

**Minutes of the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the
Edinburgh Decorative & Fine Arts Society held in the Freemason's Hall
Tuesday 14th February 2023 at 6.15pm**

Present, Tricia Lancaster (Chairman), Nina Mair (Treasurer), Liz East (Secretary) and 21 Members and Committee Members.

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Marion and Lachie Macintosh, Margaret Sturrock, Patricia Andrew, Mr and Mrs Parkinson, Helen Zealley, Anne Hughes, Veryan Biggar, Richard and Marjory Watson, Betty and Tony Brightman, Gail and Charlie Guest, Helen and Graham Ross, Elizabeth Sutherland, Kate Fanning, Yves Foulis, Theo Burrell, Verity Shaw and Sally and Tom Packe.

ITEM 2: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 50th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Motion 1: The Minutes of the 51st Annual General Meeting were taken as read. Approval of the Minutes was proposed by Grace Durham, seconded by Nina Mair and unanimously approved. The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

ITEM 3: ADOPTION OF THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS.

The Chairman presented the 52nd Annual Report and Accounts of the Society and gave her report.

She was pleased to report that as we emerged from the pandemic, 2021/22 was another successful year for EDFAS. The committee had continued to work hard to maintain the momentum of the previous season, when, despite Covid restrictions, the lecture programme continued to engage our members. We had been cautious in moving from online to live lectures and due to the outbreak of the Omicron variant in December 2021, we were glad to have planned to resume live lectures in March 2022. Thanks to Clark Wilson who ensured that the Freemasons' Hall was always ready for us and to Ian Cunningham for his invaluable IT support.

It had been a wonderful day when members had been reunited again, albeit wearing masks, keeping to a one-way system and keeping socially distanced, to hear our first live lecture, but it was a step in the right direction. We had offered flexibility in terms of afternoon/evening membership and continued to live-stream the evening lecture. This had proved a popular alternative for some members, particularly in the winter months, with numbers of devices logging on to watch online, averaging at 120 per lecture. We hoped that as the rhythm of the year resumed, we would see more members return to lectures in person. Thanks must go to Anne Young and Caroline Sibbald, Afternoon and Evening Membership Secretaries respectively, for their efforts to keep in touch with members

during restrictions and beyond and the considerable amount of work that went into annual renewal process.

Our membership stood at 748 members and we remained the largest society within The Arts Society.

Members had been very supportive and loyal and as we moved through the restrictions, we were able to plan postponed events and visits. Post-Covid, we had increased subscriptions to £55 for single membership and £95 for double membership, as they had remained the same for ten years and lecturers' fees and travel expenses had increased.

Thanks to the expertise and hard work of our webmaster, Kerstin Schaeffer, we had launched a new, stream-lined website, with striking images, in September 2022. We hoped that this would make life much easier for all members to navigate and would encourage others to try EDFAS out and join the society.

Despite the pandemic, we were able to offer a virtual visit to the collection of James Holloway, former Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which was most interesting. The twice postponed tour to historic houses of Cumbria, planned and organised by Charles Guest, took place in May 2021 and was much enjoyed by all who went. There had been a very successful visit to Canongate Kirk & graveyard thanks to Jane Drysdale and Jill Holmes for their organisation.

In June, a visit to the Biggar Museum, lunch at Symington House and a guided tour of Little Sparta ended the season off on a positive note.

The Annual Lecture took place, having been postponed twice, on the 21 September 2022, when Alice Strang gave a superb lecture: "Queen of Edinburgh-Anne Redpath and her Circle." It was a well-attended and sociable gathering, held in the National Gallery.

Our Lecture Secretaries, Grace Durham and Peter Hunter, had worked hard to produce another super season of lectures and lured lecturers north once again. Grace was also the editor of our annual newsletter. Communication played a vital role in the society and she expressed her gratitude to Alison St. Clair Ford for her patience and expertise in using Mailchimp to share the lecture programme, plus events and visits; Theo Burrell had done a wonderful job with Eventbrite, which we use for the booking for all events and visits. Sadly, due to Covid, volunteer work, led by Jen McDowell, had been very slow to resume, but there were signs that organisations were welcoming EDFAS volunteers back once again.

The Chairman was happy to report that at the end of the 2021/2022 season, both our membership numbers and our finances were holding up well.

In 2021/2022 donations totalling £15,900 had been made to appropriate qualifying bodies. We had donated all the money reclaimed from HM Government under the Gift

Aid Scheme to arts education. Projects and schemes for access to the arts and education for young people were, more than ever, central to our donations and we were most grateful to those members who had made additional donations to this fund.

We had made three major donations to the National Museum of Scotland's education project "Discover the Museum", to WHALE Arts-cultural organisation for Wester Hailes and we supported three arts students with Scholarship Awards at the University of Edinburgh. We also made two donations to the Superpower Agency in Leith, to enable them to develop creative writing skills' workshops for young people in Leith and to fund the reprinting of a creative writing booklet produced by the young people themselves. Thanks must go to Anna Magee, our Young Arts representative. The Chairman thanked Elizabeth East, Vice-Chairman and Secretary, for her all she does to ensure the smooth running of society meetings.

The Society was saddened by the death of John Fleming in May, after a long illness. John had served on the committee for ten years. EDFAS was privileged to have had someone of John's calibre and he had made a significant contribution the Society.

EDFAS relied on the hard work of the volunteer committee and the Chairman thanked each one of them for their support and dedication. She concluded her report by saying that we looked forward to developing the society further and to engaging with members over the coming year.

The Treasurer, Nina Mair, opened her report by reiterating the Chairman's remarks that thanks to our members' generosity over the years we had been able to donate locally to appropriate charities and to give bursaries to three students at the Art College. All the Gift Aid we can reclaim was given to charities although the amount we were able to reclaim had reduced over recent years.

Reserves: The Society had more than adequate reserves to cover any foreseeable uninsured liability. We maintained our reserves in line with the guidance on charity reserves. The trustees reduced these reserves from time to time, through the prudent additional support of suitable arts projects and bodies. The accounts had been arranged to show costs of running the society's general administration and lecture programme separately from other income and costs, such as visits, volunteer activities and donations. The cost of lecturers' fees and travel had increased post-Covid. Subscriptions that had remained the same over many years (and reduced during Covid) were increased to a level to cover these costs. The Treasurer expressed her grateful thanks to Katie Wilson who had kindly agreed to examine our accounts this year as our Honorary Auditor Ian Wittet was not available.

Motion 2: With no questions, the adoption of the Annual Report & Accounts was proposed by Peter Hunter, seconded by Alison St Clair Ford and unanimously approved.

ITEM 4: REAPPOINTMENT OF HONORARY AUDITOR

The Chairman thanked Katie Wilson who had acted as our Independent Examiner in Mr Ian Wittet's absence for her time, attentiveness and skill in examining the accounts.

Motion 3: The reappointment of Mr Ian Wittet as Honorary Auditor was proposed by Elizabeth East, seconded by Anne Young and unanimously approved.

ITEM 4: ELECTION OF OFFICE-BEARERS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Motion 5: The motion to approve the re-election of the following office bearers and members of the Committee and the election of one new member of the Committee, Mr Russell Duncan, was proposed by Anne Mason Brown, seconded by Sarah Hynd and unanimously approved.

Patricia Lancaster	Chairman
Elizabeth East	Vice Chairman & Secretary
Nina Mair	Treasurer
Grace Durham	Lecture Secretary
Peter Hunter	Lecture Secretary
Anne Young	Membership Secretary (Afternoon)
Caroline Sibbald	Membership Secretary (Evening)
Jen McDowell	Head of Volunteering
Anna Magee	Young Arts
Alison St Clair Ford	Membership Communications
Jane Drysdale	Head of Visits and Study Groups
Theodora Burrell	Visits and Eventbrite
Verity Shaw	Visits
Jill Holmes	Visits
Kerstin Schaeffer	Webmaster

The Chairman confirmed that two members of the re-elected Committee, Mrs Anna Magee and Mrs Jane Drysdale would be standing down at the end of the current season and she thanked them for their hard work and support during their time on the Committee.

The Chairman thanked the President, Lady Rosebery and vice Presidents: Dr Iain Gordon Brown & Lady Johnston for their constant support.

VOTE OF THANKS

On behalf of the Members, Lady Johnston, Vice-President gave a vote of thanks. She began by saying how delighted she was to be able to thank the Committee on behalf of members, as she herself had been involved since 1970 and recognised the dedication of time and hard work given by the Committee. She thanked them for the excellent lectures and visits which had been appreciated by the members. In particular, she thanked Tricia Lancaster as Chairman for everything she had done for the Society in what was not an easy job.

ITEM 5: DATE OF NEXT MEETING: the date and format of the 2023 AGM would be confirmed, but it was hoped that this would be held in October as in previous years.

There being no other business, the Meeting was declared closed at 6.32pm