



**Swindon Open Studios AGM**  
**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025, 7pm**  
**The Sun Inn**

**In attendance:** Anna Enright (Chairing), Mark Enright, Michelle Whitmore, Ann Parker-Griffiths, Deepti Arora, Deb Battaglia, Jo Todman, Toni Foot, Rhona Jack, Nicky Sutton, Sheryll Fox, Sophie Boyce (notes), Susanne Webb, Steve Sewell, Jacquie Primrose, Carly Byrne, Jason Richardson, Helen Savin, Carmen Norris, Mel Cooper-Powell, Zoe Thomas, Kristýna Grussová, M Drysz, Lisa Lane.

**Apologies:** Rachele Dickie, Trevor Hancock, Mary Matthews, Linda Read

Version 2 issued 02/02/2025 amendments in red

**Agenda:**

1. Introduce meeting
2. 2024 event update
3. Finance update
4. Proposed Constitution
5. Comfort break
6. Appoint Committee Members
7. Any other business

**Introduce meeting**

Anna introduced herself and explained that at the end of 2024 the existing Committee stepped down and there were concerns there might not be an event in 2025. When the existing Committee asked for help, there was a lot of interest, which is great.

This presents an opportunity to change things slightly and move things forward by adopting a Constitution. This sets out that we will have an AGM every year and elect new committee Members, or the current ones can re-stand.

There will be teams of people helping, and the Committee will be helping them.

The Constitution isn't written in stone and can be changed. The proposed time to make changes would be in November 2025 – so we'd have the event, there would be time to gather feedback, then have our AGM again in November.



We would like to run this meeting like an AGM, so will give an update on the success of last year's event, a headline summary of the financial standing, then hopefully agree the Constitution and appoint Committee Members.

## **2024 event update**

*From last committee meeting notes*

Feedback from visitors was that there was a great choice of artists to visit showing a wide variety of mediums. Feedback from artists was that the event was well organised with lots of information and support.

There were lots of new initiatives for the 20-year anniversary which helped, in addition to the roles which the committee usually do such as, brochure, website, emails, social media, artist support...

The visitor page on the website which Michelle created was thought a helpful addition this year, as the Facebook ads & social media links went through to this page and everything was on there for visitors.

The video that Jacquie Primrose created for social media was really effective, focusing on the visitor's experience. Free support from Digital Culture Network arranged by Sheryll Fox, supported ideas in developing the website and doing Facebook advertisements with Jacquie's video.

Rhona wrote press releases, there was a competition for visitors giving them the chance to win a £50 voucher if they signed up for the newsletter, the launch night was awesome, there was lots of input from the local artistic community. Deborah's speech was amazing. The main event featured in the Swindon Borough Council newsletter, Swindon Advertiser, and lots of other places. There was increased website traffic:

1,500 visits to the website in the lead-up to the first weekend.

1,239 visits to the website in the lead-up to the second weekend.

14,271 – reach (the number of people who saw the Facebook ad).

Thanks was given to the previous committee.

Jacquie, on behalf of the outgoing Committee: *it's been hard work and extremely rewarding in equal amounts. They felt pride from helping run a small cog in the arts events in Swindon. It looked as if we were standing down enmasse, but it was all for*



*individual reasons – medical, family, business. It wasn't because we don't love Swindon Open Studios anymore.*

*When we held the meeting we were worried it wouldn't go ahead this year. We're just over the moon that there was so much enthusiasm and love for open studios. It's an awesome event and awesome community, and we're looking forward to seeing all the new things happening in 2025.*

The existing Committee are very keen to help the new committee. There are lots of jobs volunteering that aren't on the committee, and if those doing those roles hit a challenge or a hurdle, they can reach out to the previous committee for guidance.

### **Finance update**

*From last set of accounts*

1<sup>st</sup> Oct 23 – end Oct 24.

£5,242 income.

The majority of this came from participating artists, £650 from venues, £700 from advertising and sponsorship. Smaller amounts from the raffle, etc.

Total expenditure £5,965.

Printing costs were around £4,200 with £3,700 of this going towards the 10,000 catalogues that were printed. £314 for the website. There was some overspend and some of that was from phasing because these accounts cover 13 months.

There is £2,163 showing in the bank account, which will be carried over to this year's event.

### **Proposed constitution**

*Review and record any agreed amendments, vote on adoption (with agreed amendments).*

Everyone should have received a link to the proposed Constitution, and it's also on the website.

Most amateur clubs – football, amateur dramatics, choirs – have this document in place. They all look similar with the same basic nuts and bolts. The thing that differs with each are the aims. These are the most important thing for us to agree.

Any questions, comments, additions on the aims in the Constitution?



It was suggested to remove the clause of 'affordable' and everyone agreed.

Rhona raised that there is no mention of sponsors or other stakeholders. Discussion followed to the effect that the aims speak to the core values of the organisation and other stakeholders wouldn't usually be included here.

Jacqui emphasised that the aims are very important. It's not a business for someone to profit from, it's a community event and mustn't be taken over by someone who wants to spin a profit from it.

Rhona raised that in Marlborough all artist work is screened. A short discussion followed. The committee and others felt strongly that it's always been an inclusive event that's open to a broad range of artists from those that are doing it professionally to those starting out.

Agreed to change wording to: provide an inclusive community for local artists.

Discussion about whether there is a commitment to providing training events. Agreed to take out training and retain social events. Aims agreed as follows:

2.1. To provide a free opportunity for the general public to engage with local artists, located within a radius of 15 miles from Swindon town centre. The event allows the public to see and discuss how the art is made, with the option to buy original art if they wish.

2.2. To provide an inclusive community for local artists, who are often isolated, and give them the chance to connect with each other, and the whole community through social events around the main exhibitions, on social media and by visiting each others' studios wherever possible.

2.3. This Association is a not-for-profit association. Members pay a fee to be part of the main event. The fee covers the costs of marketing the event.

The rest of the Constitution is very standard in its details. It says we will have a committee, elected at the AGM, and sets out policies we have in place, winding up process etc. It's a standard template constitution, with Swindon Open Studio specific details added.

All present were asked to vote in favour of adopting the Constitution, with the discussed changes and there was a unanimous vote in favour.

cont



## **Appoint committee members**

Six committee members can't run an event this big without help from others so you don't have to be on the committee to be involved. A lot of people have said they want to help and it isn't practical to run a committee with 15 people.

A brief description was given of the available roles and Anna advised that the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer were the core roles needed for the constitution and that the others were desirable but not mandatory.

It was explained that, should someone put themselves forward for a role, someone would need to propose them, then someone second them. If two people want a role then they will each give a little speech and a vote would follow.

### **Chairperson**

Anna Enright said she would like to be chair if no one else wants to be. Jo Todman proposed, Mel Cooper-Powell seconded. No other interest. Anna Enright is appointed as chairperson.

### **Secretary**

Sophie Boyce has put herself forward for Secretary. Anna Enright proposed, Michelle Whitmore seconded. No other interest. Sophie Boyce is appointed secretary.

### **Treasurer**

Steve Sewell has stepped forward for the role of Treasurer. Anna Enright proposed, Kristyna Grussova seconded. No other interest in the room. Steve Sewell is appointed Treasurer. It was noted that Rachele Dikkie had said she is interested but cannot make committee meetings. She has said she will help with guidance if needed.

### **Events Representative**

Michelle Whitmore has put her name forward as the Events Representative. Steve Sewell proposed, Deb Battaglia seconded. No other interest. Michelle Whitmore is appointed as the Events Representative.

### **Marketing Representative**

Rhona Jack has put herself forward as Marketing Representative. Carly Byrne noted interest but didn't want to contest Rhona. Mel Cooper-Powell proposed Rhona, and M Drysz seconded. Rhona Jack is appointed as the Marketing Representative.



## **Sponsorship Representative**

After the discussion below Kristýna Grussová has stepped forward Nikki Sutton proposed and Rhona Jack seconded.

Kristýna Grussová is appointed as the **Marketing Sponsorship** Representative.

Initially, no one stepped forward. Mark Enright said he will help with tasks but not be on the committee. This role is strongly aligned with marketing. Someone who champions us to other organisations, goes to Magic Swindon events, long-term we should be looking to get big organisations to work with us as main sponsors or key partners. It's a development role, get to know all of our existing sponsors and venues and build from there.

## **Other tasks**

Sophie will do the website, Mel will help with the graphics, Toni will help with socials, **M Drysz** will help with PR, Deepti offered help with events, plus many others offered to help with other tasks. Volunteers can be on two teams.

The Arts Council offer training to organisations like SOS. Jo and Rhona came to a meeting with them. They have lots of free training courses.

## **Any other business**

Ann Parker-Griffiths spoke. Last summer she attended Leamington Spa Art in the Park weekend. It was an amazing weekend and huge. She would like to run a similar event in Swindon. She has spoken to a local farmer in Wootton Bassett (Sustain Farm) and is hoping to run an event on a Sunday afternoon in June. It would be for artists with SN postcodes, artists can take stalls. She said that SOS can come and promote the event in September by handing out leaflets. The event will be a charity event, supporting causes for Harry Parker.

## **Other actions / notes comments**

A concern was raised that people didn't know about last year's Pop-up event and how to apply to take part. Last year's committee clarified that this was a trial. Only a few artists were invited to take part, to see if it would work. The outlet said we could do it again and we were going to open it up but they didn't have any space available at present. It was used to market open studios. The previous committee had hoped to make it a regular event, open to everyone.

Tara Parker-Woolway had offered to curate a signposting event throughout



September that has a piece of art from each artist taking part in SOS, and would encourage people to go out to all the venues, especially the venues out of town. However, we – Swindon Open Studios – would need to find her a venue, and to provide people to invigilate (staff) it.

Small discussion on the possibility of being part of Swindon Fringe this year, and curating an exhibition as part of that - they would find us a venue, we would have to organise artists putting up work and also invigilate - however we could choose our opening times.

There are lots of people who want to help and there are lots of good ideas, but they all generate work and we need to retain focus on the main event.

### **Admin / actions**

**Anna** - coordinate hand over with previous committee - namely list of what areas each covered, and contact details shared with new group of volunteers.

**Anna** - coordinate the collection of banners, encapsulated signs, and a big box of old brochures from Deborah.

Thanks and the meeting closed.