

**Minutes of the  
54<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting  
on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2018**

**Welcome**

Michael Johnson welcomed Friends to the meeting and thanked the Odney Club for hosting our AGM. In addition to apologies received from various members of the Friends, our President, Dr James Fox, was unable to join us due to his many other commitments. Scot McKendrick, Chair of Trustees, had hoped to attend but was in Paris on business.

Michael then introduced the 40 or so Friends present to the Gallery's new Registrar, Clare Mitchell, who gave a talk about her 'Career in Collections.' She described the work of a registrar, which includes dealing with acquisitions, loans, packing, shipping, storage, insurance, risk management and the development and maintenance of collection management systems. Clare gave an overview of her career, during which she has worked for Southampton City Art Gallery, the Palace of Westminster, the Hampshire Cultural Trust and the Alphonse Mucha Foundation, before setting up her own consultancy business and taking on a part-time role at the Stanley Spencer Gallery.

**The meeting**

**1. Previous minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2017 were accepted and signed.

**2. Chairman's summary**

Michael Johnson reviewed the previous year and the events coming up in 2018. He mentioned recent BBC broadcasts about Spencer and his Daughters, and Shipbuilding on the Clyde, and pointed out the wallhanging on display (owned by the Friends), thanking its main needlewoman, Ruth Daniel, who was present at the meeting. He noted that the Gallery's newsletter, to be published four times a year from now on, will be sent to all Friends, including custodians and volunteers, and thanked the editor, Sue Mahoney. He paid tribute to Ann Danks, whose latest course on Stanley Spencer has been very well received. The summer exhibition, which opens on 29 March, will not have the usual catalogue, but a more substantial book containing essays on Spencer's patrons. The book will be available at half price (£5) to Friends visiting the Gallery, and advance copies were on sale at the meeting.

The highlights of 2017 were a day trip in April to the Henry Moore Studios and Gardens in Hertfordshire; an overnight trip to Cambridge in August, when Dr James Fox was our guide to paintings at the Fitzwilliam Museum and also hosted a dinner at Gonville & Caius College; and a visit in September to the Sandham Memorial Chapel in Burghclere. Michael thanked Margaret Shore and Pam Roberts for their work in organising the outings. Friends events planned for 2018 include a trip to an Eric Ravilious exhibition at Compton Verney in Warwickshire; a visit to Chichester Cathedral and Pallant House Gallery; and a two-day trip to Hull (UK City of Culture 2017) and Lincoln Cathedral. Details will be published in future newsletters. He also mentioned current loans of Spencer's works to York Art Gallery, which may be of interest to Friends in the north of the country. An appendix to these minutes lists past and future events organised by the Friends and the Gallery.

**3. Treasurer's report**

Alan Harding presented the accounts for the 12 months to 31 December 2017. He noted that the income from subscriptions remains stable at around £3000 a year, plus donations from a number of Friends. The outings also make a profit. He drew attention to the additional contribution made by Gift Aid on Friends' subscriptions and donations. Our expenses are modest, with newsletter costs falling as we send more copies by email. The bank balance stands at more than £15,000, which is available to the Gallery when an appropriate need is identified. Molly Hurley thanked the Friends for the church flowers at Unity Spencer's funeral, which were much appreciated. A Friend suggested that the £15,000 should be put into an account paying higher interest, but Alan Harding said that we need flexible access to the cash in case the Gallery requests it at short notice. Alan explained that the item 'Contributions to the Gallery' indicated joining fees that were paid straight into the Gallery till. This

figure will go up in future as new subscriptions and renewals will be paid directly to the Gallery, instead of to the Friends account.

It was pointed out that new Data Protection legislation coming into effect in May will require us to ask all the Friends to give their consent to us holding their names and addresses for the purpose of sending the newsletter and any other communications specifically relevant to the Friends.

The accounts were examined by Nicolas Singeisen, who is prepared to continue with his service next year. The accounts were accepted by the Friends present, and Michael Johnson thanked Alan for producing the financial statements, as well as for his ongoing work as membership secretary.

#### **4. View from the Management Committee**

Bob Kottler, who became Chair of the Gallery's Management Committee in 2017, introduced himself to the meeting as 'an ex-rugby playing civil engineer who doesn't live in Cookham!' While this may not seem an ideal CV for the post, Bob has been a custodian for a year, and benefits from the involvement of his wife Jenny, who has been a custodian for more than three years. With extensive experience of international construction projects, he brings a fresh pair of eyes to the management of the Gallery. Over the coming year, he will be looking at ways to increase visitor numbers and income at the Gallery; recruiting more custodians now that we have returned to 7-day opening; finding more storage space for our stock and equipment, and seeking a new Chair for the Friends. Bob said that he feels privileged to be part of the Gallery's dedicated team, and looks forward to working with everyone.

#### **5. Committee membership**

Michael Johnson has now retired as Chair of the Friends, after 10 years in the role. Until a replacement is found, the chairing of meetings will be shared between members of the committee. Alan Harding, Brian Schirn and Richard Woodrow have agreed to serve for a further three years, until 2021. All these committee members were accepted by the meeting. The remaining members will come up for re-election in 2020, and new members would always be warmly received.

#### **6. Any other business**

It was pointed out that the Friends' outings always take place mid-week, which excludes people who are at work. This was noted by the committee and we will try to accommodate the request, but many galleries don't accept groups at weekends, which tend to be their busiest times.

Alan Harding paid tribute to Michael Johnson for his chairmanship of the Friends over the past 10 years. Michael has been discreet, quiet, very effective, thoughtful, at times firm, but always friendly. A particular highlight of his involvement has been the overnight trips he organised, especially those to Rotterdam, Liverpool, Leeds, Wakefield and Cambridge. On behalf of all the Friends, Alan presented Michael with a framed print of Spencer's drawing of 'Roy.'

### **Appendix**

#### **Friends' events 2017**

Henry Moore Studios and Gardens  
The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, with Dr James Fox  
Sandham Memorial Chapel, Burghclere

#### **Friends' events 2018**

Ravilious & Co exhibition at Compton Verney  
Chichester Cathedral and Pallant House Gallery  
Ferens Art Gallery, Hull, and Lincoln Cathedral

#### **Gallery events 2018**

Feb/March	7-week course on Spencer with Gallery archivist Ann Danks
March 29	Summer exhibition opens
April 14	Curator talk by Amanda Bradley
May 24	Gallery lecture by Dr Susanna Avery-Quash
June 28	Gallery lecture by James Rawlin
July 12	Gallery lecture by David Boyd Haycock
August 13	Cookham Patrons Walk with Ann Danks
Sept 12	Buildings and Beer, with Keith Parry and Ann Danks
Nov 7	Gallery lecture by Carolyn Leder