

**MINUTES OF EAST ANGLIA AREA MEETING: THURSDAY 12 MARCH 2020
THE LECTURE ROOM ABOVE THE REFECTORY, BURY ST EDMUNDS CATHEDRAL**

A warm welcome was extended to all Society attendees, David Medcalf, Church Recording, James Wilkins (JW), Membership Director, Tim Nicholls (TN), Finance & Resources Director and Angela Payne (AP), East Anglia Area Societies' Advisor, all The Arts Society.

Apologies for absence received from Susan Mahmoud (Burghley), Susan Greenwood (Cambridge), Roy Wisdom (East Suffolk), Chris Chapman (Glaven Valley), Julia Short (Granta), Vanessa Reed Herbert (Newmarket), Gerald Pepper (North West Norfolk), Elaine Mitchell (Norwich), Mary Moles (Orwell), Ann Samuel & Desmond Quinn (Peterborough), Gill Thurlby (South Cambs), Penny Mahood & Jean Steward (Wensum), Sue Barrett (West Suffolk) and Clare Richardson (Woodbridge).

Minutes of the last Area Meeting were approved and signed after amendment to show that under Church Recording Sue Medcalf was stepping down from organising Study Days not from Church Recording.

Area Chair's Report, Ann Foulds

Looking back over the last three years, it seems as if we have all been on a roller-coaster with a constant theme of 'change'. We have been renamed, rebranded and restructured. The societies have met all the challenges, produced their own publicity and explored the surrounding areas for new members. As a result, our membership is now **5914**. You have also created new ideas for supporting Young Arts, Young Musicians and Drama Students. Your reports are excellent and I thank you for all your hard work. My special thanks to the retiring Chairs: Viola Jones (SE Suffolk), Desmond Quinn & Ann Samuel (Peterborough), Constance Heald (Ely) and Elizabeth Dales (Southwold). We extend a warm welcome to their successors: Lynd Aldred, Mick Stump, Maggie Halverson and Sally Goodsell.

The Area Team has been a great support and it is a pleasure to work together. We have had training days and Study Days both for Art and Church Recording, and have given financial support to Young Arts exhibitions. I was proud to see our R.B.A. entries in the Mall Gallery and they will now be in the Overseas League until mid-April. My thanks to Anne Day who stood in for me when I went to Australia. She has been very good at running training days and Opera visits. However, like me, it is time for us to retire along with Nuala Simpson who has quietly and efficiently built up Church Trails. At the moment, we are awaiting the result of the review of Area, which has not helped in my search for a successor.

Decisions made as a result of the Volunteer Impact Review have caused much anguish in this Area, as 17 of our Societies are involved in Church Recording. The Church Recording Team will talk after lunch about the plans for this year and beyond. Yesterday, I bought Hilary Mantel's "The Mirror of Light". This volume about Thomas Cromwell could not have been written without access to church archives.

Maggie and Peter deserve special thanks as they have kept me in order and provided all the valuable advice that help to make this such a successful Area. My dream would be for a successor to step forward today !

Area Treasurer's Report: Peter Ross

Peter's aim was to summarise the 2019 accounts and have them signed off at the meeting. His summary statement and accounts had already been circulated and the Expenditure & Income statement had been inspected by an independent inspector who

checks the accounts against the supporting documentation. Peter drew attention to the small deficits on Area Meetings (£119) and on Mailchimp training (£102). The cost of running the Area exceeded the affiliation fees. Surpluses on the November Special Interest Day and on the Glyndebourne trip had subsidised the Area finances.

The aim was to hold reserves of £2,500 and although two grants had been given in-year totalling £750 there was still a surplus of £1,700+ for which we needed to find a use. If Societies have a suitable use for funds they should contact Area.

Question from the floor:

Q: Why were bank charges relatively high?

A: The Area banks with CAF bank which charges £5 per month and an additional charge was made for a rejected cheque which was presented unsigned.

The 2019 accounts were then adopted, proposed by Ann Foulds and seconded by Angela Payne.

Special Interest Days (SIDs): Jill Irving

Despite difficulties in contacting people a SID has been booked at Culford for 30 October 2020. Leslie Primo will lecture on 'A History of Art-A Voyage of Discovery'. It is hoped to have flyers distributed within the next 10 days. Negotiations have also started on the next Spring lecture.

Ann Foulds thanked Jill for the excellent Spring SID given by Mary Alexander and said that in view of the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus the planned July SID should be postponed until next year, but the October one could go ahead.

Training Days: Anne Day

Programme Planners Day: Twenty-two people from 14 societies had booked to attend the Programme Planners Day on 27 March. Not all Societies had responded to the invitation and there were still 10 places available. She asked that people check they had received invitations and to book places, if appropriate. The day will run from 10.30 to 1, followed by a sandwich lunch and resume in the afternoon if required. The aim is to support new programme planners and share information. ¹

Mailchimp Training: There had been two sessions but the feedback had not been brilliant. Anne had explored the cost of a professional trainer but the cost (c.£900) was too much. It would help to know which Societies were using Mailchimp and what the demand for further training was.

Glyndebourne: Anne is no longer organising trips to Glyndebourne but is very happy to give advice to anyone who wants to take it on.

Church Recorders: Sue Medcalf

The report of church recording activity in the Area had been circulated ahead of the meeting. It should be noted in particular that this Area has presented Records to 164 Churches, with 18 currently being processed. The report represents the status quo as we start a new Church Recording season. BUT as you are all aware, TAS Volunteering Impact Review Report has cast a huge cloud over us all. It has been a very hurtful to be told what we do is of no value. That is not the way to treat intelligent, grown-up volunteers.

We, and research psychologists, considered the questions in the Review survey had a negative slant against Church Recording; it was not sent to every Recorder (and, as CRs, our details all have to be registered at HQ!); some findings are not the full facts or the whole truth, and are misleading. It has been obvious for the last couple of years that TAS were not supporting Church Recording. The immediate reaction to the Impact review Report by Recorders, Area Societies, churches, church authorities and others

¹ Note that the Programme Planners Day has now been cancelled.

having a common interest demonstrates the value of Recording both locally and nationally.

For this year, as far as East Anglia Area Church Recorders and Societies are concerned, we go on as usual-and we intend to in the future! We are grateful for the support expressed in this Area by a number of the Chairmen, and hope that all Societies will continue to fully support their CR Group.

There are two or three points at grass-roots-level:

- For the Societies, all Chairmen will have read the Report and seen that it comes into effect at the end of 2020 after which the grant of £125, paid to the Society concerned from TAS, towards the cost of production, printing and binding of the final Record, ceases. This is unfortunate as there will now be a number of rushed Records to beat the dead-line to apply for the grant. (TAS has been asked to extend this deadline, reply uncertain.)
- This grant was originally provided when 5 paper copies with photographs (and negatives) had to be produced. Now, with technology, we only have to print 2 copies, the others being on memory sticks or gold disks (as from 2020 the latter three items are probably not required). Photographs are embedded or on separate pages but are all laser printed, so that the cost is much reduced. An average Suffolk Church Record might take 2 years of work but cost about £350. Savings could be made if the Church or a sponsor would like to contribute. One cannot be specific as to the exact cost of any Record before it is finished as we do not know what we are going to find, what might need a number of photographs, and what, when looked at in detail, needs none.
- Insurance will continue to be covered as an activity of subscription-paying members of TAS and that includes the so-called Supporter members.
- After 2020 TAS logo will be removed, and supporting Society logos can be used instead.
- In future there will be a loosening of the restraints imposed on Church Recorders and we shall be able to work things out to get Church Recording widely known, and to make our enjoyment even greater.

However, TAS is withdrawing covering the costs of CRARs travel within their Areas, and to meetings in London-though these might not be a feature in the future. We estimate that in EA Area the expenses for the three counties with a current total of 13 Groups is approximately £500 each year. Area has been told they are not allowed to contribute to this, so it remains a concern.

The meeting in London with the Chief Executive confirmed the decision made by him and the Trustees to take away the Arts Society support. Despite their decision the Area representatives reported an enormous amount of support from societies and recorders for church recording to continue. There was much discussion on how we can go on either as a self- incorporated charity and/or under the umbrella of a larger organisation. There is a lot of work to do but we are confident that we will be able to continue with the work that is so worthwhile and much appreciated.

Questions and comments from the floor:

Q: Why is the Area not allowed to support Church Recording? The surplus funds are generated by the East Anglian Societies so it is 'our' money.

A: Technically the Area is part of The Arts Society and the Area accounts are consolidated with those of Head Office. As a result Areas funds can only be spent within Head Office guidelines. TN

Q: As the Area has surplus funds could not Church Recording apply for a grant as part of the area Heritage activity?

A: It is ultimately the decision of the Trustees as to how Area money is spent and all grants need to be in line with the Society's grant strategy. TN

A: The focus for grants is on Young Arts, skills development and support for Art Galleries and Museums. Heritage is a separate activity. JW

Comment: No reasons were given for Church Recording was dropped.

A: The Society undertook the Volunteering Impact Review to scrutinise all of its activities as a charity to ensure they provide public benefit. There are lots of local benefits to Church Recording but when asked, national bodies such as the V&A did not see the benefit. JW

Comment: It is no wonder external bodies do not see the benefit of Church Recording as they do not have access to the records.

Comment: People are getting heartily sick of diktats from Head office telling us how we can spend our money. There would not be an Arts Society without its members and our money supporting it. Maybe it is time for societies to strike out on their own.

Comment: It appears that Head Office is not responsible and accountable to its members.

Comment: The Review should have led to an options paper with recommendations and discussion on the way forward. In this respect the Trustees had over-reached themselves. There is now a muddle with Head Office saying it will not support Church Recording but at the same time suggesting the micro site will be developed and supported by them.

The Church Recorders commented that the report had not been discussed with Area Representatives before it was published and it was evident that the decision will not be changed.

Comment: A new Chair said that it was striking how much unhappiness has been created and for such a small sum of money-about £2000 p.a. for East Anglia.

It was agreed unanimously that a message should be sent to Head Office that the Area deplores the arbitrary nature of the decision, without consultation, to cease support for Church Recording. There was a strong feeling that we were being dictated to and not listened to.

Summing up the discussion Ann Foulds said that the message as agreed will be send but the decision was a fait accompli. The mistake was to miss out consultation on the proposed way forward. However, we should be proud of what we have achieved and work through how to take things forward in the Area. The Area Representatives work will continue and they are looking at whether it is feasible to set up a separate charity to take the work forward. She had already voiced her objections on behalf of the Area at the last ADCO Meeting but it was clear the decision had been taken.

James Wilkins, Membership Director (Slides attached)

Slide1: I think this is about the third or fourth time I've visited East Anglia so it's good to be back particularly as it's Ann's swansong as Area Chairman. Ann has asked me to come and speak to you about your colleagues at Guilford Street, what each of us does and who to contact when you have a particular enquiry. There have also been a few staff changes at Guilford Street in the past 18 months. I note from the agenda that it says that I'm going to speak about 'Change with particular reference to Headquarters and the links with Societies' so hopefully what I've got to say fits in with that.

Slide 2: Let's start with the second floor of The Arts Society House. From left to right.
Katherine Sutton, Education Manager: Lecturer recruitment & monitoring. Katherine is also the organiser of the annual Directory Day. If you have any issues with Lecturers, have a query about the arrangements for Directory or would like to take part in a selection session please contact Katherine. Katherine is very ably assisted by two fantastic volunteers, Liz Simpson and Pat Wood. Both have a wealth of experience within The Arts Society and can also be contacted to assist with programme planning.
Isabel Cooper, PR & Communications Officer: PR, social media & communications. Please contact Isabel for advice about using social media, promoting your Society or using the

brand. Isabel is also the editor of the monthly e-bulletin and the regular e-newsletters that are sent to members. If you have any queries about the distribution of these please contact her.

Rik Gadsby, Digital and Creative Director: email Rik for help with designing flyers, pull up banners and other materials for your Society. Rik can also help with setting up generic Society email accounts.

Slide 3: Finance and Resources Department:

From left to right: Tim Nicholls, Finance & Resources Director, Lewis Merricks, Finance Officer and Josie Moriarty, Operations Assistant.

As the name suggests, you contact Tim and his team with any queries relating to finance such as: Affiliation fee, Fares pool, Gift aid, Insurance, Guidance if you're Society is considering charitable status & Payment of expenses.

Tim is happy to give advice on Society constitutional matters as am I. Tim is also Company Secretary and works closely with the Trustee Board and National Treasurer. Supporter Membership Admin & queries, Eventbrite queries to Josie.

Slide 4: Membership Department

Back row: Joseph Little, Training Officer and Amber Robinson, Membership Advisor

Front row: Joanne Martin, Membership Manager, Me and Elizabeth Gorell, Membership Advisor. The department is often the first point of contact for Societies, Areas, Members and potential members. It is a "one stop shop" for all your queries relating to: membership queries. For volunteering contact Joanne, Elizabeth & Amber and for grants, Joanne (Societies) & Me (external). We also deal with lecturers' feedback, passwords, dashboard & website queries and assistance and MailChimp enquiries. We have mentors that we can put you in touch with should you be having problems with MailChimp Contact me about New Societies and support, Joseph for Training. We also deal with magazine mailing, address labels and merchandise.

Slide 5: Also at The Arts Society House.

I don't think the two people on the right-hand side need any introduction but just in case, Florian Schweizer, Chief Executive and National Chair, Julie Goldsmith. The young lady on the left is Shivani Mahida, Executive Assistant to Julie and Florian. Shivani is the person you contact if you'd like to invite Julie, Florian or another member of the Trustee Board to attend a Society event such as an anniversary celebration. Shivani is also the person the contact with any queries about the arrangements for AGMs or the upcoming Hub meetings.

Slide 6: Finally, we're your colleagues at The Arts Society House. We want to help so please don't ever hesitate to contact us. Our contact details can be found on the Contact Us page of the website.

Questions and Comment from the floor:

Comment: Head Office has changed enormously over recent years and is very helpful.
AP

Comment: A Society Chair who attended a day on committee recruitment run by Angela Payne and had found it very useful.

Q: How do we get information about local society activities, especially Church Recording in the magazine?

A: This is a perennial issue as space is always limited. We now have the monthly bulletin, which is e mailed to members, websites (local, area and national) and e newsletters. Contact the editor, Sue Herdman on magazine@theartssociet.org. JW

Young Arts: Jill Donnelly (report read by Ann Foulds)

I read with some pleasure the findings of The Impact Review in respect of Young Arts projects across the country. I was not at all surprised to read that projects were generally successful, appreciated by local communities and that volunteers were not too difficult to recruit. I was therefore astonished to read that the conclusion was to suggest 'rebranding' to a general activity title and losing the well-understood and reportedly successful name of Young Arts.

In my own area of East Anglia we have a well-established support network with activity in Young Arts projects in so many local societies that we have required the involvement of two or three co-ordinators representing counties to work together productively. We are currently preparing for our sixth annual competition and exhibition for children of all ages in Cambridgeshire from pre-school to sixth form. We have over 130 entries from about 40 schools with an exhibition on two days in March at Kimbolton School. A different secondary school hosts the exhibition each year, bringing IT skills to developing the dedicated website, hospitality students to help organise refreshments, car parking arrangements and visitor movement. This year a quartet of Young Arts judges was drawn from art teachers in East Anglia, an independent artist and the current Chair of East Anglia Area Arts Society. The awards celebration will be opened by the Chief Executive Officer of the local merged NHS Trust. She recognises and appreciates the impact that artwork from local children has on feelings of well-being for patients, staff and schools.

The event is supported by an enthusiastic group of volunteers who have developed a relationship with one or two schools in their localities, such that they refer with pride to the efforts of 'my schools'. Each volunteer brings their own skills and interests, some supporting students heading for art courses at college or university level, others providing delight to primary school children, their teachers and families with displays that brighten the long white corridor walls of our local hospital. This latter joint project is supported by volunteers from both the local Arts Society and the hospital. The project is now in its eight year, and is sustainable precisely because the Young Arts volunteers have invested personal time, energy and enthusiasm in the relationships with their schools. All are appropriately DBS screened and share some training events with hospital volunteers where appropriate. No individual Young Arts volunteer is asked to take on more than they can handle, but there is a friendly support network underpinned by the Area Team. There is pride in supporting the young artists in our area and watching some develop or simply maintain their own joy and skill in the value of art as a communication method available to all.

These projects work because the needs of the young age group, supported by appropriately skill volunteers, are met more effectively outside the support network for adult artists. The needs of the relatively small numbers of skilled primary school children are easily swamped by the larger number of adult artists. Indeed it was to escape from just such submersion under a much larger project for countywide adult artist that this project emerged.

We believe you risk killing the golden goose by 'rebranding' to lose the Young Arts name and with it, recognition for the support network effectively developed for the young. Alternatively you are welcome to come and witness the success of our countywide project at the 2020 exhibition on March 13 and 14 at Kimbolton School, Cambridgeshire.

Ann Foulds added that she was very grateful for all the brilliant work Jill Donnelly does and commended the innovative method of funding activities. Photos of the best artwork

are taken each year and used to make notelets for sale. It was also very pleasing that three students from Wymondham High School have been chosen for the RBA Rising Stars Fine Art Competition.

Comments from the floor

Comment: It is encouraging that our activities can continue to be badged as 'Young Arts' can continue as it is an important activity for many East Anglian societies.

A: It was explained that the wider title of Arts Volunteering had been chosen as a result of the Volunteering Impact Review as it was apparent that some arts activities involved older age groups. JW

Comment: There are many Young Arts activities undertaken in East Anglia and specific mention was made of the Kings Lynn involvement in sponsoring children to take part in the Youth Proms in the Royal Albert Hall and Country Dancing workshops and the East Suffolk involvement in musical activities. (For full details see half-yearly digest of Chairs Reports and Volunteering circulated before the meeting).

Trails of Discovery

Following Nuala Simpson's retirement there is a vacancy for an Area Coordinator. Nuala is willing to assist any new volunteer.

Heritage Volunteers

Jayne Tracey at Area has brought together details of heritage volunteering in East Anglia. Details have been circulated to Societies and the information is also on the Area website.

Discussion Forum

Tim Nicholls was asked to give an update on how the coronavirus was affecting society activities. He said it was a fast-moving situation and people should regularly check for advice from Head Office and from central government. There is as yet no directive to cancel meetings, the ADM or AGM² but advice would shortly go out suggesting that societies should be flexible in dealing with cancellations and/or rescheduling of lectures and events. The Arts Society does not have insurance cover in the event of cancellation of events so there may be a financial hit. The Society does, however, have insurance cover for trustees' liability in the (unlikely) event of a challenge because of a cancellation. For this purpose all committee members are trustees.

Q: Will TN and JW feedback the strong feeling expressed at the meeting on the way in which the Volunteering Impact Review has been handled?

A: Yes, it will be fed back to the trustees. TN JW

Q: Has there been a similar reaction from other Areas?

A: Yes, although the reaction is stronger from East Anglia. TN

Comment: There is a perception that the trustees are not listening. Is that right?

A: It is the trustees who take the decision of the Arts Society and we are not privy to the decision-making process. It is open to any member to stand for election as a trustee. TN

Q: Is there one trustee with responsibility for Volunteering?

A: Yes, Julia Charlton Weedy. TN

Q: Are training courses for treasurers still being held?

A: Yes although the emphasis is more on networking than training so that participants are able to network and share experiences. It is also planned to hold training out of London and there are two up-coming days, one in York and one in Edinburgh. TN

² Note this has been superceded and meetings, including the ADM and AGM have now been cancelled.

Societies' Advisor: Angela Payne

Societies' Advisors are there to support new societies and those which are struggling. A group of 7 or 8 experienced people is being set up under the joint chairmanship of David Yates, South West Area Chair and Angela Payne to assist societies. The group has a growing pool of good ideas to help societies and it was noticeable that societies themselves were now more willing to ask for help. If societies are having difficulty recruiting committee members it is worth considering attending a training course on the subject. In addition Angela is willing to attend committee meetings to offer tips for recruiting both members and committee members during the coronavirus period. She also emphasised the value of neighbouring societies working together and this could extend to sharing committee members and activities. If people need help please ask for it.

Comment: Ann Foulds said that East Anglia Area shared half-yearly reports in which there were many good ideas and some societies were already working with their neighbours.

In conclusion Ann Foulds said that her term of office as Area Chair finished at the AGM in May. A successor had still not been found and it might be that a perception that Areas would be abolished was putting off potential candidates. She urged anyone who might be interested to get in touch. They did not need to have been a Society Chair.

Date of next meeting: 21 October 2020