



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at Trinity Theatre

18th November 2024 at 10.30am

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2023 (attached)
2. To receive and approve the Chair's report for 2023-24 (attached)
3. To receive and approve the Annual Accounts for 2023-24 (attached)
4. To elect Officers and Committee Members for 2024-25 (attached)
5. To elect the Financial Examiner of the Accounts for 2024-25

It is proposed that David R Ralph be appointed as Financial Examiner of the Accounts for 2024-25

The Arts Society Royal Tunbridge Wells

Minutes of the

2023 AGM at the Trinity Theatre

Held at 10:30am on Monday 13 November 2023

Present: The Chair and Committee together with 124 members.

Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Andrew Jenner and Christopher Weller.

Welcome: MaryAnne Lockie welcomed everybody to the Annual General Meeting.

Minutes: It was noted that Christopher Weller had incorrectly been referred to as "Christopher Weather" in the Minutes. Subject to this amendment, MaryAnne Lockie asked that the Society accept the minutes of the 2022 AGM.

Proposed by Ann Browning and seconded by Anna Astin. Motion carried.

The Chair's Report was presented by MaryAnne Lockie, the full version of which had been circulated to members beforehand.

I am delighted to present the Chair's report which covers the year August 2022 to July 2023.

It was wonderful to welcome our members, old and new, back to Trinity last October for our first lecture – September's meeting having been cancelled for the late Queen's funeral. Our numbers were still lower than in the past but they slowly climbed as the season went on. We were very fortunate. Several societies found that they had to curtail their activities or, by the end of the season, decide to begin the process of closing down. We are feeling very privileged to have avoided this situation and my first of many "thank yous" go to you, our members, for your loyalty.

We enjoyed a wonderful range of lectures, covering not only our nearby town of Crowborough but also the wider world – China, Russia, France and America among them. All of our lecturers, as you know, are experts in their fields and we try to select a wide range of topics that might not be easily accessed via other sources. We should, perhaps, give a big thank you to Simon Inglis – a lecturer first booked for a date which had to be cancelled due to storms and floods. The "re-match" was then cancelled because the date happened to clash with the aforementioned funeral – but we got to it in September of this year. It says a lot about the commitment of our lecturers and the efforts made to make sure you get the experience that you deserve.

Of course, one of our greatest assets is our venue – and, within that, the Trinity staff. I must thank them for their consistent patience, skill, flexibility and calmness. Our meetings are hugely enhanced by both the venue and the team.

Beyond the lectures in the theatre, we enjoyed some other activities. One of the unexpected benefits of COVID necessitating Zoom lectures was the addition of an extra lecture to our programme. As you will be aware, Trinity produces a very popular and successful pantomime every Christmastime. The length of preparation has meant that in the past, we have not been able to have a lecture in December. However, with our continuing Zoom licence, we decided to offer a seasonal lecture for you to enjoy in the comfort of your own home. This proved to be very successful. Lots of members met us online and invited friends to join them. I am delighted to announce that we intend to make this a permanent item and you will have seen it featured in your programme as a December lecture.

Of course, our activities last season were not confined purely to lectures. We enjoyed two fascinating Study Days. The first, on Australian art, proved to be an eye opener for us all. Paul Chapman took us through its history and development, highlighted the most significant artists and explained various genres. The second day saw the return of Chris Aslan, who had previously given us such a fascinating lecture. This time, he had the luxury of three lectures about life and work in central Asia. He has lived and worked in the area for a long time, so the facts were accompanied by many personal anecdotes which complemented the factual content. If you have never been to a Study Day, you might like to come to our next one in the spring. These occasions are more than "just talks" as they offer a chance to meet other members, chat with Committee members and enjoy morning coffee and an excellent lunch. Our Study Day secretary, Marilyn Glover, works very hard to make the day a success. We appreciate that for some of our members, cost and travel concerns make it difficult to attend. As of next season (2024-25), we will be offering one "live" study day and the second on Zoom in the hope of enabling more members to join in.

Having covered autumn and spring with these activities, March and June saw several groups making their way to the British Library to see the work of the restoration department. Members were able to enjoy a fascinating trip behind the scenes, explore the library and either return home straight away or take the opportunity to stay on and enjoy some more time in London.

Our summer – and the year – ended with a delicious afternoon tea at the High Rocks hotel. The food was delicious, fizz was available to those who wanted it and we enjoyed some wonderful flute music from a young woman who had just left Oxford with a first in music.

At the beginning of last season, we carried out a members' survey at the lecture and received many useful responses about various aspects of our offer to our members, including recruitment and retention, publicity, communications and our online offerings. To supplement the survey, we set up a Consultation Group to discuss issues in greater details. So, my thanks go to Anthea Hall, Julia Stitt, Liz Harding, Linda Lewis and Suzy Nixon for their input. The Committee has made progress on many of the issues raised.

As the season came to an end, we said "goodbye" to one of our committee members – Anna Astin. She has been a member for many years and for some of those was an energetic and popular Chairman. She remains a member and has joined our team of helpers – so we will still be able to benefit from her experience and energy. For

anyone who feels that they would like to be more involved with the running of the Society but does not want the commitment of Committee membership – may I commend the team of helpers. It is simply a pool of people who are happy to help with a range of events and admin items and can be called on from time to time. If this interests you, please have a word with any members of the Committee or get in touch with me and we can have a chat.

I would like to end my report with thanks to my Committee colleagues for all their hard work and commitment to the Society.

Marilyn Glover has already been mentioned in her role as Study Day Secretary – a huge task but one which she carries out with great calm and humour. She is also one of our Programme Secretaries, choosing who is going to be speaking to us and on what topic.

Jenny Brennan works alongside Marilyn on the programme – a job that is the equivalent of working in a sweet shop. Like Marilyn, however, she has another role – that of Visits Secretary. She it was who organised all our recent trips and she is already thinking about the next ones.

Helen Sanders is the person who is responsible for dealing with all the administration connected with your membership and keeping you up to date with any changes. We are hugely grateful for her dedication to a very essential job.

Diane Reay is now responsible for emailed communication with all our members. She also leads on our publicity and setting up connections with local businesses and societies and has already made some significant links with local businesses to promote our Society.

Jaco Rowlands is our secretary. She takes the minutes of our meetings and miraculously transforms them into clear and succinct records of our discussion and decisions. I am hugely grateful to her for the clarity and promptness of her reports.

Liz Harding is a new member of the team having joined us in the latter part of last year. At present she is exploring all the aspects of our work and deciding in which area she would like to work. We are very pleased to have her in the team and are looking forward to working with her as she decides on the role she would like to play.

Sandy Steeves, like Liz, is fairly new to us. She has been a member of another Society and so is very helpful in commenting on how things operate elsewhere. She, too, has been observing our meetings and activities and will very soon be choosing the area in which she would like to serve.

The final thank you must go to Jane Jenner who stood down as Chair in July. She really got us going again after COVID. Some of you may not be aware that, along with that role, she was also the Treasurer and we are very grateful that she continues in that role this season.

As a Committee, we are very excited to be planning the best range of experiences that we can for you. We thank you for your loyalty and look forward to another interesting, sociable and friendly season.

We all thank you for your continued support.

MaryAnne Lockie

Chair

MaryAnne Lockie requested that the Society receive the Chair's report for 2022 - 2023.

Proposed by Sandra Hitching and seconded by Andrea Bromley. Motion carried.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Jane Jenner, who displayed the Annual Accounts on the screen and discussed TASRTW's last year from a financial perspective.

The attached accounts are for the 12-month period from 1st August 2022 to 31st July 2023.

This year, we have continued with the "cash" basis for preparing the accounts – i.e. looking only at the money coming in and the money going out. This simple form of accounts is recommended for organisations such as ours by the Association of Charity Independent Advisers. Although we are not a registered charity, and not therefore obliged to following the Charity Commissioner's advice, it is nevertheless good practice to do so. As we have an income under £250,000, we can opt to produce our accounts in the simpler Receipts & Payments format and also opt to have them Independently Examined by someone the Association deems is competent to do so. The Charity Commission encourage the use of both of these as an aid to making life easier for volunteer Trustees and Trustees.

Let us first look at the Income and Expenditure Account

The Society's main source of income is from membership subscriptions and as you can see, we received a much lower amount during the year. This is because we had received the bulk of the year's membership subscriptions in the previous financial year. While this is not an issue in itself, it can put pressure on our cash flow. The Committee mitigated this by opting to pay our annual affiliation fee to The Arts Society in monthly instalments, rather than making one large payment in January. We remain financially strong but the Committee monitors our cash flow very carefully and we have to ensure that all the additional events we organise are not run at a loss.

We were pleased to make small surpluses on both our British Library visits and our Afternoon Tea but disappointed to make a small loss on our Study Days. The Committee has now agreed that in future, one of our Study Days each year will be held as an online event as feedback has indicated that the half-term break (when the Langton Green Village Hall is available) is not always convenient for our members. Providing a virtual Study Day offers greater flexibility as to dates and should therefore encourage greater participation. It also means a lower cost both for the Society and for those attending.

With regard to our expenditure for the year, this shows a reduction by the year end. I wish I could claim credit for this but the main reason was that Trinity Theatre did not invoice us during the year for the final three months of the venue hire cost. And, as I mentioned earlier, we are now paying our affiliation fee by monthly instalments so the Society had only paid 70% of our full fee by the year end. The amount of grant funding provided also reduced. This was a deliberate decision to reduce the amount given due to our reduced income but we intend to donate £500 in the coming year to worthy local causes.

Looking at the outcome for this year, we made a reasonable surplus.

I would like to assure members that the Committee continues to keep a close eye on our income and expenditure at our monthly meetings, monitoring our costs against an agreed budget.

Turning now to the Balance Sheet:

Cash assets, at £20,197 are at a very satisfactory level. As in previous years, it is worth noting that the loan to the Arts Society Patricia Fay Memorial Fund, which stands at £6,000, is returnable to us immediately upon request. The fund itself is used for arts grants generally and we feel at present that it is a useful employment of our surplus funds.

Our overall position means that our finances remain in good shape and we will continue to keep a close eye on our income and expenditure over the coming year.

Thank you very much.

*Jane Jenner
Honorary Treasurer*

Anna Astin asked for further information about the Society's grant giving of £250. Jane Jenner explained that this represented a donation to the Amelia as a contribution to their costume restoration work. The Society's grant giving was less in the year due to the Committee's concerns about cash flow but that this would be reviewed in the coming year.

Jane Jenner requested that the Society receive and approve the Annual Accounts for 2022 – 2023.

Proposed by Daphne Darby and seconded by Linda Lewis. Motion carried.

Independent Financial Advisor: Jane Jenner requested that David R Ralph be appointed as Financial Examiner of the Accounts for 2023-2024.

Proposed by Sandra Hitching and seconded by Ann Browning. Motion carried.

The Committee for 2023-2024 will consist of MaryAnne Lockie (Chair), Jenny Brennan (Visits Secretary/Programme Secretary), Marilyn Glover (Study Day Organiser/Programme Secretary), Elizabeth Harding, Diane Reay (Communications Officer), Jaco Rowlands (Secretary), Helen Sanders (Membership Secretary) and Sandra Steeves.

MaryAnne Lockie requested that the Society elect the above Officers and Committee members.

Proposed by Katrina Turner and seconded by Jane Coward. Motion carried.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.45 am.



Chair's Report 2023 – 24

It is a pleasure and a privilege to present the Chair's report which covers the financial year from August 2023 to July 2024.

Although we had returned to our "base" in Trinity before the start of last season, last September's gathering really did feel as if we were coming home. It was a delight to be catching up with old friends returning, hearing the buzz in the foyer and taking our seats ready for what we knew would be an excellent experience – even if we only had a title and tiny hint of what we were about to hear.

Of the many "thank you's in this message – the first one goes to all of you for your support and your feedback.

The programme that we so enjoyed was the joint work of two members of the committee and the choices of two gave us a wonderful mixture of art forms, fashion, artists, lifestyles – and horses! Working on the programme is a wonderful task but has its moments of panic (will there be a train strike that day? He's late! Why won't the images come up properly?). The time and effort are always worth it. If we have enjoyed a lecture on a subject dear to our heart or something we had never heard of, the thanks and praise must go to Jenny and Marilyn. We are always looking for new topics and, while we are committed to using official Arts Society lecturers, we are always happy to receive suggestions on any topic that you feel would go down well.

Speaking of the lectures, you will probably realise that my fourth "thank you" is to the Trinity technical team – who *never* panic. Without their expertise, we would never be able to offer you all the experience that we all value so much. The only thing worse than trying to look at fuzzy images is an unreliable sound system and their work ensures our enjoyment.

I feel that, along with them, we should express our gratitude to the catering team. Without a doubt, the availability of coffee at the beginning of the morning (and sometimes lunch afterwards) makes our gathering not so much "a meeting" as "a lovely morning". Not many societies are able to enjoy such a pleasant arrangement. (That was my fifth "thank you!").

Moving on – as a committee, we are very happy with the way things have gone after the pandemic but, just as life has not completely gone back to what it was – neither have we.

One of the big "losses" for us has been the difficulty with the organisation of study days. They have been running for a number of years and the combination of a triple lecture with a lunch was a delightful way to spend a day. However, lives have changed and costs have risen and so for the moment, we are pausing this particular activity. The committee considered various ways to offer you, our loyal members some kind of substitute but all the ideas either fell short of the standard that we would wish to offer or would be unfeasibly expensive. We have not abandoned the idea, but for the moment we are exploring other options.

We have, in fact, already started the process by organising some trips near to Tunbridge Wells. Last September, a group of us went up to London to visit Leighton House, the home of the artist Frederic Leighton. Later in the year, we went to explore the area around St Pancras and Kings Cross. That might seem a bit odd – even if we were hoping to get a glimpse of Harry Potter – but the wealth of history in the area, together with some stunning new building and the development of a thriving community was both inspiring and fascinating. The visits were organised by Jenny (thank you number six) and she is already working on further visits – the first one of which is on 20th November and is a behind the scenes tour of the Royal Opera House.

As I approach the end of my report, I must give my thanks to those colleagues who retired at the end of the season. These are the people who worked so hard to keep everything working smoothly as we came back from the remote working that was Covid. So many thanks to Jane Jenner, who worked a double shift as chair and treasurer, Jaco Rowlands, the most meticulous secretary ever, and Diane Reay who worked unceasingly to improve our profile in the town and has started on the path to connecting with various businesses with whom we might engage. A special mention should be made of Helen Sanders - whose many years of service meant that she was a human directory of all rules and regulations and thereby our guide to all matters Arts Society.

We were very pleased and fortunate to welcome to our number, Jess Foster and Clare Smith. If you are puzzled by the fact that we have lost four and found two, it is because we have re-arranged the way we organise the way the committee is composed. You have the contact details on your programme leaflet. Please feel free to contact me or one of my colleagues if you have questions or problems.

Having thanked twelve sets of people for their work and loyalty, may I finish this message by wishing you a very interesting and enjoyable season.

MaryAnne Lockie
Chair



Treasurer's Report on the 2023-24 Accounts

Firstly, many thanks to Jane Jenner for her work as Treasurer through the year (and previous years!) and who has provided much of the detail included within this report.

The attached accounts are for the 12-month period from 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024.

This year, we have continued with the "cash" basis for preparing the accounts – i.e. looking only at the money coming in and the money going out. This simple form of accounts is recommended for organisations such as ours by the Association of Charity Independent Advisers. Although we are not a registered charity, and not therefore obliged to follow the Charity Commissioner's advice, it is nevertheless good practice to do so. As we have an income under £250,000, we can opt to produce our accounts in the simpler Receipts & Payments format and also opt to have them Independently Examined by someone the Association deems is competent to do so. The Charity Commission encourages the use of both of these as an aid to making life easier for Trustees.

Let us first look at the Income and Expenditure Account

The Society's main source of income is from membership subscriptions. The number of members remained stable year on year and we continue actively to encourage new members.

We were disappointed to make a loss on our visit to Leighton House but we did make a surplus on the walk in the King's Cross area. Overall, therefore, we made only a small loss on the two visits. More significantly, we made a greater loss on both our Study Days during the year. As members are aware, the Committee has now agreed that we will not organise Study Days for the time being but focus on visits, both in person and online, which can more easily break even or make a small surplus. The decision regarding Study Days will be kept under review but with increasing venue, catering and lecturer costs, we need to be certain that the Study Days garner sufficient interest from members before they go ahead.

The Committee was very pleased to see the increased income from guests attending our lectures. Guests are always welcome and pay a fee on the day of the meeting. It is testament to the quality and variety of our lecture programme that such additional interest is shown. The Committee would encourage all members to bring family and friends to lectures as guests, not least because guests often go on to become members.

Another pleasing item to note is the income from sponsorship from Maddisons, a local estate agent who, following sterling work by Diane Reay, our former Communications Officer, generously agreed to sponsor the production of our programme leaflet for 2024-25. We are very grateful to them.

With regard to our expenditure for the year, members will note that this is significantly higher overall than last year. The reason for this is that Trinity Theatre did not invoice us in the last financial year for the final three months of the venue hire cost. This therefore made the cost of the venue hire artificially low in 2022-23 and artificially high in 2023-24.

Another anomaly is The Arts Society's annual fee. Last year, we started to pay this by monthly instalments and so the amount actually spent was lower as only seven months' worth of the fee was paid. The 2023-24 figure shows the total amount spent for one year. It is not evident from the accounts, but the national affiliation fee has been reduced by The Arts Society in recent years.

Members will note that lecturer fees continue to increase. In putting the programme of lectures together, our Programme Secretary, Marilyn Glover, balances the subject matter with the lecturer fees. On average, the fee per in-person lecture is £360 plus expenses.

We continue to use the wonderful venue and facilities that Trinity Theatre offers and this also comes at an increasing cost.

While our administration costs have reduced, our governance costs have increased. This relates to Committee expenses and most of the amount of £278 is a refund for the purchase of a card payment reader. We continue to encourage online transfers wherever possible but the card reader provides us with the ability to take payments by card (for a small fee) if necessary.

Looking at the outcome for this year, we made a loss of just over £4,000. As I mentioned earlier, some expenditure was artificially high this year and the Committee have taken very seriously the impact of reduced membership since 2020 (by over 100) and increased costs.

While our overall position means that our finances remain in good shape, especially compared to other Societies (some of which have had to close), the Committee felt that our cash flow would be strengthened by the refund of the £6,000 loan made to The Arts Society some years ago for their Patricia Fay Memorial Fund. This refund was received in May 2024.

The Committee will be seeking to secure further sponsorship for our programme production in the current year.

For the year 2024-25, we are budgeting to make a loss. The last increase to our membership subscription fee was in 2022-2023. To enable the Committee to continue to offer a quality programme of lectures in this fantastic building, it is anticipated that the membership fee will increase for 2025-2026. We will endeavour to keep any increase as reasonable as possible to enable us to continue operating as a Society.

I would like to assure members that the Committee continues to keep a close eye on our income and expenditure at our monthly meetings, monitoring our costs against an agreed budget.

Turning now to the Balance Sheet:

Cash assets at £16,077 have reduced since last year due to the deficit incurred. The level of cash held at the year end is at a high watermark for the year as this includes receipt of most of the membership subscriptions for 2024-25. With the projected expenditure for the year, our cash balance remains at a satisfactory level.

Thank you very much.

Jess Foster
Treasurer

18th November 2024

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JULY 2024

	2023-24 £	2022-23 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Deposit Account	14,891	6,077
Current Account	1,186	8,120
Loan to The Arts Society: Patricia Fay Memorial Fund	0	6,000
	<u>16,077</u>	<u>20,197</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	0	0
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>16,077</u>	<u>20,197</u>
ACCUMULATION FUND		
Net Assets Brought Forward	20,197	18,750
Surplus/(shortfall) on current year	<u>-4,120</u>	<u>1,447</u>
	<u>16,077</u>	<u>20,197</u>

M. A. Lockie MaryAnne Lockie, Chair

J. Foster Jess Foster, Treasurer

I confirm that I have independently reviewed the accounts & balance sheet of The Arts Society Royal Tunbridge Wells against the accounting records provided and I am satisfied as to their accuracy.

D R Ralph D R Ralph FCIE, Financial Examiner

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024

		2023-24	2022-23
	£	£	£
GROSS INCOME (less Direct Expenditure)			
Annual Subscriptions			
Total subscriptions		11,458	11,090
Visits			
Income	601		
Expenditure	646		
Loss		-45	310
Study Days			
Income	2,540		
Expenditure	3,435		
Loss		-895	-484
Afternoon tea 2023			
Income			
Expenditure			
Surplus			130
Guests' Fees		408	195
Other Income			
Donation		20	0
Raffle		151	335
Sponsorship		300	0
Payments made in error/refund		0	22
Bank interest		114	39
		<u>11,511</u>	<u>11,637</u>
RUNNING COSTS			
Speakers & Meeting Expenses		3,813	3,427
Trinity Theatre Hire		6,635	2,829
Administration Costs		635	972
The Arts Society Annual Fee		3,990	2,534
Arts Grants		250	250
Refund of payments made in error		30	130
Governance Costs		278	48
		<u>15,631</u>	<u>10,190</u>
Surplus/(shortfall) on the Year		<u>-4,120</u>	<u>1,447</u>



ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
2024-25

MaryAnne Lockie	Chair
Jess Foster	Treasurer
Clare Smith	Secretary
Elizabeth Harding	Membership Secretary
Marilyn Glover	Programme Secretary
Jenny Brennan	Visits Secretary
Sandra Steeves	Website Officer
Vacant	Communications Officer