

Minutes of the
57th Annual General Meeting
On Friday, 11th March 2022

Welcome

Dick Brealey welcomed about 70 Friends to the meeting at The Odney Club, and introduced our President, Dr James Fox. Dr Fox gave a fascinating talk, based on his latest book, about the use of colour in art from prehistory to modern times.

1. Previous minutes

The minutes of the previous year's meeting held on 26th March 2021 were accepted and approved.

2. Chairman's summary

Dick Brealey said that, due to continuing Covid restrictions, it had been another difficult year for both the Gallery and the Friends. However, the number of Friends had remained steady at around 500, with about a third from the Cookhams, a third from the surrounding area and a third from further afield.

The aim of the Friends is to support the Stanley Spencer Gallery by helping to fund improved facilities and purchase new works for the collection, as well as taking on a variety of volunteer roles. We are always seeking to recruit new members; those present were asked to help by spreading the word and distributing Friends' leaflets. As a thank you for their continued support, Friends were invited to take home a free print of Spencer's painting, *At the Piano*.

Friends' activities were limited last year due to Covid, with coach trips felt to be inappropriate. Nevertheless, we did organise a successful visit to Sandham Memorial Chapel, using people's own transport. Talks by Carolyn Leder, about Stanley's Women, and Amy Lim, about the Portraits exhibition, proved extremely popular, and both were repeated to meet demand for more places. In addition, Amy's talk was recorded and made available on the Gallery's website. On 27 April this year, Gallery Trustee Amanda Bradley will give a talk to Friends about the summer exhibition, 'Delight in Nature'. We are working on arrangements for future outings, and planning a walk and talk for children. Dick thanked the Friends committee for their support, while making a plea for new committee members and a new committee Chairperson.

3. Treasurer's report

Clare Millar sent her apologies, as she was unwell, so Dick Brealey presented the accounts for the 12 months to 31 December 2021. At year end, the Friends' bank balance stood at £8,719. The accounts, which were examined by Nicolas Singeisen, were accepted by the Friends present and Dick Brealey thanked Clare Millar for producing the financial statements.

4. Report by Chairman of ManCo

Bob Kottler reviewed the past year in the Gallery. He noted that it had again been difficult, due to Covid, but that we had come through as well if not better than most galleries, thanks to tremendous support from our volunteers, and grants from South East Museums, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and others.

Despite the disruption, the Gallery is recovering well, with footfall of around 1,200 people this year so far, which is as good as before the pandemic. Our new exhibition, 'Delight in Nature', curated by Amanda Bradley, includes some excellent loans and an impressive brochure.

Stanley's daughter, Shirin Spencer, died last month and her funeral will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Cookham, on Wednesday 16 March.

There have been some movements among the Gallery's trustees: the Treasurer, Kathy Bright is retiring and will be replaced by Keith Miller. Shez Courtenay-Smith has retired and been replaced by Chris Brown. Peter Brown is moving away from Cookham, and will be greatly missed for the many contributions he has made to the running of the Gallery.

Forthcoming events involving the Gallery include the Cookham Festival in May and the Queen's Jubilee in June.

We have recruited six new custodians over the past year, and two students have offered to help as required. Bob also requested help from Friends in displaying posters and flyers about the summer exhibition, as well as distributing them to local businesses.

5. Committee Membership

Existing committee members were re-elected at last year's AGM. Since then, Joan Polsinelli has volunteered to join the committee. She was proposed, seconded and duly elected by the meeting.

6. Any other business

There being no other business, the meeting was declared closed at 9pm.