

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

MINUTES
AGM
17 September 2025
F.E. McWilliam Gallery
Followed by guest speaker Jennifer Trouton

Welcome

Chair Jane Boyce, welcomed members and commented on how good it was to see a good turnout.

Apologies

Apologies were received from: Jane Hudson, Millie Moore, Chris Tracey, Jasper and Della McKinney, Dermott & Olga Hutchinson, Isabel & Allison Moorehead, Loretto Sloan, Ingrid & David Nicholson, Maeve & Mark Murphy, Sheila McAvoy, Mary Morrow, Helen Wright, Pauline & Michael Malone, Gladys Montgomery, Patricia McAteer, Eamon Duffy, Florence & Jonathan Heyhoe, Brian & Tara Jardine, Bea Boyce, Deirdre Gallagher and, Madeline & Will Coulter.

Adoption of minutes

Chair, Jane Boyce gave a short overview of the agenda for the evening starting with the minutes from the previous year's AGM. The adoption of the 2024 AGM minutes was proposed by Horace de-Courcy Wheeler, seconded by Anne Davidson and carried in the majority by those present.

Annual Report Presentation

Referring to a summary powerpoint presentation, Jane described the 2024/25 events for the charity which included: a garden visit to Montalto; sneak-preview tour of the Scottish Women Artists' exhibition by James Knox from the Fleming Foundation; talk by conservator Claire McGill and a tour of the National Trust's Argory; visit to Queen Street Studios and tour by artist Jennifer Trouton; tour by Jason Diamond of the Hillary Heron exhibition; sneak-preview tour by artist Susan Connolly of her exhibition Ground +100; talk by art historian Carmel Coyle about local artist Helen Mabel Trevor; visit to the Tyrone Guthrie Arts centre in Monaghan to see bursary recipient Susan Mannion at work in her studio; afternoon art tea at the Merrion Hotel in Dublin and; talk by artist Kevin Killen.

Acquisition of F.E. McWilliam painting

Jane shared with the audience her experience of bidding online on behalf of the Friends, for an early F.E. McWilliam painting, *Landscape at Var*. Riann showed the audience the painting which had just been cleaned and suggested that a new frame would help do justice to this important addition to the gallery's F.E. McWilliam collection.

F.E. McWilliam Prize

Jane reminded the audience that the F.E. McWilliam prize was awarded to Eliza McGourty last year, and that it was recently awarded to artist Christine Donaghy.

The prize is awarded to the best work in the Belfast School of Art's year-end show.

Maurna Crozier Bursary winner

Jane announced to the audience that artist Sharon Kelly, had been awarded this year's Maurna Crozier Bursary. Sharon had had a very successful exhibition a couple years ago at the gallery and will be invited, as is the tradition, to speak at next year's AGM.

Friends' support for schools

Jane highlighted the ongoing Friends' support for the transportation of school students to the gallery to learn about F.E. McWilliam and to take part in workshops to develop their artistic skills. This initiative has continued to be a great success and was funded by the remains of two significant donations made to the Friends in 2023/24. The presentation showed a number of photographs of Hamiltonsbawn Primary School pupils attending one of these events. A list of 10 schools that also visited was shown and highlighted that 473 pupils had taken part during the year – a great achievement.

Financial Report

In the absence of the Treasurer Dermott Hutchinson, Jane included a short report on the financial health of the charity. Emily Neill-Dalzell proposed that the Friends accept the 2024/25 Annual Report including the accounts and the re-appointment of CG Taggart Accountants as independent assessor for next year. This was seconded by Miriam Dudley and carried in the majority by those present.

Election of Committee

Jane invited Riann Coulter to oversee the election of committee members for 2025/26 as the constitution requires all members to stand down at the AGM.

Riann thanked the committee and Friends for their on-going support for the gallery. She praised the committee for delivering on another great year of events and especially for their ongoing dedication to the schools' transportation initiative. She mentioned that an application for a grant to continue the funding has been submitted to the Arts Council.

Riann thanked Treasurer Dermott Hutchinson, for his excellent work as he now departs the committee, and thanked Gail McCullough who has indicated her willingness to take on the role for 2025/26.

Riann reported that the current committee members had agreed to remain in place with the addition of Gail, and asked for a proposer and seconder to accept their appointment. Eleanor Gough proposed accepting the appointment and Brigitte Boland seconded it. This was passed in the majority by those present.

Questions for Committee

There were no questions from the audience.

AOB

Under AOB Jane asked for a proposer and seconder for a change to the Friends' constitution. The resolution was proposed to help overcome the need to appoint a secretary for the charity. Jane reported that advice was sought from the Charities

Commission of NI who indicated that the Friends should be guided by its constitution with regard to the need for a secretary.

Jane therefore formally proposed a resolution to remove the requirement for the role from the constitution. This would mean that changes to the wording of the constitution would mean that a secretary **could** be appointed, but **wouldn't have to be**. And if an appointment wasn't made, that trustees may be able to perform any or all of the tasks normally carried out by a secretary.

The new wording of the constitution, which would be an addition to item (10) under Trustees Meeting would read:

"If no secretary is appointed the Trustees may appoint a trustee to perform any or all of the tasks which the secretary of a charity normally performs. The name of any trustee(s) so appointed and the scope of the tasks entrusted to them shall be recorded in the minutes of the relevant trustee meeting."

The resolution was proposed by Colin Mathews, seconded by Eppie Rose and carried in the majority by those present.

Speaker

Riann introduced artist Jennifer Trouton as the speaker for the evening. Riann shared her pleasure at having followed Jennifer's career for some time and was delighted to see how her reputation had grown most deservedly over the years.

Jennifer mentioned that she had several pieces included in the recent 'As Far As The Eye Can See' exhibition which took place at the gallery earlier in the year. She spoke at length about these works and others that were included in her critically acclaimed exhibition 'In Plain Sight' which featured at the RHA in Dublin. She talked about how she had worked on the pieces whilst staying in China during lockdown and the challenges that this presented. This was a detailed and personal talk by Jennifer which the audience appreciated. Jennifer took questions from the floor and mentioned that her book relating to this body of work, 'One of Many', was available to buy from her website.

On behalf of the audience Jane thanked Jennifer for her fascinating and moving talk. She then mentioned Friends' upcoming events – tour of the Barbara Freeman exhibition on 26 September at 11.30am by Riann, and the opening of Lord Belmore's Collection exhibition on 11 October.

Jane thanked the audience for attending the AGM. This brought the evening to a close.

Chair Date.....