

The Arts Society Egerton

Annual General Meeting – 12 June 2024

Report of the Committee on the Previous Year's Activities

The last year has been very encouraging. Membership, which had declined during and after Covid, has risen from a low point of 150 to over 180. In addition, there has been a significant increase in the number of guests attending our lectures. As can be seen from the Honorary Treasurer's report this has led to a substantial income benefit. We were delighted to be able to re-start Special Interest Days and planning commenced for offering Members visits. We hope that these positive developments will enable us to reach our Membership target of 200 in 2024.

However, we have not been immune to cost-increases, and this has led to an overall deficit. It now looks certain that subscriptions, which have remained unchanged for many years, will have to increase next year to help address the financial shortfall.

In the meantime, we continue with our aim of increasing our Membership through:

- being a friendly and sociable Society;
 - offering a varied and interesting programme of talks delivered by experts in their field;
 - widening our programme of activities through Study Days and Visits;
- all in a location with wonderful views and FREE parking!

It is always pleasing when hard work starts to pay off. As previously reported, the foundations for this were laid by Gill Bromley's Membership Action Plan and Jenny Mowatt's Special Interest Days organisation, whilst our new Committee member, Diane Eccles, has done a great job on the planning for Visits. Christine Willis and Paul Tubby then provide essential back-up keeping membership contacts and communications up to date, whilst Inga Major and Allan Mowatt provide wise counsel and support based on their many years' experience. Paul has also enhanced the website and I recommend members use it. Last, but not least, we could not function without Sue Wood's secretarial support. This is a very good team and it's a pleasure to work with them.

But even so, we would struggle without the extra support we get at meetings from our members. Lynne, Gail, Shirley, Elizabeth and Maggie have been terrific on the front desk. We are indebted to Roy who has assisted on the technical side for many years, and not a little relieved that Geoff and Mike have recently joined him.

One of our meeting highlights comes at the end with the tea and biscuits provided by Claire and Rachel. Probably less obvious is the work done by them in setting up the Hall and clearing up afterwards. We are so lucky to have them.

We will undoubtedly face challenges in the year ahead not least in putting our finances onto a firmer footing. This is a key challenge for our new Treasurer, Wendy Licence, and we look forward to her input. Thankfully, the opening months of 2024 have seen a continuation of the increase in membership numbers and guests at meetings. The upcoming Special Interest Day is fully subscribed as have been the two members' visits to date. We therefore look to the future with some optimism.

Rob Peaple

Chair

June 2024.