

Chairman's Report AGM 30 April 2016

It was my birthday recently and a friend sent a card that had the words Past, Future, Present written large on the front.

That gave me the idea for the format of my report.

Although the Chairman's Statement is usually a review of the past year I want to go further and say a little about the present and the future too.

THE PAST

This is my first report as Chairman and covers only the first four months of this year. I was elected late last year after Anne Framer had to step down because Peter needed her more than we did. Thankfully Peter seems to be making progress and we look forward to when Anne can become more active in the Society again.

I would like to extend our thanks to Anne for her work and support as Chairman over the years.

Attendance at events has generally been poor although our Christmas Lunch saw a rise in diners. It was a pleasant lunch at the Walnut Tree.

In February our social evening and art book exchange was attended by six members although a few more came just for the art books and material which raised £12 for the Society.

The Spring Exhibition Private View was not crowded and we were very disappointed that the Mayor, Cllr. Leigh Redman and his Lady did not make an appearance as promised.

A recent presentation on Mosaic Art again was not well attended.

We have started a membership drive this year, writing to all past members, distributing a brochure and pushing out more PR.

THE PRESENT

We now have 49 members, up from a low of about 30 this time last year.

We now have a webpage, Facebook page and a Twitter account and our on-line presence is slowly getting more notice.

Our on-line challenge is proving to be popular with members which is helping to keep them engaged with the Society.

Your committee is working hard to make the Society better for you and they deserve a vote of thanks, particularly Jonet Middleton who organises the exhibitions, Carole Stoate the on-line competition, Chris Alder who helps with PR, Philip Brimson the accounts, Pat Preater the minutes and the support and input of Anne Farmer, Mike Griffiths and Christopher Deane.

THE FUTURE

When I first volunteered to help the Society I took up the role for publicity and membership promotion.

Publicity falls into two camps, information to our members and announcements in the news media. Although the local press and the wider internet has sent out our messages, attendance at events has not been great as mentioned earlier.

My belief is that we may not be doing what the members and public expect of us but there is the problem.

If our members do not connect with us and tell us what they would like how are we to know?

So please, engage with us, whether its suggestions, criticism or praise. Let us hear from you now or you can email us, drop a comment on Facebook or start a Tweet. It is your Society.

After the election of the committee members today the first order of business will be the formulation of next years programme so if you have any thoughts or ideas let us hear about them.

Your committee is currently working on updating the Constitution which will be presented to members for approval later this year.

We want to expand our exhibiting venues, make it easier for our visitors to buy your work and more importantly we want to engage more with the members.

We want members:

- to help with sourcing speakers and lecturers.
- to tell us about potential exhibiting venues.
- to recruit friends to the society
- to organise social events
- to help with the catering for Private Views and social events
- to contribute their ideas and seek out opportunities.

An idea from Richard Field about raffle of art and Carole Stoate's invitation to paint in her garden are two examples of engaging with your society.

Our Hon. Treasurer will be making his report next and you will see that we are just wiping our face financially but if we are to do more for you there will have to be an increase in membership subs. At £12 the current fee is very low. In order for the Chandos Society of Artists to open up more events and meet the needs of a modern art society we will need more income. You will, of course, be consulted on the fee recommendations when they are made.

It is said that the present defines the future and the future builds on the foundation of the past.

For many years our Hon Treasurer Philip Brimson has kept the Society's finances on a firm foundation to ensure our future.

But it is with regret that he is resigning today. We owe him much, not least our thanks for the many years he has served the society.

Christopher Deane has volunteered to take over as Hon. Treasurer which the Committee endorses.

KEN CHURCH. Chairman