

AGM 2026 - Annual report

Chairman's report

I'm pleased that we have continued to have such good audiences for our lectures, there are often 100 members and visitors. We are always pleased to welcome visitors. Please remember that you can each bring a guest to one of the lectures as part of your membership. This is an excellent way of showing people what we have on offer and maybe they will consider becoming members themselves. Word of mouth has been shown to be the best way of recruiting. Jane Yates, our membership secretary, will be pleased to accept renewals over the summer and this will help avoid queues in the autumn! We will be writing to about membership renewals as usual.

We are keeping our membership fee at £55 for next year. Lecturers' fees and travel costs continue to rise so please continue to support our raffle and social events as these are important sources of additional income. The contributions from visitors help to keep us on track financially. The money from Gift Aid is particularly welcome and I would urge you to sign the relevant section on the membership application form, if you are in a position to do so, in order that we can claim this on your behalf

The committee has been pleased to welcome the members who have offered to support us at our meetings and events. I would like to thank the committee for all their work. If any of you are interested in volunteering to be part of the team with or without actually joining the committee please let us know.

It has been good to see the development of the informal group after lectures to have tea in the Beehive Café which is being led by two of our members. I have also been pleased by the popularity of the Antiques Evening at Chilcotts and seeing the number of members coming on the trip to see the Beryl Cook Exhibition at The Box in Plymouth.

Janet & I have written an Arts Society Heritage Trail which will lead people around the town pointing out buildings of historic interest and places associated with artists and their work. It will be available on phones or tablets by clicking on a QR code. We plan to launch this at our summer social in July which is being held at Allhallows Museum in July. The event will be run as a fund raiser to help them with their appeal to raise money for their roof repairs.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible as members again in October for another stimulating series of lectures and social events.

David Ward, Chairman

Treasurer's Report 2025/6

As you can see in the attached accounts the Society has had a good year under the stewardship of Dr David Ward, our chairman. We had a surplus of £1324, mainly due to increased membership numbers and are in a good financial position going into next year.

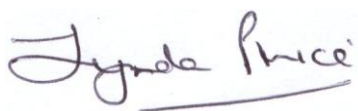
Thank you again to those who are eligible to sign up for Gift Aid, as you can see it brought in almost £1200 this year. Can I again remind those of you who fill in one membership form for a couple that we can only claim both if you have a joint account. HMRC need individual details otherwise.

As expected, the cost of lecturers this year increased by £250, a small sum due to our Programme Secretary taking fees and travel into consideration when booking. Whilst some lecturers ask for over £400 the travel costs have risen and will certainly increase again this year due to trouble in the Middle East.

The National Arts Society have kept their overall package (their fees and insurance) down this year, they have warned that charges will rise next year.

The Committee have discussed next year's fees and are able to leave Membership at £55 and Visitor fees at £8.00.

My thanks go to Nick Lewis who has kindly examined the accounts again this year.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Lynda Price". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Lynda Price

April 2026

Membership Secretary's Report

I am delighted to report that our current membership has increased to 125. We have continued to receive support from our core members but thirteen new members have joined us this season. The scheme of enabling members to bring a guest to a lecture for free as well as the welcoming of visitors has proved popular. Having experienced what the Arts Society Honiton has to offer some have subsequently become members themselves. Being a member has many added benefits including the receipt of the Arts Society glossy magazine.

We have considered ways to make the experience of joining our society a versatile process and now offer these options:

- Application Forms can be sent to your inbox, you can click Reply and then complete the form on-line before clicking Send so that it comes directly back to me.
- Printed Application Forms can be collected whilst at a lecture and completed by hand
- Application Forms can be sent to your inbox to print and complete by hand then hand delivered or posted

We also offer a variety of means of payment:

- Debit/credit card whilst at the lecture
- BACS payment from home
- Cheque
- Cash

The vast majority of members use email which keeps everyone up to date with relevant information. It means that everyone can receive our Newsletter about forthcoming lectures, lunch menus, voting after lectures and receive other items of interest. Information is also sent directly from the Arts Society including their mini- lectures and 'be an expert on' series.

Jane Yates, Membership Secretary

Programme Secretary's report 2026

As always at this time of the year we still have some lectures to come in our 2025-2026 programme. Thank you again for all your feedback. We have had over 50 responses to some lectures and all the lectures have scored highly overall. It remains difficult however to please everyone all of the time and you won't be surprised to learn that the same lecture can receive an outstanding score from some whilst getting some marked criticism from others. 'Influences in Photography', 'Singer Sargent' and 'Britain's Art Deco Architecture' were all particularly well received. Some members were disappointed that the Joseph Wright lecture did not contain more of his well-known scientific pictures, although personally I enjoyed Amina Wright's original research which concentrated on the artist's time in Bath. The Russia and Ukraine lecture was popular and many felt it would have been better as a study day as there was so much content to cover.

I had an amazing response for suggestions for topics for the next season and have therefore included a wide range of lectures from Dutch Still Life to Sir Kiffin William's - Wales's greatest painter. Gavin Plumley will be coming back to discuss Bauhaus, which was another of your requests. I have also included Ian Swankie, who has been to us before, this time talking about 'Great Railway Stations', this was the standout lecture at the recent southwest programme secretaries meeting. At our final lecture in June 2027 David Rosier the expert on Chinese costumes is returning. After the lecture he has offered to look at and discuss any antique Chinese items that you may like to bring. We will be having a longer session which we will tell you about nearer the time.

Unfortunately, having printed our promotional flyers for next year I subsequently heard from Elizabeth Merry, who was going to talk about Thomas Hardy, that she was no longer able to attend. However, I am delighted that Mark Cottle will be able to start our new season with his lecture on the Great Cathedrals of Medieval England which has been popular at other societies.

I am very grateful to members for suggesting that we should try to form a discussion group after the lecture in the café. This has been running since March and is open to everyone but it is also a chance for new members and those on their own to feel more a part of the society. It's also an opportunity to get some immediate feedback. I hope the initiative will continue and that more of you will come along.

Please keep the suggestions coming and meanwhile I hope you enjoy the rest of this year and will be joining us again for an exciting new season In October 2026.

Janet Ward, programme secretary

Volunteer co-ordinator's report

This year a new system has been started for us to have Volunteers or “Helpers” for the Committee and these are Members who have agreed to step in and help out when needed. Committee Members usually cover the majority of tasks before our monthly Lecture meetings but when there are insufficient Committee to cover the tasks, this is when the Helpers step in.

I send an email to all Committee Members and Helpers about a week before each meeting asking if they will be there and they send me a short reply. We have been doing this for six months now and it has been working well. If anyone would like to join the Helpers please let me or any Committee Member know.

Amanda Preston.