



Friends of York Art Gallery

Minutes of the virtual Annual General Meeting on 27 March 2021 on Zoom at 10.00-12.00

Present: 44 members were recorded on Zoom with 2 YMT representatives

Apologies: Sylvia Hogarth, Peter Hogarth, Dianne Cox, Lizzie Darbyshire, Colette Hennigan, Louise Wheatley and Vivien Flynn

1. Welcome by Charles Martindale (CM), Interim Chair

- CM thanked members for sticking with the Friends and drew attention to the extensive programme of events planned for later in the year
- Much of FYAG's activity in 2020 took place online, resulting in a major update of the website and regular electronic communication with the membership
- Committee has been busy modernising and updating procedures, building on the hard work undertaken by Judith Glover during her tenure as Secretary

2. Record of decision to hold the Annual General Meeting online

- Committee, in light of the exceptional circumstances and with due diligence, agreed that the AGM should be held online

3. Approval of minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 3 April 2019

- The minutes of the last AGM on 3 April 2019 were approved and accepted as a true record

4. President's address

- See the attached document for the 2021 President's address

5. Future developments at York Museums Trust by Reyahn King, CEO, YMT

- Confirmed that YAG will re-open to the public on 28 May 2021
- Financial position is still very serious, but YMT has not yet had to ask for emergency funding from CYC due to various successful grant applications as well as donations
- YMT headline priority for the next 12-18 months is to survive Covid and work together with its audiences and communities to recover and re-open
- An application has been made to access recovery funding from the government, with the result known later this month
- CYC has been an important stakeholder and supporter during the pandemic
- Result of the latest round of recovery funding will dictate whether or not the Yorkshire Museum can open this summer
- Experimental pricing model for YAG which entails free access to the collection and charging for exhibitions will stay in place for the foreseeable future; Friends will receive a discount
- YMT sites will be open 5 days a week instead of 7, with reduced opening hours

6. Proposed amendments to the Constitution

- CM thanked Richard Bailey for his work on the amended Constitution and highlighted the changes

- Concern was expressed about the length of tenure for committee members serving a maximum of 12 years; CM said this would rarely be the case and any member would still have to be re-elected every 3 years
- The amendments to the Constitution were approved

7. Election to the Committee

- It was agreed that proposers and seconders would be taken from those listed on the nomination forms
- The following Officers were elected by the membership at the meeting:
 - Secretary – Benjamin Hilliam (prop. Ron Clayton, sec. Anne McLean)
 - Treasurer – Paul McLean (prop. Azizah Clayton, sec. Benjamin Hilliam)
 - Membership Secretary – Sue Smallpage (prop. Charles Martindale, sec. Azizah Clayton)
- The following members of the Committee were elected by the membership at the meeting:
 - Charles Martindale (prop. Azizah Clayton, sec. Benjamin Hilliam)
 - Moira Fulton (prop. Anne McLean, sec. Judith Glover)
 - Azizah Clayton (prop. Charles Martindale, sec. Benjamin Hilliam)
 - Margaret May (prop. Charles Martindale, sec. Moira Fulton)
 - John Roe (prop. Susan Greenhow, sec. Jim Sharpe)
 - Jim Sharpe (prop. Charles Martindale, sec. Ron Clayton)

8. Treasurer's report by Azizah Clayton

- Accounts had been approved by HPH and the committee and had been circulated to members
- Covered accounts for both 2019 and 2020 and confirmed that the charity is in good financial shape despite the challenges of the past year
- Outlined the substantial grants given to YAG from various special funds for acquisitions, conservation and the MA studentship over the last two years
- Thanks were given to Dorothy Nott, Linda Downey and Susan Greenhow for their work on events, which made a substantial contribution to FYAG funds
- Dr Bearpark bequest was used in 2019 to acquire major Laura Knight painting; commissioned external consultant to advise on purchase
- Richard Bailey highlighted that a decision had been made to invest part of the collection fund into CCLA charities ethical investment fund
- The meeting approved the 2019 accounts (prop. Charles Martindale, sec. Dorothy Nott)
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- CM thanked Azizah Clayton for her efforts as Treasurer

9. Appointment of an Independent Examiner

- The Independent Examiner (HPH Accountants LLP) was appointed for a further year (prop. Charles Martindale, sec. Dorothy Nott)

10. AOB:

- Judith Glover commented that at the last two AGMs concerns had been raised about the low attendance figures at YAG and was pleased that charges had now been removed
- Suggested an exhibition that celebrated the work of York and Yorkshire-based artists of all genres who are currently practising to renew association with local citizens
- Reyahn King highlighted that YAG's audiences had shifted during 2020, with a larger proportion being local, and a younger age demographic; encouraging that attendance figures were up to 60% compared to the previous year, with an increased Net Promoter Score

11. Curator's Report by Beatrice Bertram, Senior Curator, York Art Gallery

- Summarised FYAG's generous grants towards conservation, mounting and framing of collection works, especially the transformative remedial treatment undertaken on damaged canvases for planned *Bloom!* show (results of conservation work to be shared on website)
- Outlined several important acquisitions in 2019-20: a Christopher Cook work purchased with a grant from the Friends; four paintings by 20th-century British women artists including Prunella Clough; a significant group of ceramic works from American collector Patricia Barnes; works on paper by Jade Montserrat; and a major painting by John Atkinson Grimshaw
- Drew attention to exhibitions held between lockdowns in 2020: *Your Art Gallery – Paintings Chosen by You*, which included winners from a Friends poll, and *Views of York & Yorkshire*, featuring prints conserved and mounted thanks to the Friends
- Looked forwards to forthcoming exhibitions: *Inspired by Japan: Pictures of a Floating World* in the Upper North Gallery, *Grayson Perry: The Pre-Therapy Years*, a touring exhibition from the Holburne Museum in the Madsen Galleries, followed by an exhibition about the young Thomas Gainsborough as a landscape artist and a show on collector W.A. Ismay
- Thanked the Friends for their continued support

12. Presentation by Grace England, FYAG Research Scholar, University of York

- Expressed gratitude for the bursary and opportunity during a difficult year
- Work had been completed on blogs, social media, research and interpretation
- Completed a forthcoming 'Artwork of the Month' on the Lely and hoped to deliver an in person talk for the Friends as soon as restrictions allow
- Future work will focus on supporting exhibition installs and de-installs and a research project on society women's portraiture using YAG's collection

B Hilliam, Secretary, 27 March 2021