

THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL

Registered Charity No. 1133670

August 2025

Dear Member

The FORTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society will be held at The Core, Solihull, on Wednesday 3 September 2025 at 10.30 am, prior to the lecture, to transact the following business:

1. **To receive any apologies.**
2. **Notice of Meeting.**
3. **To receive and adopt the Minutes of the 39th Annual General Meeting held on 4 September 2024.**
4. **To receive and adopt the Chairman's Report for the 2024-2025 season.**
5. **To receive and adopt the Honorary Treasurer's Report and the Audited Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2025.**
(Note: If you intend to ask a question at the AGM under this item, you must notify me of what you intend to ask by 26 August 2025 at the latest. You must be at the AGM to ask your question.)
6. **To elect Officers and Committee.**
7. **To appoint the Independent Examiner.**
8. **Date of next Annual General Meeting – 2 September 2026.**

The AGM will be followed at 11.00 am with a lecture by Pepe Martinez entitled "Banksy"

Yours faithfully,

Janet Marsh

Hon. Secretary

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**Minutes of the 39th Annual General Meeting of
The Arts Society Solihull
held on Wednesday 4 September 2024 at Cineworld, Solihull
Registered Charity No. 1133670**

Chairman's Welcome:

The Chairman welcomed members (110) to the 39th Annual General Meeting of our society. He noted that the Society was thriving, membership had increased and finances were very healthy. As a result of having had to cancel the September meeting last year and the fees for hiring Cineworld being lower than those for hiring The Core, there had been an in-year surplus for 2023-2024 and, as a result, we had been able to reduce this year's membership to £50 from £55. He spoke about the society's interesting and varied lecture programme, complemented by the popular programme of tours and events, which had helped to sustain our membership numbers.

Reference was made to the attempt by the trustees of the national Arts Society to change the constitution, the debate that ensued and the overwhelming vote by local societies not to support the constitutional change. There are now new trustees at national level and they aim to renew the relationship between HQ and local societies.

Mr Griffiths said that the Society owed much to committee members and that he had thoroughly enjoyed his three years as Chairman, helped by their dedication, hard work and comradeship.

1. **Apologies for absence:** The list of apologies is held with these minutes and is available for inspection.
2. **Notice of Meeting:** The notice of the meeting had been circulated to all members in August and the Chairman proposed to take it as read. There were no objections to this proposal.
3. **The Minutes of the 38th Annual General Meeting** held on Wednesday 8 November 2023 had been circulated to all members in August. The Chairman proposed that they be formally adopted, seconded by Susan Gomm and carried by a show of hands.
4. **Chairman's Report (Phillip Griffiths)**
The Chairman's Report for the year ended 30 June 2024 had been circulated to all members in August. The Chairman proposed that it be formally adopted, seconded by David Bixby and carried by a show of hands.
5. **The Hon. Treasurer's Report (Diane Grainger)**
The Hon Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2024 had been circulated to all members with the Chairman's Report in August. No notice had been received of any questions pertaining to the Treasurer's Report or the Accounts. The Chairman proposed that the Treasurer's Report and Accounts be formally adopted, seconded by Judy Evans and carried by a show of hands.
6. **Election of Officers and Committee**
The names of the present Committee Members who were prepared to stand again for office had been displayed prior to the July meeting and prior to this meeting. All had been formally proposed and seconded. Their re-election was carried by a show of hands.
Phillip Griffiths was standing down as Chairman at this meeting and he congratulated the new Chairman, Judith Carver, and handed the Chair to her. Judith thanked Phillip on behalf of all members for his leadership over the previous three years and then outlined the plans for the 2024/2025 year.
7. **Appointment of Independent Examiner (Carole Orford)**
The new Chairman was pleased to confirm that Carole Orford had agreed to act as Independent Examiner for the financial year ending on 30 June 2025. Her appointment was proposed by Sue Burden, seconded by Nick Stephens and carried by a show of hands.
8. **Date of next Annual General Meeting**
The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3 September 2025. There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed and the Chairman thanked members for their attendance.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024 - 2025 (Incorporating the Committee's annual reports)

We have enjoyed another successful and interesting year, as the individual reports from our committee members testify. Please do take time to read what they have to say about the society. A society of which we are rightly proud and which responds to change and feedback and is constantly evolving.

Throughout this year we have seen our membership grow as a result of our popularity and the welcome addition of members from The Arts Society Arden. It has been a pleasure to talk to these new members and to see how quickly they have settled with us. We have been carefully monitoring membership numbers in line with the capacity of both Cineworld and The Core and whilst total membership has often exceeded the capacity of both venues (which have roughly the same number of seats) we know from registration figures that current attendance leaves us with sufficient space.

The staff at Cineworld both in management and behind the scenes have made us most welcome whilst The Core has been closed and I would like to say a personal thanks to them for enabling us as a society to continue with our monthly meetings. The decision to move back to what has been the home of the society since its inception was not entered into lightly. After much discussion and crunching of numbers we agreed that it was the sensible thing to do.

The increase in the number of responses to the request for lecture feedback confirms your interest in maintaining high standards as well as providing us with valuable feedback. At times, however, we do wonder if we have all watched and listened to the same lecture when comments can be as varied as "very interesting and informative lecture on a subject I didn't know anything about" to "pace of lecture a bit slow and some repetition so I nearly fell asleep". Both of which came from the same recent lecture! It just proves what an interesting group we are and that you can't please all of the people all of the time – though we do try.

It has been pleasing to experience the improvement in communication from London and what feels like a genuine drive to embrace and involve local societies and their members; looking out instead of looking in. I will keep you posted on developments.

We know how much you value the trips and visits we organise and how much they add to your membership of the society. Costs in all areas of our organisation are escalating considerably and at all times we have our financial responsibilities at the forefront of our planning. However, we are still able to support the development of art for local children and their schools through grants. Each of these things reflect the superb way in which the committee strives to enhance the success of the society; it has been such a privilege to work with them this year.

We are always on the lookout for new faces to add experience to the team. Do speak to us if you have a little time to spare and the inclination to add your expertise.

The return to the Core Theatre in September coincides with the 40th anniversary of the society and we are looking to highlight this in a number of different ways throughout the year, so do keep an eye on your emails.

Thank you for your support and good will over the last year. I am really looking forward to continuing that relationship next year. Our aims are simple: to inform about the arts, to explore a breadth of subject matter, to stimulate discussion and encourage further interest, to share experiences with like-minded people, to broaden knowledge and to entertain.

Programme Secretary (Lorna Bosley)

This year has seen a diverse range of topics, and our lecturers have enjoyed visiting us here in Solihull. We had very positive feedback from most of our lectures and the lecture given by Sarah Lenton – 300 Years of Christmas at Covent Garden was very much enjoyed. Benedict Morrison lectured us on Cinema from the Rubble: The Post War Politics of Ealing Studios. Many members had memories of the films he discussed, and some members were going to try to download these golden oldies for their enjoyment.

Once more we had Bertie Pearce who has visited us several times before. This time he gave us his lecture Wonder Workers and the Art of Illusion: the History of Magic through Art and Pictures. Bertie never fails to please, and it was a pleasure to have him back in Solihull.

During the coming year we have a programme which I hope will spark your interest. In September, Pepe Martinez will be giving his lecture on Banksy, and you will see from the website that, over following months, we have lectures on: Women Artists in Britain 1520 – 1920; Charles 1, King and Collector; the History of Portmeirion; Food and Art through the ages from Renaissance Sugar Sculpture to 3D printing; The Art of Art Deco; The Art of the Japanese Garden; 18thC England through the eyes of Canaletto; Death by Wallpaper; The History of Opera; Bronze Frescos of Santorini; and Anthony Gormley.

I have had several enquiries (sometimes on behalf of other societies) as to how much it costs to have a lecturer come to Solihull. This varies as it depends on whether or not they are situated in London or whether they live further afield, in which case we pay for overnight accommodation, mainly at the Travel Lodge in Solihull as this would appear to be the most reasonably priced. On average it costs approximately £600 for lecturers attending from London. We ask lecturers who travel by car to cost their travel expenses on the equivalent advance rail fare, and several lecturers who live substantially far away will set their expenses at a fixed price favourable to our society. I hope this gives you an insight into the cost of lecturers attending Solihull.

I look forward to seeing you at our lectures and I am always keen to hear your appraisal and reflections of our lectures.

Membership Secretary (Phil Griffiths)

In recent years, the Society's membership has remained at 300 at renewal in July, climbing to about 320 over the year with usually 200 attending a lecture. This year there has been a steady increase in both membership and attendance at lectures. Every month at least 10 members have joined the Society, so that by April 2025 we were approaching maximum capacity, although this was never reached. Growth has partly been natural, with new members attracted by both the lecture programme as well as the variety of trips and visits. However, the closure of The Arts Society Arden has been a major factor in the increase and we have welcomed many of Arden's members. With membership renewal at the end of June 2025 membership should be around the 400 mark.

Heritage Volunteers (Maureen Hill)

All good things come to an end and we have now completed our work at Packwood House for The National Trust.

Our first meeting at Packwood was in January 2014 and, in the 11 years that followed, we have enjoyed providing the following:

- a) Creating a copy of the original Visitor's Book worked by Baron Ash's Mother.

- b) Replicating the pattern of a tapestry hanging in the Dining Room to create the cushions below the Oriel Window in the Great Hall.
- c) Interpreting the new graphic images used by the Trust on two bench cushions spelling out the name Packwood etc (located upstairs in the Observation Room).
- d) Producing six chair covers for the chairs located in the long gallery between the Entrance and the Great Hall. These were an identical copy of the original covers which still exist underneath but show how vibrant the colours and pattern were originally. They are lined with a silk-like material to ensure no damage would incur during removal for cleaning.

All items have labels indicating that they were produced by The Heritage Volunteers of The Arts Society Solihull.

We have worked with a number of National Trust Managers over this period and thank them for their assistance and cooperation. They have also encouraged our Society to hold some events on their premises, which we have enjoyed.

Our volunteer numbers have dwindled during the time, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their hard work on this project.

Tours and Events (Rosemarie Cope)

We are delighted that the Tours and Events Programme continues to be so popular. Demand for places on our trips has increased this year, reflecting the increase in the number of members of our society, especially since the closure of the Arden Society. We recommend early application for the trips to avoid disappointment. Could I also please remind members to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with their application.

The Tours and Events programme is put together by a small group, to which we have welcomed Gill Davies. She has joined Anne Butcher, Judith Carver, Diane Grainger and me. Our programme last year continued in September with a guided walk around the historic market town of Ludlow. There followed, on a freezing cold day in November, a tour of an unusual venue, the now decommissioned Shrewsbury Prison, where we learnt about its history and the reality of life behind bars. We also visited Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. We ended 2024 with our annual Christmas lunch, this year at Nuthurst Grange, which provided an excellent meal in a beautifully decorated setting.

Our first event in 2025 was a second visit to The Birmingham Royal Ballet at the Hippodrome, following its popularity last year. We enjoyed an entertaining, magical performance of Cinderella. In March, the Church Crawl in and around the Malvern area took us to four historic churches, under the expert guidance of Tim Bridges.

Our holiday in May this year was to the Isle of Wight. This was enjoyed by all, and we had a varied selection of visits during our time there. Osborne House was the highlight of the holiday, but we also visited some lesser-known venues, including Brading Roman Villa, with its outstanding mosaics, the quaint Godshill Village, Mottistone Gardens and Arreton Barns Arts and Crafts Centre. We also had a trip on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway.

Lastly, we returned to the Cotswolds in June for our very pleasant visit to the picturesque, historic town of Burford, followed by a guided tour of Kelmscott Manor, the summer home of William Morris and family.

Later this year, in September, we have a visit to Upton House and The National Herb Centre, followed by a Special Interest Day in October with Sophie Matthews, entitled an Afternoon of Art and Music. This will take place at Nuthurst Grange, not Wren Hall as advertised.

Finally, you will find details of the Tours and Events programme for 2026 on our website. This includes our first holiday abroad for several years, to Art Deco and Art Nouveau sites in Lille and Antwerp.

Young Arts/Arts Volunteering (Annette Shillaker)

In the academic year 2024-5, we awarded a grant to the Solihull Cultural Education Partnership. They worked with 3 partner organisations to deliver an exciting programme of interventions across theatre, visual arts, music and dance which involved over 3000 children in 28 local schools. Our grant was to fund the creation of a short film of the project which is now available to view on YouTube (see Solihull CEP website for a link to the “ Moments of Wow” project).

Communications (Lynda Donaldson)

Mailchimp has become fully embedded as the means of communicating with the membership as a group, with our Gmail email address being used for individual responses. The Mailchimp subscription was upgraded this year which means that emails can be scheduled to be sent out at a specific date and time.

The Chairman's newsletters are now sent out as a PDF with only a few members receiving a paper copy. They are also available on the website under Documents.

The Arts Society introduced a West Midlands Facebook page last year and I still manage the Arts Society Solihull contributions. Using Facebook continues to give us an opportunity to share what we have been doing to a wider audience.

The monthly PowerPoint, which is shared with members before the lecture, is also available as a PDF on the website.

The number of members who are evaluating the lectures via the website has increased this year to an average of around 80 reviews each month. We welcome the reviews as these help the Committee when reviewing them for the Arts Society.

As part of my commitment to the Arts Society in its wider context I am the secretary of the West Midlands Support Group. Its role is to support the West Midlands Art Societies and to provide a link with London.

Airedale Solutions manage the website for us and those members who visit the site will have seen that it has been improved over the last six months. It is still difficult to put photographs of events on the website but members who regularly attend lectures will have seen the most recent photographs as part of the PowerPoint.

Judith Carver, Chairman

TREASURER'S REPORT 2024 – 2025

Introduction

I am pleased to present the final account for the year-end 30 June 2025. The accounts continue to reflect a sound financial position for the Society.

Our independent financial examiner is satisfied that the accounts have been correctly prepared and has not raised any matters of concern regarding the accounting records nor practices.

Income and Expenditure

There is a surplus at the year-end of £13,760.00, which is an increase of £10,780.00 on last year's figure. This is the result of an unprecedented increase in members, the generous donation of £6981.00 from our sister Arts Society Arden when they closed earlier in 2025 and the continued support from members for gift aid and our raffles.

We also earned a more favourable annual interest of £717.78 from our new savings account with Skipton Building Society. This sum has been reinvested with the original deposit of £20,000. The interest rate has been reducing over recent months and will be kept under review by the Committee.

There is a small surplus between the Income and Expenditure from Tours and Events due to the popularity of the Events programme.

The Committee recognises that we have a strong surplus fund and is committed to ensuring that this is used for the benefit of members and our Society aims.

The donation from The Arts Society Arden has been ring-fenced to be spent on arts in the community at the request of the retiring Chair of Arden.

The remaining increase in funds was taken into account in setting the 25/26 membership fee and in the planning for extra expenditure which will be used in 2025/26, to provide a range of special events to commemorate our 40th anniversary year. We have additionally increased our 2025/6 commitment for Arts Volunteering grants to £3,000.

The budget for 25/26 takes account of the benefits from a renegotiated lower hire fee with the Core Theatre, the increases in lecturers' fees and expenses and an increased annual service charge from the National Arts Society.

Balance Sheet

With regard to the balance Sheet, all items are covered in the above report.

Diane Grainger, Hon Treasurer

THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2025

Basis of accounting and accounting policies

The financial statements are prepared on an accruals basis and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Accounting Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005), issued in March 2005.

Income and Expenditure

The annual payment of the Society's Service Charge to the National Arts Society and the West Midlands Area Arts Society is for the year January to December. The fee is non-refundable and as such the Committee includes the whole charge in the Society's annual accounts for each year ending 30th June.

Balance Sheet

All renewal and new membership fees received for the 25/26 membership year, prior to 1 July 2025 are reflected in the creditors figure in our current liabilities in the Balance Sheet.

The cash on deposit of £20,717.00 is a Community Saver account with Skipton Building Society, opened in 2023 for the purposes of a reserve fund to protect the Society's sustainability and provide capacity to manage unforeseen financial difficulties. The interest is variable and paid annually in October, the first payment being £717.78 in October 2024. The Committee sets and reviews the policy for its reserves having regard to the Society's financial position and commitments.

THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL
Income and Expenditure Account
For the year to 30th June 2025

	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
<u>Income</u>			
Subscriptions 2024-25		19660	16998
Visitors' fees		424	243
Study Days & Events		15234	14742
Interest		0	12
Miscellaneous income(Raffle & Arden donation £6981)		8057	351
Gift Aid		3273	2981
The Arts Society Grants for Young Arts		250	250
		<u>46898</u>	<u>35577</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Lecture fees and expenses	4680		3971
National and Area Arts Society service charges for year ending Dec 2024	5072		5506
Hire of Lecture Theatre	6480		6835
Printing, stationery and postage	594		583
Administrative Expenses	256		161
Study days/Event/virtual walks Expenditure	14712		14276
IT Expenditure	242		365
Misc expenditure (raffle)	102		
Total expenditure		<u>32138</u>	<u>31697</u>
	<u>14760</u>		<u>3880</u>
Surplus/ (deficit) before awards and discretionary expenditure			
	14760		3880
<u>Awards and discretionary expenditure</u>			
Arts Volunteering (List)	1000		900
Moments of Wow - £1000			
	<u>1000</u>		<u>900</u>
<u>Surplus/ (deficit) for the year</u>		<u>13760</u>	<u>2980</u>

THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL
Balance Sheet
For the year to 30th June 2025

	<u>2024/25</u>	<u>2023/24</u>
Current assets		
Cash at bank (No. 1 Acc)	36,414	23,250
Cash at bank (No. 2 Acc)	17,055	11,750
Cash on deposit Skipton	20,718	20,000
Cash in hand	80	50
Other debtors		
Loan - Patricia Fay Fund	500	500
Pre payment Art & Music event Oct 25	150	
Prepayment Xmas lunch Dec 25	250	
Prepayment Cineworld July 25	720	
Prepayments		1198
	<u>75,887</u>	<u>56,748</u>
Current liabilities		
Creditors & Accruals	17,179	11,800
Bank reconciliation No. 1 Acc.		
Bank reconciliation no. 2 acc		
	<u>17,179</u>	<u>11,800</u>
Net assets	<u>58,708</u>	<u>44,948</u>
ACCUMULATED FUND		
Balance as at 30th June 2024	44,948	41,968
Surplus/Deficit for the year	13,760	2,980
Balance as at 30th June 2025	<u>58,708</u>	<u>44,948</u>

Approved on behalf of the Committee

Chairman

J. L. Cane

Treasurer

Diane Grainger

Judith Carver

Diane Grainger

REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ARTS SOCIETY SOLIHULL

I have examined the foregoing Balance Sheet as at 30th June 2025 together with the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date and in my opinion they are correctly prepared in accordance with the Society's records produced to me.

Independent Examiner

Carole Orford

Carole Orford