

CROWBOROUGH ARTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held on Sunday, 1st March 2020 at 15.00

MINUTES

Present: Angela Vernon Bates, Julia Ball, Grant Bradford, Vanessa Bradford, Caroline Hobbs, Gaye Jee, Sue Petszaft, Christine Roberts, Anne Shifler, Alan Smith, David Tate, Jenny Tate, Marguerite Tinley, Barbara Todd, Justin Todd, Jeanette Towey, John Whatley, Sue Whatley, Elizabeth Wood.

Apologies for Absence: Miranda Baston, Lesley Boase, Alma & Ron Burch, Gill Child, John Eliot, Jane Gray, Mary Harris, Mary Howells, Graham James, Jean Van Beek.

Minutes of 2019 AGM: These were agreed.

Election of Committee: all members were re-elected on block. This was proposed by David Tate and seconded by Elizabeth Wood. Committee Members are: Chair, Music and Visual Arts – Angela Vernon Bates; Treasurer & Membership Secretary - Ivor Quinn; Marketing, Publicity & Website Manager also Literary Events – Gaye Jee; Secretary & Literary Events – Christine Roberts; Literary Events – Julia Ball; Open Studios – Jane Smith.

Treasurer's & Membership Secretary's Report (See balance sheet attached.): Our surplus in 2019 was £1,105 and the bank balance currently stands at £6500. Membership is currently 161 as at end February 2020. Membership income had increased again with a welcome donation of £140 from Jane Smith. There are currently twelve sponsors. The Treasurer pointed out that there has been no increase in the membership fee in the ten years that Crowborough Arts has been running. A vote of thanks to the Treasurer was proposed by Caroline Hobbs and seconded by Sue Petszaft.

Chair's Report (See full report attached.): Despite the fact that it was decided not to hold the Open Studios event in 2019 preferring to focus on our 10th birthday year in 2020, membership has held up well. Fifteen events were held and we spent much time planning events for the birthday celebrations. New posters were designed and produced and put in stronger frames at Crowborough Station. The Summer Garden Party was held at Sue and Stefan Petszaft's garden and the weather was kind. A team of female Morris dancers performed. Our thanks to the Petszafts for a great afternoon.

For the birthday celebrations we had arranged to have the return of the Tibetan Monks but unfortunately due to the ill health of their tour manager, this has had to be cancelled. We are planning the showing of a silent Charlie Chaplin film at the Crowborough Centre and the ZRI group of musicians will provide live musical accompaniment. Commemorative goods are being produced, i.e. porcelain mugs with a birthday logo. A membership drive is currently being organised and a new leaflet '10 Reasons to Join Crowborough Arts' has been prepared. These are available at this meeting.

The Chair thanked a number of people for their support. These included Patrons David and Jenny Tate for their continued support and also the other sponsors. She also thanked the individual members of the Steering Group committee for all their contributions. Special thanks were also given to Stefan Petszaft for running the Mailchimp distribution list and for his kind and generous help over printing the majority of our flyers, newsletters and publicity free of charge – a huge help towards our budget.

Literary Events & Performing Arts Group Report (See full report): 2019 saw a full and varied programme of literary events with a particular focus on the performing arts side of things. A major event was a production at the United Church on the (very wet) weekend of Sussex Day and entitled *A Sussex Salmagundi* which was based on a previous production of ours 'Secret Sussex' but much extended. This was brilliantly supported by a number of invited performers including Virginia Winton, pianist, Robin Jeffrey and Alessandra Testai, musicians and singers along with members of their family and friends, Susanna Cox and members of her dancing academy, guest actors including Benjamin Pearce, David Holmewood and Pat and David Bryer. Our own regular performers appeared: Julia Ball, Gaye Jee, Alice Barnard, and Christine Roberts as well as technical support from a range of helpers.

Nearer Christmas we put on a production in the style of a Victorian/Edwardian parlour entertainment entitled '*Come Into My Parlour*' and featuring Crowborough Arts own resident group of performers, plus pianist Peter Land and actors Peter Claridge and Benjamin Pearce.

We also held our annual *Murder Mystery* event this year entitled 'Hi-Di'Die' and despite bad weather which forced us indoors at The King's Arms Rotherfield, it was a huge success.

Visiting speakers gave much interest. These included author, playwright and TV and radio producer Simon Brett who gave a talk called 'Tickled to Death'; Peter Medhurst gave his fascinating talk called 'The Sound of Paint' which included piano playing and images of paintings.

Our regular groups continued to meet regularly, namely Playreaders which started the year with American drama and then went on to look at contemporary British drama. The Booklovers book group met monthly with members talking about the books they had recently read, both fiction and non-fiction. Notes are taken and are always put on the website for members to read.

Visual Arts (See full report): Despite the absence of an Open Studios offering this proved to be a varied and interesting year with opportunities for all members who practice or are interested in the visual arts. In addition to the new set of station posters mentioned in the Chair's Report above, these included:

The Summer Show held at Grant Bradford's home (and for which we thank him and his wife). Fourteen artists showed their work in an attractive setting. Our hosts plus Marguerite Tinley kept exhibitors well fed with coffee, cakes and nibbles.

Glorious Gardens: Penschurst Place again generously gave members free access to their gardens throughout the season with a special emphasis on Glorious Gardens weekend. Another opportunity was provided by Penschurst Place to allow artist members to show and sell their works – *The Christmas Show*. We are very grateful to Penschurst Place for their support and to Gaye Jee for liaising and setting up events there.

Portrait and Life Classes (See report): These groups continued throughout the year offering excellent models who held challenging short poses and longer more relaxed positions. New studio lighting has helped to illuminate the models.

Music Report (See full report): Another full year with diverse and interesting concerts. We saw the return of *Daniel Tong* (pianist) and *Robin Michael* (cellist) in a fundraising concert for the Wye Valley Festival. *Ellie Kotzia*, a Greek guitar player, also returned with *Wilfrid Murray* at the piano. They played a varied programme of solos and duets ranging from Vivaldi to Ravel. *The Aurora Trio* also returned and played a delightful concert. Finally, *The Lodestar Trio* came and played music from Norway and pieces connecting Bach and other Baroque composers with folk music.

Bursary Award for 2019: This was made to member *Alice Barnard*, performing artist and facilitator in the Special Needs sector working at The Camphill Community in Wadhurst. Alice used her bursary to pay for a short course providing a grounding in music therapy which she hopes she will be able to take further. Alice has been a fantastic supporter of Crowborough Arts since it began, performing in most of our productions, singing, playing the guitar and acting. We are happy that we have been able to help her along her career pathway.

We are proud to point out that since August 2013, we have paid out approximately **£3500** in bursary awards to a total of **twelve** local artists, performers and writers. Please contact Christine Roberts if you feel you might like to apply for a bursary. Full details are on the website.