

1 Attendance and apologies for absence

Present: Gill Rowley (Chair), Colin Easton (Hon. Treasurer), Dorrie Baker (Hon. Secretary), Richard Partridge

Committee apologies: Anne Neville, Richard Norris

Representatives of member organisations in attendance: Margaret Partridge (HEOS Musical Theatre), Kitty Hartnell (BEAT), Jane Cocking (Friends of Marcq-en-Baroeul), John Hummerston (past-chair of EA&L), Burgess Taylor (Ealing & Hampshire House Photographic Society), Thomas Cobb (Beaufort Players), Sue Clark (Ealing Choral Society), Tony Miller (CEPAC), Celia Busby (Ealing Art Group)

2 Minutes of previous AGM

These were approved.

3 Matters arising

There were none.

4 Chairman's report

Gill Rowley said that over the last year one of the key problems has been distribution. Many outlets – including public libraries (which, it has been announced, are 'going paperless') – are permanently off-limits, while Covid-closed church halls and community centres are currently inaccessible.

The pandemic has of course also severely affected our members. Many have been unable to function at all under lockdown, often because their usual premises are closed. Others have managed to continue operating, sometimes only virtually.

The current circumstances, plus the library situation and almost extinct 'local' paper, have highlighted the importance of the EA&L website and *What's On* in helping to maintain the profiles of our member organisations.

Earlier in the year the Council had held a Scrutiny panel meeting on the subject of Arts Provision in Ealing, inviting seven or eight local arts organisations to report. Gill Rowley, for EA&L, made use of our members' responses to our survey of their experiences of Council provision, such as space for group gatherings, publicity, etc. Fees for Council facilities have been increased to well in excess of what community organisations can afford, and some of its accommodation (that in Ealing Town Hall, for example) was closed to the public well before the pandemic. Lack of space for meetings, rehearsals, performance, art exhibitions etc. has created severe difficulties

for many of our members. It is understood that the Council will be issuing a report on Arts Provision in Ealing in October.

5 Membership report

Richard Partridge said that there are currently 71 EA& members. While a couple have been lost owing to the pandemic, and he expects more, he is hoping that at least some might re-join when it is behind us. He will try to persuade those who are leaving EA&L to become Supporters.

6 Hon. Treasurer's report and adoption of accounts

Treasurer Colin Easton had issued a Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2020. Membership subscriptions were slightly down on previous year but advertising and extra line charges had made up for this. Expenses for printing looked high, but this was because of the phasing of the printer's bills, one of which should have gone into last year's accounts. The bank account for the year ended 31 March 2020 showed a healthy balance of £4,287.

The accounts were duly accepted and approved.

7 Reports: (a) Supporters of Ealing Arts; (b) *What's On*/website

(a) Richard Partridge had taken over the Supporters list from Hazel Talbot. (Supporters pay £10 a year to have *What's On* sent to them by mail.)

(b) Richard reported that whereas the April/May edition of *What's On* had to be sent to recycling as soon as it was printed, owing to lockdown, and no June/July diary was printed, we have now produced two editions in shorter print-runs and distributed them as well as we are able. He reminded the meeting that the website and printed *What's On* contain identical information.

The shorter print runs have had the advantage of enabling us to print in colour on glossy paper, which is particularly advantageous for advertisements. The colour printing was much appreciated.

Richard appealed for volunteers to help with distribution, especially in areas outside central Ealing. Some meeting attendees said they will consider this. Sue Clark of ECS asked to be sent a copy of the current distribution list. Outlets that might be added to this were suggested, including the Steam Museum at Kew.

The use of Council noticeboards was also suggested for general publicity.

8 Election of Officers and Executive Committee members

The following retiring officers were re-elected:

Chairman: Gill Rowley

Hon. Treasurer: Colin Easton

Hon. Secretary: Dorrie Baker

The following ordinary committee members were elected:

Richard Partridge (membership, website, *What's On* editor)
Richard Norris
Anne Neville

Hazel Talbot had stood down from the committee after many years' service, latterly running the Supporters list, and with her husband John very kindly hosting all the EA&L committee meetings. John, until past the age of 90, had been the 'runner' on the major delivery round for *What's On*, which takes in all corners of the borough. We extended our very grateful thanks to both of them.

Gill Rowley said that the committee would be keen to have new members and looked forward to hearing from anyone who might be interested.

9 Campaign for an Ealing Performance and Art Centre (CEPAC): update

Gill Rowley reported that CEPAC, which originated within EA&L, had as agreed last year become a founder member of the new charity, the Friends of the Victoria Hall, which has been working tirelessly to try to prevent the Council disposing of the Victoria Hall to developers, along with the rest of the Town Hall.

The building was paid for by the residents of Ealing in the 1890s for use by the local community, but as it is subject to the governance of a charitable trust it cannot be disposed of without the permission of the Charity Commission. The Commission has asked the Council to modify its plans for the sell-off in order to comply with the trust deed's stipulations concerning use by local organisations. The Council is not inclined to do this, beyond advertising for one voluntary trustee who will have no voting rights and therefore nil impact on the decisions of the trust, which is in effect the Council. Hence, the conflict of interest between the Council and Ealing's community groups and between the community and the commercial hotel operator would remain. What there *should* be is a quorum of trustees from the community, not a single, toothless appointee to whom no one will listen.

CEPAC has drawn up plans to show how the Victoria Hall and Prince's Hall beneath it could be remodelled as an arts centre with facilities for many of our members' activities. The plans will feature in a short video being made to demonstrate how the space could work.

Developments on this issue are reported from time to time in the online newsletter *Ealing Today* and on the CEPAC website, www.cepac.org.uk.

10 Any other business

Former EA&L chair John Hummerston enquired whether it would be possible for EA&L to set up and run an Ealing in Bloom-type competition, on a much smaller scale and for schools only. Dorrie had been a member of EinB until it disbanded last year and Nicky Ross, the widow of former EA&L chair John Ross, had been heavily involved with it. The matter will be discussed at a future committee meeting.