

The Arts Society Wensleydale
Registered Charity number 1203231
Report of the Chairman of Trustees for the year ending 31
December 2023

Introduction

The Arts Society Wensleydale was established in 2000. Following a review by the Management Committee of the Society in 2023, a decision was taken by the membership to register the Society as a charity. This was achieved on 23 May 2023 when registration as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation was approved by the Charities Commission. Accordingly, this is the first report by the Trustees of the Charity since its registration.

The objects of the Charity are:

- 1) the promotion and advancement of the education of the public in the cultivation, appreciation and study of the decorative and fine arts,
- 2) the conservation and preservation of the artistic heritage of the United Kingdom and other countries for the benefit of the public, and
- 3) the advancement of the arts, culture and heritage, in particular, but without limitation, the decorative and fine arts.

Review of Activities

Lecture Programme

The Charity has undertaken a programme of nine lectures in 2023. These are open to the public and have covered a wide range of topics consistent with the objectives detailed above. The topics covered have ranged from Faberge to the original photos of Shackleton's expedition to the Antarctic and from Breugel to the Art of the Mining Communities. After each lecture, the Management Committee assesses its quality and reviews any issues that arise. Our current venue at Tennants in Leyburn has the benefit of a large lecture room with good seating, a café, restaurant and extensive accessible parking. Attendance at lectures remains in line with previous years with an average of 70 members and 11 guests attending meetings.

Visits and Study Days

The Charity has resumed its programme of visits and study days following the interruption caused by Covid. Two visits were undertaken in 2023. The

first was to Harewood House and involved a private guided tour focussing on the exceptional Chippendale furniture. The second visit was to Bishop Auckland and included a tour of the Bishop's Palace with its series of paintings by Zubaran and newly created Faith Centre. Both visits were rated highly by the participants.

Church Recording

In early 2023, the Charity commenced an ambitious project to record all the elements of Kirklington Parish Church near Bedale. The majority of the recording has now been completed and the process of assembling, editing and publishing the information is now in progress. This project was led by Brian Kealy, a longstanding member of the Society and the Management Committee and a champion of church recording. Sadly, Brian passed away in December 2023 and it is now planned dedicate the finished work to his memory.

Young Arts

The Charity has worked in partnership with another local charity, We Can Dance (registered charity number 1136698), which provides dance workshops for young people with learning difficulties. The Charity was successful in obtaining a grant of £1500 from the Patricia Foy Foundation to fund workshops at the Mowbray School in Bedale. These weekly workshops took place over the nine months from November 2022 and offered a clear demonstration of the positive impact of music and dance in transforming the lives of young people with learning difficulties. In addition to the positive impact on the young people involved, this project increased the profile of the Charity in the local community.

Finance

The Charity incurred a deficit of £544 in the year to 31 December 2023. Total cash reserves at year end amounted to £15,124. The accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis in line with current guidance by the Charities Commission.

Prior to its registration as a charity, the members of the Society approved a change of year end from 31 August to 31 December. Accordingly, 2023 was a year of transition. In the twelve months to 31 August, the Society incurred a deficit of £1,661 with cash reserves at that year end amounting to £10,500. The improvement reflected in the result to 31 December is more than accounted for by the positive impact of Gift Aid related to membership subscriptions and donations (£1,479).

The primary sources of funding for the Charity in 2023 were membership subscriptions (£7,282), Gift Aid (£1,479), donations from members of the

public attending lectures (£985) and the net proceeds of monthly raffles (£607). The Charity does not undertake any other fundraising activities.

Underlying reserves are around £10,000, broadly equivalent to normalised annual expenditure. This level of reserves is designed to ensure that the Charity is financially robust and can survive unforeseen events such as having to change venue, an unexpected decline in membership or a national crisis such as the pandemic. 80% of the underlying cash reserves are deposited in interest bearing accounts.

Governance and Structure

At the Extraordinary General Meeting of members on 25 April 2023, the members of the Society approved the following:

- 1) to seek to register the Society as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation,
- 2) a New Constitution reflecting its charitable status, and
- 3) the appointment of the Chairman (Susan Rumsey), Treasurer (Bob Davies) and Membership Secretary (Lilian Haworth) as Trustees to serve until the next Annual General Meeting.

Registration of the Charity was approved by the Charities Commission on 23 May 2023 and the HMRC subsequently approved registration for Gift Aid.

Prior to its registration as a charity, the Society was governed by a Management Committee elected by members. Under the New Constitution, the Charity is governed by the Trustees who are elected by members. The Management Committee continues to undertake the day to day running of Charity and its current members are:

Susan Rumsey	Trustee and Chairman
Robert Davies	Trustee and Treasurer
Lilian Haworth	Trustee and Membership Secretary
Jennifer Howard-Vyse	Study Day and Visits Secretary
Alyson Jones	Programme Secretary
Eileen Davies	Minutes Secretary
Carolyn Bryant	Young Arts Coordinator
Rosalind Higson	Committee Member

All the current Trustees are standing for re-election at the Annual General Meeting.

Membership and Guests

On 31 December 2023, the Charity had 113 members, broadly unchanged from the previous year. This is significantly lower than the 152 achieved immediately prior to the pandemic. However, it remains around 15% higher than the levels achieved prior to the relocation to Tennants in Leyburn in 2019.

Outlook

The Charity is now in a stronger financial position than it was a year ago. Although a small increase in annual subscription will be necessary to achieve breakeven, the overall financial position of the Charity is satisfactory.

However, the Charity faces two key challenges. Maintaining and growing membership is essential for the Charity to prosper. If membership falls, our venue may become unaffordable necessitating relocation to a less attractive facility. This in turn could further adversely affect membership.

All the Trustees and a number of the members of the Management Committee have now served the Charity for at least 5 years. In common with many other voluntary organisations, the Charity struggles to get members to volunteer for key leadership roles. Again, if members are not willing to volunteer for these roles, the future of the Charity is at risk.

In addition to the Management Committee, the Charity has a core group of members who make a major contribution to the success of the organisation including running the monthly raffle and transporting lecturers to and from railway stations. The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank them and the members of the Management Committee, on behalf of the members, for their continued hard work and support.

Conclusion

This has been an important year for the Charity. The Trustees believe that we have taken a significant step towards ensuring a successful future for the organisation. Please continue to support The Arts Society Wensleydale, encourage others to join and do consider becoming a Trustee or volunteering to join the Management Committee. The future of the Charity is in your hands.

Susan Rumsey

Chairman

February 2024

The Arts Society Wensleydale

Registered Charity 1203231

Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023

The Charity incurred a deficit of £544 in the year to 31 December 2023. This is consistent with the forecast at the time of the EGM in April 2023 and reflects the positive impact of the Gift Aid (£1479) and the higher interest income resulting from the transfer of funds from Barclays to the Skipton Building Society (£80). Total cash reserves at year end amounted to £15,124. The accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis in line with current guidance by the Charities Commission and have been subject review by an independent examiner.

Year Ending 31 December 2023	
Income	£
Subscriptions	7,352.00
Guest donations	985.00
Raffle	767.00
Spring Lunch	655.00
Visits	1,585.00
Gift Aid	1,554.00
Young Artists	1,500.00 *
Book Sales	41.00
Other	4.00
Bank Interest	164.65
Total Receipts	14,607.65
Expenditure	
Lecturer Fees	(3,320.00)
Lecturer Expenses	(446.32)
Room Hire	(4,320.00)
Raffle	(160.04)
Lecturer Lunches	(95.42)
Spring Lunch	(658.00)
Visits	(1,637.00)
Card fees	(33.28)
Arts Society Affiliation Fee	(2,294.72)
Travel, Subsistence & Printing	(687.00)
Young Artists	(1,500.00)
Total Expenditure	(15,151.78)
Net Surplus /(Deficit)	(544.13)
* Prepayment	

	31 December 2023
Members funds	
Brought forward from previous year	17,168.55
Net Surplus /(Deficit)	(544.13)
Prepayment	(1,500.00)
Accumulated funds at year end	15,124.42
Current Assets	
Business Premium Account	2,666.12
Current Account	6,296.63
Skipton Building Spociety	6121.67
Cash in hand	40.00
Total Assets	15,124.42

Bob Davies
Treasurer
17 February 2024