



The Arts Society Oxford

TASO Newsletter July 2020

Dear Members and those on our Waiting List

This will be the last Newsletter of the current TASO year. It feels very strange to be writing about the end of the year when we have not had the opportunity to meet together for four months. Social contact is such an important part of the Arts Society's life, and we must feel positive about being able to gradually reintroduce that element in the autumn. Therefore the emphasis in this Newsletter is upon the new year, 2020 / 21, and how we intend to make it as enjoyable and participative for our members as we can.

Three areas of importance for you to read about below:

1. Membership for 2020 / 21
2. Our Programme for next year
3. TASO AGM

1. Membership 2020/21

Thank you to all those who have renewed their membership over the past few weeks. The next step is for Diana Gordon, Membership Secretary, to approach those on our Waiting List. I very much look forward to welcoming New Members.

Confirmation of membership will be sent out in the course of this month, July, and will be accompanied by our next year's Lecture Programme. We shall not be printing Membership cards this year, as there will be no opportunity to hand them out to members. So please keep the emailed Programme as your monthly reminder. All the information will also be available on the TASO website, along with any updates should they be required.

2. Our Programme for next year

2.1. The lecture programme is fully booked for the year. While trying to be flexible in our approach in these uncertain times, trustees made the decision to deliver all lectures online up to and including December. We fully appreciate many of our members will be extremely cautious as the government progresses its lifting of restrictions. Magdalen College has been very helpful; we have cancelled the lecture theatre without cost up to the end of the year. It is obviously our hope we shall be able to move back into the auditorium from January, perhaps with a combination of live and online lecture delivery. Our usual monthly slot is being kept for us.

The central body of the Arts Society has issued helpful planning guidelines, and this has enabled us to purchase our own TASO Zoom licence and receive training on how to implement this for the benefit of members. Several of the trustees are now proficient at hosting and running Zoom lecture sessions but we are still looking for a couple of enthusiastic members who are tech-savvy and willing to learn more about Zoom to join us on our team. Do please contact me if you could help.

Each lecture will be delivered live via Zoom and our own dedicated TASO YouTube channel. Members will access this via an encrypted secure link. More information will be circulated and we shall also run drop-in practice sessions for members before we go live in the autumn.

2.2 Other activities within the Society for the autumn. We held very productive TASO Coffee Morning sessions in June – very many thanks to those members who joined trustees to put forward and discuss possible ideas to increase social interaction for our members.

We feel the most constructive way forward to gauge the views and interests of the wider membership is to send out a short questionnaire, based largely on the above discussions. This will be sent out at the end of July. Please do respond as feedback from you will be very important in establishing a viable programme of activities (including online participation).

3. TASO AGM

Trustees have decided to hold our AGM largely by email. As well as overcoming the impossibility of meeting at the Maths Institute in September, it will give all our members the opportunity to take part in the election of trustees and to confirm receipt of the Chair's report and the accounts.

The initial AGM notification with the request for Resolutions and Nominations will be sent out mid July. This will be followed mid August by the Reports and Accounts, together with a voting link for the elections and the opportunity to submit any questions.

On **Thursday 17 September** we shall hold a live online session, starting with myself as Chair summarising main points for the year and answering any questions that have been sent in. This will be followed by a lecture from Alexandra Epps – she was booked for our April Celebration lecture and has kindly agreed to deliver this as our now traditional extra lecture for members. More details will come out with the AGM papers, and are also contained in the Lecture Programme.

Thank you to all our members for your patience in these uncertain times, and for your support, both in terms of emails and in your confidence that our society will return to its informative, active and sociable state. I certainly have missed seeing everyone – members, volunteers and trustees (though we have held virtual meetings regularly on Zoom).

For those members who purchased tickets for the celebration lecture please be assured we still have your £5 saved. We intend to hold a "Back to Normal" event when possible, but we are happy to refund your money if requested.

I should like to extend particular thanks to all members of the Trustee Board, and the organisers of Visits and Get to know, who have all given an amazing amount of time and thought to the society over the past months. It is very encouraging to hear this week that the government has at last come up with a support package for the arts; for many organisations the future was looking precarious at best. Please do not forget over the summer the multitude of online offerings from museums and galleries, theatres and concert halls.

- Our own Ashmolean provides some fascinating virtual tours as do most major museums.
- The National Theatre productions continue with Les Blancs (2nd July), The Deep Blue Sea (9th July), Amadeus (16th July).
- The Met opera New York (www.metopera.org) continues to stream a different production daily at 7:30 p.m. EDT and remains accessible for on-demand viewing until 6:30 p.m. the following day.

- Lastly, don't forget the new Arts Society Connected platform, with a series of short Arts lectures already available, and more to come this month, and an online forum for exchange of ideas. <https://www.connected.theartsociety.org/>

Very best wishes to all
 Sarah Whiteley
 Chair, The Arts Society Oxford

TASO communications to look out for over the summer

- During remainder of July - Confirmation of Membership and Lecture Programme
- Mid July - AGM notification and request for Resolutions and Nominations
- 1 August - Members Questionnaire
- Mid August - AGM papers with voting link
- Early Sept - Newsletter
- 17 Sept - AGM and lecture

Your Trustees

Top row: Sarah Whiteley (Chair), Hilary Reed Evans (Vice Chair), Allan Taylor (Treasurer), Pam Eyton (Secretary)

Bottom row: Ann McIlhinney (Lecture Programme), Celia Robinson (Community Arts), Stephanie North (Study Days), Diana Gordon (Membership)

