

Dorking Arts Society, the Chairman's Report AGM June 2026

My second year as Chairman was marked by many excellent lectures, and some fascinating outings. Behind the scenes, the committee and I have been working hard to keep up the standards of previous Dorking Arts Societies. We thank our members for their continued support and enthusiasm for the Society.

The year though has not been without its challenges due to the closure again of Dorking Halls from May until mid-December, meaning that we will have the May, June and July lectures at Denbies. However, having just had the May and June lectures there it worked out well and we had 170 members present which is close to the average we get at Dorking Halls.

We are currently at capacity with 340 members with a waiting list of 20.

The membership fee increased by £5 to £50 this year, working out at a cost of £5 per lecture. This increase reflects the higher fees that our lecturers have been charging, but I feel represents excellent value as even a cinema ticket today costs considerably more than this.

Each member of the committee fulfils their role diligently and the usual term of office, in any role, is 3 years, so in July, we will say goodbye to John Arnold, who will end his term as Treasurer. I am pleased to say he will stay on as 'member without portfolio' so we shall retain his expertise. We are very pleased to welcome Roger Bacon who has joined us as Treasurer.

We are also delighted to welcome Sue Bax back to the committee, and she will be our Tours Organiser. This year we will go to Buxton in September and Greece next April.

We had a wonderful trip to Romania in October where we saw several painted churches, painted both inside and out. Thank you to Jenny Perks as this was her swan song as Tours Organiser: it was a terrific trip.

A key role is the secretary, very ably filled by Cecily Church, who produces our meeting Agendas and Minutes and reminds me when I have forgotten something.

Tricia Smart, as Membership Secretary, has moved us away from paper and now handles everything electronically. Well done, Tricia.

Marina Spatz organises the lectures two years in advance and is currently booking lecturers for 2028. This role requires extensive time and research; involving discussion with different lecturers to ascertain their availability and subject matter. She also attends a day in London where the lecturers 'sell' themselves and she tries hard to provide a varied range of art topics to appeal to as many as possible. It was noticeable how many more men there were in the audience when we had a lecture on the art of cars.

Lectures with lunch are organised by Jenni Knights, vice chairman, in liaison with Marina Spatz. These consists of 3 lectures, 2 in the morning, and the third in the afternoon after a sandwich lunch.

Our day visits, ably organised by John Ackers, have been to Penshurst Place in December, Farley's House and Gallery and Michelham Priory in May, and the June visit was to Godinton House and All Saints Church at Tudeley where we saw the fantastic Chagall windows. The cost of the coach hire has increased tremendously this year which affects the price of visits.

John is assisted by Sue Thompson, Steve Thomas, Cindy King, Stephanie Randall and Emily Hough.

Linda Packman beavers away behind the scenes, working with young people, producing artwork of various sorts. We have paid for display units on platform 2 at Dorking Station, where the posters are often on display, and the children's posters were also shown in the window of The Art Gallery in West Street.

Apart from the membership card we now provide every member with two bookmarks as an 'aide memoire' and Chris Blockey organises these, alongside her role promoting the Society in local publications.

Three other people perform vital roles: Suzie Moore produces our wonderful Newsletter, which is sent to everyone with their membership card; Stephanie Randall, who keeps our website up-to-date and posts news of forthcoming lectures and the scores achieved for each lecture; and Navin Mehta is always on hand to help ensure that our lectures are ready for screening and was responsible for sourcing our own laptop.

Thanks go to Peter Dawkins, who, every three months, produces the list of London exhibitions we could visit, and this is available on the website. Jenny Perks, who has been on the committee for many years and has performed a variety of roles, is stepping down. She has been a real help to me, as she is the voice of reason and can offer advice and support based on her many years on the committee. We will miss her. Thank you Jenny.

We are lucky to be able to employ Tom Lawrenson, the audio-visual technician at Dorking Halls, who will come to Denbies each month to ensure we have a clear and audible presentation.

Back to administration - one issue that the committee has looked at this year is ensuring that we are not in breach of copyright when we use photographs. We have been delighted to welcome Emily Hough as our Media Advisor, who ensures we use only images that are copyright-free or used with the owner's permission.

Most of the committee attended a First Aid course in April and we have subsequently updated our first aid kit.

Without a committee, we would not be able to run the society, and my thanks go to each of them on your behalf.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband John, who calms me down when things are going a bit awry and produces the E-news each month.

I hope you agree that we have had a successful year. If any of you feel that you would like to be part of the organising team going forward, please get in touch.

Best wishes, and I hope that you all have a good summer and look forward to meeting again in October, at Denbies.

Christine Thom

Chairman

Dorking Arts Society, Treasurer's Report AGM 31st March 2026

We started the financial year with 340 members and ended it with 340 paid members. Our costs have increased across the board, but your committee have persevered in presenting a most interesting and varied programme of lectures, lectures with lunch, visits and trips. The majority of events have proved very popular.

Our reserves have reduced from £21,736 at the beginning of the year to £20,554 at the year end. Whilst these are well within required limits, we need to be mindful of the continued upward trend in the key costs - lecturers' fees and hall hire. Our loan of £3,000 to the Patricia Fay Fund (established in 1981 in memory of Patricia Fay, who founded what is now The Arts Society. The fund, created shortly after her death to continue her commitment to arts education, heritage conservation, and community arts projects, is interest-free and repayable on demand.

As always, we are very grateful to those who have joined the Gift Aid Scheme. Tax-paying members can claim Gift Aid Relief on the Affiliation Fee (which increased from £15.94 in 2024 to £16.20 in 2025), which we pay to the Arts Society (a Charity) out of subscriptions. As the Arts Society Dorking is not itself a charity, we cannot claim Gift Aid, but the Arts Society pay us £1 as an administration fee per claiming member. If you are a taxpayer but have not yet completed a Gift Aid form, please consider doing so; the forms are available from the Membership

Secretary. Please remember to let the Treasurer know if your tax circumstances change.

Your committee has decided to hold the annual subscription fee for 2026/27 at £50.00 per person, if paid online, or £51.00 if paid by cheque (due to administration costs). Visitor fees will be £10.00 per visit from October 2026.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Maura Lowe for her continued support in preparing these accounts. Our thanks also to Robert Lowe for providing his support and expertise as the Reporting Accountant.

John Arnold

Dorking Arts Society, Membership Report AGM 14th July 2026

Our membership continues to be strong and steady. Currently, at time of this report, we have 340 paid members plus 23 people on our waiting list. At the end of our financial year in March 2026, there were also 340 paid members and 23 people on our waiting list. We said goodbye to 37 members for a variety of reasons during the summer 2025. Between April 2025 and March 2026, that is, during this financial year, we recruited 37 new members. There is a strong possibility, based on previous years, that we shall be able to invite all those on the waiting list to become paid members during 2026/27.

On average, 6 guests per month have attended our meetings during the financial year. This is an average increase of 2 per month, year on year.

Tricia Smart