

Tuesday 30th November 2019

**At the Art Worker's Guild
6 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AT**

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from 9 members.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 20th November 2018

The minutes were accepted.

3. Presentation of the Annual Report (including Financial Report)

Sue Anstruther, Chairman, presented the Annual Report, giving a summary of the activities for the year. The Chairman highlighted the new Summer Series events in 2019 which were well received, and the use of a new venue at Friends House which members had given positive feedback on, and it was thought its excellent location and high quality more than compensated for its higher cost. Overall the Society had had a good year with a wide range of education topics which were well subscribed.

John Dunlop, Treasurer, presented the accounts for the 15th year. In 2018/19 the Society had generated a surplus of £13,000 and £10,700 of this had been distributed as donations to local arts-based organisations, and a small amount used to complete work on updating the Society's website. £3,200 was donated to Birkbeck to assist students with research costs, £3,000 to RIBA to rehouse and catalogue a collection of medals, £2,500 to Leighton House, and £2,000 to the Wallace Collection. The Treasurer noted that the Society had, over the last 7 to 8 years, given away its surplus funds totalling approximately £70,000. The Society has healthy reserves of £25,000 and has no need to increase these. However the Society needs to keep a balance between revenue from member subscriptions and covering the cost of items such as general administration, the lectures and 'The Review'. These had operated at

a loss for a time but were now moving towards a balance as the subscription charges increase. The surplus is generated by the paid for events such as courses and study days. These education events are competitively priced and the Society needs to be able to balance the risk of making a loss on an event against the price levied, and also to be able to risk trying new topics. Demand for courses in 2019/20 was good so far and members were encouraged to look at the website to see what events were coming up in the new year.

There were no questions about the accounts. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Jacqueline Leigh and seconded by David Culver.

4.Election of Officers

Edward Cox was standing again for Membership Secretary at the end of his three year term, and was nominated by Gwen Ovshinsky and seconded by Susan Nettle. No other candidate was proposed and he was elected nem con.

5.Election of Members

Four Committee members were standing for re-election, following the end of their term of office, as follows:

Barrie MacDonald was proposed by Peter Bryden and seconded by Norah Moss.

John Peacock was proposed by Susan Nettle and seconded by Peter Bryden.

Michael Pearson was proposed by Gwen Ovshinsky and seconded by Sue Anstruther.

Rae Richardson was proposed by Maggie Stockton and seconded by Jacqueline Leigh.

All these nominations were approved by the meeting.

6.Election of the Account Reviewer

The acceptance of Gary Dolphin as Account Reviewer was proposed by John Dunlop and agreed by the meeting.

7.Any Other Business

a) The Society is investigating new venues for our education events and Sue Anstruther encouraged members to let the Committee know of any suitable venues that were of good quality, affordable, catered and in a central location. In 2020 some events will take place at Lettsom House. And in 2020, the Society will offer a tour linked to a course or study day, and plans to do this each year.

b) The Chairman warmly thanked Jacqueline Leigh as it was her last year organising courses which she has done since the Society started offering them, and also thanked Moira Creak for the help she gave John Dunlop whilst he was both Chairman and Treasurer.

c) Sue Anstruther thanked all those members who volunteered and helped the Society in many ways. Their work was invaluable and the Chairman warmly encouraged other members to volunteer to assist the Society so that its education programme could continue; volunteers receive support and advice and their ideas and input are invaluable.

A question was asked about membership: this currently stands at about 530 members and has increased by about 25 people last year. The website and link to WebCollect has made it easier to join and we have close links to Birkbeck so some students join. But there is a limit to how large the Society can grow as there is not the capacity to put on an unlimited number of events.

The lack of diversity in the Society's membership in age and ethnicity was raised. The Chairman responded that the Committee was aware of this and would welcome greater diversity in membership: its close links with Birkbeck are likely to be helpful in addressing this and the Society's values are to be welcoming and open. However, most members of the Society are newly retired and so free to attend daytime events. The Society is a small specialist interest society, not a public institution like the National Gallery or Tate Gallery. In response to a suggestion that the Society could offer courses in non-western art, the Chairman confirmed that a course in non-western art was offered each year, for example, Japanese art, Mughal art.

Michael Pearson has organised the Society's tours for many years and is well known to members; sadly his wife has become unwell and Sue Anstruther will pass on to them the good wishes of the membership for a full recovery.

The meeting closed at 2.30.