longer necessary.) As at 30 June 2019 we therefore had very healthy Members Funds of £17,600, compared with £11,800 the previous year.

Forecast

Unfortunately the financial picture for the current year is not so rosy.

Slide 2 shows a Forecast for this current year ending 30 June 2020 (with a comparison column showing the actual figures for the previous year).

The main source of our income is of course still Subscriptions. However, our membership has declined significantly. The current number of members is 239, yielding income of £11,300, whereas in the previous year membership reached 264 by the summer. Guest donations are unreliable so we are unable to predict them accurately.

Gift Aid from HMRC is still an important element of our income, estimated at £1,500. However, with the decline in membership numbers, this is also declining.



At the same time as our income is falling, our anticipated costs are rising.

The main costs comprise:

- fees to lecturers (£4,600 – compared with £4,100 for the previous year)
- hire of our lecture hall plus set up costs (just over £3,000, compared with just over £2,700 last year), and
- Affiliation Fees which we pay to The Arts Society national body (£3,900, compared with under £3,700 previous year). They provide us with the roster of lecturers and a great deal of advice on compiling a suitable lecture programme.
- Other general costs also seem to be rising slightly, and we are unable to predict in advance any gains or losses on visits and Study Days, particularly as members are signing up for them more slowly than in the past.
- We would also like to continue to support Young Arts, and similar projects to help promote the Arts, which is part of our charitable purpose, so I have included a provision for that.

As a result of the decrease in membership numbers and increase in most other costs I am currently having to forecast a loss for the year 2019/20 of £580. Without Gift Aid, this loss would be considerably higher.

Obviously this is still just a forecast. We are still gaining new members, some of whom we are glad to see here today, however it is unlikely that membership numbers will rise so significantly by June that a profit is assured.

We can absorb a loss for 2019/20 because we made a surplus in the previous year and we have healthy reserves. However I feel it would be irresponsible not to anticipate a further decline in membership numbers for 2020/21 and a continued rise in costs.

We have held the subscription at £47 for 3 years, but I now recommend that we should raise the annual subscription for next season, 2020/21, to £50.

In addition I also recommend that the suggested Guest Donation per lecture for 2020/21 should be £8 rather than £6, on the basis that it ought to remain more beneficial to be a member than a guest.

Analysis of expenditure per member

In order to show more clearly why it is necessary to raise the subscription to £50, Slide 3 illustrates the approximate use of each member's annual subscription for the current year (and compares it with the previous year).

Of the £47 which each member currently pays annually:



-£16 goes to The Arts Society national body (compared with £14 the previous year). The Arts Society not only provides immense support on the choice of lectures but also provides us with admin support and help with running the society. It also supplies you with the quarterly Arts Society magazine.

-The cost of lecturers is estimated to be £19 per member (up from £16)

-The cost of the lecture hall is £13 (up from £10)

- Gift Aid from HMRC averages at £6 (slightly down)

- A small award to Young Arts projects has been included in the estimate

This leaves a net deficit of at least £2 per person.

If we raise the subscription to £50, I would hope we could hold it there for a couple of years at least, but we would have to keep it under review.

(Stella asked for comments and questions.)

Ruth Brown commented that a £10 guest fee was acceptable in London and other members concurred.)

Independent Examiner

ASB is not required by law to have an Independent Examiner because it is a relatively small charity, but the Independent Examiner provides the only detailed check on the Treasurer's competence, so is a very necessary role.

As Bill Redmond is unable to continue, Barry Wilkinson has very kindly offered to take on this role. He is a Chartered Accountant. He was Treasurer of Walton and Hershaw Arts Society for 5 years, and then became their Independent Examiner, before moving to Bristol a few years ago. He is therefore extremely well qualified to fulfil the role and I am grateful to him for offering to take it on.'

Stella recommended the signed accounts for the year ended 30 June 2019 be adopted by the society.

Proposed by Geoffery Clements and seconded by Simon Baker. There were no objections recorded

Stella recommended that Barry Wilkinson be appointed to the position of Independent Examiner for the year ending 30 June 2020.

Proposed by Ruth Baker and seconded by Jeremy Floyd. There were no objections recorded.

Stella thanked the membership for their support.



Susan Hampton took back control of the meeting from Henry

Election of Committee Members (Trustees)

The following members have offered themselves for e-election to the committee having completed their first term

Henry Alpass (Chairman until 2023) proposed by Karen Zold and seconded by Jane Bland

Lin Standen (Hon Secretary until 2023) proposed by Tig Jarrett and seconded by Elizabeth Floyd

Mary Alpass (Speakers' Secretary until 2024) proposed by Jane Bland and seconded by Stella Berkley

Debby Sandow (Programme Secretary and Heritage Volunteers until 2024) proposed by Geoffrey Clements and seconded by Jean Poole

All were re-elected with no objections recorded

The following members were coopted onto the committee during 2019 and offered themselves for election by the membership

Kate Floyd (Church Recording and Study Days) proposed by Ann Woodhead and seconded by Michael Edwards

Jinx Newley (Programme and general) proposed by Jill Dyson and seconded by Tig Jarrett

They were reelected with no objections recorded

Any Other Business

No other resolutions had been proposed and as there was no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.and thanked all those present for attending.

Date and time of the 37th Annual General Meeting

Tuesday January 12th 2021 7.30 pm, Redmaids' High School