

SOUTH EAST OPEN STUDIOS AGM MEETING

Held at The Stag Theatre on 28th July 2011

Present:

Rod McIntosh (Chairman)

Hazel Addley (Treasurer)

Felicity Flutter (ACO Officer)

Dominique Morgan (Database Officer)

Terry Ayling (Guide Editor)

Paul Williams (Website)

Louisa Crispin (Evaluator)

Emma Dove (Publicity Officer)

Mike Tedder (Minutes Secretary)

Anna Wilson-Patterson (Advertising Officer)

1	Rod welcomed everyone to the 2011 AGM. Members of the committee introduced themselves to the floor.		
2	Apologies: Charlotte Rice (Guide Distribution), Helen Mayer (OSN)		
3	Signing of the minutes of the 2010 AGM: The minutes of the previous AGM were agreed by Rod and accepted by all. No additions to the minutes were logged.		
4	Proposed changes to the Constitution: .Amendments to the constitution: Breach of terms & conditions: It has been considered that where there is a breach of the terms and conditions, we should be in a stronger position to refuse membership on these grounds. Rod has had to manage complaints again this post event from local residents angry about SEOS signs put up, and visitors finding artists not at studios. Committee and membership present were all in agreement to pass this amendment. Although it was suggested a few years ago that if artists failed to be present during SEOS, they would be denied future entry – it could not be enforced, but was now entered into the constitution.		

	<p>Description of management team / committee:</p> <p>It was decided by the committee that the post of Development Grant Liaison Officer should be dropped, as it was no longer being recruited for, due to the current climate of grant funding within the arts.</p> <p>This was passed unanimously.</p>		
5	<p>Chairman's Report :</p> <p>There had been a lot of changes in the Open Studios Networks this year. Most Open Studios were still operating, some having undergone structural changes, in order to become less reliant upon local authority and grant funding.</p> <p>SEOS was well placed financially to look at a 5 year programme / development plan.</p> <p>Research had shown a considerable drop in petrol sales, with people driving less, resulting in a third less footfall in out of town shopping centres this year. Bad weather had also been a factor affecting this year's Open Studios event. A combination of these factors had an effect upon visitor numbers, particularly to rural studios.</p> <p>There had been a 250% increase in the SEOS advertising budget this year, enabling a broader range and reach of advertising placements. This had been made possible due to a reduction in guide printing costs.</p> <p>Rod indicated that an online survey / questionnaire (by Survey Monkey) would be distributed to test advertising assumptions.</p> <p>The committee would be looking towards a more consistent brand awareness approach to artwork & posters used to advertise SEOS.</p> <p>Our online presence is stronger this year with the new website, and cross-platform, with dedicated Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In and Flickr feeds.</p> <p>Rod encouraged members to keep their updates coming in on the artist updates section of the SEOS website, and other platforms.</p> <p>99% of visitors had reported that SEOS 2011 was good.</p>	<p>PW</p> <p>Cmt</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Sept</p>
6	<p>Treasurer's Report:</p> <p>Hazel informed us about the draft expenditure analysis. There had been an income of £34,000 – an increase on last year. There had been an increase in membership income.</p> <p>This was now the 2nd year in a row that SEOS had not received any external funding.</p>		

	<p>Income had been spent: Invested in the web site make-over. A substantial increase in the advertising budget. An increase in ACO funding for local promotions.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the surplus this year, so finances are in a good position for moving forward to next year.</p> <p>There will be an examination of the CIC (Community Interest Company) model in September, to explore whether this would be suitable framework for SEOS in the future.</p>	RM HA	Sept
7	<p>ACO Officer's Report:</p> <p>Flic pointed out the artist trail maps, ACO reports and artist comments boards to members.</p> <p>ACO's had put in a lot of work this year developing local advertising with banners, flyers, etc.</p> <p>From reports, some artists had been more successful than others, but visitor numbers were, in general, down on last year's totals.</p> <p>Flic indicated that it would be additional expense if the ACO area boundaries were changed, as some members had requested, as these are pre-programmed into the SEOS website.</p> <p>There are a few areas currently without an ACO: Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells & Dartford.</p> <p>In some areas SEOS is in competition with local events: Whitstable, Herne Bay, Canterbury, Deal etc. Rod stressed the value of both regional and local events working for artists, and the need for continuing to get the message out that both add value.</p> <p>Flic thanked the ACO's for all their hard work this year.</p>		
8	<p>Website Officer's Report:</p> <p>Paul outlined the updates & changes to the website this year. SEOS home page.</p> <p>New facilities for the visitor and artists had been brought online, without an increase in the cost of development.</p> <p>Paul reported that website visitor numbers were up 34% on last year's totals.</p>		

	Nest year SEOS would be looking into the possibility of having existing artist details available at the sign-up process.	PW	Late 2011
9	<p>Publicity Officer's Report:</p> <p>Emma presented a map showing the coverage of advertising & publications across the SEOS regions.</p> <p>She suggested that SEOS should present press releases that were less generic and more individually focussed next year.</p>		
10	<p>Advertising Officer's Report:</p> <p>Anna informed us that the uptake of advertising space taken in the SEOS guide had doubled this year.</p> <p>Currently when advertisers book space, they are invoiced and pay later. She suggested that it would be better practice if payment was received with the order, to save chasing payments after advertising had been printed.</p> <p>She suggested that there was a need for SEOS to present a more corporate brand image to attract the larger advertisers sought, such as contemporary art galleries such as Turner Contemporary & Towner.</p> <p>There was a suggestion for that the guide could be A5 portrait format, with the first 5 pages dedicated to advertising.</p>		
11	<p>Database Officer's Report:</p> <p>Memberships had increased by 10, which was considered to be an achievement, considering the current financial climate.</p> <p>Dom indicated that she had received encouraging emails from prospective new members for 2012.</p> <p>There had been a few more applications made online this year.</p> <p>She also stressed the need for artists to read the instructions, when filling in applications, to prevent unnecessary errors.</p>		
12	<p>Guide Production Report:</p> <p>Terry informed us that this was his third year as guide editor, and in that time its content had risen from 60 pages to 72.</p> <p>Hastings Print Company had given us such a competitive price - the lowest quote, so it was decided to try using them for this year's printing</p>		

	<p>run. Although we had not used them before, the samples looked impressive, and the savings made could be used to increase the advertising budget.</p> <p>One criticism voiced about the guide cover was that the paint tube appeared to favour painters. Other comments suggested that the design was too 'busy'.</p> <p>It was considered to be important to show the wide range of artists & makers taking part in SEOS.</p> <p>It was also suggested, and is for future consideration, that we should feature more action 'doing' photos of people taking part in the event.</p>		
13	<p>Guide Distribution Report:</p> <p>Some issues with KCC distribution of the SEOS guides had been noted and were described: Previously boxes of 60 guides were carried for distribution, but with new Health & Safety considerations, KCC suggested couriers could now only carry boxes of 20 guides.</p> <p>Charlotte managed to negotiate boxes of 50 guides being carried, but the smaller umbers distributed may mean that ACO's will have to top up libraries as stocks become depleted.</p> <p>The committee will be exploring alternative methods of distribution, eg. via courier to lifestyle hotels etc. It was also suggested that the guide print run may be increased to 40/50,000 to cover alternative areas of distribution.</p> <p>The committee noted to send Charlotte, recently married, a congratulations card.</p>	Cmt	Sept
14	<p>Evaluation Report:</p> <p>Louisa presented a wide range of SEOS statistics as colourful wall charts.</p> <p>61% of respondents experienced an increase in contact with other artists, boosting their networking opportunities.</p> <p>It was strongly felt that SEOS should continue to offer participating artists Public Liability Insurance cover, as part of their membership, as the statistics revealed that 52% do not have their own PLI cover.</p> <p>Visitor numbers this year had been affected by the poor weather, sporting and other local events.</p>		

	<p>Some visitors responded that they had been unable to find SEOS guides, so this is an area than needs to be addressed for the forthcoming year.</p> <p>Taster exhibitions and art trails were reportedly well received.</p> <p>There was a call for more artists to be open on weekdays during the event period, to boost artist networking.</p> <p>A massive 99% of respondents rated SEOS as either good or very good.</p>	Cmt	2012
15	<p>OSN Representative Report:</p> <p>The Open Studios Network was one of the arts organisations that lost funding this year. The new voluntary / virtual structure is now built upon a Linked-In networking platform.</p> <p>The OSN was considered to remain a good sounding board for trends within the network, and Helen Mayer is continuing to maintain the SEOS link.</p>		
16	<p>Nominations and Elections:</p> <p>Rod McIntosh - Chairman: The committee passed a vote in favour. 1st proposed by Jane Wharrad / 2nd Tish Tunstall / passed by membership</p> <p>Hazel Addley - Treasurer: 1st proposed by Chris Furse / 2nd Elitta Fell / passed by membership</p> <p>Felicity Flutter - ACO Officer: 1st proposed by Victoria Fontaine-Wolf / 2nd Vikky Furse / passed by membership</p> <p>Paul Williams - Website Officer: 1st proposed by Tish Tunstall / 2nd Jane Wharrad / passed by membership</p> <p>Emma Dove - Publicity Officer – standing for the 1st time: 1st proposed by Clare Palastanga / 2nd Jane Barnard / passed by membership</p> <p>Anna Wilson-Patterson - Advertising Officer – standing for the 1st time: 1st proposed by Kate Chitham / 2nd Juliet Simpson / passed by membership</p> <p>Dominique Morgan - Database Officer: 1st proposed by Rose Coldbridge / 2nd Christa Corner / passed by membership</p>		

	<p>Terry Ayling - Guide Editor: 1st proposed by Harriet Gifford / 2nd Rose Coldbridge / passed by membership</p> <p>Charlotte Rice - Guide Distribution Officer: 1st proposed by Elitta Fell / 2nd Melvyn Evans / passed by membership</p> <p>Louisa Crispin - Evaluator: 1st proposed by Clare Palastanga / 2nd Tish Tunstall / passed by membership</p> <p>Mike Tedder - Minutes Secretary: 1st proposed by Victoria Fontaine-Wolf / 2nd Philip Arrand / passed by membership</p>		
17	<p>Questions from the floor:</p> <p>It was noted that the associate membership had been appreciated, allowing members to continue to feel connected, even though they were not taking part in the SEOS event itself.</p> <p>Jane Wharrad:</p> <p>ACO's had found it difficult to produce trail guides as studio opening times had been so different and varied. The need for artists to contact ACO's pre application to synchronise opening dates was essential for successful trails. It was questioned whether there should be compulsory opening days, when all artist studios were open.</p> <p>How do we make it easier for people to plan studio visits? Dates/times/public transport links/advice. Weekends were busiest times, with highest number of visitors.</p> <p>Tish Tunstall:</p> <p>Artist trails: Could every ACO be issued with a professional map to use for trails. Currently map quality was very varied and needed to become more professional, usable and detailed, including public transport links. It was suggested that mapping design was an area for future investment, adding consistency to SEOS maps and streamlining the trail generation process.</p> <p>Elitta Fell:</p> <p>Publicity material: While the trail guides / posters were just what was required, it was felt that leaflets were wasted, questioning whether these should be re-thought. Would have preferred a big banner provided, in place of leaflets.</p>		

	<p>The DL guides are, however, the first SEOS branded printed information that goes out to the public before the guides. The committee will look again at printing quantities / formats etc for next year</p> <p>Flic reminded that an SEOS banner was available from the website to download for local / artist own individual printing requirements.</p> <p>It was suggested that it may be of value to enlist the services of a professional photographer to shoot a range of promotional images, for use on publicity material.</p> <p>Tim Constable:</p> <p>Suggested more adverts & recruitment via opportunities listings prior to membership applications being sent out.</p>		
18	<p>AOB:</p> <p>Rod congratulated the winners of this years membership bursaries, Clare Palastanga and Melvyn Evans.</p> <p>Next year SEOS would be offering a 'Friends Bursary' to support a member with a free entry in the SEOS event.</p>		
19 20	<p>Prize Draw: The artist prize for a £100 Great Art voucher was won by Sonia Smith The visitor prize for a £100 voucher for use towards work by an SEOS artist was won by Denice Staniforth</p> <p>Date for Open Studios 2012: The committee decided unanimously that the event should remain in June for 2012. There was a proposal to open for an extra week to coincide with the Olympics, but the practicalities and costs of that would need to be examined at a later date. Rod added that he would enquire with Arts Council England, other arts organisations in the south east and look at sports fixtures etc., then report back to committee ASAP.</p> <p>June opening options were: 1. 1st -17th June, including the 4 day bank holiday 2. 8th - 24th June</p> <p>The vote was split, but a higher number of hands were recorded for option 1, so the decision was made to adopt option 1 for the earlier June weeks opening.</p> <p>Rod thanked the committee, ACOs and members before drawing the 2011 AGM to a close.</p>	RM	ASAP