

Good Afternoon and welcome to the NEOS 2016 Annual General Meeting. I am Rae Osborne current NEOS Chair and I would like to declare this meeting open at 3.0pm

Let me introduce the NEOS Committee:

**Secretary/Minutes Secretary**

Jane Ronie is taking the minutes today

**Treasurer, Map Compiler, Printer Liaison, Directory Pick up Point organiser.**

Gerry Potter, our Treasurer and map co-ordinator. Gerry is very meticulous regarding the accounts, keeping our spending in check. Organising and visiting the Directory Pickup Point Volunteers, and preparing the delivery schedule. Gerry also liaises with the directory printers, and along with the Committee proof reads the Directory to within an inch of it's life. Gerry was a Pickup Point.

**Entries Secretary & Social Media**

I welcome Jane Ronie back to the Committee to help with Signup, and Social Media.

Absent Members:

**Social Media, Advertising, Press Officer**

Aubin Stewart, who is currently on Maternity leave, and cannot be here today. Aubin was responsible until June for keeping Social Media up to date, also the Role of Press Officer, administering the Adverts in the Directory. Aubin is a professional jeweller and lecturer at Gray's School of Art. The Chair picked up the Role from June onwards.

Outgoing Committee Members since the 2015 AGM.

Elaine Lindsay

2016 has been another challenging year. I was suddenly taken ill mid November, and although I picked up the reins again mid January I was not back to full health until end of May.

I was doing so much that everything stopped from November until January, as no-one was up to speed. Aubin Stewart kindly stepped in to look after the NEOS Mail account, and experienced the volume & variety of emails received daily. Many thanks to Aubin.

The consequence:

Signup was delayed from 1 March to 1 April, to enable full testing of the new Signup system. Unfortunately by 1 April Jane Ronie had other Commitments.

My illness has highlighted again the pitfalls of such a small Committee with too few folks performing several tasks. This is not good for NEOS, and not good for the Committee Members who are struggling to pull NEOS together whilst trying to produce a body of work for their own NEOS exhibition.

I again covered several roles myself, Chair, Directory data compiler, Entries Secretary, Communications Officer and NEOS Rep for Aberdeen Festivals, Social Media & advertising. Whilst it is the Chair's Role to ensure tasks are completed in a timely manner, and where necessary step in. Expecting the Chair to consistently step in leads to inefficiency and is not sustainable.

The Job Description document has been uploaded to the website. We have tried to break down the roles, so if you think you could help in some small way please email your CV (experience) to [northeastopenstudios@gmail.com](mailto:northeastopenstudios@gmail.com).

Yes it has been hard work again, but I have heard more positive than negative comments. The negative comments regarding visitor numbers. My figures were back down to 150 as against 290 in 2015, but as was expressed at last year's AGM it is all about expectations. Gerry & I visited new exhibitors in Keith & Forres, and they were delighted to have had 40 visitors. As one of them said "That is 40 people who wouldn't have seen my work without NEOS". They see NEOS as an opportunity to showcase their work, and less about selling. Yes I know we all want to sell.

I am trying to encourage more artists in the Keith to Forres area, as with more exhibitors there is a better chance of others joining them.

### **Aberdeen Festivals**

Neos's membership has again proved to be very beneficial with so much more exposure than we could have afforded. NEOS is very highly thought of and to date we are still the only unfunded Volunteer led festival. Aberdeen Festival 's Member, promoted alongside the other Festivals automatically. The Window Vinyls on Bridge Street continue to be updated to feature each Festival they happen. The Popups that have appeared around Aberdeen City, the STV Adverts, the Original FM adverts and the P&J Weekend Supplement were all courtesy of Aberdeen Festivals. More about this in the Press & PR report later.

The full board of Festival Managers now meets quarterly, and sub groups have been set up, with reps from each festival on the sub Group. Jane Ronie is the NEOS rep on the "Festival Income Generation" group, Aubin is the NEOS rep on the "Marketing & Communications" group, and I (Rae Osborne) sit on the "Policies & Governance" group.

**29 July 2016** Gerry Potter, Jane Appelbee & (myself) Rae Osborne attended an Aberdeen Festivals day: All Member Festivals, and those festivals interested in joining gathered together at the Beach Ballroom. The morning devoted to the current Member festivals, where various discussion groups were set up, and the attendees could move from group to group. I joined 1 group discussion about "How do folks get started culturally? How can they find out what they are good at artistically." and was heartened to hear that NEOS is seen as a great encourager of emerging artists. Interested groups joined us for the afternoon session . A very inspiring speaker Jude Kelly OBE, Artistic Director, Southbank Centre in London, related her background, and how she got to where she is today. Jude led the cultural team for the successful London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic bid.

### **Visitor Surveys**

Thanks once again to Aberdeen Festivals for financing the Visitor Survey, as last year other festivals had folks on the ground with clipboards asking visitors questions. This is impractical for NEOS, which is why we have again asked you to collect visitor email addresses. I am aware that some folks find this difficult, but I have found that if you have the notice, and ask if they have been elsewhere and if they have participated in the survey. This opens the conversation, giving you the opportunity to explain why we need the email address. Most folks are keen to help NEOS prove it's Cultural and Financial contribution to the North East of Scotland, and this is our only way of measuring it. The Visitor Prize Draw will take place tomorrow 31 October, and this year we have changed to a Cash Prize, as last year several visitors were reluctant to enter the draw if they were from outwith the

North East so it would be difficult to be able to spend the prize money with a North East Artist. It is equally important that we measure both the number of local visitors and those from outwith the North East of Scotland, as this proves that we do bring Visitors to the area specifically for NEOS. I constantly hear that relatives time their family visits to coincide with NEOS. I also know that Delgaty Castle, has lots of Visitors who time their holidays again to coincide with NEOS. Joan at Delgaty this year dropped the charge to NEOS visitors to go around the castle. A great support for NEOS & the Artists exhibiting there.

**The Artists Survey** is still open until Midnight Sun 6 November. Complete it and you could win a free entry to NEOS 2017.

Based on the data gathered in 2015 I have been asked to go & speak to the Council as we now have proof of our Cultural impact and could be eligible for some funding.

So as you can see NEOS has been a busy year.