

Notes of the 66th meeting of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Chairs Meeting held at the Gurkha Museum on 2nd October 2023

Present:

Charles Harris	Area Chair (CAST)
Jo Ward	AS Trustee
Tim Nicholls	AS Finance and Resources Director
Pat Hindley	Hon. Treasurer incoming
Janet Pooley	Trails of Discovery Co-Ordinator
Simon Reynier	Website Manager
Lucy Tew	H&IOW Spring Series Organiser
Diana Heatly	Secretary
Jane Hutchence	Liaison

and 27 Chairs and representatives from 15 Hampshire and Isle of Wight Societies

Apologies:

Louise Biddis and Gilly Greenwood (Alresford), Vanessa McMahon (Alton), Ali Green (Education), Naila Webb (New Forest), Margaret Hind (Test Valley), Sarah Hill (Winchester).

NOTE OF THE MEETING

Welcome

- All
- Guest: Jo Ward AS Trustee
- Guest: Tim Nicholls AS Finance and Resources Director

1. **Minutes of the 65th Area Meeting held on March 6th, 2023.** Agreed.
Matters arising: None.

2. **CASTS update:**

Chair: Members from the recently closed Portsea Island Society found a lifeline with the neighbouring Portsdown Society.

Visits: Arlesford has been postponed to February, New Milton: 9th November and Romsey on 4th April 2024. On Oct 23rd Charles will be attending the Area Forum in West Surrey as Guest Speaker.

West Surrey is running a Free Lecture Offer to newcomers. Area can produce a flyer that you can distribute with your name on it. Collaborations and cluster groups provide more opportunities- there are currently many examples of common interest societies and cross-boundary societies working.

Charles shared his dialogue with Katherine Sutton AS Education Director, about the art content of present-day lectures. 'more like ITV than BBC4?' He welcomed comments from the floor. Jo spoke about the transition from the 'Fine Art' brief to a broader one, a few years ago.

The AS National Conference theme was 'Transform, Regenerate and Inspire.' Charles produced a video clip taster to 'Inspire' attendees. Recruitment is becoming a challenge; for 'Track 1' (current members) word of mouth is still the best form of advertising. We should not consider 'change for change's sake' - Leadership is key and generating excitement encourages participation. How to recruit the next generation? 'Track 2' is an innovative approach being researched by the Arts Society. After all, 'Art is all around you'. It's about appealing to 55–65-year-olds through social media, piquing their curiosity so that they join the Arts Society.

Pat Hindley: nothing to add to her report.

Simon Reynier: Airedale host 15 of the societies, Airedale provide data on the numbers of clicks on your website.

Please could societies send links to places of interest to Simon for the Area website.

Janet Pooley: reminder of the value of dementia trails.

Diana Heatly: Networking session planned for 27th November at the Gurkha Museum. i) Morning: Visits secretaries ii) Afternoon: Membership Secretaries and Treasurers with a shared light lunch.

3. **Presentations:**

The Jean Bolton Story: It has become something of a saga this year. The uptake for physical attendances at the lectures has been poor, so Ali Green has cancelled the venue, The Grand Café, and will Zoom instead. Charles invited the lecturers from the Series to come to this meeting to 'treat us to the inside story of their research' but none were available.

Ali Green took over the organisation of the series when the knowledgeable Jean Bolton died. Any surpluses generated are used by Area, or via grants to local societies, to support art related events or projects, in line with the aims of The Arts Society.

The series in November is '**Making the Invisible Visible**': 5 lectures written specifically for Southampton, on Zoom, cost £13.00 per lecture. There are 320 applicants, so far.

Simon spoke about the history of Jean Bolton, how her links made this unique lecture series available. How they generate income for H&IOW. A discussion followed about raising awareness/publicising the series. NB: The series is advertised on: **theartsocietyhantsiowarea.org.uk** website.

Proposal to relaunch flyer to each society, next year. Options for Southampton venues next year, discussed.

Spring Series: Lucy Tew, with support from Pat Hindley, is in the process of planning the Spring study days: one per month in February, March, April at St. Peter's Church Hall , Winchester. The theme is '**Nature in Art**':

February - Clare Ford-Wille has a Study Day called "The History of Trees in Art From Giotto to Klimt" which was so popular when given to the Greater London Area that it is being repeated to accommodate all those who to attend.

March - Steven Desmond has a Study Day entitled "An Image of Liberty: the Origins of the English Landscape Garden".

April - Hilary Guise has a Study Day called "Flowers in the Art of the Great Masters" but is going to tailor make the Day for us probably changing the last lecture to one called "Landscape and Emotion" which will take the audience away from familiar artists and themes into considering "our connection to Nature which holds us sane."

Jo Ward : The Arts Society needs to create a digital experience for a new generation that will make art mean more to more people.

Social media is something she is passionate about, it is not difficult to navigate and that it doesn't take up much time. Again, this is something that societies need to embrace to attract a new audience and to promote their talks and events. How about a social media rep on your committee?

Tim Nicholls: Discussion about the affiliation fee, prompted by a question from the floor. This led onto a conversation about Gift Aid and the implications if your society is a charity. Conversation about raising awareness : Jo Little (AS) runs a useful online workshop 'Promoting your Society'. Another suggestion was to ask lecturer to provide a sound byte video to put on your website to promote their upcoming lecture.

4. **Lunch**

5. **Society chairs 2 minutes Update:** Revisited membership numbers and recruitment tips for members and committee members. Consider a membership pack, member gives to a friend including a free lecture. Value of a survey of members: age group/how did you hear about us. Solutions for what to do if your lecturer cancels due to illness or train strike. Vanessa Rolfe available to work with young people on art projects. The value of encouraging the social element eg theatre trips or quiz. The value of Sum-Up readers and Instagram/Facebook. Coach costs expensive on visits consider self-driving. On S.I.D's, an evolving format change - the third lecture is interactive.

6. **Any Other Business**

Jo suggested considering sponsorship for lectures, for example dentist or opticians.

7. **Date of Next Area Meeting: Monday 4th March 2024** (please add to your diary).

