

**Minutes of the AGM of The Wylfe Valley Arts Society held in the Michael Herbert Hall on  
Wednesday 17 January 2024 immediately following the lecture**

**Apologies:** There were no apologies

**Minutes of the AGM held on 16 November 2022.** These were approved by Dr Derek O'Callaghan and seconded by Heather Bache

The Chairman, Clem Norrington-Davies welcomed everyone and handed over to the President Dr Derek O'Callaghan.

Derek said that the previous year had not been great for him but that he had found great comfort in the friendship of the Wylfe Valley AS. The Committee work hard to make sure that everyone is welcome and the lectures are outstanding on the whole. Clem as Chairman had done an amazing job and he would ask that the Chairman and Committee are approved for another year.

### **Chairman' Report**

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as your Chairman and would like to thank you all for your continued support for me and my very excellent committee. For this AGM I am going to concentrate on their achievements that provided us all with an excellent calendar of lectures, visits, tours and events.

Attendance over the year was fairly steady with average attendance around 139 and our membership starting to creep back up after a slight fall during the Covid years. Whilst our membership is relatively healthy (285) we cannot be complacent and must continue to try and recruit new members. We have tried to keep our membership fee to an acceptable level and will continue to try to do so despite the rising costs of hiring the hall, the speaker's fees and their travel expenses. Sarah Terry does an amazing job at keeping our members up to date and has put into place new systems which we hope will keep our stationary and postage costs down. You should by now have your membership renewal forms so if you haven't already, please fill them in and return them to Sarah ASAP.

Once again we have been entertained and informed by a wonderful choice of speakers chosen by Melissa Cordingly with help from myself and Jane Fawcus, all of whom sat through hours of 2 minute sample lectures. After a few hours our brains started to fry but I think you will all agree Melissa chose well and, as you can see from the screen, the majority of our lectures were rated excellent or outstanding. After 5 years of being our Programme Secretary, Melissa has decided to stand down from the committee at the end of 2024. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her publicly and to welcome Jane Stevens-Smith into the role. Jane will shadow Melissa throughout this year.

Jane Fawcus has done an incredible job this year keeping us all fortified every month with coffee and biscuits. She ran the most wonderful Coronation lunch with military precision and I think that all who attended will agree that it was a huge success. She also organises our Christmas and summer parties. Jane has run two excellent Special Interest Days this year, both of which were well attended, with a delicious lunch provided by Jane and the committee. Jane has asked me to remind you all to please remember your mugs for coffee as we do not keep a supply of mugs here and if the volunteers are washing up they sometimes miss the beginning of a lecture. Thank you Jane and all the lovely ladies on her coffee rota.

We had a variety of excellent visits run by Jane Wallace and Rosslyn O'Connor throughout 2023. On the whole the day visits have been well supported, despite the cost to our members, but we haven't always been able to fill a 40 seater bus. As you can imagine the cost of hiring a bus has gone up significantly this year and because we haven't always managed to fill each bus, we have reluctantly

taken the decision to reduce our day visits from 4 to 3 for 2024. We hope that by doing this we can run 3 full trips, thereby covering our costs.

Rosslyn also ran a tour to Cardiff which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The sun shone and we had a full and busy itinerary covering art, history, social history and politics. We also had time for a little retail therapy in Cardiff's wonderful shopping malls and we all discovered that Cardiff is full of wonderful eateries. Again, thank you Rosslyn and Jane for all your hard work.

This year our foreign tour is to Madrid and I'm pleased to say that the tour is full with a waiting list. We will be very busy but this year we have programmed in afternoons off cultural visits for people to have some time to just rest, or sit and people watch or enjoy some retail time. We also hope that we can enjoy tapas and sample the Cava.

As you are all aware this year, along with Nick Andrew of The Wyllye Valley Art Trail, we held a competition to find a young artist to sponsor for the event. The young artist chosen was Bella Chapman and she was delighted with her win of £500 which she used to frame and finish her paintings and sketches. Bella is extremely grateful for her sponsorship and has credited this promotion with her being successful in winning a post at The Tate. Pauline has been remarkable in taking on this new role and running with it. She has applied to The Arts Society for a grant from the Patricia Fay fund and has been successful. The money will be used on a new and exciting project for later this year and we will keep you informed. Thank you, Pauline.

Barbara Turvey has taken over the role of Heritage Volunteer and is currently leading a select team who are busy compiling records and taking photographs of the church of St Peter's Fugglestone. I think their work will probably be on hold during the winter months as the church is not lit or heated. We wish them all the best when they start again in the spring.

My thanks to Heather Bache who is a stalwart of the committee. She mans our heavy front door and greets people ensuring that all our members feel welcome. She also keeps our notice board up to date and is always a willing volunteer in helping others. Thank you, Heather.

Paul Borrelli has stepped into Robin Phayre's shoes and runs the tech team seamlessly. The sound problems now seem to be much improved and despite a lack of WiFi we continue to provide excellent support to the speakers slides and PowerPoint. Robin will be much missed by us all but continues to support us by continuing to provide the slides which are shown on our rolling screen and who has helped me put together this morning's report. Thank you Robin and welcome Paul, I hope the committee of ladies isn't too daunting for you.

I think everyone here will agree that Karen Martin has made significant changes to both our website and newsletters. It is so important that our members remain informed of our past and present activities and the website is now vibrant and completely up to date. If you ever have anything significant you wish to see on our website then Karen is the person to ask

Once again I wish to thank Gael Radclyffe who continues to run and organise our book stall. This year she has raised £340 which once again she has kindly agreed can be put towards our future Young Arts projects. I think you will all agree this is an incredible sum to achieve so thank you to Gael and thank you to you for all your donations and for reading so many books.

I cannot begin to tell you what a huge support Gill Roddis has been to me and the committee. She produces our agendas and minutes and is always at the end of the phone whenever I need advice. Her steady and unflappable manner have seen me through this first year and I have told her that she is not retiring until my time is up as Chairman. I would also like to include Chris Roddis in this vote of thanks as he has continued to support the tech team and to make sure that we all have a glass of wine available at the social gatherings.

Jane Stevens-Smith has now completed her second year as our Treasure but will give up at the end of the year when she will take over from Melissa.

Our accounts remain healthy although we do need to continue to find ways to use your money wisely and frugally. The accounts were audited by David Edmunds to whom we are extremely grateful. The accounts were published on our website from late December and some copies are available here today. I hope that you have all taken the opportunity to look at them and will approve them. We have had to increase our membership fee to £45 and our guest admission to £8 in the hopes that we will not have to dip into our funds. I have done some research and we are still charging considerably less than other branches in the area and I really feel that despite the increase we continue to offer good value for your money at £4.50 per lecture.

The accounts were approved by Christine Glover and seconded by Gay Edwards

Could I please have someone propose that the committee be re-elected. The Committee was approved by Kai Anderson and seconded by Heather Easton.

Finally and briefly I would just like to thank you for your support in my first year. I have tried to look after your best interests and have approached the Pembroke Estate yet again to chase up the installation of WiFi. They promised to look into this but recently I received an email to say that our request has been turned down. I have also discussed the parking problem with them and they promised to look into the possibility of us using the car park at the house. Again this has been refused so our parking problem will continue whilst the main car park in Salisbury is under alterations. Many commuters are using the car park in South Street to leave their cars whilst catching the bus into Salisbury. Sadly these commuters seem reluctant to use the park and ride facility. I would therefore ask you to consider using the park and ride or the Guild.

I have over this year attended two area meetings where we discuss ideas and the state of our societies and I am really pleased to say that whilst other branches are closing we stay relatively safe but as I said earlier we cannot be complacent and any help or ideas in recruiting new members would be gratefully received.

We are also always looking to find new people to come onto the committee and are actively looking for a new treasurer so if you would like to volunteer for this role please come and speak to me as soon as possible. I would also like to hear from you with ideas for social events or anything that you think would enhance your membership here. I also need to inform you that the caretaker here at the MHH has retired and that Estate is not planning to replace Pauline who has done the job for very many years. She has been a huge support to us over the years and has kept the building clean and tidy and every month she has put out all the tables and chairs prior to our meetings. We have passed on your thanks to her and bought her a leaving present as well as her usual Christmas present. We shall miss her friendly and helpful demeanour and of course the upshot of her departure is that from now on we shall have to set up the hall ourselves. Could I therefore ask you that if you arrive early enough that you help the committee put out the chairs and tables and let us know if you think the facilities are not as clean as you would like to find them. We intend to monitor this situation closely and along with the WiFi and parking problems we may eventually have to consider the option of moving permanently to somewhere else as we did during Covid.

That concludes my report and I now pass over to you on the floor for any questions or comments.

Christine Glover mentioned that Amesbury had good facilities for a Special Interest Day with excellent IT.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and the meeting closed at 1225..