

Ealing Arts & Leisure

Minutes from 56th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 19 October 2021, via Zoom

1 Attendees and apologies for absence

The attendees were Gill Rowley (chair), Dorrie Baker (secretary), Colin Easton (treasurer), Richard Partridge and Richard Norris (EA&L committee members); plus EA&L members Carol Wilkes (Ealing Quilters), Edward Baker ((U3A) and Jane McLeod (Ealing Choral Society).

Apologies for absence were received from former chair John Hummerston, Hugh Mather (Chair of the Friends of St Mary's Perivale), Ealing Lacemakers, Don Kennedy (Rainbow Poetry Group), Abi Barber (abibiyoga) and Celia Busby (Ealing Art Group) and EA&L committee member Anne Neville.

2 Minutes of previous AGM (55th), 30 September 2020

These were approved (proposed and seconded by Richard Norris and Richard Partridge).

3 Matters arising

There were no matters arising other than those covered below.

4 Chair's report

Gill Rowley spoke of

- The distribution of *What's On*, the Events Diary. which now that more drop-off points have re-opened is borough-wide again.
 - It is hoped that distribution can now include re-opened libraries that are community-run
 - Most supermarkets have now outsourced the servicing of their free-sheet bins, which we have been using for *What's On*. If we want to continue using them it will cost money, and may or may not be worth it.
- It is good to see that live events are happening again. BEAT (Borough of Ealing Art Trail) took place this September, across 63 separate sites, and various concerts, including those by Ealing Symphony Orchestra and the West London Sinfonia, have taken place with audiences present.
- The Friends of the Victoria Hall are challenging the Charity Commission at tribunal on its decision to back Ealing Council's plans to dispose of the Victoria Hall, which forms part of the Town Hall complex but is on a separate footprint and is governed by a charitable trust. FoVH's legal costs so far are approaching £80,000. Earlier this year EA&L, a substantial number of whose members have in the past been regular users of the Victoria Hall and other Council facilities, voted to make a contribution towards these costs, which will appear in next year's accounts. Although what the Council is trying to do is clearly indefensible, there seems to be no limit to the amount of our money it is prepared to spend on defending its position.

Gill wished everyone well for next year and hoped that the next AGM can be held in person.

5 Membership report

Richard Partridge summarised the current position.

- There were 75 paid-up members or groups in 2020
- This year, of that 75, 10 have left (two of them permanently, the others as they were not functioning due to the pandemic), 15 have yet to pay, and 50 have paid

6 Treasurer's report and adoption of accounts

Colin Easton had prepared a Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2021 which was shown on-screen. Membership subscriptions fell slightly during that year, with some societies leaving altogether while others held their usual subscription in abeyance while the lockdowns curtailed their normal activities. Advertising and similar revenue was also reduced.

There was a balance of £6,474, some of which has since funded our £1,000 contribution to the Victoria Hall campaign.

One issue of *What's On* (June/July 2020) had to be sent straight to recycling, due to the first lockdown's effect on activity. Otherwise, the print-run was smaller owing to the lower number of available outlets, which reduced costs, but as things return to normal the print-run, and the costs, will increase.

Approval of the accounts was proposed and seconded by Richard Partridge and Richard Norris.

7 Reports for Supporters of Ealing Arts, *What's On* and website

Richard Partridge reported that:

There are still a few EA&L supporters who pay £10 per month for *What's On* to be posted to them at home, although the same information is available on the website for free.

The diary is currently digitally printed in colour, which is much appreciated, but as the print-run is increased, as more outlets become available, the cost of keeping it in colour will rise. It is unlikely that we will want to go back to printing in black only.

West Ealing Library is now open and this is very good for distribution, despite the restricted hours.

Supermarkets are now using a company to manage the free-sheet bins and will charge us to use them in future.

The website continues to provide the content for *What's On*, but can of course be updated more frequently between printed issues.

8 Election of Officers and Executive Committee membership

The following retiring officers were re-elected (proposed and seconded by Carol Wilkes and Richard Partridge):

Chairman: Gill Rowley
Hon. Treasurer: Colin Easton
Hon. Secretary: Dorrie Baker

The following ordinary committee members were re-elected:

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

9 Getting through the pandemic: how some local organisations have survived the lockdowns

Gill Rowley had asked some committee members to tell us how music and drama, in particular, had managed to get through the lockdowns, these being the disciplines that work towards public performance before an audience.

Anne Neville, EA&L committee's drama representative, who was directing rehearsals at Questors and therefore unable to attend this AGM, had sent through a note to say that Questors had done audio dramas and short plays put out on video, play readings on Zoom and improvisation classes. Shakespeare's birthday was also celebrated on Zoom. Towards the end of the second lockdown a devised piece was mounted outside in the car park as the first real performance in front of an audience.

Richard Norris (West London Sinfonia), representing music, spoke of the major programme of livestream concerts held without audiences at St Mary's Perivale, and Ealing Junior Music School had also managed to keep performances going. WLS itself is now performing to audiences again, as is Ealing Symphony Orchestra. The

latter was represented by Richard Partridge, who said that during the lockdowns there had been online talks by musicians and online music-making using a special system that is able to share sound remotely.

The non-committee members present were then asked how their organisations had coped.

- Jane McLeod said Ealing Choral Society had used Zoom throughout the lockdown. Choral singing is particularly problematic in a pandemic situation but now the choir is rehearsing again, with social distancing and lateral flow tests, for a public performance of the Brahms German Requiem on 13 November.
- Carol Wilkes said Ealing Quilters had also used Zoom throughout the Covid crisis, though she said they found the technical issues difficult. Ealing Quilters meetings restarted in September.
- Edward Baker said Ealing University of the Third Age was initially very badly affected by lockdown, but now they are back in Ealing Green Church, following the church's distancing rules (30 people max,). They now operate a hybrid system with both Zoom and live meetings.

10 Any other business

Gill Rowley reported that EON (Ealing Over-60s Network) had recently picked up five new membership enquiries from one edition of *What's On*: EON knows that they came via our events diary because it does not advertise anywhere else.

She ended the AGM by thanking everyone for their contributions and their time, and expressing the hope that the next one would be a live event.