



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held at Trinity Theatre
17 November 2025 at 10.30 am

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2024 (attached)
2. To receive and approve the Co Chair's report for 2024-25 (attached)
3. To receive and approve the Annual Accounts for 2024-25 (attached)
4. To elect Officers and Committee Members for 2025-26 (attached)
5. To elect the Financial Examiner of the Accounts for 2025-26

It is proposed that David R Ralph be appointed as Financial Examiner of the Accounts for 2025-26

The Arts Society Royal Tunbridge Wells

Minutes of the

2024 AGM at the Trinity Theatre

Held at 10:30am on Monday 18 November 2024

Present: The Chair and Committee together with 142 members.

Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Terri Westerdale, Guy Kent, Annabelle Hayward, Carole Minkey, Eleanor Morgan and Andrew Jenner.

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

Minutes: MaryAnne Lockie asked that the Society accept the minutes of the 2023 AGM. Proposed by Sandra Hitching and seconded by Sue Brimlow. Motion carried.

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

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

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Jess Foster (the full version of which had been circulated to members beforehand), who displayed the Annual Accounts on the screen and discussed the Society's financial year to 31st July 2024.

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*

Jess Foster requested that the Society receive and approve the Annual Accounts for 2023 – 2024. Proposed by Andrea Bromley and seconded by Jean Bicknell. Motion carried.

Motion carried. **The Committee for 2024-2025** will consist of MaryAnne Lockie (Chair), Jess Foster (Treasurer), Clare Smith (Secretary), Elizabeth Harding (Membership Secretary), Marilyn Glover (Programme Secretary), Jenny Brennan (Visits Secretary) and Sandra Steeves (Website Officer).

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

Proposed by Jane Scholes and seconded by Roxana Roman. Motion carried.

Independent Financial Advisor: MaryAnne Lockie requested that David R Ralph be appointed as Financial Examiner of the Accounts for 2024-2025.

Proposed by Ian Turner and seconded by Lois Thomas. Motion carried.

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

CO CHAIRS REPORT 2024-2025

Good morning everyone. My name is Sandra Steeves and it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the Annual General Meeting of The Arts Society Royal Tunbridge Wells.

By now you should all have had a chance to look at the papers for today's AGM. So firstly, I would like to ask that the Society accept the minutes of the 2024 AGM. Can I have a proposer and a seconder please. Motion carried. Thank you.

Now, as co-opted co chairs, Liz Harding and I are very pleased to present to you the Chair's Report for 2024 to 2025. It's been another busy and somewhat challenging year for the Society and our Committee has seen many changes. We must thank our outgoing committee members:

MaryAnn Lockie outgoing chair, who was supported by Jess Foster, Marilyn Glover and Jenny Brennan. Thank you all.

And now I'd like to introduce you to our current committee members:

Clare Smith is our Secretary, Jane Lintern is our Programme Secretary, Terri Westerdale is our Treasurer and as well as co-chair, Elizabeth Harding is our Membership Secretary. And I am still Website & Facebook manager.

So you will now have realised that, on the basis that two heads are better than one, Liz and I have been co-opted as Co-Chairs.

We are also very lucky to have a group we call "The Friends of TASRTW" – some past committee members and old friends of the Society whom we can call on to help when necessary. We are very grateful for your help. Anyone who would like to join this group, please just let us know.

On the community front, we were pleased to provide an Arts Society Community Grant to St Peter's School in Hawkenbury. This money contributed towards their Arts Week 2025, helping to ensure access to all, including financially disadvantaged pupils.

We've also been asked if we would like to collaborate with The Arts Society Pantiles group who, together with the Rotary Club, have been active in supporting arts exhibitions for Skinners Academy and St Gregory's school. Whilst we felt that we may not yet be in a position to contribute financially, we are more than happy to support this Young Arts initiative.

Let's talk about our lectures. So far in 2025 we've enjoyed this wide range of subjects:

Charles Dickens (in Bertie Pearce's inimitable style)

John Craxton
The Jurassic World of Mary Anning
Fashion of the 1930s and Edward Molyneux
Awakening The Royal Pavilion
Painting Kent from Knole to Margate
George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham "the handsomest man in Europe"
and most recently The De Beers Diamond cartel

Our programmes have to be researched and the lecturers booked at least one year in advance so thank you to our inspired Programme Secretaries.

We would also like to thank Maddisons Residential for another year of sponsorship of our programme; their support has been very much appreciated.

Visits. Our tour to the Royal Opera House in November 2024 was very popular and oversubscribed, so a second visit was organised in March 2025. In September we took a group around the Spitalfields area which was an insight into a part of London that many of us had not known before. As we speak, arrangements are in place for a private tour of Somerset House's historical highlights at the beginning of December. This tour sold out immediately and we do apologise to any disappointed members who wanted to join. We will try to run the tour again in the spring.

On membership. We were sad to see that, mainly as a result of Covid, many branches around the country found that they were no longer viable and were forced to close. However, despite these difficult times, *our* numbers increased from 226 in October 2024 to 260 paid up members as of today and we are still growing, not least because we are welcoming people from Tonbridge, the Pantiles and as far afield as Battle.

We held a new members coffee morning in October and must warmly thank Anna Astin for hosting us. As we continue to increase our membership, we will be holding newcomers' coffee mornings again next year – if Anna will have us!

We know that it can sometimes be a little intimidating to walk into a place where everyone seems to know each other or to be keeping a place for a friend, so we've brought back the new members table in the café. Whether you are new to the Society or just coming to the lecture on your own, you can meet kindred spirits here.

We hope you have all noticed our smart banner which goes up the week before our monthly lectures and attracts passers-by who never knew we were here! We continue to distribute our programme and posters wherever we can around Tunbridge Wells and surrounding villages. Please do take a few yourselves to pass on to friends. And our Facebook page is getting more "likes" and comments every month. Do take a look.

We've also recently introduced a raffle, which we plan to run at alternate lectures. To support this raffle, our prizes will vary; sometimes our lecturer will donate a copy of a book on their specialist subject. And locally we are very grateful for the ongoing donation of prizes from Trinity Theatre, Cook and The Secret Cellar. The proceeds from these raffles will be specifically allocated to supporting community projects.

Our thanks go to the Trinity team - technical, front of house and the hardworking café staff who somehow manage to serve everyone in the tea and coffee queue.

As you can see we are a small group and Liz and I are so grateful because without your help none of this would be possible. Thank you ladies.

And now we would like to give a special thanks to our outgoing Chair, MaryAnne Lockie. MaryAnne has been on the committee of The Arts Society for many years and as chair, steered us through some tricky times with calmness and optimism, and we really do appreciate all her work. Please come up, MaryAnne. [Liz presents flowers]

And of course, our thanks to you, our members, for your continued support and enthusiasm for what we do. We need your feedback to let us know what works and what doesn't, so please don't hesitate to speak to any one of us. And if you enjoy the Arts Society, do spread the word.

Thank you.

Sandra Steeves
17 November 2025

Treasurer's Report on the 2024-25 Accounts

Jess Foster was the Treasurer for the 2024-25 financial year and she has provided the numbers for the 12 month period from 1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025, which have been reviewed by an independent Financial Examiner.

The Society's income relies principally on our membership fees, which increased significantly by £1,950 from the preceding year. This is the result of increased membership numbers, reversing the declining membership of prior years. A profit of £386 was made on Visits compared to a loss in the preceding year. There were also small increases in fees for the number of guests attending lectures, sponsorship income and bank interest.

Running costs were £13,250 in the year and were broadly as expected, resulting in the accounts showing a profit of £1,549 for the year. Apart from the hire of this hall, our two principal expenses are fees for the Lecturers and a per capita annual fee to our parent organisation, both of which were slightly lower than the preceding year.

The year ahead: At the end of July, we had £17,626 in the bank of which £10,780 represents advance membership fees for the year ahead. As such, the Society's real cash buffer is closer to £6,846.

The budget for 2025-26 is to make a small profit.

Thank you very much.

Terri Westerdale

Treasurer

17th November 2025

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

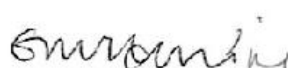
1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025

	2024-25	2023-24
	£	£
GROSS INCOME (less Direct Expenditure)		
Annual Subscriptions		
Total subscriptions	13,408	11,458
Visits		
Income	1,200	
Expenditure	(814)	
	386	(45)
Study Days	0	(895)
Arts Grant		
Income	250	
Expenditure	(250)	
	0	(250)
Other Income		
Guests' Fees	478	408
Donation	0	20
Raffle	0	151
Sponsorship	394	300
Bank interest	133	114
	<u>14,799</u>	<u>11,261</u>
RUNNING COSTS		
Speakers & Meeting Expenses	3,695	3,813
Trinity Theatre Hire	4,995	6,635
Administration Costs	846	635
The Arts Society Annual Fee	3,580	3,990
Refund of payments made in error	0	30
Governance Costs	134	278
	<u>13,250</u>	<u>15,381</u>
Surplus/(shortfall) on the Year	<u>1,549</u>	<u>(4,120)</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 JULY 2025

	2024-25 £	2023-24 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Deposit Account	15,650	14,891
Current Account	1,976	1,186
	<u>17,626</u>	<u>16,077</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	0	0
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>17,626</u>	<u>16,077</u>
ACCUMULATION FUND		
Net Assets Brought Forward	16,077	20,197
Surplus/(shortfall) on current year	1,549	(4,120)
	<u>17,626</u>	<u>16,077</u>


Sandra Steeves, Co-Chair


Elizabeth Harding, Co-Chair


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

27th August 2025

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2025-2026

Elizabeth Harding	Co Chair
Sandra Steeves	Co Chair
Terri Westerdale	Treasurer
Clare Smith	Secretary
Jane Lintern	Programme Secretary
Elizabeth Harding	Membership Secretary
Sandra Steeves	Website Manager