

**Charity Registration No NIC 106019  
Friends of the F.E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio**

**MINUTES  
AGM  
11 May 2022, 7pm  
F.E. McWilliam Gallery  
Followed by guest speaker Alison Lowry**

**Welcome**

Chair Millie Moore welcomed everyone to the AGM.

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from: Miriam Dudley, Marianne Fairburn, Jane Boyce and Della & Jasper McKinney.

**Adoption of minutes**

As no formal AGM took place in 2020 or 2021, there were no minutes to adopt.

**Annual Report**

Millie welcomed members and started by acknowledging that the past two years had been very challenging and how pleased she was to be able to return to face-to-face events to see everyone who had come out to the AGM.

Millie referred to a slide presentation to talk through the highlights of the year which included photographs of events that had taken place such as: a tour of Hillsborough gardens in August 2021; a tour of 'Sculptures at Work' exhibition; the Sky Arts Landmark programme which was filmed at the gallery; artist Genevieve Murphy sharing her ideas for a Council-commissioned centenary sculpture; a tour of the F.E. McWilliam exhibition at the Armagh County Museum; a tour given by Graham Gingles of his own exhibition 'The Theatre of Secrets'; a talk by linen expert Fiona McKelvie; a tour by artist Sharon Kelly of her own exhibition 'Resting Pressure' and; an Artisan Wine and Cheese event.

Millie announced that this year's bursary had been awarded to artist Sue Morris and that Sue would be invited to take up a place at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre during 2022.

Millie also shared with the audience the news that local art group, the Banbridge Art Club, had folded and that on doing so, had donated the funds from their closing account to the Friends of the gallery to use for educational purposes. She also mentioned the kindness of the McKinney family who made a donation in memory of Grace McKinney, also to be used for educational purposes. Millie thanked both the club and the McKinney's and said that the Friends were working with the gallery to design suitable projects. As a gesture of appreciation, members of the art club have been given a year's free membership of the Friends.

Millie thanked the Friends of the gallery for their continued support for the charity and highlighted what their support means: (1) greater awareness and appreciation of the

work of F.E. McWilliam, the gallery and studio and an increased appreciation of art in general (2) support for developing artistic talent and (3) the artistic development of young people.

Hilary Good proposed that the Friends accept the 2022 Annual Report. This was seconded by Riann Coulter and carried unanimously by those present.

### **Financial Report**

Treasurer Dermott Hutchinson, reported on the financial health of the charity. Dermott highlighted outgoings and income for the Friends making specific reference and thanks for the donations from the Banbridge Art Club and the McKinney family.

Dermott announced the appointment of a new independent financial assessor for the Friends, Grace Taggart. He also thanked Callum Boland for his professional accountancy services for the past two years which had been provided free of charge to the charity.

Colin Matthews proposed that Grace Taggart be appointed financial assessor. This was seconded by Hilary Good and carried unanimously by all present.

Helen Blane proposed that the Friends' Financial Accounts be accepted. This was seconded by Jane Hudson and carried unanimously by all present.

### **Thanks and news from gallery Curator, Riann Coulter**

Curator Riann Coulter, thanked the committee and Friends for their on-going support for the gallery. She praised the committee for managing to keep going through the last two challenging years of the pandemic.

Riann shared with the audience how delighted she was that the Friends of the gallery had agreed to fund a University of Ulster art prize. Soon after the AGM a number of committee members would select the winner of what will be known as the F.E. McWilliam prize for the student of an end-of-year show. The winner and some sample images from the artist will be shared with the Friends of the gallery in due course.

### **Election of Committee**

Millie invited Riann to oversee the election of committee members for 2022-23 as the constitution requires all committee members to stand down at the AGM.

Riann said that the current committee were content to be reinstated in full and that the office-bearers would be appointed at the next committee meeting on 14 June.

Fiona Hyslop proposed accepting the appointment of the committee. This was seconded by Colin Mathews and carried unanimously.

### **Upcoming Events**

Millie shared with the audience the draft proposals for forthcoming events including: a visit and tour of the Seamus Heaney centre; tour of the Belfast School of Art degree show; meet the artist event with Kevin Killen; a celebration of the Maurna Crozier bursary; the education project; and possibly an in-conversation event with Colin Davidson.

## **Other Business**

Millie told the audience that due to the pandemic and the appointment of a new independent assessor, she wanted to put three resolutions to the Friends for approval. Millie read out the resolutions shown below.

### **Resolution 1**

To change the Constitution under section 127 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, section 127 to insert a new paragraph vii to the section entitled “Annual General Meeting”. The new paragraph shall read:

“vii. The Annual General Meeting may be held in person or, if the Trustees deem it appropriate in relation to a particular meeting, by a suitable alternative means of communication or vote on the issues to be addressed at the AGM, to include (without limitation) online voting or video or phone calls or conferencing”.

### **Resolution 2**

The online voting which took place by way of AGM in 2020 and 2021 by reason of the Covid-19 Pandemic shall, for the avoidance of doubt, stand as valid AGMs for the purpose of those years.

### **Resolution 3**

To change the Constitution under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, section 127 so that the third sentence of paragraph 2 in the section entitled “Money and Property” shall read as (new provisions shown in underlined text):

“The accounts of the charity shall be audited or assessed in accordance with the relevant legislative provisions by auditors to be appointed by the annual general meeting and the reports and certificates of such auditors shall be presented to the annual general meeting.”

All resolutions were accepted unanimously by those present at the AGM.

In her closing remarks in AOB, Millie also made special thanks to Secretary Lynda McFadden, for her on-going work for the charity.

## **Speaker**

Millie once again thanked the Friend's members for their continued support. She invited the audience to take a short comfort break and cup of tea before introducing artist Alison Lowry as the speaker for the evening. Alison, who was the 2020 recipient of the Maurina Crozier bursary, gave a lively and interesting talk bringing the evening to a close.

Millie thanked everyone for their attendance.

Chair ..... Honorary secretary.....