Harborough Artists Cluster 2025

Meeting: Tuesday 21st January, 7pm – 9pm,
Location: Methodist Youth Wing, Northampton Road (Opposite Bus Station) LE16 9HE

Meeting Leader: Maxine Dodd, Meeting **Notes**: Allie Whelan **Key Holder**: Sally Struszkowski,

Attendance: Sarah Luke, Chrissy Wilson, Lois Winfield, Derek Brittan, Henrietta Corbett, Andy Ground, Katy Dynes, Vicky Keskeys, Clare Staveley, Birgit Lewis, Annie O'Connor, Lis Naylor, Lynn Loomes, Allie Whelan, Zoë Laughton, Kath Topham, Sally Struszkowski, Maxine Dodd

Apologies: Greta Paradine Palmer, Marion Holden, Danièle & Roger Bradley, Ruby Tomes, Annette Hill, Kelly Gardner, Lynda Talbott, Michael Edwards, David Dunmore, Kay Carpenter, Emily Twomlow, Gaby Read, James Corbett, Barbara Hatton, John Parker, Rebecca Harvey (Website designer)

Minutes

1. **Subscription and Sign Up:** Fee for 2025 – Group to agree the amount and deadline for pay. Recommended increase **£38-£40 per annum**, to be agreed by group **Deadline for payment 31st January, 2025**.

Group agreed: New annual subscription of **£40 deadline to pay: 31st January, 2025.**

Group agreed: **Joining/Admin Fee: £10** to be applied when members join *after the deadline*. This small fee to cover general admin, creating/reinstating Artist Page, chasing payments. This idea proposed by Maxine as there was so much uncertainty and extra work around membership last year.

Membership costs and process to be updated on website – AW will ask Rebecca.

2. **Structure of the group:** Do we need a formal committee structure? If so, we need to nominate and support the following roles:
    a. Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
    b. Additional roles such as, Event Leaders, Website admin, Design and Publicity, Membership and more.
    c. Team event groups/roles

Group agreed: **No formal structure – everyone likes the collaborative nature of the HAC – and the extra work would not solve the issues around a group Sumup machine.**

Group agreed: **Steering Groups and small teams to manage all group tasks,** ie Open Studios, Art Windows, Annual Exhibition, Pop Up Events, Admin, Publicity, PR, Graphic design, Website & Social Media, Meetings and any other tasks that arise. All members must sign up to one group or more or offer assistance in some way.

3. **Events, dates and budgets for the year:** Group to agree dates for the core events, budgets to be assigned to Steering Groups in February, when membership is known:

Group agreed:

- **Open Studios: 17th and 18th May**
- **Art Windows: September (whole month) as our NROS event**
- **Theatre Exhibition: Proposal: September 20th/21st** part of Art Windows and NROS, and times with Aspects of Stitch, so mutual advertising as before – Maxine to contact theatre for availability and check with Katie at NRoS for dates to avoid clash / maximise footfall. ***Post meeting update: Dates booked with the theatre of 20th-21st September for the exhibition, setup on Friday 19th.**
- **Theatre 'What's On' Guide –** Henrietta brought a copy to show the group and ask if our exhibition could be mentioned in there or an advert placed – Maxine will ask when booking the dates with the theatre**.**

4. **Review of November/December event -** Sarah spoke and confirmed most opinions that the date was poor – too much competition from other events. Footfall was poor, Rosie suggested flyers were much better for advertising than posters. **A Board signage worked but we need additional branded items for exhibition and events ideally.**

   Sarah confirmed that the best sellers were browsers and cards and recommended that we offer them again at the exhibition and other pop up events.

   Publicity material for 2025 events could be designed now – Open Studios first. B confirmed that it is the most complex of the publicity material, especially the venue map – but additional signage, postcards and flyers etc, which have the brand logo could be designed generally, with dates added before going to print nearer the time.

5. **Meetings Social group events:** Sip and Sketch, Garden meetups and more – **Group agreed:** Alternative meeting places would be great. Social gatherings, drawing or sketching events, fundraising events, suggested by Lis and more. Members offered gardens in summer and suggested various venues such as Louisa's Place.

   a. Sarah's financial report highlighted the cost of hiring the Methodist Youth Wing (£363 pa) which feels too high for our current income, so venues such as village halls or pubs out of Harborough were suggested by Lis as an alternative.
   Group agreed: Further investigations and enquiries on this. Meeting in March currently booked at Methodist Youth Wing.

6. **Event teams:** Core groups/leaders for the above events for publicity, graphic design, promotional material, PR etc. **Group agreed: Yes – A Sign Up form was presented and will also be sent to members who weren't there. Everyone must try to offer something to one team, event or another.**

7. **Monthly Newsletter:** To cut down on emails, Allie proposed to send a monthly newsletter with all the information regarding events, meetings and other news. Allie to arrange this and decide on a deadline for material from Steering Groups.

Group agreed: Great idea, thank you Allie!

8. **Website and social media:** Suggestions for website from the group:
   a. **Clear means of communication on website – Email address and Admin Team and other teams for the year obvious from the website.**

b. **Material such as agendas/minutes should be easy to download and obvious**
c. **Fees for the year should be clear and easy to find**
d. **Nominations for Artist of the Month,** Website team to draw up a list and send to Allie for publication in the Newsletter.
e. **Instagram and Facebook news:** Sharing social media details. **Kath Topham** has joined the Publicity team specifically to support Instagram, along with Rebecca our website designer. Emily Twomlow has been looking after Facebook, so both accounts on the mainstream platforms are now operational.

   Kath has started to post, share and follow artists in our group, shops who take part in Art Windows and other local groups promoting Harborough. Kath produced a guide for everyone on how to help her run Instagram, as she'll need material to post from members. The guide will be sent to members not present.

9. Any Other Business: Items raised were:

- **Welcome new members,** Andy Ground, Annie O'Connor, Zoe Laughton and Lynne Looms from Aspects of Stitch

- **Exhibiting at Foxton:** Allie found a great space at Foxton Locks with potential for a Pop Up exhibition. Rosie Jarvis recently exhibited at the Museum there, so could be a good site for us as the footfall is high, especially in summer.

- **Communication: Members to use email hac.artists@gmail.com for enquiries.** The email account is looked after by Maxine and Clare, who will reply and share your requests to the right person. Team and event admins can use this as well – with assistance from Maxine to login for the first time.

Next Meeting: **18th March 7pm Methodist Youth Wing. Meeting Focus:** Open Studios, Steering Groups, Advertising/Publicity

Meeting Leader/Key Holder: Allie Whelan

Notetaker/Refreshments: TBC – Please come forward by email