**Minutes of Annual General Meeting 5th Oct. 2019 2.00 pm at The Beecroft Gallery**

**Present:** 28 Members *including Committee Members: Ray Andrews (Chair), Jayne Andrews, Sam Quilter, Teresa Cutmore, Sharon Henson, Vanessa Eastoe, Laurie Newton, Rose Hofman, Bob Holmshaw, Linda Vost*

**President Christine Dodson** opened the meeting by welcoming members and thanking them for coming. As President, she had been able to attend a few of the committee meetings and assured members that they were working very hard on their behalf. She was disappointed that over the past year it had been necessary to cancel the usual social functions, as these occasions were her opportunity to better get to know members, but she hoped the Christmas Lunch in December would be well supported.

Christine referred to Chairman Ray Andrews standing down after five years in office, together with his wife Jayne, who had been Secretary for the same number of years, and said that the Club were grateful for their effort and dedication despite health problems making this difficult at times. She said they had her best wishes for the future and those present joined her in thanking them.

**1**. **Apologies for Absence:** Bill Barr, John Thompson, Nick Martin, Margaret Jennings,

Pauline Grove, Jan Dickinson.

**2**. **Approval of Minutes of Meeting held 6th October 2018**

The Chairman said that the minutes of the last AGM had been available for members to view on the website and suggested that these be accepted as read. This was unanimously approved and the minutes duly signed.

**3**. **Matters arising** - there were none

**4**. **Chairman’s Report - *Ray Andrews***

Ray Andrews thanked members for making the effort to attend the AGM and stated that by attending they had a say in what happened in the Club. He confirmed that he was standing down after five years in office and that an e-mail had been circulated among members, asking for volunteers to take on the role of Chairman. He was pleased to report that John Thompson, currently website manager and well known artist, had agreed to take over as Chairman for the next year. Ray went on to say that he had thoroughly enjoyed representing the Club as Chairman and that he and Jayne continued to enjoy the friendships formed within the Club.

Ray mentioned some of the changes that had occurred over the past year or so.

* On-line banking now facilitated paying subscriptions and exhibition entry fees.
* The Club no longer issued a printed newsletter as this was now displayed on the website together with other documents as necessary. However, he confirmed that those members without e-mail would receive an A4 copy through the post.
* The Committee had welcomed two new officers - Sharon Henson as Media Officer and Rose Hofman as Publicity Officer. As some roles within the Committee had now changed, wording in the Constitution would need updating and this was currently being addressed, when the final copy would also be put on the website. Those members not on line would receive paper copies.
* The Essex Lottery was providing the Club with a yearly income of around £200, earned as tickets were purchased by Club members.
* A proposal to set up a Property Savings Fund had been approved by the Committee and would be put before the meeting later in the agenda.

**5. Treasurer’s Report - *Sam Quilter***

The Treasurer reported on the accounts for the year 2018-19 ending 31st July 2019, copies of which were distributed to those present and gave the following breakdown

 ***Exhibitions*** Spring 2019 did well with a surplus of £38.21 (achieved by cake sales)
 ***Subscriptions***  Income from subscriptions was £236 down from 2017-18
 ***Winter programme 2018-19*** saved £909 on the previous years’ costs
 ***Summer programme*** saved £169.10 on the previous year.
 ***Summer party*** held at Laurie Newton’s garden broke even
 ***Summer Outing*** (cancelled due to low interest), so lost coach deposit of £40

 ***The Essex lottery*** had done well, pulling in £240.37 for the financial year.
 ***Cheese & Wine (July 2018) & Christmas Lunch*** ran with a deficit of £133.59 which was a smaller loss than the previous year.

 ***Cottage / Church hall expenses*** were up by nearly £200, but this was to be expected with the move. The Club also now had gas AND electricity expenses, so higher costs for utilities.

  **Newsletter costs** Not now printed as booklet this year so a saving of £106.

The Treasurer confirmed that overall the club was still in a good financial position, with a loss of the Club’s overall value of £529.39, which was mainly down to depreciation of the Club’s assets. (In the event of the property savings fund being agreed at the AGM, Sam advised that £91.46 had been accumulated towards it within the year.)

Concluding her report, Sam stated that she would like to step down as Treasurer at next year’s AGM as she did not have the time to give the position of Treasurer the attention it deserved.

The Chairman thanked Sam for her report and asked members to inform the committee if they knew of anyone who might be able to take over as Treasurer when the time came. Laurie Newton proposed a vote of thanks to Sam for her hard work which was applauded by all those present.

**6. Secretary’s Report - *Jayne Andrews***

Jayne reported another busy year carrying out the role of e-mail manager alongside secretarial duties and paperwork for two exhibitions. She said on-line banking was helpful and many members were now utilising this facility. She was pleased to report that making cakes and serving refreshments at the Spring exhibition had resulted in making a profit of £250 and had agreed to do the same for the 2020 Spring exhibition.

Jayne finished by explaining that she was not an artist but had taken on the role of Secretary from Norman Ventris five years ago as a favour to the Chairman because nobody wanted the role. She said she had mostly enjoyed her time on the Committee although admitting some stressful periods and thanked everyone for putting up with her.

**7. Officers Reports**

**Membership Secretary - *Linda Vost***

Linda reported that membership totalled 212 for the year ended September 2019. She thanked all those present who had paid their subscriptions by the requested date of 1st October but said renewals had been slow coming in and she was still waiting to hear from around 80 members. However she advised that the Club had welcomed three new members from 1st October.

**Website Manager - *John Thompson***

Johnreported that since the last AGM he had been publishing to the new website and wanted to thank those who had offered help to improve the look with comments and content and thanks to Sharon Henson for her help with the site design. He said using the WIx interface was easy and he had only scratched the surface of possibilities. Benefits of the new site included

* Membership interaction through forums.
* Members able to contribute to the site content directly.
* Collection of exhibition entries - with interaction to rules and payment.
* Ability to handle all e-mailing duties from website ‘dashboard’ using databases imported or collected from site.
* Collection of subscriptions and renewals.
* Better integration of the Club’s online present’ including Facebook and Instagram.
* Offer a service of tangible benefit to the membership, which could include a place to sell work with SAC collecting commissions via the site.

John stated that moving forward the Club needed to end the contract with Vision net and transfer the name to another provider as Vision net could not forward web-traffic. He recommended Wix Basic e-commerce for which the site plan was £187.20 per year or £151.20 per year for a three year contract (regularly reduced in various sales) The domain names could also be transferred but that would still carry a £10 estimated cost per year. Ray Andrews suggested that this was something for the Committee to consider in the future.

Ray Andrews clarified the Wix site and Sharon Henson proposed that the old website be discontinued as the new website would enable the Club to do so much more than could be done with the old site. This was seconded by Ray Andrews and agreed by those present.

**Summer Programme - *Bob Holmshaw***

Bob reported that the Church Hall was larger than the cottage and had proved so well suited for demonstrations - highest attendance had reached 40 - that only two were held outside during the summer, those being undertaken by Paul Alcock and Simon Chalk and worked well. Bob said he would endeavour to carry out more outside demonstrations next year, when he was hoping to also use Beauchamps (home of Patron Charles Tabor and Sandra who had allowed their grounds to be used for painting in the past).

Pauline Grove’s mixed media demonstration was in a horizontal format but the extra space allowed the camera to be used vertically to give members a good view. Bob mentioned that a second TV screen had been kindly donated by Malcolm Perry and he hoped to link this to the existing one to give better viewing.

After the success of visiting Laurie Newton’s garden in lieu of the cancelled summer coach outing, Bob reported that it was decided to hold the Club’s Summer Party there. With good food provided by a caterer and fine weather, the day was enjoyed by all who attended and Bob congratulated Laurie and his wife Chris for their organisation of this event. He said Laurie was also to be thanked for his maintenance of the Church Hall and for moving much of the Club’s equipment across from the cottage. Lastly Bob advised that he had retired a few of the old chairs, following one collapsing under a member during a meeting.

Bob concluded his report by expressing his gratitude to Teresa Cutmore who stood in for him on the occasion that he couldn’t attend and also to the many members who helped with various tasks that enabled each event to run smoothly.

Some discussion took place on whether or not the Club should continue having a Cheese and Wine evening, and where to hold it. Following Christine Dodson’s suggestion that perhaps this might be better held in the afternoon, it was thought possibly combining the Cheese and Wine with the Summer Party might be worth considering. This matter would be discussed further at the next committee meeting.

**Winter Programme Organiser - *Teresa Cutmore***

Teresa reviewed last winter’s programme which had included much enjoyed demonstrations by Hashim Akib, Marie Antoniou, Paul Alcock, Vic Bearcroft and John Glover (who did a self- portrait) and said she enjoyed the challenge of finding different and interesting artists. She was much looking forward to a demonstration by this year’s portrait artist -John Thompson, whose self- portrait appeared as a thumbnail on the new programme card.

Teresa commented that by liaising with Bob Holmshaw they tried not to repeat book the same artists back too often, although members would see that their own Jane High was placed at both ends of the new season’s programme, but using different mediums and subjects. She said that they were always grateful to have Club members agreeing to do a demo and that as well as John and Jane, Pauline Grove would be demonstrating various materials and techniques and Sharon Henson would be providing a still-life demo, which Teresa felt would be a delight to watch. Teresa particularly wanted to record her thanks to Sharon for producing ‘such a fabulous winter programme leaflet’.

Mentioning another member, Teresa was very grateful to Sharon Stone, who agreed to step in to replace Susan Clare last year. Although Sharon had not done a demonstration before, it was most successful, showing different ways she worked through her process of using acrylic ink. Teresa said that by booking its own members, who were talented professional artists, the Club helped to keep costs down as there were no travel expenses involved and sometimes a little bonus entertainment was offered - such as Malcolm Perry’s much enjoyed saxophone accompaniment to his acrylic demo.

Looking ahead, Teresa explained the location of the Balmoral Centre where the first session of the winter programme was taking place with a critique hosted by Andrew Hall. She said it was a good location for a critique as it had more light for viewing members’ work with which they might like some help. She said she looked forward to seeing members at the future meetings, which had Darren Jones coming as a new demonstrator and other popular artists returning - Sylvia Paul, Denise Allen and Sonia Bacchus. She urged engagement with the Members Forum on the Club’s website to provide feedback on any of the demonstrations or suggested using the Club Members only Facebook page.

**Media Officer - *Sharon Henson***

Sharon introduced herself by explaining that she joined the Committee in May - a new post responsible for design and production of all media, which entails the look and feel of all printed and social media elements. Having a background in graphic design, Sharon said she was also able to deal with the design of the new winter programme cards and thanked Anita Pickles for allowing the use of her painting on the front.

Sharon said she had been working closely with John Thompson with the initial design and set up of the new website and that this work would continue as the site became more integrated with the requirements of the Club. The Club now had a new logo and colour identity which has been integrated with the website, exhibition posters and banners and continues across all media including the winter and summer programmes. Many more Club documents were available to view through the website, i.e:- Committee Members’ AGM reports, Club Constitution. Sharon added that the previously printed newsletter was now being designed and published online through the website, although the Membership Secretary would still post a printed copy of this to those members not on the internet.

E-mail communication to members would now be controlled by the website. She said if members wished to see any other type of information on our website they should send a message to either John or herself.

**Publicity - *Rose Hofman***

Rosesaid she had responsibility for publicity, part of which was securing permission to display banners or posters to advertise exhibitions. She reported that it was unfortunate that two banners (worth £100) had been removed from sites - West Leigh School railings and Car wash site - by persons unknown and the Club had not been able to recover them, despite numerous enquiries.

**Social Secretary - *Vanessa Eastoe***

Vanessa began by referring to this year’s summer party and thanked Laurie Newton for holding this at his garden. However with regard to organising this in future, Vanessa said the church hall was reasonably large and had a grass area outside where gazebos could be erected so she felt holding it at the church hall should be possible. As good caterers were known and used previously, it was agreed the summer party would definitely go ahead next year.

Regarding next year’s coach outing she stressed the need to fill 49 seats and to do this it was important to choose a location that gave members plenty of options, i.e. the Club had found a trip to Hastings particularly successful, so perhaps a seaside town would be popular. She hoped to be able to announce what had been decided at the Christmas Lunch.

Vanessa reported that the Christmas Lunch on 14th December would again be held at the Rochford Hundred Golf Club which had plenty of parking space. The resident chef produced a delicious buffet with a wide variety of food to a high standard and the dining area was a delightful, spacious room. The cost this year would be £16. However, although the times printed on the membership/programme cards stated 1.30 - 4.30 pm, Vanessa said the Golf Club would like the Club to vacate by 4.00 pm, so it was agreed that the times would now have to be 1.00 - 4.00 pm. Vanessa confirmed that she would start taking bookings at the first meeting on 26th October.

**Premises Manager - *Laurie Newton***

Laurie reported on the move from the cottage to All Saints Church hall in Sutton Road which was completed at the end of March and involved emptying the cottage of all the equipment and archives accumulated over the years. He said that being now settled in at the hall, the Club’s patron, Mr. Charles Tabor, had confirmed that with a few occasional exceptions the Club would have exclusive use of the building. Laurie said that he had tried to make the Club’s new home as appealing as possible to members, with planted flowers and logos to the outside and some favourite paintings on the inside walls . He further advised that he had found it necessary to effect repairs to the roof and toilet system, a paint job on the outside door and surrounds and fully mobilised the heating and water systems. He said the Club were indeed fortunate to have decent kitchen and toilet facilities within the building.

**Vice Chairman - *Bill Barr* ( *stepping down as Vice Chairman from this AGM*)**

As Bill Barr was unable to be present, Teresa Cutmore introduced his proposal previously passed by the Committee for AGM approval :- **That the Club set up a fund with the sole purpose of building a large enough sum so that sometime in the future the Club will be able to acquire their own premises. If agreed this would be written into the Constitution.**

Reasons for the proposal were as follows:

* In recent years membership numbers had fallen by 20%, resulting in a decrease of revenue.
* Rare to see more than 35 members attending demonstrations and workshops and most were the same regular members - why did the other 190 remain members?
* Many members only join to exhibit and we no longer have a good exhibition venue (no longer able to book the Cliffs Pavilion for regular Spring and Autumn dates)
* Now lost Butlers Farm cottage - one of the Club’s best attractions for the summer programme. (Fortunate to have the use of the Church Hall - but for how long?)
* Most of the visitors to exhibitions who made enquiries about membership and club activities wanted to know where the Club’s regular and permanent meeting place was. Many of them leave after one year simply because we have no permanent address at which to congregate and share ideas.
* For a club nearly 90 years old, at best it appeared to be lack of a site or commitment, at worst a lack of trust.

If it was agreed to do so, Bill proposed that all monies raised, other than membership subscriptions and exhibition entry fees, be paid into a property savings fund - i.e. raffles, auctions, art ephemeral and tea and cake sales and that the paintings given to the Club by various members and demonstrators (now stored at the Church hall) be sold, raffled or auctioned off and the proceeds put in the fund. He suggested collection buckets at all meetings and exhibitions, labelled as a trust fund collection, as a way of raising money from public donations. He specified that the fund should have five trustees in charge of and responsible for the fund, that all five trustees must sign for any withdrawal or disposal of monies from the fund and even then, only after a unanimous committee decision to do so.

Chris Wiseman was not in favour of the proposal and said that it was not good practice to have a fund that could not be accessed. Agreeing with Chris Wiseman’s comment, Keith Watson said that in this situation setting up a fund that locked money away, unable to be accessed in times of need, could damage the Club rather than help it. He felt a decision could not be taken at this stage.

Sharon Henson stated that the Club often only broke even at exhibitions because of tea and cake sales. However, Teresa Cutmore felt that if the Club was making a loss at exhibitions then this should be recovered by raising membership fees or reducing costs and Sharon advised that there were measures to change the exhibition entry form which would increase revenue.

Robert Eichert commented that if membership numbers were down then the likelihood of ever being able to afford to buy new premises seemed almost impossible and Rose Hofman said it would appear that such a fund would probably never be used.

In view of considerable concern, there did not seem enough time to make a decision and Ray Andrews suggested putting this forward for next year’s AGM and meanwhile place the proposal on the website to enable more members to express their views. Penny Hawker thought it worthwhile to advertise the necessity of members looking at the proposal. Keith Watson added that to ‘lay on the table’ until the next AGM would overcome the difficulty of voting against the proposal at this stage. It was therefore unanimously agreed that the proposal would ‘lay on the table’ for next year.

**8. Resignation and Election of Committee**

The Committee stood down and President Christine Dodson took the chair to ask those present to propose and second a motion for their re-election. Proposed by Ann Chadwick, seconded by Keith Watson and approved by those present the Committee were duly elected.

Proposed by Annabel Hern, seconded by Chris Wiseman and unanimously agreed, John Thompson was duly elected as Chairman.

**9. Any Other Business**

The meeting were advised that with regard to the Constitution it was now necessary to make changes to definitions of certain roles on the Committee.

**10. Chairman John Thompson’s Closing Remarks *(read by Ray Andrews)***

As incoming Chairman, let me on behalf of the Club thank Ray and Jayne for their work over the past years. They have been hugely active in all that is the Southend Art Club. May I also wish them well in their retirement and life away from SAC responsibility. I know it will be difficult to live up to the standards set by Ray, but I look forward to working with the other committee members to ensure the Club delivers on our Constitution and makes the Club something we should all be proud of. I will try to find what the membership wants from the Club and make that happen.

***Signed……John Thompson………………(Chairman) Date ……24/10/2019……………….***