

SPITHEAD ARTS SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE 27th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 28th November 2023 at 1845

Attendance:

The Chairman, Trevor Barker welcomed all those members attending and declared a quorum of members were present.

1. Apologies for Absence

Margaret Morpew

2. Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting held on 22nd November 2022.

The Minutes of the 26th AGM were agreed.

Proposer- Ian Gallett/Seconder- Tony Billings

3. Matters arising from the last Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report 2022

This year we have experienced another superb programme of lectures, starting with Linda Smith talking about how the "working classes" have been represented in art through to Peter Medhurst entertaining us with his talk on the nocturn in art and music. We learnt about such diverse subjects as the Cirque Medrano in Paris, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera in Mexico and the mosaics of Zeugma on the Euphrates. We also heard about street art in London, the graphic art of Macdonald Gill, the art and relationships of J A M Whistler, art and culture following the Black Death and David Nash's work with wood. I am still wondering about the fate of his wooden boulder bobbing around in the ocean somewhere! All of our lectures have been outstandingly interesting and entertaining, with a number of new speakers in addition to speakers we have already experienced.

Our programme for the coming year looks to be equally interesting, starting off with tonight's talk by John Ericson on the "Art and Stories behind Peculiar Pub Names" and covering a diverse range of subjects from The Dancing Faun to Grace Darling and Saving Lives at Sea, including talks on Art Behind Bars, Art and Architecture of Britain's Lidos, Playing with Light and the Art of Celebrity. Meanwhile, preparation of our 2025 programme is well underway.

Running our lecture programme this year has not been without some challenges due to the increasing use of the Main Hall by Bay House school, including changes at very short notice, and travel difficulties experienced by some of our speakers. This included the near cancellation of our October talk by Peter Medhurst which David Williams did such an outstanding job to turn around, with the end result that we all enjoyed an excellent talk, albeit on Zoom.

This year we also had a successful trip to visit Arundells, Edward Heath's house in Salisbury, in May which was very well attended and members had the opportunity to see the house and gardens and appreciate the extensive collection of antiques, furniture, and 20th century art.

Due to non-availability of the Main Hall we did not hold our usual Social Event this summer but do intend to hold one in January when we reconvene after Christmas and the New Year.

We also made our usual awards to Bay House A level art students this year, although staff sickness prevented them being awarded in person. I propose that we continue to allocate £120 for these awards for the coming year,

Our committee continues to work extremely hard on your behalf and I am grateful to all of them for their hard work and commitment during the past year. I have already mentioned the superb work that David does in setting up for every lecture and keeping things on track when last minute problems arise, but all the committee have their roles and work hard behind the scenes to keep the Society's programme going. This year sees the departure, after many years of outstanding work, of our programme manager Marie-Claude Barker and her able assistant Sue Halewood, who also is our chief editorial assistant correcting our grammar and spelling as required. A huge vote of thank is due to both these committee members. We have 2 excellent replacements Sara Heaysman, who has been helping Marie-Claude for some time and Helen Battersby. Both bring excellent skills and experience to the committee and I welcome them joining the team with the AGM's endorsement. I still intend standing down as chairman after 3 years but will continue as interim chair until my replacement is found. We continue to look for new members of the committee to bring in fresh ideas and experience, so please contact myself or any committee member if interested.

Going forward, we face several challenges. While we have welcomed a number of new members during the past year or two, and a significant number of guests to some of our talks, we have still seen an overall decline in membership. Increases in the fees charged by speakers, travel costs and administrative costs such as hall hire and insurance mean that existing membership and guest fees were deemed to be insufficient. Since we were already running a deficit, the committee decided that the fees would need to be increased for the coming year. It is still extremely important to attract more members since this is the only way to ensure our viability going forward and to keep the cost of membership down.

We are also challenged with the increased use of the Main Hall by Bay House School and the impending building works at the school. We have been investigating our options going forward and we are confident that we shall soon have a very suitable solution.

In summary, I would like to reflect on a highly successful past year with great thanks to all the committee and our members and look forward to an equally engaging and entertaining programme for 2024.

Trevor Barker
Chairman 2023

5. Treasurer's Report for year 2022-2023

We have again done very well to reduce our year's deficit to only £97 vs the budget deficit of £420 - a saving of over £320, despite being nearly £200 down on budgeted income from Subscriptions.

Half of this gain has come from the generosity of non-attendees not claiming back the cost of their trip to Arundells, Salisbury, plus a new profit of £44 from Michaelmas Fayre book sales. We also gained over £60 extra income from Guests. Savings of over £260 were made on Hall Hire, Administration & Donations.

Our year end bank + cash balance on 31 October 2023 is, therefore, £5,657.

Our proposed budget for 2024 still, unfortunately, shows a deficit - of just over £460. This reflects the predicted increase in lecture costs (+ over £400) & venue costs (+nearly £300). We know these costs pretty accurately, as all the lecturers are already booked & we have the latest increased venue costs of over 40%. This budget

shows the vital necessity, unfortunately, for our increased Membership & Guest prices.

Our bank balance at the end of our financial year 31 October 2024 is forecast to be £5,193. This is now somewhat down on our target of maintaining a cash balance of roughly our annual expenditure level, as this has risen to nearly £6,200.

However, the figures in green, top right, show that we only need another 12 members to break even!

So, we continue to need to make every effort to increase our membership in the next year, as there is only minimal opportunity to reduce our costs.

Tony Billings
Treasurer

The acceptance of the financial statement was proposed by David Williams and Seconded Ingrid Mathison and approved unanimously.

6. To appoint Ian Galett as the independent examiner of the SAFAS accounts for the year ending 31 October 2023.

Proposed– Nell Rimmington/ Seconded – Helen Battersby and the appointment was approved with no objection.

7. The Spithead Arts charity of the year.

The Committee proposed the sum of £120 (one hundred and twenty pounds) should continue to be given to the Art Department at Bay House School to be divided into prizes for promising art students.

Proposer: Ros Wheatcroft; Seconder: Tricia Coombes and the proposal was approved with no objection.

8. To elect Committee Members and Officers

The following Committee members were proposed to continue in post:

Officers

Chairman	Trevor Barker
Vice Chairman	Tricia Coombes
Treasurer	Tony Billings
Membership Secretary	Karen Loneragan

Committee

Lecture Organiser	Sarah Heaysman
Lecture Support/ Visits Organiser	Vacant
Publicity/PR	Ros Baxter
Schools Liaison	Vacant
Technical and Website Manager	David Williams
Secretary	Philippa Harrap

Proposer: Marie-Claude Barker; Seconder: Tricia Combes and approved with no objection.

9. Any Other Business: -

- The Chairman noted that there were vacant seats on the committee and requested members considered joining the management as we grapple with the disruptions of change of venue and declining membership.
- A presentation was made to retiring members of the committee.
- There were no further comments from the floor.

The meeting ended at 1910

12. Date of Next AGM - Tuesday 26th November 2024.