

DRAFT

Friends of the Wilson, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum Minutes of the 42nd Annual General Meeting Held at the Wilson, Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, at 6 pm on 2 July 2026

Present:

PJ Crook (President)
The Mayor of Cheltenham, Councillor Martin Horwood
Councillor Izaac Tailford, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Wellbeing, and Public Realm, Cheltenham Borough Council
Lisa Edgar, Head of Culture and Communities, The Cheltenham Trust
Mary Greensted (Patron)
Peta Hoyle (Patron)
Judie Hodsdon, Chair of the Friends of the Wilson
Andy D'Souza, Irene Finlayson, Kat Hoerath, Steven Sasanow (Trustees)
and 19 other members.

1. Welcome

The President PJ Crook welcomed the Mayor, Patrons and other Friends to the 42nd AGM. She expressed delight at the splendid exhibitions that had been mounted by the Wilson during the year and at the work displayed by local artists. She praised the Big Museum Project for its connection with the local community and for the substantial quantity of information and comment gathered through it. She remarked particularly on how pleasant, helpful and engaged all the volunteers were and how fortunate the Wilson was to have them. Lastly, PJ referred to the tremendous support of the Friends to the Wilson, for which everyone was very grateful.

The current Chair of the Trustees, Judie Hodsdon, added her welcome to attendees and noted how fortunate the Friends were to have PJ as their President.

2. Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Margaret Austen (Patron)
Edward Gillespie (Patron)
David Wilson (Patron)
Jessica. Brewster
Michael Bourne
Emma Ferry
Richard Gibson
Freddie Gick
Cristina Hall
Mike Napier
Alison Pascoe
Kate Peden
Rachel Roberts
Anne Strathie
Hilary Swan
Greg Worth

3. Minutes of the AGM 2025

The Chair invited members to approve the Minutes from the previous AGM held on 14 June 2025. The Minutes were approved by a show of hands.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's Report for 2025-26

A written report had been circulated to members and copies were available at the meeting. Judie highlighted that it had been another successful year for the Friends, whose main aim was to support the Wilson. FoTW had donated £66,000 to the museum in the last year, which was allocated to various projects. This included the last tranche of money to support the refurbishment and a contribution to play activities. This donation had also allowed the Wilson to apply successfully for other grants.

Judie referred to the interesting programme of talks and events that had taken place, including the study tour to Lincoln and the successful evening at the Nook. Both had attracted a good number of participants, which helped to raise money for funding. There were some interesting events still to take place, including a visit to Rodmarton Manor. She thanked the Events Team for their hard work, enthusiasm and creativity in providing such a varied and interesting programme.

The reopening of the Victorian Galleries was keenly anticipated and it was hoped the events surrounding that might attract new members. The Friends had benefitted from various legacies to boost their funds and others should materialise in the coming year. It was unfortunate that membership was down and Judie asked current Friends to do all they could to encourage others to join.

As there were no questions arising, the acceptance of the report was carried by a show of hands.

5. Financial Report for 2025-26

The Financial Report had been circulated with the Chair's Report and had been examined by the Independent Examiner Liz Giles. Treasurer Andy D'Souza noted in particular that the £66,000 donation to the Wilson included £10,000 for digitisation and £10,000 for the Artists in Residence programme. The Friends had received £27,000 in income during the year, with lower income from membership being more than compensated for by an increase in Events income. All the events held had made a profit. Expenditure had been minimal. The general fund currently had £48,000, and there was £31,000 in restricted Funds. It had been agreed to donate £33,000 to the Wilson in the coming year.

As there were no questions on the Financial Report, it was accepted by a show of hands.

6. Election of Trustees

Emma Ferry and Freddie Gick were confirmed as new Trustees by those present and Irene Finlayson was re-elected as Trustee and Secretary. Rachel Roberts was also reelected as a Trustee. Judie thanked all the Trustees for their hard work and contribution

to the organisation. A presentation was made to Sue Reeves and Alison Pascoe for their sterling work as part of the Events Team.

7. Questions to Officers

There were no questions.

8. Any other Business

No other business was raised.

9. Closing and Thanks

The Chair expressed her thanks to the CBC and the Cheltenham Trust, to the President for all her support and generosity, to the Events Team under the leadership of Kat Hoerath and all the speakers they had engaged, to her fellow Trustees and to all the Friends for their continuing encouragement and backing. She also thanked Lisa and the team at the Wilson, and David Hewitt for his invaluable assistance with the website. Lastly, she thanked Liz Giles for examining the accounts.

After the close of the AGM, Councillor Izaac Tailford provided an update on local government reorganisation as it affected Gloucestershire. As well as a proposal for Gloucestershire to be a single unitary authority, Cheltenham had put forward a proposal for an East/West split while Gloucester had suggested a unitary authority but with Gloucester city as a separate entity. Decisions were expected this month and Councillor Tailford expressed his determination to ensure that Culture survived whatever happened. Much work had gone on behind the scenes including Lisa Edgar's chairing of the Cheltenham Culture Board, which represents 20 cultural organisations. There was also the possibility of people wanting include a Mayoral aspect as part of the reorganisation as that attracted extra funding. Councillor Tailford would provide more information when it became available.

Lisa Edgar, Head of Culture and Communities at the Cheltenham Trust then gave a presentation, a report of which will be circulated to members.