

Bucks Art Weeks

AGM 13 October 2021

The Oldham Hall, Church Street, Great Missenden

1. Chair's Report – Susannah Fellows

The Chair noted that during the lead up to the 2021 event some members had taken out their frustrations on the Administrator, Paola Aldus, and that this was unacceptable. The Chair made two pleas. 1: To be open to and accept CHANGE. Changes were necessary to allow an actual, rather than a virtual event, within Covid guidelines. The 2021 Brochure was altered from the traditional format, to allow more flexibility to event preparation timings, should lockdown guidelines change. The upside was that it allowed those unsure of their participation in January, to come on board later as Covid subsided, which had never been done before. The use of the website is becoming more important. 2: Please will members read all of their BAW emails and communications. Members were told that the Brochure would not contain dates, locations or map in the AGM report a year ago, that complete event information would be on-line and that the Brochure was produced to thank and celebrate the artists who trusted BAW with their fees and took part in trying circumstances. Still many expressed surprise in their feedback that everything wasn't the same as normal. There are figures showing the proportion of artists who read the communications and those numbers could be higher. Social Media has dramatically increased in importance over the Chair's tenure (5 years) and will be used more and more by BAW. Vanessa and Zaira have created new ideas using social media and these will be discussed later.

2. Feedback from Visitors and Participants – Mark Bond

It was explained that interpreting the data was more difficult this year.

In summary there was a lot of anger about the Brochure.

34% of artists said that sales were significantly down but most said that figures were the same or higher. There seemed to be fewer visitors but overall, more sales. The average age of visitors this year had reduced from the 61-70 age group to the 51-60 age group.

Among visitors 50% made adverse comments about the Brochure. Twitter was only used by 9% of visitors and Instagram was used more than Facebook.

9% of visitors said they would not recommend BAW next year.

No feedback cards were used this year so the data relied on artist reporting or direct visitor feedback.

The issue of artist feedback when exhibiting alone or in groups was briefly discussed. Only group leaders are expected to report back and if group members report as well that might inflate the figures overall. Adjustment and clarification could be needed on this topic.

Arising from questions from the floor it was stated that people must positively opt-in

to satisfy GDPR regs. They should also be able to opt-out easily. The Regs are clear on the need for organisations to be explicit on what data they keep, where they keep it and for what purpose and how the data will be maintained. BAW have a policy that addresses these requirements. In answer to a question about whether personal data is published, the answer was “No”.

3. Website Update – Sarah Beak

The website is developing and improving gradually. All members have a Gallery page and the aim is to use them to drive social media traffic and to create more reasons to go to the website. Artist Events can now be added, artists are encouraged to add more and current images to their Gallery and videos can also now be added. The Chair noted that the website is shared with Oxfordshire and two other counties so we can benefit from their improvements but Sarah evaluates, and the Committee discuss, what changes are happening.

The map is being improved to allow searches by date, time, location, art type etc and it can be accessed on phones and tablets as well as PCs. Imminent changes will include Virtual events and possible Sales pages.

Centrally created videos, such as those with Throwdown contestants, are and will be added.

In answer to a question the Galleries are cleared around February to make way for new applications in the current year.

Another question concerned searching for an individual artist within a group and occasions when it did not work until one went to the group and searched for the individual from there. This will be investigated by Sarah.

Next year group entries will be done differently to make the connection between the group and its members.

In answer to another question it was noted that some participating artists were not listed in the Brochure. It was accepted that the normal indexing methods were changed as a cost cutting measure but that might have been an error.

4. Social Media – Vanessa Mayhead

Vanessa and Zaira have taken on social media matters and they are trying to make it work harder on behalf of artists. The objectives are: to maintain social media efforts supporting the live BAW event in June for artists and visitors; to highlight the work on artist galleries and to create themed events (as some may have seen recently); and to create a virtual BAW to keep interest up at different times of the year.

Vanessa identified three levels of social media activity: ‘Humming’ when we carry out reposting activities throughout the year; ‘Singing’ to highlight work and create themed events at different times of the year; and ‘Shouting’ during Art Weeks in June.

Three request were made of artists and members, to use the #bucksartweeksofficial hashtag when making any social media postings and to keep their galleries up to date with new work.

There will be a newsletter soon offering members the chance to participate in a virtual selling Xmas Fair. A fee will be charged to give members the chance to place 3 pieces of work in the Fair. It is intended to go live from mid-November.

In 2022 it is intended to extend BAW as a virtual selling event beyond June.

Preceding the 2022 event it is hoped there will be a live exhibition and competition that will be open to the public to go and see. The event will be independently judged

with Best in Category awards given, selected by the independent judges and visitors.
Open to all current BAW members.

In answer to a question – Events on the website have to be uploaded by the individual artist.

5. **Resignation of Current Committee**

In line with policy the committee resigned.

6. **Nomination of New Committee and Treasurer**

Nominations were made and seconded for the new committee.

Deborah Black, as Treasurer

Mark Bond

Paola Aldus, also Co-ordinator

Vanessa Mayhead

Sarah Beak

Zaira Mohamed

Laurie Keck

Susannah Fellows

7. **Appointment of Chair**

Susannah Fellows was nominated and seconded for the post of Chair

8. **Questions, Discussion, AOB – The floor**

Trisha Woodcock thanked the Committee for its work during the past 2 years.

Kate Wilkinson also thanked the Committee for honouring fees paid in 2020 to cover the 2021 event.

A comment was made that an unintended error may have been to produce a very attractive Brochure that looked the same as a normal Directory, so people expected it to contain the same detail as usual.

N Bucks did art trails which overcame some of the problems of a lack of hard copy dates, venues and times.

A thank you was made to Paola for making a late entry for an artist.

In answer to another question it was confirmed that VIG have a cash surplus and that £33000 is held in the bank. A loss was made in the year to August 2021 but finances still look healthy.

Another question asked about whether accounts are audited? The response was affirmative but with the clarification that they do not have to be audited accounts but do need to be signed off by an accountant.

Gifts and much appreciation were presented to Kate Wilkinson and Pauline Holt who resigned from the Committee and their roles in the past 2 years.

The meeting closed at 20.30.