



www.sau.org.uk
info@sau.org.uk

Scottish Artists Union Annual General Meeting
Saturday 16 September 2006, 2pm
DCA, 152 Nethergate Street, Dundee, DD1 4DY

Present: Terry Anderson, Chris Biddlecombe, Su Grierson (Chair), Laura Hunter, Fiona Pilgrim (*Associate*), Clare Galloway, Christine Goodman, Claire Harkess, Marie Hay, Sarah Keay, Pernille Spence, Ed Hunter, Suzanne Stuart Davies, Margaret Dyson (*Associate*), Nigel Mullan.

Apologies: Chris Fremantle, Marianne Greated, Chris Kelly, Joyce McFarlane, Jayne Taylor, Wendy Bibby, Rowena Comrie, Charmian Pollok, Steve Richard, Don Mcneil and Jean Bell of Fyne Studios, Mairi Ewen.

Agenda

1. Welcome from President, Su Grierson
2. Report from President
3. Report from Treasurer, Chris Kelly presented by Danzig accountants
4. Proposals for Scottish Artists Union (SAU)
5. Election of Executive Committee Members for SAU

1. Welcome from President

Su Grierson welcomed all those in attendance, read out apologies from the above and noted wishes that had been sent to the SAU from Lorne Boswell, Equity and Ivonna Veiherde, the Latvian Artists Union (LAU) Vice President.

The LAU's work was briefly described as being a union run by a voluntary community of artists with a total of 1200 members. They have a 5 story building incorporating studios, workshops and a permanent collection.

It was noted that Guyan Porter whom was elected at the last SAU AGM in 2005 has since retired from his role due to other work commitments, and was thanked for his continuing support and for notably being the initial president of the SAU.

The previous AGM minutes were proposed by Fiona Pilgrim and seconded by Chris Biddlecombe.

2. Report from President

2.1 Success of the SAU

Su outlined the success of the SAU over the past 5 years, acknowledging the work done both nationally and internationally. With an increase in membership numbers and activity, the SAU is now being sited as an example for others to follow. It was noted, that the 2006 AGM is taking place 15 months rather than 12 months after the 2005 AGM, which was sanctioned by a postal ballot.

2.2 Cultural Commission

Su commented that the Cultural Commission report had been published and an invitation was given to attend a "Culture Club" in Parliament. In brief, the report failed to match expectations and did little to address the issues that had initially been raised prior to the published report. Su facilitated a full group response to this and circulated it to the Scottish Arts Council (SAC), other cultural bodies and various artists' emails and forums.

2.3 Political Lobbying

The SAU continues to be involved in political lobbying for Visual Arts. Patricia Ferguson declined to meet the SAU however Su was able to question her during a Radio Scotland Radio Café broadcast and at Parliament on the same day. Patricia Ferguson's response was that artists would indirectly benefit from plans to raise the profile of culture generally but that there were no plans to extend this to individual artists. The Union has since contacted the presiding officer in Parliament House to see if an SAU display stand could be mounted in the building and progress is pending.

Donald Gorrie, the Scottish Liberal Democrat, MSP tabled a Motion to Parliament on artists' rates of pay following on from the "Culture Club" talks that had taken place.

Terms of Motion were that the Parliament believes that public bodies such as the Executive, councils, health, enterprise and education authorities should pay agreed professional rates of pay to artists working in any of the art projects funded by public bodies.

2.4 Trade Union Affiliation

The SAU have been successful in gaining support from the larger Trade Union bodies with exception of the Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph & Theatre Union (BECTU). BECTU is taking the stance that they have prior claim to the SAU affiliation on the grounds that their constitution states that they represent artists and that SAU could only become a subgroup of BECTU.. At this stage, if BECTU continue to *not* give support, the SAU will remain an individual Union.

2.5 Membership Issues

The SAU are continuing to support members in writing and in person and for those they are unable to support, they continue to signpost onwards where possible. It was stressed that the SAU are not classed as an information bureau and are not indemnified to provide this service.

A prevailing point from discussion with members however, is a need for advice on contracts. This has fed into the development and delivery of the SAU and Cultural Enterprise Office (CEO) partnered event "Artists' Contract and Resale Rights".

The SAU sought marketing advice from the CEO through their marketing consultant Adrienne Hall. In response, new flyers and large posters were produced but have

created an additional workload for the current committee. At present, it is felt that there is an imbalance between the time spent lobbying and doing administrative tasks.

2.6 Benefits of Joining the SAU

One of the key benefits now provided by membership of the SAU is free public liability insurance. Thanks were given to Chris Biddlecombe and the Musician's Union for their support with this.

2.7 Promotion

The SAU have been represented at several art events in Scotland including the Glasgow Art Fair and the Perthshire Visual Arts Forum. Laura Hunter, the SAU Researcher was able to distribute her questionnaire about contracts at the Art Fair, results of which were presented at the 'Contracts and Resale Rights' conference.

2.8 Cultural Academy

Bryan Beattie was funded by the Scottish Executive earlier this year to examine the idea of the Cultural Academy. Research was done and proposals were made that did not meet with SAU approval. Alternative proposals were made by the SAU and again, disseminated to the SAC, various cultural bodies and to other artists to encourage them to send in their views. SAU have been informed that their views have been supported by many sections of the cultural community.

2.9 SAU Model

The SAU is being seen as a model that others wish to follow including Visual Arts Ireland. The Artists Information Company [a-n] is becoming a membership organisation to be able to work in a similar way to the SAU.

Research projects undertaken by the SAU has meant an increase in workload for Laura, the SAU Researcher. Further funding would alleviate this extra burden and would also enable the SAU to undertake more research. An increase in benefits for members would also attract new members. Sufficient number of committee members would allow the SAU to be able to campaign and lobby more effectively. Essentially, a committee and membership group who perceive the bigger picture is needed to further 'define the arena in which we work and live our lives'.

3. Report from the Treasurer

Carolyn Brydon of Danzig & Co read out the report in Chris Kelly's absence. The report outlined financial business from April 1 2005 to March 31 2006 and were checked and endorsed by Danzig & Co, the appointed auditors for the SAU.

- The financial year was deemed as relatively stable with general income and expenditure similar to the previous financial year.
- Total annual income was just over £8.5k which includes grant funding of approximately £2k.
- Grant funding was generally used for training committee members in skills pertinent to running the SAU effectively. Training included using various computer software systems, website and database use and management.

- Total annual expenditure was £5k, giving an increase of £1k on the previous year. The increase was explained again by the need for skill training for committee members.
- A similar expenditure or reduced cost was made in virtually all other areas.
- An accumulated surplus for the year of £3.5k has been added to the previous year's funds. Therefore, as of March 31st, 2006, the SAU was standing with funds of £10,758 (inc. fixed assets).
- The SAU has created a strong financial base in the first five years of existence. The future year will bring greater stability with the development of the Public Liability Insurance benefit, increasing membership and further development in both marketing and research ideas.
- The SAU is in a strong position both within the public profile within the sector and in its financial stability and can continue to provide support for the Visual Arts in Scotland.

The members of the SAU adopt the presented accounts as the due financial record for the financial year 2005-2006. Claire Galloway proposed this motion and Ed Hunter seconded it.

4. SAU Proposals

4.1 Proposal from David Cook

Chris Biddlecombe read the proposal:

"The SAU should invest an agreed budget from its cash reserves/fund to launch a publicity campaign amongst artists and politicians aiming for all political parties to put artists at the centre of arts policies in the lead up to the May 2007 Scottish Parliamentary Elections."

Debate followed with emphasis put on the amount of publicity it would take to execute such a campaign. Su Grierson commented that the SAU has not reached its full quota of members and this would impact on this being carried forward. It would be difficult to administer due to lack of time committee members could devote to such a high profile campaign. In order to target MSP's as done previously, Su added that detailed proposals would need to be in place otherwise it would be considered as "hot air".

It was proposed that David Cook could offer suggestions to expand on his proposal. Members were asked for their views. Discussion followed about what specific issues could be highlighted in such a campaign, and taxation was suggested. Chris Biddlecombe added that the SNP are going to include a similar tax benefit policy in their next manifesto, covering all artforms. Su Grierson discussed the opposition that has arisen to this Irish benefit mainly as it is of use to the higher income artists rather than the lower income artists and has succeeded in attracting higher profile artists to return to Ireland. . Fiona Pilgrim highlighted that the SNP are currently looking at different type of tax benefits for artists but she was unsure how much of these tax responsibilities fell within the Scottish Parliament's remit.

Chris asked if this motion would be carried forward and who would second it? Fiona Pilgrim said she would second it if there was an amendment to say it could only be delivered with a total of 15 committee members. Chris asked if that would be a second motion, and if so, who would second that?

With a degree of uncertainty, the members felt that the proposal itself was an attractive one but it needed clear targets and objectives. , It was agreed that the idea was sound and would in any case have been implemented in some way It was agreed that the idea would be discussed in the next SAU meeting but David's proposal was not seconded at this stage.

5. Election of Committee Members

Chris Biddlecombe confirmed that the existing committee had stepped down and read out the list of proposed members for the next term:

Su Grierson
Terry Anderson
Chris Kelly
Fiona Pilgrim
Joyce Macfarlane
Jayne Taylor
Marianne Greated
Chris Biddlecombe
Laura Hunter
Chris Fremantle

Suzanne Stewart Davies is a new nominee.

There were no objections to this new committee. 11 existing SAU members agreed on it but there will need to be a postal ballot to reach the official quorum number of 21.

Su Grierson completed the AGM and thanked everyone for attending.