

Chairman's report on 2023 (AGM 2024)

Well what a year it has been for us! We just keep going from strength to strength.

Our year started off with the April One Day Workshop run by Sue Cheviot. Six courses ran Needle felting , Watercolour , Willow, Skin care, Macramé, and Stencilling. 43 students attended, 29 members and 14 non-members. A very enjoyable event which made a small surplus. Thank you Sue.

Summer school 2023

As ever, each summer school happens with new ideas, tutors, courses, advertising strategies, publicity campaigns and this one was no exception. After months of planning the week started and then was over in a flash, leaving behind weary but happy students and tutors and even more weary and happy committee members, in its wake.

There were 28 different classes this year, involving 169 students booked onto 212 courses and 17 tutors.

130 students on one course

34 students on two courses

3 students on three courses

2 students on four courses	169
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Students with us for 5 days -25

Students with us for 4 days- 2

Students with us for 3 days – 27

Students with us for 2 days – 91

Students with us for 1 day – 67	212
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169 students was a brilliant outcome, far better than we had hoped for. The last time we had anywhere near this number of students was way back in 2016 with 166. The reasons of successful take up this year has to be a combination of new and exciting courses and a well planned promotional advertising strategy, involving new volunteers in different areas of Gloucestershire, run by Catherine.

It was good to see many new students, who were overjoyed to have found us.

This year we had 9 new courses. Dressmaking – Lesley Greysmark, Wood carving –Seb Burchart, Silk Painting –Mary Day, Enamelling – Katie Sanderson, Discover your Love of Clay – Caroline Gregory, Expanding boxes and Rope Bowls – Sue Cheviot, Amigurumi and Macramé – Tricia McDowell. As well as our established tutors offering different courses within their skillset.

Three courses sadly had to be cancelled, Mosaic and Quilling on Polymer Clay, due to extremely low numbers, and Botanical Art due to tutor illness. But our students are always willing to rebook something else. Thank You.

We planned a good variety of courses and having the photos in the brochures meant that the outcomes could be seen easily. When planning the courses our aim was to have a variety of arts and crafts, of different lengths, on different days, so classes could be mixed and matched. This worked very well,

The Venue

Another very successful year at Newent School, due to the very helpful and obliging staff. The school looked clean, bright and inviting. The Catering worked well with the two different places used. Siting the coffee and tea breaks in the Main Hall made for a greater footfall through the entrance hall for the Marketplace, New Beginnings and Artist in Residence. This year there was a new catering manager who did an amazing job of producing tasty and plentiful

meals. We received many compliments which we passed onto Alison and her team. Bringing your own mug worked well and the helpers appreciated not having to do so much washing up

The entrance hall looked exciting and colourful, with gold tablecloths, sunflowers, new tables and revamped and new signage. In fact I don't recall it looking so good before. I have always wanted the entrance to buzz with activity and it certainly was a buzzing.

Additional income The Raffle proved popular with £278 raised. It was an amazing array of prizes, with first prize being won by Ginny. Many thanks to everyone who donated prizes and bought raffle tickets.

The Marketplace generated £123.80. Thank you to tutors and students who brought in their wares, again a truly remarkable marketplace with beautiful items for sale.

The New Beginnings table was truly an innovative step. I wasn't sure how this was going to pan out, but after emptying my house of unloved items and Margaret Skinner collecting items the table started to evolve. Everyday there were a whole load of new donated items coming in and the students loved it. Nigel and Joyce were in charge of pricing and we were left with very little which went straight to a charity shop. I have had comments thanking us for providing new hobbies for the long winter evenings. It raised £262.12. It will be back.

Artway came back with their wonderful array of materials and gave us £41.10. They are already booked for Tuesday and the Wednesday 2024. Nicky artworks came along and gave us £14.0 from her sales.

We had one Artist in residence this year, Alfie Morgan demonstrating Miniature model painting. That was absolutely amazing to watch, such intricate and delicate work. We hope to have him tutoring a course in the future.

We launched the November One Day Workshops and had 14 book up, there and then.

We also had eleven new members joining us during the week. We welcome them.

We had to raise the student fees to cover the increased Room hire charge, the increased service charge per person and the increase in Tutor fees. This meant that we didn't break even until 4 weeks before summer school, a bit of a worrying time. But we did end up with surplus which is again going to help build up the depleted reserve account. Which is still recovering from the floods of £2007 and Summer school losses 2008-2018.

We have ended up with lots of suggestions for next year and are looking forward to implementing them

Running Summer School this year has at times been interesting to say the least. I started booking students in when the bank transfer system hadn't been fully implemented. In actual fact, for some reason or other, it wouldn't let myself or the treasurer access the accounts for a number of weeks, but it did Sue and Catherine. When it did allow me in, I then had to work out who had paid and under which name. Often the booking form would come a couple of weeks later, the post being what it is. I felt like a teenager always checking my phone several times a day, to make sure I hadn't missed anything. All said and done it was lovely to get to Summer school all week and to see so many happy people. From the comments I have received it was an enjoyable, creative and somewhat tiring event. People did look a bit jaded on the last day and I am looking forward to organising the next one. Onwards and upwards. Many thanks to the committee for all their hardwork and dedication. Such an amazing group of people. It did help to have an able bodied youngster, Ollie, to help with the carrying and clearing away on the last day.

November ODW- this had 7 courses, Skincare, Mixed Media, Crochet, Watercolour, Christmas Cards, Block printing and Scraperboard. 53 attended, 27 members and 26 non members. This was the biggest attendance we have ever had. The students were very happy, the venue looked amazing and we made a surplus. Well done to all who helped.

A very good year for the committee. Who knows what next year will bring?

Gill Webb 2024.

