|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | cid:image001.png@01D6221F.6EFA5B40     Little Gem Arts & Crafts Gallery   cid:image002.png@01D6221F.6EFA5B40  **Newsletter Number  6 – August 2020**  **SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION WITHIN THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**  **I hope that you are all still well, keeping safe and still observing all the Government Guidelines.**  **With the relieving of restriction from the 1st August (or at least two weeks later, given Boris’s announcement on Friday), we *may* be soon able to re-open our classes and workshops. Then, we will be able to get back together again. Further details later in the newsletter.**  For the rest of the lock-down period (hopefully, not too long now), if you need any guidance or advice about your painting, please don’t hesitate to contact me by email [srwilkinson1953@gmail.com](mailto:srwilkinson1953@gmail.com) or phone 077 22 234 752.  **Monday’s Survey**  Thank you very much to all of you who responded to my short-timescales request for your views on the state of the Little Gem Charity. Out of the 18 people canvassed, I received responses from 13 of you. I think that this is a great response and reflects your interest in, and commitment to, our charity and for getting improvements made.  We used the summary of your responses to underwrite the issues discussed at the latest Little Gem Committee Meeting.  More importantly, we will be using these observations as a check list for future improvements to the way we run the Little Gem Charity.  For your information, please find at the end of this email a summary of all responses. If you have any queries, or would like to add anything to the responses to help us go forward, please get in touch with me ([srwilkinson1953@gmail.com](mailto:srwilkinson1953@gmail.com) or 077 22 234 752).  **Little Gem Committee Meeting**  We held our Little Gem Committee Meeting on Tuesday. It was the first such meeting since February because of the lockdown. We had an awful lot to discuss and made some significant decisions.  ***Brain & Lillian***  Firstly, I am sorry to have to report that as the workload running the charity has become too much for them, Brian and Lillian have decided to resign from the committee. Although they will not be as active in the running of the charity, they will still be participating in our activities.  I would like to take this opportunity to thank both of the founders of our charity for all the hard work and devotion to Little Gem – and they should be applauded and recognised for the immense contribution which they have made to Little Gem! Without all their hard work, we wouldn’t have the facilities and services which we all now take for granted.  Thank you Brian and Lillian; we all look forward to seeing you both around the gallery, taking advantage of the art centre and attending our future events.  ***Trustees of the Little Gem Charity***  We reviewed the legal status of our committee members and acknowledged that, under the charity’s constitution (which allows a trustee to serve a maximum of three yearly terms) the only current Trustees are Sue Case, Christine Davison and myself. This is the minimum allowable in the constitution. So we will be looking in the near future to recruit new Trustees to serve from 1 – 3 years (at their discretion). If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact me ([srwilkinson1953@gmail.com](mailto:srwilkinson1953@gmail.com) or 077 22 234 752).  ***Governing Structure***  We re-affirmed that the way that the charity would be run in future would be as follows: The Trustees shall oversee the operational committee which shall comprise both Trustees (should they wish to participate) and other members. All day-to-day activities of the charity shall be delegated to the committee which will be managed by the chairman, the treasurer and the secretary. All these three positions will be appointed as the first agenda item of the next full committee meeting scheduled for 10:00 Tuesday 25th August 2020.  Again, if you are interested in serving on the committee and helping to work towards a rejuvenated and vibrant charity, better to serve the needs of our local community, please get in touch with me ([srwilkinson1953@gmail.com](mailto:srwilkinson1953@gmail.com) or 077 22 234 752).  ***Acrylics Class***  We reviewed the finances for this class and have agreed to run the sessions as a ‘club’. This means that all the grant which we received from Hadrian Trust for this purpose will be allocated exclusively to the acrylics class (and subsequent workshops/club). It will pay for the materials provided by Brian and also those procured by myself. Hence, the attendees will only be charged for the rent at £2.50 per session. So, those who paid the full £4.50 in the first three weeks will be due a refund (or a credit for future classes). I hope that this model can be used for future classes (in whatever medium).  ***Little Gem Logo***  At the committee meeting we reviewed the submissions which we have received so far for the logo competition. We have narrowed it down to four designs or concepts:  1  2  3  4  So, we have a challenge for you: either tell me which of the four options you favour, or send us your own offerings. I’m sure that you can better these attempts – after all, you are all brilliant artists yourselves!  The final decision will be made at the next committee meeting from these four options and any further which I receive from you (taking into consideration your preferences if you send them in to me) – and, no, you don’t get to see who offered these alternatives; everything is being done ‘in cognito’!  Remember, there will be a prize for the winning entry!  ***Little Gem Shop***  As you know Brian and Lillian re-opened the gallery shop for business from Saturday 20th June. The plan was for the shop to be open every Saturday 12-3 pm for your art and gossip needs.  However, the minimal uptake in the recent weeks questions the viability of doing so. Based on availability of personnel, and the demand, we will be revising these opening times. We will keep all members and the community up to date via newsletters and the Little Gem Facebook page.  The shop will remain closed until, at least, a full stocktake can be made of the items for sale. This will establish a management baseline from which the new administration can proceed.  ***Little Gem Workshops***  As of 1st August (or at least two weeks later, given Boris’s announcement on Friday!) the COVID restrictions are being further lifted. We have seriously reviewed and considered all Government guidance documents which we can find and have come to the conclusion that, if we keep to the guidelines of social distancing, PPE and maximum numbers in the gallery, etc. and implement some precautions and procedures, we *should* be able safely to re-commence art workshops in the very near future.  We gathered that we could do this on 1st August (or, now, two weeks later!). However, to be certain, we are making sure that we have dotted the i’s and crossed the t’s. At least we have a further two weeks in which to get our act together! We will of course modify our plans in line with any updated guidance from the Government.  But we also would like to hear your views and whether you would be interested in a staged and limited return to the gallery.  Our current thoughts are that, if we restrict the number of attendees to 6-8, all wearing face masks, using hand sanitiser on entry and when needed, and bringing and using your own materials and equipment, we should be OK and within the regulations.  Whether you wish to attend will, of course, be up to you. We understand that some of you may still be uncomfortable about meeting in such close proximity indoors. In which case we look forward to welcoming you back at some later date.  We will ensure that the committee have carried out and documented a full risk assessment and implemented the necessary mitigation. We would also be looking at each participant signing a waiver on entry each time to confirm that they do not have any COVID symptoms, etc.  In the next few days, I will be sending further details of our ideas together with a short survey out to all on our email list (if you are not already on our distribution list, contact me on ([srwilkinson1953@gmail.com](mailto:srwilkinson1953@gmail.com) or 077 22 234 752 and I can add you to it).  Our schedule, procedures and implementation will take full account of the responses to the survey (and, of course, any revised Government guidelines!).  Remember, your health and safety is our greatest concern and we will support you as best we can to get back to the great social gatherings (or perhaps not so great, as the numbers will be limited! ☺ ) and produce some more fantastic paintings.  **Northumberland Lottery**  Well, so far we have 12 people who have entered and nominated Little Gem as the beneficiary.  And, the money has started to come in to Little Gem (for all tickets bought through the Little Gem page, 50% of the proceeds will come to our charity). And, these people have had at least 5 winning tickets so far.  Don’t miss out; Why not buy some tickets and tell all your friends to do likewise.  It could be you next!  For more information visit: [www.NorthumberlandLottery.co.uk](http://www.NorthumberlandLottery.co.uk)  click on ‘Buy Tickets’ and search for The Little Gem Arts and Crafts Gallery.  The more people who we get to enter via our ‘The Little Gem Arts and Crafts Gallery’ page on the lottery, the more money comes into our charity.  So spread the word (as long as you keep 1+ metre from the recipient!  ).  **Little Gem Virtual Gallery**  We currently have well over **137** paintings exhibited from **10** artists.  As the first gallery is full, we now have 8 painting hung in the second gallery.  The number of paintings being submitted seems to have slowed down a bit. So if you have a stack of paintings waiting to be ‘hung’, get them photographed and sent in to me. Remember, any paintings done (or finished off) during the lockdown are eligible for the end-of-lockdown competition.  You can visit the virtual gallery by going to:  [**https://www.artsteps.com/view/5e8db2dd01608162e13d9d60**](https://www.artsteps.com/view/5e8db2dd01608162e13d9d60)  and the **2nd gallery** by going to:  [**https://www.artsteps.com/view/5ef9b5ea8edcb11c650a4e54**](https://www.artsteps.com/view/5ef9b5ea8edcb11c650a4e54) The Sunflower Project The SAA are having another challenge, similar to the Poppy Challenge; but, this time it is a memorial for those who have been affected by, or lost their lives to, COVID-19. Whether you intend to enter the SAA challenge or not, we will be exhibiting any paintings done by our artists in the gallery window (schedule to be advised).  So get painting, enter via the SAA website if you wish and let me have your paintings to put in the window. Here are some words from SAA:  *Following the huge success of the Poppy Challenge in 2018, which commemorated the end of the First World War, we want to invite people across the UK to paint or draw a sunflower and upload the image to create a permanent memorial to those affected by the virus. Why did we choose the sunflower? This particular bloom has been chosen for its positivity, for the way it turns to face the sun, looking forward to more optimistic times. The giant sunflower was also worshipped by the Incas whilst sunflower seeds were placed at the graves of those who had passed. This flower is also linked to values such as loyalty and longevity.*  *We aim to invite everyone to take part; the young and old, amateur and professional artists. Through our schools, clubs, care homes and businesses, we want to create an art-based memorial to show how every person who has died during this time, is not a number but a special individual. We want to bring light and sunshine back into the lives of those left behind, and to create a lasting memorial to those who have passed. We recognise that this ambitious project will highlight the grief and sadness of our current situation. So, we want to make sure the site also provides support and guidance for those in need. Our vision includes content and signposting for grief counselling and raising awareness of mental health, as well as the beneficial effect that art has on wellbeing.*  *To kick off the campaign, we asked artists whose work is featured in the current issue of Paint, to paint a sunflower for your inspiration. Uploading your own painting is easy and you can also add a short story, name and picture of the person you are remembering, if your painting is of the more personal nature. The aim is that this act as a memorial to all those who have been affected and died during this time, whilst also being a national archive to record the social history of this crisis. But we can only do this with your help. Spread the word, get painting and creating and contribute to this special cause.*  The campaign is open to anyone, whether you are a member of SAA, or not. Visit the SAA website <https://community.saa.co.uk/> or click on the buttons below to either enter the challenge and/or view the gallery of entries  [ENTER CHALLENGE](https://community.saa.co.uk/enter-challenge/?competition=415204) [View Gallery of Entries](https://community.saa.co.uk/challenges/sunflower-project/?utm_source=SAA+Database&utm_campaign=3141d1a1d2-31+07+2020+Corona+Inspiration&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_69c0b1655a-3141d1a1d2-176503557&mc_cid=3141d1a1d2&mc_eid=db4123d773#challenge-gallery)  **Interesting website**  Another interesting website for your consideration. It may give you some inspiration for a looser painting style:  <https://www.jacquelinerooney.com/brand/jacqueline-rooney-art/>    [**Stay safe and healthy**!](https://www.sky.com/watch/title/series/ea09995e-34a0-4d81-bb30-aa8440cf722f)  [Steve Wilkinson](https://www.sky.com/watch/title/series/ea09995e-34a0-4d81-bb30-aa8440cf722f)  [srwilkinson1953@gmail.com](mailto:srwilkinson1953@gmail.com)  077 22 234 752  [1st August 2020](https://www.sky.com/watch/title/series/ea09995e-34a0-4d81-bb30-aa8440cf722f) | | Little Gem Art & Craft Gallery  Charity Number 1163002  Committee members:  David Sinclair  Alan Brady  Christine Davison  Steve Wilkinson | | [*If you do not wish to receive further mailings from Little Gem, please click here.*](mailto:srwilkinson1953@gmail.com?subject=UNSUBSCRIBE) | |

**Comments extracted from responses from members – Monday 27th July 2020**

Incorporating email inputs from: Steve, Rita, Val, Brian D, Diane, Joan, Jeanette, Keith B, Liz and Anne (text), Eva (phone) & Christine (phone):

**Positive**

* A community focused activity centre where individuals of all ages can develop their skills in a friendly environment
* A centre for displaying (and hopefully selling) artwork and buying art supplies
* The social side is just as important as the painting
* Relaxed, friendly and non-judgemental
* I have met some lovely people and like the social part
* Allows a friendly environment for like-minded people of all ages
* Developed good friendships
* Meet other/new people from the village
* Inexpensive/ reasonable (prepared to pay more, if needed) – ***repeating theme***
* The help and encouragement we get from each other
* Constructive critique from fellow painters
* Keith was a great inspirational tutor – it is a shame that he stopped his classes
* Very good tutors
* My standard has much improved since coming to watercolour and acrylics classes
* Newsletters and advice from Steve during lockdown
* Virtual gallery has been a stimulus for doing paintings and it is good to see what others have been painting, as we don’t get together to show at the moment
* Opportunity for selling paintings

**Negative**

* Lack of documented financial controls
* Authoritarian management without consensus
* Operation in contravention of constitution and the law
* The toilets are a disgrace – ***repeating theme***
* The actual place is untidy, haphazard, totally disorganised – ***repeating theme***
* Looks like a run-down charity shop or jumble sale, especially at weekends, when far too much space is taken up with crafts
* Kitchen is a mess...often can't get to sink without moving the obstacle course
* Kitchen is disgusting; what would the HS&E say?
* Things just don’t get done – even when people offer their help, certain committee members want to keep it to themselves – and then they don’t do anything!
* I feel as if a certain group of people just want to do everything themselves
* Certain individuals won’t listen to others; it is not democratic
* Bad tone of critique from a certain tutor – very negative in criticism; not constructive
* Everything needs to be done a certain way – doesn’t listen to any new ideas
* Mixed feelings about the management of different classes; oils and acrylics are good
* People have ‘dropped off’ from classes because of these things
* Paint brushes not kept in good condition
* Poor communications (apart from Steve’s newsletters and emails) – why don’t we hear about fairs and fund raising events until the last minute (we could help and contribute if we knew about them). Where is the noticeboard which was promised? – ***repeating theme***
* Keith and Steve have apparently lost money running their classes. Individuals should never lose money supporting the gallery, or the charity as a whole
* The acrylics grant should be spent on the acrylics class and not put into the general pot
* No visibility of where the money is spent
* Display of paintings for sale is overcrowded and not attractive for buyers
* Too many paintings up on the walls and scattered round on tables
* Display of art supplies is not good - New shelving has not really been utilised properly
* Size of gallery is very restrictive

**Improvements**

* Implementation of democratic organisation
* Recruitment of enthusiastic and capable Trustees
* Agreed delegation of responsibility from the Trustees to a working committee, operating within documented procedures and guidelines
* Consider increasing fees to pay pro rata costs of rent, heating, etc.
* Increase number of work groups and reduce number of attendees in each group to maintain social distancing
* Need more classes and group sessions; this should be the main aim of the gallery
* It would be good to have visiting guest artists for demonstrations and workshops
* It would be good to be able to borrow books to take home and return
* Need social activities like visits to local galleries
* Need a wider range of art supplies for sale
* A place to have coffee and chat?
* The appearance could be improved
* The place was greatly improved after the recent tidy up (especially of the rear storage area), but is still a mess and needs further tidying up. It is like a junk shop
* Everything is cash; it would be nice to be able to pay by card
* The ‘shop’ is badly organised; there should be a way of making more money from sale of art supplies
* Better marketing is required to promote the services of the gallery and attract more visitors
* We need better publicity....and more posters etc. for exhibitions  and events
* Display fewer pictures, so that they can easily be seen
* The display of paintings to be regularly changed to encourage better sales and at appropriate prices
* Could we not keep an area, or shelf, for spare paintings...maybe a limit on how many from each person and changed at least monthly
* If there is an art exhibition, it should NOT have crafts in front of it... and if there is a craft exhibition (do they actually have them?) the same would apply... no pictures in front of craft work
* Maybe separate accounts to ensure that each group is fully responsible for their own activities in receiving their appropriate equipment at the right price and time – and visibility of accounts
* It would be nice to see what the grant money is spent on
* It would be nice to hear how much they make from events as when I have asked the only answer was that they'd had a good day members need some visibility of finances
* Hire a hall where we could spread out, but this would require a good turnout in order to pay for the hire of the hall and hopefully have some left over to contribute to the gallery!
* Offer of help from some members (sometimes, in the past, this help has been refused)