



FRIENDS OF THE WILSON, CHELTENHAM ART GALLERY & MUSEUM MINUTES OF THE 33rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, the Promenade, Cheltenham,
at 6:15 pm on 21 June 2017**

Present

- Dame Janet Trotter (Lord Lieutenant);
- Julie Finch (Chief Executive, the Cheltenham Trust);
- Margaret Austen and Dr David Wilson (patrons);
- Hilary Simpson (Chair);
- Adrian Barlow, Mike Jenkinson, Jenny Ogle, Martin Renshaw and Jan Turner (trustees);
- Maggie Anthony, Julie Arnold, Alison Ayres, Pamela Bentley, George Breeze, Rachel Breeze, Gillian Clarke-Hill, Carole Clifford, June Cox, Geoffrey Cox, Rose Crimes, Phil Crimes, Richard Parker Crook, Anne Dunn, John Eaden, Sue Fairclough, Irene Finlayson, Mary Greensted, Susan Hamilton, James Hodsdon, Judie Hodsdon, John Hope, Rowena Hope, Marjorie Imlah, Mandy Jenkinson, Corynna Jeudwine, Pat Joice, Bob Joice, Malcolm Lomas, Gillian Lunn, Julia Manning, Heather Moore-Scott, Michael Murrell, Douglas Ogle, Sue Pearce, Sally Pullen, Sheila Rashed, Sue Reeves, Barbara Riccalton, Robert Rimell, Daphne Sanderson, John Simpson, David Standish-Hayes, Clare Stewart, Hilary Swan, John Turney, David Walton, Rosemary Westgate, Michael Westgate, Keith Woodman and Greg Worth (members).

1. Welcome

The President, PJ Crook, welcomed everyone to the Friends' 33rd AGM. She extended a particular welcome to Dame Janet Trotter, the Lord Lieutenant; to Julie Finch, Chief Executive of The Cheltenham Trust; and to Margaret Austen and Dr David Wilson, two of the charity's patrons. She also thanked the two trustees who were standing down, Jenny Ogle and Jan Turner, for their contributions.

2. Introduction

The Chair, Hilary Simpson, opened the proceedings.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

- Councillor Klara Sudbury, the Mayor of Cheltenham, and Councillor Flo Clucas;
- John Beard, Jaki Davis and Mark Holliday (Trustees);
- Peter Harkness, Chair, The Cheltenham Trust, and Ian Renton, Trustee, The Cheltenham Trust;

- Edward & Alison Gillespie, Richard & Peta Hoyle, Mark & Julia Hurrell and Jonathan Rendall (Patrons);
- Sarah Cook (The Wilson) and Laura Kinnear (Holst Birthplace Museum);
- David & Virginia Adsett, Angela Applegate, Linda Bicknell, Christine Chambers, Jennifer Gillman, Alec Hamilton, Jenny & Ken Heron Jones, Jean Knight, Julph Miers, Heather Pritchard, Jonathan Rendall, Brian & Anne Shawcross, Stella Somes-Charlton, Anna Stanway, Michael & Jacqueline Storm, Peter & Janet Thornton (members).

4. Minutes of the 32nd AGM held on 30 June 2016

These were approved *nem con*.

5. Chair's Report for 2016-17

The Chair introduced her report for 2016-17, a summary of which is appended to these minutes.

6. Accounts for 2016-17

In the absence of the Treasurer, Mark Holliday, the charity's accounts for 2016-17 were introduced by Adrian Barlow, Deputy Chair.

He reported that the charity ended the year with a surplus of £15,000, of which £5,800 was the product of income-generating events. The balance sheet showed total funds of £122,000, of which £117,000 was invested with CCLA Investment Management Ltd. The accounts showed that the Friends were in good financial health and the programme of talks, visits and other events, alongside subscriptions, made a significant contribution to this. The Friends were accordingly well placed to offer support to Phase 2 of The Wilson's redevelopment.

The following queries and comments were raised from the floor.

- a. It was pointed out that although page numbers were referred to, the pages were not in fact numbered.
- b. Clarification was requested as to when the "last 100 years", referred to in the Phyllis Kay bequest, began. It was assumed that this referred to the date when the bequest came into effect.
- c. A consolidated account of the finances of fundraising events was requested. In response, Adrian stated that information was available at several levels of detail and was regularly discussed by the committee.
- d. Adrian was thanked by Marjorie Imlah for his clear explanation.

The accounts were approved and adopted *nem con*.

7. Appointment of the Independent Examiner

It was proposed that Andrew Ellis be re-appointed as the Independent Examiner if he was willing to undertake this role. This was agreed *nem con*.

8. Election of Trustees

Sue Pearce and Brian Shawcross were both elected to serve as Trustees *nem con*.

9. Any other business

- a. In response to a question from the floor, the chair confirmed that Anne Bartlett, who would be taking over the role of trips and visits organiser, would be acting as a volunteer and was not standing for election as a Trustee.
- b. The Chair reminded members that places were still available on the visit to Bath on 27 June.
- c. The Chair presented a bouquet of flowers to Jan Turner to thank her for her service as a Trustee and in particular for her work in organising the Luncheon Club.
- d. The Chair then paid the following tribute to Jenny Ogle, who was standing down after 33 years on the committee.

"Shortly after moving to Cheltenham, Jenny Ogle was invited by the then curator George Breeze to join a steering group to set up a friends' organisation for the Art Gallery and Museums. She became a Founder Member of the Friends in 1984 and has served on the committee ever since, becoming the guiding force behind our successful events programme and our fundraising campaigns. During that time she inaugurated the day trips – of which she has personally organised almost 250 – the study tours, the luncheon club, the de Ferrières public lecture, and the summer and winter parties. More than this, however, she has set a style and a standard for the Friends which have been crucial to our success. The standard has naturally been a high one, based on her strong conviction that a significant cultural institution deserves a significant Friends organisation. The style has been one of energy, enthusiasm, innovation and fun. Most importantly, Jenny has the gift of sharing her love of life and art with others and carrying them along with her in that spirit of exuberance. The committee has granted Honorary Life Membership to Jenny and Douglas in recognition of the outstanding contribution they have made and The Wilson will be mounting a tribute to Jenny in the galleries later in the year."

Jenny was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a personal gift of jewellery from the President, Patrons and Trustees of the charity as a token of their gratitude for her long and illustrious service.

Following the close of the meeting there was a screening of the BBC film ***A Day Out: Cheltenham***, which was first broadcast in March 1985, the year after The Friends was founded.

Refreshments were served in the Montpellier Room.

[Draft 3 July 2017]

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR 2016-17

Membership

We are one of Cheltenham's largest voluntary organisations. Our membership levels during 2016-17 remained steady at around 650, and during the year we welcomed over 70 new members. I would like to thank our Membership Secretary, Mike Jenkinson, for managing the membership database and for collecting the subscriptions which account for the majority of our income.

Trustees

Two trustees (John Beattie and Rosemary Westgate) resigned during the year for personal reasons. I would like to thank them both for their contribution and wish them well for the future. A further two (Jenny Ogle and Jan Turner) stood down at the 2017 AGM. Both have been central to the Friends' success, having served for 33 years and five years respectively. A tribute to Jenny, a founder member, is included in the minutes of this meeting.

Two members – Brian Shawcross and Sue Pearce – are standing as trustees at this AGM. If they are elected, it will bring the current number of trustees to nine out of a possible twelve. A recruitment campaign to fill the remaining vacancies will continue.

Our trustees have a wide range of skills and interests and I would like to thank them for giving so generously of their time and expertise. As Chair I am very ably supported by my deputy, Adrian Barlow, by the Secretary, John Beard, and by the Treasurer, Mark Holliday.

Support for The Wilson during 2016-17

During 2016-17 we agreed to fund the acquisition of two items for The Wilson's local history collection. The first is a small oval etching of James King, who held the post of Master of the Ceremonies at Cheltenham between 1801 and his death in 1816. The other is a printed copy of an Address to King George IV that was delivered by a later MC, Charles Marshall, when the King's carriage paused at Cheltenham during a journey in September 1821.

During the year we also agreed to release money from the Wilson Family Fund for the restoration of a sketchbook belonging to Edward Wilson, which is now on display in the Paper Store.

Communication

There is an ever-growing choice of communication channels available to us. At the same time, our members range from those who don't possess a computer to those who prefer to do everything on a smartphone. Faced with this dilemma (which is by no means unique to us), we currently use four main channels for communication with members, potential members and the wider public: a printed newsletter, emails, website and Facebook.

We continue to produce a high quality printed newsletter three times a year, which is sent by post. This is an expensive means of communication but our editor, Martin Renshaw, has been successful in securing

advertising revenue which offsets a large proportion of the costs. Starting with the May 2017 newsletter we are now including booking forms for our events as inserts in the centre.

Because the newsletters only go out three times a year they have their limitations, so they are supplemented by emails (although regrettably on average only about two thirds of the emails we send are opened); a regularly updated website; and a Facebook page.

I would like to thank our Newsletter Editor, Martin Renshaw, and our Mailing Organiser, Sue Reeves, for all the hard work that they put in to keeping members informed.

Events

After subscriptions, events are our largest source of income. In planning the events for 2016-17 we attempted to take into account the preferences of members as indicated in our 2016 member survey.

Our lunchtime talks continue to be popular and made a profit of over £2,000 during the year thanks to the hard work of the organiser, Jan Turner.

From September 2017 our talks will be held at Chapel Arts, a newly restored arts venue a few minutes' walk from The Wilson.

Jenny Ogle has once again provided a much-appreciated programme of outings and visits for the Friends, delivered with her usual verve, enthusiasm and attention to detail, which raised a substantial amount. Douglas Ogle led a study tour to Lille, which took Friends to a range of fascinating locations. There are reports and a slide show of this tour on our website, which capture some of the unexpected glories of the area which were explored by our group. We are very grateful to Douglas for coming out of a self-imposed retirement to lead this tour.

We are extremely fortunate in having secured the services of Anne Bartlett to run our programme of visits and tours from September 2017. Anne is a qualified and highly experienced Blue Badge tour guide with her own company, and she has already started to put together an exciting programme.

Our various social events during the year also raised an impressive amount. We are very grateful to Rosemary Westgate for organising these, and also to our President PJ Crook for her personal hospitality. This year instead of holding evening receptions for new members we held a coffee morning followed by a tour of the galleries, which was well received.

Last November we joined up with Cheltenham Civic Society to organise a Civic Dinner at Pittville Pump Room to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the discovery of the first mineral springs at Cheltenham. This was a memorable occasion for many reasons; one important one being the official presentation of the Captain Skillicorne portrait to the Mayor of Cheltenham. The event raised £1,600 for the Mayor's charities and a similar amount for WaterAid.

Future support for The Wilson

The Cheltenham Trust have shared with us their plans for Phase 2 of The Wilson's redevelopment. The emphasis of Phase 2 is on engaging (and re-engaging) both residents and visitors with The Wilson's

permanent collections. The proposal will include opening up the current "dark spaces" in the museum galleries, providing fresh interpretation of the collections, and developing new audiences for them.

As an essential precursor to a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other potential funders, the Friends will consider a request at their committee meeting in September to fund a feasibility study, which is likely to be in the region of £30,000-35,000. I believe this is a project which all members of the Friends will support with enthusiasm.

In the shorter term, the Trust is undertaking a project to provide clearer and simpler signposting for The Wilson and its collections. The proposal involves alerting the public to the proposed Phase 2 redevelopment through improved signage designed to open up the permanent collections. The Trust has secured funding for part of this project, but the Friends will consider a request at their committee meeting in July for an additional £6,000-7,000 to support it. Again, I am sure that the Friends will consider this money well spent.