

AGM of the Abergavenny Art group 3rd August 2020

Zoom meeting. 19.30hrs

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It all started off so well!

The annual exhibition last year was a success with paintings sold and a small profit made for the Group.

Our meeting in the Garden at Treberfydd was delightful, sunny and inspirational.

Once the Autumn meetings had commenced we had demonstrations on botanical art and the use of soft core pencils. In November we began the workshop meetings in the afternoons. Although this did not hugely increase our numbers we all appreciated the extra light to draw by and not having to turn out on the dark nights.

Christmas rapidly approached and we all enjoyed the Christmas social this year. Our thanks to the quiz masters and caterers.

Malcolm Meadows had to cancel his lecture due to ill health but I am happy to report he is in robust health now!

And that brought us to an abrupt halt. March 2020 and Covid 19 struck!

The committee made the decision to remain in place and cancel future meetings including the May AGM until such time as we could get back together. New innovations such as the monthly challenge and the new-artist-a-month gave us all some focus for the trying times in the Lockdown that followed.

Now we find ourselves in a situation of easing Covid19 measures but still have vulnerable members and some have family members that must be protected. I feel that the new committee needs to be in place to have your authorisation to put new safety measures and to plan a strategy and programme for going forward.

Happily the Community Centre is about to open its doors, if not fully at least it should be available for some smaller meetings, with safety uppermost at all times.

Ralph Heron, your former Chairman, had agreed to put his name forward for Chairman position before the May date AGM. Thus I think that the AGM now is essential to get the new chairman and committee up and running to meet the next challenges ahead.

This experience of the pandemic has thrown up a lot of challenges, personal and for the Group. You will see that you are being asked to consider and vote

for a new constitution. If you approve this constitution at this AGM then the decision could be ratified if necessary at an extraordinary meeting face-to-face in the future.

The loss of our annual exhibition must be mourned as I do not think it has ever happened before in the 82 years of the Group's existence. The committee hope that a smaller version can be held before Christmas but time and the implications of the coronavirus will tell. In the meantime there are some of your pictures in the window at High Cross, in the Community Centre and in the Llanwenarth Hotel.

I would like to thank Louise Collis, a long time supporter of our Group, for her work in setting the challenges and judging the Monthly challenges. Never easy and often difficult. As you will see if you look at the entries on the website Abergavennyartists.co.uk. I hope those of you that have taken part have enjoyed them as much as I have.

Indeed I have a lot of Thank Yous to say. Thank you to the outgoing committee for all their hard work and flexibility in meeting the new challenges. Thank you to Jean Prandy, who after many years of service, is standing down from the committee this year. Thank you to John Hurst who has fought against the odds and remains ready for duty as Secretary, what would we do without him? Lavinia O'Brien is standing down as Treasurer this year, happily she is willing to remain on the committee to give us her expertise again. Ralph is giving up the program secretaryship but is willing to stand again for the committee. The Group and I owe them all a great debt for their hard work.

Thus going forward there will be changes, indeed the return to "normal" does seem to look way off, if there will ever be a normal as we knew it again. I know the Group can grow and change to suit the new situation as there will always be creative people about in our community. Ones that enjoy the fellowship of like minded people and are happy to give a helping hand to each other.

So in conclusion thank you to all you members for your support. I look forward to a slightly less fraught year ahead but would be happy to remain on your committee should members desire this.

Sarah Hoddy