

LAS AGM - Chairman's Report 2020

Welcome everyone to Lechlade Art Society's Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30th June 2020.

Owing to the current pandemic situation, our AGM this year has been adapted to overcome the need for the social distancing which currently prevails. It is for this reason that your committee have all confirmed that they are prepared to stay on in their current roles. We are meeting as a committee via a video link and the members of the Society, although not physically present at this meeting, will have an opportunity to raise questions to the Chair which will be answered via our website.

The first part of our financial year, following our AGM of 2019, began with our usual programme of monthly demonstrations, workshops, weekly painting sessions, the Annual Exhibition and our Christmas Lunch. We also participated in the Swindon Open Studios event, when several of our members exhibited and demonstrated their work at the Pavilion in Lechlade.

However, any further activities came to a grinding halt in March 2020 when the whole world was seized by the Covid 19 pandemic and Lockdown, which threatened to put paid to all the other Art Society activities planned for the rest of the year.

Like many organisations, the Society had to learn to compromise and adapt. Consequently, our regular committee meetings still went ahead but by using a video link called Zoom. By this method we were all able to contribute to each meeting, but safely within our own homes.

We were all too aware of the problems that Lockdown presented to everyone, particularly socially isolating those of our members who lived alone and regarded the Art Society as an important link with the outside World.

Very much with that in mind, our April Newsletter contained a Members' Art Challenge with art projects to engage, challenge and hopefully uplift people, although we realised that it was not for everyone!

Several more Newsletters have been published since then to keep everyone "in the loop" about our activities and plans, and the latest three editions have had a new look and content. They are more visually exciting – we introduced full colour and a very professional layout – many thanks to Zoe Hing for her expertise in this.

Our intention was to inform and entertain and the new look has been well received by the members. As a consequence of this, you will all know that we have planned a YouTube demonstration for September by Susan Neale who had previously been booked to come to Lechlade to demonstrate the techniques of Acrylic ink painting. This, we hope, will be the first of many demonstrations for the months ahead using the medium of the internet.

Future plans are for smaller size follow-on actual workshops operating with social distancing.

Our regular Thursday Painting Group at the Trout has resumed and we will transfer to the Pavilion in September as we have in the past.

The icing on the cake, I think, is that we will be going ahead with our Annual Exhibition – on this occasion it will be a Virtual Exhibition which will be available to view on our website for the whole month of September. It is taking shape already.

Finally I have people to thank.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their support and their dedication to the welfare of the Society, particularly during these strange times we are living through.

Last, and certainly not least, for the support and loyalty of our generous Patron Charles Lord Faringdon.

Sharon Ellis - LAS Chair