



BRUTON ART SOCIETY

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Bruton Art Society
held at Caryford Community Hall, Castle Cary on
14th January 2026 at 2.30pm**

Those present:

49 members of the Society and the following members of the Committee: Jean Stevens (chairing the meeting in the absence of John Burrough), Richard Cumming, Dorrie Peat, Sally Ridout, Peb Burfoot, Corinna Leigh-Turner, and Jeffy Salt.

1. Apologies

John Burrough, Eleanor Milton, Jenny Maddern, Jane Onslow, Joanna Snow, Wendy Gregory, Alix Baker, Prue Furse-Roberts, Daryl & Sandra Meech, Jules Horn, Gilly Zannetti, Eileen Walkington, Yolanda Moreno

2. Minutes of last AGM - dated 16th January 2025

The Minutes, having been read, were then confirmed as a true and accurate record, and signed.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

4. Chair's Report. (read by Jean Stevens)

"Regrettably, I am unable to attend this year's AGM due to an urgent commitment. I appreciate your attendance and continued support for the Society over the past year. If you wish to contact me my email is listed on the BAS programme card.

The past year has been both busy and successful. The Summer Exhibition was well attended, maintained high standards, and achieved strong sales. Members who joined the visit to the Royal Society of Portrait Painters Annual Exhibition benefited from our patron, Anthony Connolly's insightful President's Tour.

Following last year's discussion regarding the Society's reserves, the Committee has allocated funds for specific projects, ensuring responsible use aligned with our objectives. Notably, we have begun inviting local school students to selected talks free of charge, with further initiatives under consideration.

Committee Updates:

Jean Stevens succeeded Damaris Lee as Secretary and Damaris has stepped down from the committee after 10 years. Jeffy Salt and Jenny Maddern joined the Committee, with Jeffy now organising Painting Days. Peb Burfoot, who has managed the Society's website admirably, has also stepped down but will continue to maintain the website which now facilitates broader engagement for members and non-members alike. We are grateful for Peb's ongoing contribution.

Sally Ridout is stepping down as Exhibition Curator, having set high standards and contributed significantly to our success. Sally will continue to organise Workshops and Lectures, and Jean will assume the role of Curator. The Society relies on the dedication of its committee, and I thank all colleagues for their commitment.

Membership remains strong, and we aim to meet members' needs. The Society acknowledges the dedication of its committee members and invites volunteers for some of the roles that now sit vacant such as of vice chair, secretary, and Trip Organiser. Interested members are encouraged to contact the Secretary. Ideas and involvement are always welcome; please contact any committee member if you feel able to contribute.

You will be pleased to know that plans for a summer party are now underway - look out for more information in due course!

Finally, I extend my thanks to everyone who has supported the Society's activities, including sponsors of the Annual Exhibition. Thank you!"

5. Treasurer's Report

The Society concluded the financial year with a surplus of £2900, thanks to the key factors of stable membership numbers and a highly successful Annual Exhibition with sales more than double those of 2024.

Our workshops continue to be popular and offer good value for money. However, costs rose this year, particularly when engaging high-profile tutors, resulting in a shortfall of £1500 for workshops (most years they break even). In addition, the Society organises and funds lectures, which remain free to members.

At year-end, the Society's assets were as follows:

- **Current account:** £4,952.00
- **Deposit account:** £13,708.65
- **Cash:** £603.91
- **Project Fund:** £18,070 (ring-fenced for initiatives that align with the Society's aims and objectives)

The Project Fund was established after last year's AGM, when it was agreed that bank deposits exceeded likely needs. This fund is dedicated to supporting projects that benefit our members and further the Society's objectives.

The society's accounts are in the process of being finalised however we do not currently have a suitably qualified member or contact able to act as an independent financial examiner and may have to engage accountants specifically to do this.

Legal Status: BAS is not registered as a legal entity and is most likely classified as a 'Not for Profit Unincorporated Association'. This means that members, and especially the management committee, could be liable for any debts or contracts entered into. We will seek advice on the best way forward without creating administration processes that are beyond our resources.

Tax: The Society is likely liable for tax on unearned income (bank interest of £370), and an appropriate provision has been made. Meanwhile we are seeking further advice from tax accountants.

A reserves policy has been proposed to maintain funds equivalent to twice the normal year's expenses, ensuring the Society could withstand two consecutive difficult years.

6. Membership Secretary's report

Membership: Dorrie Peat welcomed the new members who have joined since the AGM last year. Bruton Art Society membership is high with 345 members (347 at the last AGM) and Membership has doubled in the last ten years. 2025 was another very good year with 60 joining (79 in 2024). The total number may change as some decide not to renew membership. Renewals are now coming in through the website with 2/3rds of the membership already renewed. The deadline for renewing membership is 31 st January and after that only one reminder will be sent; 2 weeks after that we will assume that anyone that we haven't heard from is happy to be removed from the Membership. Dorrie requested that members should let her know of any change of email address or telephone for the records.

Newsletter: The last December Newsletter was a bigger 12 page printed edition for the first time; it was also available as a pdf and a flip page version. A regular feature is the Artist Profile and we must again thank Eleanor Milton. Dorrie reported that 3 Newsletters are planned again this year: May, September (after the Exhibition) and a printed edition in December. Members were encouraged to send in their news for the next Newsletters.

Christmas Card Competition

Last year for the first time a book token for £100 was awarded as a prize. In addition, this year a Book Plate is being designed to go to the winner, commissioned from David Chandler. We hope that even more of you will take part this year!

7. Exhibition Secretary's Report

The 72nd Annual Exhibition was a resounding success, as reflected in the positive feedback recorded in the visitors' book, commending the organisation, presentation, and the high standard of work displayed. Notable comments included praise for the exhibition's continual improvement, the diverse range of media, and the overall quality of the event.

Key statistics:

- 140 artists submitted work, with 422 framed pieces and sculptures entered.
- Each artist was permitted up to five entries, with a submission fee of £9 per work.
- Exhibited works comprised 282 pictures and 23 sculptures, with 76 pieces sold.
- Additional sales included 138 trough entries, 37 trough sales, and 411 cards.
- The exhibition attracted 1,735 visitors.

This year, we welcomed guest artists Anthony Connolly PRP and David Brayne Hon. RWS. Anthony Connolly PRP serves as President of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and is one of our Patrons, while David Brayne Hon. RWS is an honorary member of the Royal Watercolour Society. We extend our gratitude to external judges Richard Pikesley, PPNEAC RWS and John Walsom, ROI, as well as to our sponsors for their generous support.

Thanks are also due to all participating artists, committee members, and volunteers, whose dedication ensured the exhibition's success. Special recognition goes to Jean Stevens, who stepped in as curator at short notice and demonstrated exemplary organisational and leadership skills. As I step down, Jean Stevens will assume the role of Exhibition Secretary and Curator, and I wish her every success in this position.

8. Website and Social Media

In simple terms the website currently has three main functions:

- i. It gives members an online resource that provides them with as complete a view as possible of the society's news and activities, all in one place.
- ii. It is an online showcase and shop window for both the society as a whole and for the individual members, and in this respect, it needs to look good and work well.
- iii. It is a tool that can be used to ensure the smooth operation of the society and to provide a secure channel through which membership applications and renewals, bookings for workshops, trips etc. can be made and paid for.

Whilst the website has been functioning well in these three areas, there is always room for improvement and development. Input from the members is not only welcome but encouraged whether it be news of members activities past or upcoming, information for the members own pages, or any other ideas or suggestions for improvement. Without this it can never fully reflect or show case the activities of the society and its members.

Lastly, the use of the website to collect and administer memberships, renewals and bookings online has been enormously helpful in the running of the society over the last few years, but it is, understandably, not universally popular. So, whilst this function is unlikely to 'go away', we know that not everybody finds it easy, and you should rest assured that we will always try to keep the process as simple and user friendly as possible.

Social Media

We have a Bruton Art Society Facebook Page and also an Instagram Account. We have 360 Follows on Facebook and 1,661 Followers on Instagram. We post about the workshops and lectures on these and also try to share members' work. If you wish Bruton Art Society to share your work on Instagram, you will need to add BAS as a collaborator and then it will show on the BAS feed.

9. Programme for 2026

Workshops: In 2025, the society hosted a series of workshops, some of which were more popular than others. Despite a financial shortfall, the society was able to absorb the loss. Three complimentary lectures were offered: 'Winter in Art' by Jenny Newman, 'Adventure, Travels and Sculpture' by Mark Coreth, and a Christmas lecture by David Chandler on 'Mastering Watercolours', produced in collaboration with the Tate Gallery. Reports on these events are available on the society's website and in the newsletters.

For the current year, five workshops are scheduled: a 'Gouache Taster Day' with Kate Cochrane, 'Oil and Cold Wax Painting' with Jenny Graham, 'Marine Figures in Clay' with Marianne Bareham of the Trouvaille Gallery, 'Pigments into Inks and Paints' with Fiona McIntyre—whose book 'Sacred Earth' will be published this year with support from members—and 'Not so Still Life Unwrapped', a talk and workshop with Sally Ridout.

Lectures: Three free lectures are planned: Anthony Connolly on 'Why Drawing Matters and when it doesn't!' at the AGM today. Our next lecture is to be given by Aranxta Sardina from the Art Society London, entitled 'Nikki de Saint Phalle - A Rebel with a Cause', timed to coincide with the exhibition at Hauser & Wirth. This will be at Caryford Hall next Friday January 23rd at 2.30pm. A third lecture just before Christmas will be announced in due course.

Additionally, in October, James Budden will return for a 'Portrait from Life' demonstration, a consistently popular event.

Members are encouraged to complete the Workshop Media Preference Questionnaire, available in the foyer, on the website, and via email from the Membership Secretary. A display of the Workshop and Painting/Sketching Programme for 2026 is also available in the foyer.

Painting Days: There are five exciting sketch and paint days planned at a variety of venues - Kilver Court Gardens in Shepton Mallet, Sturminster Mill, Wells Market and two stunning and very different private gardens: Lordsmead house in Mere and Knowle Rock at Shepton Montague,

So, come and join us and share the experience of sketching or painting outdoors in the medium of your choice followed by a cheery lunch over our sandwiches or in a local cafe.

10. Election of Officers

The re-election of the existing Committee and the election of John Burrough as Chair was proposed by Mark Pender and seconded by Hilary McFarland. The Committee was duly re-elected, with John Burrough as Chair.

11. A.O.B.

There was no other business, and the meeting closed at 3.15pm.