

Spring TAS Sussex Area Forum and AGM, 5 April 2019

Draft Chair's Report and Website Report

1. Personal and Team matters

The autumn and winter periods have been quite a bit quieter for the Chair after last summer's Jubilee sequence. I now have a better idea of what the task entails and remain grateful for everyone's support. Team renewal remains a number one issue as the Area Committee is running with just 7 members at the moment and I need to replace 3 of these during 2019. I completed my Chairs Training in November and formed a WhatsApp group with other new Area Chairs whom I have met. I have written some informal notes on the training meeting, together with the Autumn Advisory Council, which will be attached to this report when it is circulated prior to our Area Forum and AGM on 5 April. Please note that my informal notes have no official standing but may be helpful.

Angela Magness has formally resigned as ACE for SIDs, after sterling service. I am negotiating a replacement for this important position, which is crucial to Area finances and our ability to fund an annual West Dean Scholarship. Sheila Ryan (Church recorders) and Alan Bowden (Treasurer) have both indicated their wish to step down. The posts of Area Trainer and Vice-Chair remain frozen. We welcome Richard Beale, whom we hope will take over the Area SID role from Angela this spring, in preparation for the 2020 seminars

So far I have visited the following local societies for one reason or another in my capacity as Area Chair: Chichester, City of Chichester, East Grinstead, East Sussex, Horsham, Lavant Valley, Mid-Sussex, Rother Valley, South Downs, Steyning, Turners Hill, Uckfield Lewes and Newick, Wealden Heathfield. I hope I didn't forget anyone in this list, but I am still intending to visit all 23 (or 24) in my 3 year tenancy, so do invite me if you feel so pleased.

Looking over my notes, I have identified 25 matters to note or raise for discussion since our Autumn Forum on % October 2018. A slightly reduced list is set out below. Some of the links I have included only seem to work intermittently. In case of difficulty, log into the national website first (you will need a username and password, which your local society Chair can arrange).

2. Autumn Area Forum 2018

The Minutes were circulated on 3 November and contain a summary of Trustee Jaqui Varley's account of the SWOT analysis carried out by TAS House (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, **T**hreats). It's worth re-reading these notes (and see Autumn ADCO below), to draw attention to the main issues of declining membership and ageing membership which are afflicting TAS nationally, and the efforts being made at Headquarters to find remedies.

3. The West Dean College Scholarship and other links

The Team has agreed that the value of the Scholarship should be raised to £4000 and stabilised at that sum by Area funds, irrespective of variations in local society contributions. The Treasurer may expand on this in his report.

Our current Scholar, Samuel Matthews, is training in furniture making and conservation. I am expecting background and project information to be available on the Area website soon. Otherwise, we are negotiating with West Dean for closer links, which might include the College and Gardens as an outings venue for local societies in both Sussex and Hampshire, for the continuation of Heritage Volunteering by Chichester based societies in the College itself, and for West Dean College to provide a speaker at our 5 April Spring Forum and AGM.

I attended the Scholars' lunch on 6 March, representing TAS, and in discussions with WDC staff clarified future initiatives to link both Area and Chichester societies more closely with the College. I was also able to see Samuel's workshop and current projects in progress.

I have started discussions with East Sussex Music with a view to local East Sussex societies and Sussex Area jointly supporting concerts by young musicians, in parallel with the links already in place with West Sussex Music.

4. TAS Society Support Teams

TAS House has reorganised its procedures for assisting failing societies (as previously reported). Following an extensive discussion with TAS House, it is agreed that no such failing societies now exist in the Sussex Area.

5. The Advisory Councils on 7 November 2018 and 20 February 2019

Please see the attached informal notes concerning 7 November. As noted above, the repeated emphasis was on declining membership and ageing membership, with numerous remedial strategies being put forward. Clearly, TAS House is not inactive. A presentation by Tim Nicholls, the national Finances

and Resources Director, assured us that TAS finances were returning to health. Florian Schweizer demonstrated the growth and diversity of The Arts Society's online presence through beta websites. If you would like to have official ADCO Minutes, please ask me. I was not able to attend the ADCO on 20 February, but the Minutes are attached with this report. The April ADCO has been cancelled, so the next date is 17 July 2019.

6. Governance Review

TAS has initiated a review of its hierarchy, including the role of Trustees. For reasons that escape me Trustees are not available to attend Area Forums while the review is in progress, however we have secured Tim Nicholls for the Spring Forum and AGM, which may be of particular interest to local society Treasurers.

7. Training dates

A list of training topics and dates was distributed on 3 January 2019:

<https://mailchi.mp/46e427e92e21/training-dates-in-2019?e=130e425746>

Please note that some training days are held outside London.

8. Trails of Discovery

Notes and other documents on this subject were distributed to the Area Team and local society Chairs on 5 March. However, there is an excellent introductory video to the relaunched Trails programme at

<https://theartsociety.org/resource/trails-discovery-resource>

(NB. You have to log on to the national TAS website first)

9. Volunteer Impact Review

2019 will see an investigation by TAS House into the "impact and outcomes" (whatever this means) rather than "products and services" of the various volunteering programmes within TAS. It seems Church Recording will be treated somewhat differently. In this connection see the CR Newsletter, packed with information at

<https://mailchi.mp/f2c1ff53935d/church-recorder-newsletter-winter-2044589?e=26afb6423c>

10. National Vice-Chair

Hilary Alcock has resigned as national Vice-Chair for health reasons and been replaced by Roger Duckworth. I am sorry about this, as Hilary and I had many interesting discussions off the record at TAS House.

11. Trustees Annual Report

Julie Goldsmith, out national Chair, is looking for examples of projects which are effective in demonstrating the benefits of the Arts to the public. Though I have missed the notional deadline of the end of February, I did think to offer the Petworth Festival exhibition of children's art as a case study, this being already written up on our Area website. I'll pursue this, if I can find the time.

12. A Case Study

The February Bulletin from TAS House contained an interesting item about volunteering websites as a resource for prospective local society Committee members, citing the case of the putative Chichester Evening Society, which may be inaugurated in the coming autumn.

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/59fac15a04a6b5144c6d222ad/files/40dd216e-8d16-4402-848d-98507c150db5/Feb_19_Bulletin.pdf

(hint: it's the very last item). Is this the way forward?

13. Chichester Evening Society

Good progress has been reported by Julia Tibbs, the Trustee with responsibility for new societies, and a formal application for membership in TAS was made recently. The prospective Chair, Pamela Kemp and two colleagues who will share the job of Programme Secretary attended the Area Information Day on 1 March in Haywards Heath and have also been invited to attend the two remaining 2019 Area SIDs at Turners Hill, as well as the Area Forum on 5 April. The likely venue for lectures will be Chichester College.

14. South of England Show 2019

The Treasurer has agreed to a request from Sue Ng to raise the Area contribution to the sponsorship of the Young Artisan of the Competition by £100 to £600.

15. Church Recording in Chichester

Betty Smith (Chair, City of Chichester) has been kind enough to prepare a short report for me on changes to the local CR team, following the retirement of

Pam Hilton, who has led the group for 14 years and made an outstanding contribution during this period. The team is ready for new projects, including a possible Trail.

16. Area Information Day

The Information Day was held successfully on 1 March with 50 delegates attending. No Minutes are produced, but the Area Chair has circulated some general notes to local society Chairs, who are asked to pass them to their Programme Secretaries.

17. Kirdford 2019

As in 2018, I propose to convene an informal meeting and lunch for local Sussex Area Chairs (or their representatives) at The Foresters' Arms in Kirdford. The likely dates are Friday 31 May and Friday 7 June. I will advise more definite details shortly, once I have confirmed with the pub.

18. The Autumn Area Forum

The list of local hosts for the Autumn Forum drawn up some years ago designates Lavant Valley as the host for 2019. A provisional date is Friday 18 October. Lavant Valley have requested a deferral, so I will be approaching other societies to find a replacement host.

14 March 2019

David Bignell

Chair, The Arts Society Sussex Area

