



Poole & East Dorset Art Society

AGM

3rd March 2024

Chairs Report

2023 may be seen as a 'regular year' in the life of PEDAS. However, it did include several new initiatives and lots of activity. I will run through these as a review of the year, before talking about our Centenary year.

Increasing digitisation

This has been unavoidable and has brought us many benefits. No doubt some of our members have been stoically adjusting to these changes for which we thank you enormously. With constraints on costs and voluntary 'manpower' as well as the excellent benefits it brings, along with nearly every other organisation, we could not operate without these benefits and savings in this day and age.

Pedas Weekly

Up till last July, you had been receiving only digital copies of the Newsletter, but in August we introduced PEDAS Weekly, a weekly e-bulletin which carries up to the minute relevant news and information, unlike the bi-monthly Newsletter which went rapidly out of date.

Sally Holland feels that PEDAS Weekly saves her time as well as giving these benefits to members. We would love it if you would contribute to the Weekly bulletin in the same way as you contributed to the Newsletters.

Social Media and Whats App

Much of our publicity has now moved to social media and evidence shows that it is this form of publicity and communication which has been bringing new interest to PEDAS and attracting visitors to attend our events, activities and exhibitions.

Look at the benefits of Whats App - Pedas @Home allows you to communicate with other members sharing artwork, ideas, experiences etc., and David's En Plein Air group will allow you to make contacts for lifts to venues, notification of late arrival or getting lost etc.

We ask you now to fill in digital forms and access email attachments and sign up for more online content. I know it is not great for some of you, but there is always help at hand. Although we now only have 1 member without access to email, we do all we can to find ways to help any member struggling to access digital forms and information. If this is you, please contact the person responsible, or a member of the committee. Do not suffer in silence, we want to be inclusive and encourage members to participate.

IT expertise

I would like to thank Sally Holland and Steph Jones for taking on so many of these initiatives and producing new digital content to a high standard. And it is paying off. This is now such an important part of our existence that we now realise we need to pay for IT expertise, when it is needed. Linda Honeyborne is working with Sally and others to advise and assist with new systems, for example the online submissions for the recent Open Exhibition.

Lastly another example – we will be producing a commemorative keepsake for our centenary. Traditionally, this would have been something like a book, but instead we have chosen to produce a video. This can be communicated to different audiences within minutes and flexibly, so it can be viewed by many people immediately in different places and times.

All this is very important, so please excuse me stressing these changes.

Membership

Much of the good news about membership has resulted from the online publicity we now extensively use.

We maxed out at 89 members during 2023. We had 33 enquiries and 14 new members during the year. We had 67 visits from 29 people to our regular Wed/Sunday sessions. We have already signed up 7 new members this year so far.

Carol Cox has been kept very busy throughout the year and a massive thanks go to her for her relentless efforts to field new member enquiries and administer membership records.

Thank you to our loyal members for renewing your membership each year. Subscriptions are our only significant source of income, so it is vital that we maintain good membership numbers. Money aside, we always welcome new blood, new interest, new participation, new ideas and new friends! To everyone, please ensure you make the most of your membership during the year and support YOUR art society. Additionally, this can be done by participating in our Gift Aid scheme if you are eligible.

New Logo

At the last AGM we held a discussion with attending members about the intention to design a new logo for The Poole & East Dorset Art Society. The outcome of that discussion, as recorded in the AGM minutes was that most of you did not want a total change but sought a refreshed version which emphasised our full name and brought us up to date. The Trustees were charged with managing this process to outcome.

Although all members were invited to submit ideas, and additionally we asked our Art Patron Helen Talbot to do the same, the Trustees could not agree on a suitable design which met the terms we had agreed on last March. As a result, we took the brief to an external design company and received some exciting ideas. In November we launched the agreed final design. We feel it gives continuity but brings a fresher signature for us now and in the future.

This is now being rapidly rolled out in all our print and digital communications.

The Gallery Upstairs (GUS)

My thanks go to the GUS sub-committee and others involved, for their continuing efforts to manage the Gallery Upstairs to such a high standard. As well as hosting PEDAS exhibitions, the Gallery is hired out for the whole year by us, and each hirer is supported and supervised to ensure the safety and smooth running of the exhibition.

In this respect, our thanks go to Liz Magee and Barry Kavanagh for all they do and the time they give. A member of the GUS committee will report in more detail for the Gallery and the exhibitions held during 2023.

I would like to re-emphasise that few art societies have the privilege of having a permanent Gallery in which their members can regularly exhibit their artwork. With fewer entries recently, as well as displays and entry fees, stewarding also becomes a problem. I would like to thank Carol Cox who has been fielding this difficult exercise valiantly for some time.

We all hope that there will be an enthusiastic response from members to participating in the Dorset Art Week exhibition which celebrates our 100th year with an appropriate theme – ‘Celebrate’!

The Gallery is there for everyone and as several of our members have already done, you can always join with other artist colleagues and hire the facility for your own exhibition, for so little cost. Just look at Dawn Goodson’s recent endeavour!

There are further ways to exhibit your work. This year the GUS Committee initiated ‘Art in the Tearoom’, inviting PEDAS members to submit artwork to hang on the walls of the Tearoom in Upton Country Park (UCP). These are offered for sale and 2 out of 3 of the first paintings to be hung sold! Steph and Liz have recently put out a call for more pictures from members to refresh the walls and also for members artwork to be displayed as successful table posters in the Tearoom.

Our on-line Gallery is still there, under ‘Meet our Artists.’. The work of 25 members is currently represented. This offers excellent free exposure for members. Our thanks go to Sally for her excellent work on this and its very professional presentation on the website.

We try to give you all a range of great opportunities to exhibit your work to the public. Steph does a excellent job for the Gallery as well as for PEDAS, promoting all exhibitions at our venue in UCP.

This year we will be promoting the Gallery in a new way and joining the ranks of advertisers appealing to visitors in Dorset, by producing a folded leaflet to fit into stands holding information on Dorset attractions, housed in key venues like museums, hotels, community centres etc. Watch this space. We will be distributing these in spring, and we will be asking for help from members who live in key areas in the BCP conurbation.

Programmes

Another lively year, full of variety, offering members a wide range of workshops, demos and general guidance on different techniques, media and subjects.

In addition, our extended En Plein Air programme also offers a fantastic range of venues in the Dorset locality. David Roberts takes a lot of time and trouble to ensure that there is something for everyone across the different seasons. Thankyou David.

Community Activities

PEDAS ran an Art Pro Loco event again in the summer, following the success we had in 2021 at Upton Country Park. This time we chose to hire the quirky Kiosk in Poole Park as something and somewhere different.

It is good to be seen to be doing these Community events and it attracted an interesting variety of participants who really enjoyed doing some art in the park and produced work of a high standard. However, this event was not well supported and some of that was down to bad weather. Very few members supported it and participation was lower than the previous event with a predominance of adults over children. Consequently, a loss was made.

Finance and Gift Aid

Pam Marshall will deliver her Treasurers report, so I will only take this opportunity to say 2 things. Firstly, to thank her so much for the time, attention and competence she gives to the role of Treasurer and secondly to mention that through her initiative we have launched a Gift Aid scheme, which we are eligible to do, and to benefit from as a charity.

This has been explained to members and form filling is well under way, but we are also dedicating an agenda item to this and to answering any queries you may have.

We will be spending a fair amount of money on the Centenary events this year, and as this is your money and the events are for your enjoyment, please participate as fully as you can. We are finding it difficult to budget for these events, but rest assured the Trustees deliberate thoroughly and make decisions that are the most cost effective to meet our stated aims.

Social

Other thanks are due to Carole Gadsby and John Biggs for our holiday to Belgium. As always, fascinating, fruitful, friendly and fun. Where will we be going this year to celebrate our special year I wonder?? We will be enjoying a full year of socialising in 2024 so watch this space! Thank you to those who always get involved with the social side of PEDAS, including David Marshall and the now famous PEDAS quiz, and several others for their creativity and social organisation skills.

Our Art Patron

Thank you to Helen Talbot for giving us so much of her time supporting us over the last year as our Art Patron. Helen is someone who gives so generously of her time; in preparation, attendance, ongoing support for individuals and travelling frequently from New Milton. She is supporting us to do our best for 'Celebrate,' the exhibition in May. Helen will be a guest of PEDAS at the Centenary Dinner.

Trustees moving in and out

With regret Susan Huskinson needs to step down as Secretary and a PEDAS Trustee. A massive vote of thanks is due to Sue for the work she has done and the effectiveness with which she has done it.

We welcome Freda Rhodes and David Marshall as new Trustees for the coming year. Thanks to both of them for their willingness to give their time for the benefit of PEDAS and its members. We hope you will enjoy the experience and find it satisfying.

Plans for our Centenary Year

You will have received information already about the programme of events being planned. We have a busy schedule with separate teams working on each event. Thank you to all of you who have agreed to join a working group. There is always room for more volunteers.

I would also like to thank the original PEDAS 100 steering group, who started meeting two years ago to plan 2024! Carole Gadsby, Carol Dowty, Susan Hawes, Pat Burnham and John Biggs and Jacqui Gush.

Our big Centenary Dinner at the Poole Quay Hotel is the first event to kick off the year, which promises to be a wonderful night to remember.

While we are on the subject of gastronomic delights do not miss booking the Cream Tea members only event in June in the Castle on Brownsea Island. This is an En Plein Air event as well so bring your materials along.

We have 2 Community events planned for the year, one partnering with UCP, and one partnering with 2 schools in Poole. Both events promise to be lively hands-on events to which everyone is welcome, and will highlight PEDAS and the activities we get involved with particular emphasis on our community.

Most importantly we have 2 very high-profile art exhibitions; Our exhibition as our participation in Dorset Art Week from 24th May – 9th June, and our special exhibition at the Lighthouse 21st June -27th July. We are very privileged to have been offered the opportunity of this cultural hub in Poole, and the engagement of the Lighthouse staff. Both are prestigious and well publicised events and are open to all members.

We must not forget that we also have a member who is celebrating 100 years this year! We will be recognizing Dennis Hill during the year. Congratulations Dennis!

At one click, PEDAS Weekly brings you full up to date details on a weekly basis of everything we are doing as the year unfolds.

I wish you all a very enjoyable year with the Poole & East Dorset Art Society.

Thankyou

Jacqui Gush

Chair