Annual General Meeting

Cotswold Sculptors Association

2nd March, 2-5pm, Malmesbury Town Hall

Chair's Report - Shirley Sharp

Looking Back over the year

- **Communications** - At the beginning of last year we started to focus on communications with our growing membership. How to keep everyone in the loop about what's going on. With new committee members taking on roles and running with them. Roy with Sculpture Loop and Jane with Social Media. Myself with a chair's monthly Update and of course the website and then the emails via Sarah as membership secretary. These communications are vital with a growing membership that spans a large geographical area. But after Miserden, Jane stepped down for many reasons and for several months we kept it going as best as we could but I am very pleased to say we now have new committee members and a great team to take us into a new phase.
- **Miserden** - It is daunting running a large summer show and without a strong team of people it wouldn't work. Although I was overseeing the operations the whole Miserden Sub-Group stepped up and ran with it. We all worked really hard at making it a success. There were issues along the way that we had to struggle with including staffing issues at Miserden that created major problems at the beginning of the show. But we are very proud of Creating Spaces 2023 and the wonderful sculptures that our members gave us. We really do have some amazingly talented people.
- **Christmas Fair that wasn't** This wasn't a success though. It was a new venture for us and the sculptors who entered put an enormous amount of effort into making it look stunning and travelling in poor weather conditions to find that we had very few visitors. Miserden let us down completely on advertising the event and we felt misled on what we were expecting it to be. We were nervous about it beforehand and should have gone with our instincts to pull it. Miserden refunded the money to the artists but of course this doesn't take into account their time and petrol etc.
- **Committee** As Chair it is vital to have a strong committee and we are so lucky to have a committee that approach everything in a very professional way but are always ready to support each other whilst having some fun along the way. Fortunately the committee are all standing again so we are lucky to be in a strong position for the coming year and looking forward to moving the Association forward.
- **New projects:** We are currently looking at venues for future exhibitions. We have a few in the pipeline as we really want to open our minds to new ways of sharing our work and collaborating with each other.

One last word is that this coming year will be mine and Kim's last year on the committee as the Constitution allows us 5 years. Which means I will be stepping down as Chair at next years AGM. So do please start to think whether you could step into the role, I didn't think I would feel as comfortable in it at first, and yes sometimes its a bit scary, but remember its all about the Team.

Finance & Membership (Sarah Cushing)

Cotswold Sculptors Association accounts for 2022/23	
Current number of members	107
Needing to renew	4
Present assets as at 24/01/23	**£17,164.15**
Income and expenditure from 17/11/2022 to 30/11/2023	
Final assets brought forward from 2022	£16,407.79
Income	
Membership	£3,880.00
Exhibition entries	£2,530.00
Sales	£41,728.00
Catalogues	£606.00
Sponsorship	£740.00
	£49,484.00
Expenditure	
Final AHG/BC adjustments	-£52.50
AGM/Meetings	£370.50
Capital Expenditure	£1,302.98
Bursary	£1,000.00
Technology	£756.29
Open forum expenses	£524.34
PIL insurance	£270.09
Miserden 2023 Payment to artists for sales	£33,987.00
Miserden 2023 expenses, advertising, grand opening etc.	£11,174.14
Lost Wax Project	-£156.00
	£49,176.84
Final assets	**£16,714.95**
Bank account as at 17/11/23	£16,714.95

Hubs (Martin Elphick)

The hubs were formed with the aims of increasing contact and collaboration between members, and reducing the distances needed to travel to CSA events. The membership of the hubs was decided by the committee on a geographical basis, which meant that some hubs had only a few members. Some members from other parts of the country are not in a hub at all. It was left to each hub to decide what it wanted to do, if anything. It became clear that there was a lot of variation in how active the hubs had become. A pattern

emerged of larger hubs being more likely to contain someone who was prepared to act as co-ordinator, and more likely to have an active core of people who wanted to either meet, collaborate, or at least communicate as a group.

Therefore earlier this year some of the hubs were amalgamated, so there are now eight local hubs, making it possible to identify a coordinator for each. It was also clarified that members could choose to join another hub if they preferred (only a few have done so far), and that hubs could be formed on the basis of common interests (resulting in a stone-carving hub being formed. Since then there does seem to have been an increase in hub activity across the board.

This is an evolving situation, and it is likely to remain so. It seems to be best to allow hubs to go their own way, with support from the committee. However as a result it is difficult to keep track of what is going on (even of who is in each hub). My own role in the committee, as the person who takes a specific interest in the hubs, is also necessarily evolving as a result.

Exhibitions

2024 submissions

Outdoor sculptors	52
Indoor Sculptors	46
Total Sculptors	71
Both indoor and outdoor	26

outdoor - 168 entered - 165 accepted
indoor - 120 entered - 99 accepted

Value of pieces £404k but waiting for 3 more prices

Outdoor Exhibition (Ange Williams and Lynda Knott)
Ange and Lynda joined the committee in 2023 after being part of the outdoor curation team at Miserden Gardens. This experience led them to take on the lead of the curation team for 2024 along with Kim Pethybridge and Jane Yarnell, taking on more of the organisational responsibilities including being part of the selection process, liaising with artists and organising the installation rota and logistics. With over 160 sculptures to consider, quite a daunting task!

As Ange and Lynda work together in their mosaic studio, TomatoJack Arts, they are used to pulling together and playing to their strengths to solve problems so will be ideally suited to ensure the Miserden curation runs smoothly – fingers crossed!

They are also both involved in the new marketing group which is endeavouring to improve the overall look and appeal of Cotswold Sculptors, with Ange especially interested in helping to develop a new website and Lynda in lending support to the Social media presence.

Indoor Exhibition (Anna Simson)
The Indoor exhibition took place in the Club Room for the 2nd year in 2023 (opposite the village pub) and was curated by Anna Simson and Juli Bharucha. Main successes include:
- Advanced planning meetings with Juli to decide on the main layout of the display. Helped us understand how many pieces we would be able to accommodate effectively.
- Sunday access for painting plinths. It was fun and really helpful - thanks too to Clare Mahoney.
- Having the majority of borrowed plinths up front so the layout was ready when sculptures started to arrive.
- False wall hiding the kitchen entrance gave extra wall space and enlarged the feel of the space.
- Ikea cabinets increased capacity by some 16 pieces.
- Identifying 1 or 2 key pieces around which the exhibition was curated.
- Staggered plinths in one central island gave an increased sense of space and intrigue.
- Online rota system along with back-up registration. Eased finding a last minute replacement and both outdoor and indoor sculptors volunteered their time. It gave every member an opportunity to engage directly with the public which was fun and informative for members and public alike. Thank you to all those members who gave their time.
- Working internet in the club room (a few hiccups at the beginning).
- Stand alone card reader that didn't need an associated device. Very easy to use.
- Public voted for their favourite indoor sculpture. Was a nice way of engaging visitors and collecting names for CSA mailing lists. Was "feel good" for the winner.
- Being able to store the cabinets and false wall in the Club Room after the exhibition.

Key Recommendations made for 2024
- Dimensions sometimes wrong (eg. application had H or W the wrong way round). Standardise on application form.
- Encourage better quality of submission photos.
- Agree a limit on the number of pieces in the indoor exhibition although this has to be flexible as it depends on the scale and display requirements of pieces.
- Move around display a bit during the course of the exhibition, especially in the cabinets.
- Encourage more textile pieces to help reduce the echo and wall hung pieces as space allows.
- Improve link between outdoor garden exhibition and indoor.

<u>Open Forums (Juli Bharucha)</u>
Last year's programme for Open Forums introduced members to a variety of artists and ways of working. Members enjoyed studio visits as well as some incredibly informative Zoom talks.

We started the year with a visit to Jitka Palmers studio in Bristol; Jitka demonstrated how she combined her love of painting and ceramics alongside her beautiful home.

Adrian Bates gave us a delightful demonstration of how he created his Mobius forms, making it look deceptively simple, his skill and ability to manipulate ceramic form left us all itching to return to our studios and create!

Another wonderful artist was Orli Ivanov who managed to impart such a passion and love of sculpting through her talk via zoom.

Other events included a visit to Cheltenham Spring gallery to see the exhibition "Reciprocity" by CSA member Anna Simson and Mandy Coppes who discussed the staging of their show alongside their passion for making and creative investigation. A visit

to the Holburne Bath to view the skill and talent of the late Lucie Ries ceramics, a highly informative talk from Art Shape senior project manager Xanthe Wood reiterating the benefits creativity can have for so many members of society aiding recovery to ill health and mental wellbeing and our final visit of 2023 was Nicola Turner's studio in Bath.

We have been privileged to have a glimpse of these other creative worlds and must as an audience always be aware of how much time those allowing us to visit their studios or preparing a talk through zoom takes. As CSA members; supporting and developing the open forum programme is for our benefit and aims to help us understand the many diverse approaches artist have.

This year a new programme is being put together exploring a range of makers and ways in which to continually engage CSA members. Please feel free to bring forward new ideas. Margaret O'Rourke also talked on Zoom last Sunday and coming up in March is the Bath Hub group visit for their exhibition at 44AD.

Marketing (Jenny Baddeley)

Last year I offered to help with Miserden (as I also did pre-2020) and organised the PR and marketing for that, as well as starting to introduce initiatives such as QR codes. Then I came on to the committee proper and have been advising generally on how we approach marketing. This included facilitating an away day for the committee. Members' survey and away day highlighted that the CSA is about "*sharing a passion for sculpture as much about working with each other and sharing our work with the outside world."*

This year we've got lots more great people to help, who have taken specific roles for social media (building on what Jane did brilliantly last year). Now we're able to start collaborating as a coordinated team and you're about to see lots of great stuff happening.

Specifically right now I'm sorting out the PR (aiming to repeat some of the great coverage we got last year, including 3 separate BBC interviews) and media bookings for Miserden and will be working with Shirley and Adrian on the artwork.

Next, we'll be looking to next year and updating the brand so it's easier for everyone to use in a way that is consistent but allows room for freshness.

Social Media / Marketing (Grant Sonnex)

Hello. I'm Grant Sonnex - a ceramicist based in Nailsworth, formerly a furniture designer and maker and formerly editor of radio at the BBC Natural History Unit. I joined the CSA last year and recently took over the Social Media role on the committee, so I come with fresh eyes and a burst of enthusiasm to try to get Instagram, Facebook and other SM platforms working in the best way possible for us all, both in terms of promoting sculpture to the wider public and sharing our knowledge and love for what we do within our sculptural community.

First step has been to send everyone a short survey to find out what members want from social media and what content and help they would like to offer. My approach is to try to find a way of doing Social Media within the CSA that is targeted and effective, and most importantly, sustainable. In other words what I love is making ceramics, not creating instagram posts, but if we can agree on what we're trying to achieve and if we can share the responsibility for making that happen, then I think we can find ways to make Social Media serve our sculpture and our connections with one another.

Do fill out the emailed survey if you haven't yet done so (5 minutes of tick boxes - not too onerous), and I'll get back to you with the results and suggestions of the next steps. Many thanks.

Various (Kim Pethybridge)

Will be my last year on the committee - volunteered to be a "goffer". Taking on little roles - so if anyone wants to fill this role it will be vacant soon...

- Organising the discounts from various suppliers for our members.
- Emailing lots of businesses to ask then if they'd like to put an advert in our exhibition brochure.
- Secured the prize from Tiranti for the Miserden exhibition. Originally was going to be 1 prize but they then extended to 2 - indoor & outdoor prizes.
- Organised the Private View at Miserden last May. Ordered drinks, glasses, flowers, gifts etc and found the wonderful vocalist for the evening.
- Helped curate the Miserden exhibition, taking on an area of the garden to help spread the load from one lead curator.
- Attended Miserden on installation and deinstallation days.
- Organised the Demonstrating days, liaising with each sculptor on their needs for the day they were there.
- Visited Malmesbury Town Hall for possible AGM venue. Organised speaker and food for AGM.
- Always on the look out for other potential exhibition venues, inquired on prices of room hires etc.
- Site visits to start thinking about where to place this years sculptures in the gardens at Miserden.

Roy (Sculpture Loop)

Being doing for a year now. 335 recipients Up on year below. 50% open. Last newsletter 168 opens. Always looking for content. Please send content. Talking to Grant to improve Sloop.

AOB

Query about specialism of committee members eg. Treasurer. Sarah has 2 more years on Importance of this role. Volunteers welcome who could perhaps work with Sarah.

Election of Committee members

- Chair: Shirley Sharp - Proposed Simon Denman, seconded by Jenny Baddley - all in favour
- Treasurer: Sarah Cushing - Proposed by Kim Pethybridge, seconded by Anna Simson - all in favour
- Secretary: Anna Simson - Proposed by Kim P, seconded by Roy Evans - all in favour
- C'tee members voted in together: Julie Bharucha, Kim Pethybridge, Martin Elphick, Jenny Baddeley, Roy Evans, Ange Williams, Grant Sonnex & Lynda Knott. Proposed Simon Denman, Seconded by Zoe Wooley - all in favour.

Peter PUllen - plinths