Harborough Artists Cluster – Meeting Left to Draw Studios – Tues 20th May – 7-7:30pm

Special Thanks: to Stacey for hosting the meeting at LTD and also to Arlo (Zoë's son), who kindly took the group photo at the beginning of the meeting. Very much appreciated by all, thank you both!

Apologies: Greta Palmer, Andy Ground, Ruby Tomes, Kay Carpenter, Lynda Talbott, Gabie Read, Michael Edwards, Emily Twomlow, Derek Brittan, Henrietta Corbett, Kelly Gardner, Sarah Boddy, Annie O'Connor,Barbara Hatton, John Parker

Present: Zoë Laughton, Stacey Barthorpe, Clare Staveley, Allie Whelan, David Dunmore, Sally Struszkowski, Lois Winfield, Vicky Keskeys, Katy Dynes, Chrissy Wilson, Sarah Luke, Rebecca Bennett, Rosie Jarvis, Lynn Loomes (Aspects of Stitch), Lis Naylor, Kath Topham, Cate Kutas, Birgit Lewis

Admin: Chair Zoë Laughton**, Minutes** Maxine Dodd, **Group Photo:** Arlo

Agenda:

1. **Open Studios Weekend**

a) **How did it go?** Very, very well! All the studios seemed pleased with turnout, made sales and weather very good. Visitors were positive about the trail and Mini Masterpieces, but needs better promotion next year not only to the public but within the group.

- **Mini Masterpiece Trail** – Really popular idea but needs better promotion. Stamps for the trail participants were very good – need more of them and better publicity about the trail/ mini masterpieces offer. Eight works were chosen, some visitors weren't aware of the trail but would have completed if they did. Some studios weren't promoting the minis and disappointment among some visitors who couldn't plan to complete the trail. Eight minis were chosen over the weekend. Artists present took their pieces home for next time. Please make arrangements with Stacey to collect if you need to.

  Numbers/ Footfall by studio

  A – Tur Langton – Over 250 visitors, including 50 to the studio PV on the Friday evening

  B – Great Bowden, Kay Carpenter studio welcomed 102 visitors over the weekend

  C – Great Bowden, Pippins Nook Studio 116 visitors signed the visitors' book

  D – Braybrooke, welcomed 50plus visitors

  E – Coventry Road, 110 visitors over the two days

  F – Lubenham, welcomed 90 over the weekend

  G – Union Wharf, welcomed 92 on Saturday and 150 on Sunday

  H – Left to Draw, A LOT!! there were SO MANY, especially on Sunday

  I – Gartree welcomed over 30 visitors

  Congratulations to everyone!

Notes for next year: Lots of suggestions around timing and promotion.

- Leaflets - Need more! Suggestions for sponsor(s) next time and possibly for future events to help with printing costs.
- Instagram/Facebook posts were excellent – thanks to Kath and Emily for such good work.
- Publicity worked well in places – Advert in Local Living magazine did bring visitors from Stamford – We were too late for MaHa magazine – but featured in Kibworth Chronicle, Lutterworth Swift Flash and more.
- Radio publicity went very well, including HFM and Allie appeared on Vernon Kay's Radio 2 show at 10:30 am on Friday 16th – Link on BBC Sounds if you missed her.
- Many visitors came on the spur of the moment after spotting signs outside studios. Good signage is important and even balloons and bunting draw attention.
- Leaflet hubs: Out of town hub is Left to Draw and plenty of leaflets were taken from there. Also, Library makes a good 'in town' hub but needs to be checked and stocked where necessary.

After event publicity: Emails – Most artists took email addresses from their visitors – Discussion around processes and requirements for us to be GDPR compliant. Suggestion that we have a group mailing list in the future – We felt a good idea in principle but attendees should be asked for permission to have their names added to this additional list first. We should be **ICO compliant/registered.** Needs further investigation as may be an issue as we are not a 'registered group'.

New members' experience. Those present seemed very happy with their experience of Open Studios, which is lovely to hear.

2. **Pop up Shop – updates:**

For new members, Lis explained the background to the Pop Up opportunity that ran for the first time last year, where a landlord allows a shop to be used rent free between tenants as a charitable act. The cost to the group is to pay the electricity and heating at the end of the run.

Lis sent a call out to the group before Open Studios for expressions of interest. Artists taking part must steward. Sarah Luke, (treasurer) devised a system to record sales, stewarding rota and payment records.

The Pop-Up opportunities require a quick response. So, artists who opted in arrived to set up on Sunday evening, refined the show on Monday, on its 1st opening day! The run will be for two weeks – although last year, there was an extension to five weeks – so watch this space. The consensus is that it looks great and full details are on the website event section.

Thank you to Lis and Naylor's Estate Agents for the opportunity.

3. September events:

The group's next official events come in September. Teams to run these are open for volunteers. These are the volunteers so far, please contact group email hac.artists@gmail.com to offer your time:

3a. Art Windows: Quick recap of the event for new members. Local businesses show work by our artists in their windows for the whole of September. Artists have a different shop window every year, so the event remains fresh. Shops are not involved in sales – Artists don't have to sell their work but if they do – all sales are made between the buyer and the artist directly.

Full details to follow in June/July from the teams involved. Please check your emails regularly.

AW Team volunteers so far: Lois Winfield, Allie Whelan, Chrissy Wilson, Kath Topham, Cate Kutas, Rosie Jarvis (July), Lis Naylor, Maxine Dodd, Andy Ground, Michael Edwards, Lynda Talbot

3b. Theatre Exhibition – 20th – 21st September, Harborough Theatre

Exhibition Team volunteers so far: Kay Carpenter, Maxine Dodd, Lynda Talbott, Sarah Luke, Kath Topham, Rebecca Bennett, Allie Whelan, Vicky Keskeys, Sally Struszcowski, Andy Ground, Michael Edwards

5. A O B

- **Harborough Carnival** – seems that our involvement not required! Allie and Kath followed up with the organisers with little response. Seemed as though the organisers were selling market stall space. Therefore, the group is not officially involved as had been thought previously. Artists can attend and make work if they wish but it won't be an official HAC Event now.
- Market Harborough Building Society 'Art Hub' something the Building Society would like to work with HAC on – more details to follow with Allie on the next newsletter, coming soon.
- **Social Media and Website:** Keep up with the social media posts, photos, events, blog post articles – all good for the group. Kath reported that our Instagram account has had 11,000 views and reached 1700 accounts. Send material directly to Kath and Emily via Instagram and Facebook messages – All website material to go to HAC Email.
- **Publicity Team:** The group's publicity team consists of Kath Topham, (Instagram), Emily Twomlow (Facebook), Allie Whelan, Maxine Dodd, and Rebecca Harvey, Website, Birgit Lewis print and design, David Dunmore, print PR. **Next PT meeting 7th July, 10am, Mercado Lounge**.
- **Neville Holt Festival:** Lis made contact with the organisers and is exploring options for the group to feature in the festival for 2026 – Exciting prospect – watch this space!

6. Next group meeting:

Tuesday 15th July, 7pm, Left to Draw Studios – Chair, Zoe Laughton

Meeting focus, Art Windows and Theatre Exhibition

Thanks again, have a great time meanwhile, See you soon! 😊