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Introduction from Co-Chairs: Sue Pandit and Jean Wit

Arts Richmond celebrates its 60th Anniversary having been established in 1966 as Richmond upon Thames Arts Council. We are delighted to have extended our range of activities and are the only independent charity supporting all aspects of arts and culture across the borough.

Arts Richmond has had a very busy year putting on events and supporting those of our affiliates in order to achieve our aim of enriching residents' lives through access to and awareness of arts and culture in the borough.

With limited budgets we continue to exercise good financial control to make sure that no event runs at a loss.

We extend grateful thanks to all members of our five committees, our fellow trustees and to our Administrator, Linda Hansell for all their hard work and commitment to the charity. We are also grateful to our patrons, many of whom are active and generous supporters. We are hugely encouraged by and grateful to the number of affiliated groups and individuals who have renewed their membership.

Annual Report April 1st 2025 - March 31st 2026

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of Kay Williams, Arts Society Richmond and Barnes Literary Society. We are also very grateful to our anonymous donors.

Looking forward we believe we have a strong team who are focussed on keeping Arts Richmond financially secure and are constantly looking for new ways to promote our affiliates, boost awareness of arts activities in the Borough and contribute to the wellbeing of Richmond's residents.

1. Objectives

The five art form committees and the Board of Trustees work hard in pursuit of our objectives to disseminate information and promote engagement in the huge range of arts events and activities produced by our affiliated groups and societies. In furtherance of the same objectives we also promote a number of events ourselves as evidenced in this report.

2. Management and membership

At March 31st 2026, 121 organisations were affiliated to Arts Richmond. This figure is growing due to the extensive support given to our affiliates' events on our social media

platforms. We have nearly 300 individual members.

Hilary Dodman stood down as Chair of Trustees at the AGM in 2025. Lots of warm tributes and thanks were given to Hilary for the many years that she has served Arts Richmond as a trustee, Deputy Chair and Chair of Trustees. She has continued to generously support us in a hands-on way.

Sue Pandit and Jean Wit were elected as Co-Chairs. Our current Trustees are Simon Bartlett (Treasurer), Geoff Acton, Peter Cregeen, Sandra Green, Pauline Orchard, Rick Plata, Gillian Thorpe and Rachel Tranter. Samantha Gore is our volunteer Assistant Treasurer.

3. Communication and Publicity

Linda Hansell and Judith Anderton are still both key in creating and editing the monthly Newsletter and Gillian Thorpe continues to play a vital role as proofreader. Our circulation of 750 remains constant and includes distribution to the libraries and Visit Richmond outlets. The digital edition is widely disseminated among the affiliates every month. With the support of the graphics team at Cyan printers we have managed to keep the pages packed and limited to 8 per edition. We are enormously grateful to Linda, Judith and Gillian for their commitment to this task.

We could not manage without our loyal group of 'stuffers' who meet every month to ensure the inclusion of affiliates' flyers and the distribution of the posted newsletters. The team is Janet Langhorne, Judith Anderton,

John Coombs, Hilary Dodman, John Hutchings, and Clare Judge

We now also offer those affiliates who pay for flyer inserts into the mailing the additional offer of uploading their flyers to our electronic version of the Newsletter which has a much wider circulation.

On 31st March 2026, our Facebook reach per 28 days peaked at 78k which is considerably up on last year, principally due to the success of this year's marketing for the Art House Open Studio and other events. On Instagram our followers have grown steadily to 2831. On X we have approx. 2500 followers; this is dwindling as more people are moving over to Threads and other platforms. We have a Threads platform which we are testing. We are monitoring this situation and will decide whether we will also move from X in full over the coming months.

Deborah Mearns, our Social Media Co-ordinator, still dedicates approx. 7 hours a week to this role. This service is a huge USP for our affiliates.

Another volunteer, Cheryl Chung, who came to us in September 2025 to help with the Young Writers competition, worked tirelessly to co-ordinate with schools and collate entries. Marina Melnikova still helps with poster design for all events and Loz Keal (another volunteer) put together the projection images for the Young Writers event. Marc Batten and Hannah Kirwin also gave up a lot of hours directing and putting together the Young Writers Celebration in March 2026.

We are grateful to all these amazing people who give us their time so generously.

4. Partnership with LBRuT

Arts Richmond has been involved throughout the year in collaboration with the Cultural Commissioning section of LBRuT Arts Service. We are an active participant in the deliberations of the group of officers and commissioned charities that include the Orange Tree Theatre, The Museum of Richmond, Sport Richmond, Hampton Pool and Combination Dance among others. The funding process is set to change but we feel well placed at the moment to make a substantial case for our continued commissioned position. We attend regular Peer Network Review meetings with the Cultural Commissioning team and commissioned groups like ourselves. We are grateful to LBRuT for their financial support in 2025-26. Through our work, we directly contribute to the delivery of the Borough's Cultural Strategy. We at every stage strive to encompass the key priorities of the Strategy:

- Excellence
- Responsiveness
- Inclusivity
- Empowerment
- Space and Place

5. Visual Arts Committee

Chair: Hilary Dodman
Committee members: Jane Aldous, John Coombs, Gill Hiley, Heather Montford, John Wylie

The Committee is committed to creating and sustaining opportunities for artists across Richmond borough and beyond.

We have a busy schedule of events throughout the year designed to fulfil this commitment.

Diana Armfield Drawing from Observation Competition.

February 2026

41 Artists entered 81 pieces into this annual competition. Whilst Diana, who is in her 106th year, was unable to attend the actual presentation event and the exhibition, she still managed to choose her winner. All the entries were brought to her home where she chose her winner and runners up. The Patch, York Street, Twickenham was again our exhibition venue and we held the presentation in the presence of the Deputy Mayor Cllr. Claire Vollum. Our winner this year was Fei Wong with his drawing of Richmond Warren Towpath. We are enormously grateful to Diana for her continued commitment.

Richmond Artist of the Year 2025

This event is now in its 5th year and we welcomed our artists to the Beautiful Grade 2 listed Grove Gardens Chapel. This was in association with Heritage and Habitats who look after this building. Whilst it was going through extensive restoration, H&H were able to make space for us and open up on the day to 27 artists.

The artists were free to choose an inspiring position either inside or outside the building. Their entries, completed in three hours, were judged by a representative from Habitats & Heritage and our patron Mark Vellacott.

We are grateful to everyone involved in the organisation for

their commitment and energy. In July 2026, the event will be held at the National Trust's Ham House.

Art House Open Studios 2025

In 2025, Arts Richmond was in its third year of running the Art House Open Studios event.

53 studios and communal spaces enlisted and the event was run over two weekends on 14/15 and 21/22 June. This event was only possible due to the hard work of Catherine Sweet, our designer, and Linda Hansell, the administrator. Linda coordinated all the information from the artists and Catherine created the brochure, worked on the website and press releases, and helped Linda with the marketing. This is a huge project for Arts Richmond, which relied on the hard work and diligence of the office and all our volunteers.

Affordable Art Tent May 2025

Arts Richmond displayed the work of local artists at the Richmond May fair on 10th May. 45 Artists from around the borough submitted 160 pieces of affordable art. We are grateful to the Arts Richmond volunteers, to the artists who helped on the day and to RTPS for their support.

- 6. Literature Committee**
Chair: Sue Pandit
Committee members: Peter Cregeen, Hilary Dodman, John Hutchins, York Membery, Heather Montford, Lottie Walker, Jean Wit and Judith Yeadon.

This committee continued to have a busy and successful year. working tirelessly to put together and promote a programme of

excellent events with increased levels of participation from adults and children from across the borough.

Arts Richmond Literature Festival November 2025.

This was the fifth year that Arts Richmond has independently run a series of author events that take place on Wednesday evenings throughout November at The Exchange Theatre in Twickenham. In 2025 the speakers were Justin Webb, Chris Mullins, Tracy Borman and Rita Chakrabarti. We welcomed sixth form students and teachers from several local schools.

We are enormously grateful for all these wonderful speakers and the team behind the operation both at The Exchange and Arts Richmond.

Each evening was supported by Helena Richardson of The Open Book who sourced and sold copies of all our speakers' books and presided over book signing sessions on each occasion. We express our thanks to her for her continuing generous support.

We already have a great programme in place for November 2026.

Young Writers Competition

Our annual Young Writers Competition was launched in September 2025 and the celebratory prize winners' Festival of Writing took place at The Exchange on Sunday 15th March 2026.

There were over 730 entries to from schools and individuals from across the borough. This year we set the two themes 'Something Extraordinary' and 'My World' which produced a

more focused approach to the prose and poems submitted. We thank in particular Cheryl Chung who liaised with all the schools and collated the entries. We are also enormously grateful to those on our Literature Committee who were involved in the initial sifting and to our three judges, Loz Keal, Elizabeth Ryan and Hilary Dodman, for their hard work in selecting the longlist for our anthology and the presentations at the prize winners' event.

The young writers' work was brought to life at the Celebration event. All the forty longlisted pieces of work were performed by a wonderfully talented group of young actors from Edmundian Players, Dramacube, Rose Youth Theatre, Twickenham Youth Theatre, and Richmond Upon Thames College. They were professionally directed by Marc Batten who was assisted by Stage Manager, Hannah Kirwan. Their work has been published in a 76-page anthology.

Arts Richmond Patron Anthony Horowitz was unable to be with us this year, but he does continue to support this competition. The prizes were presented by the Mayor of Richmond Upon Thames, Councillor Penny Frost.

We are very grateful for the support that Linda Hansell gives to the overall running of the competition and the coordination of the Exchange awards event.

We were once again successful in securing £500 of funding for the Young Writers' event from the Barnes Literary Society. We have also received financial support from the Arts Society Richmond of £750.

Poetry Competition

This competition, supported by Roger McGough, attracted nearly 300 entries from across the UK and overseas. The judging largely took place during 2024/5 but the final awards ceremony was in June 2025. This took place at the OSO Arts Centre in Barnes, Roger selected the winning poems and handed out the awards. The long-listed works were performed by professional actors and an anthology of the work was produced. This was a great event which will be repeated in June 2027.

7. Drama Committee

Chair: Jeremy Gill

Committee Members: Francis Abbott, Hilary Dodman, Pauline Orchard.

Daniel (Danny) Wain stepped down as Chair in December 2024 but agreed to remain on the Committee until after the 2025 Drama Party.

2025-26 proved yet another vibrant year for local theatre.

SWAN Awards

The Nominations evening took place on 6th August at the Exchange and was very well attended. The Drama Party including the Swan Awards, also a very well attended evening, was held on 20th September at the Landmark Arts Centre in its third year in a new format. The judges were: Margaret Androas, Rachel Baylis, Terry Dunne, Michelle Hood, Margaret Keeling, Steve Pratt, Elizabeth Slater and Warren Walters. We are enormously grateful to the judges as without them we would not be able to operate the awards.

Radio Plays

In 2025, we ran our third Radio Plays Competition, which proved hugely popular, with over 30 entries. The final four Radio plays were recorded and Riverside Radio programmed them into their autumn programme. The winner was announced at the Drama party and the first prize was presented by Lisa Skip who sponsors the event.

8. Showcoach

Chair: Janet Langhorne

Committee Members: Judith Strong and Jean Wit

At Showcoach we continue to offer a very comprehensive and varied programme which has been encouraging more members, and indeed an increasing number of new members, to join in. Members find coach transport to places, which otherwise would possibly not be easily accessible, very appealing. We also visit places in London when members can use their Freedom Passes. Most of all, our members very much appreciate and benefit from the buzz they get from the congenial atmosphere on our trips. We are always open to suggestions for new places to visit or events to experience

We have a very small team and so are always looking for people to join our committee. My thanks to Linda and volunteer Press Officer Deborah Mearns for all their work in promoting our trips and of course to Jean who as always has supported me throughout.

May

29 of us had a coach trip to the **Watermill Theatre** near **Newbury** to see a brilliant matinee performance of **Piaf** starring Audrey Brisson following an excellent lunch in their restaurant with time to walk around their lovely gardens. We were having our group photo taken when Audrey herself appeared and came over to talk to us and joined us for further photos! Everyone

enjoyed the day especially meeting the star herself!

June

Another coach trip for 29 members, this time to visit **Gilbert White's House** and gardens in **Selbourne**, home to the 18th Century naturalist, where after an introductory talk we were free to explore by ourselves. After a quick lunch we then continued to Alton for a ride on **The Watercress Line train** to Alresford and back! Another successful day.

July

Our annual visit to **Chichester Festival Theatre**, this time to see **Top Hat!**

Always a very popular day out with time for lunch and seeing the city before the matinee performance. We had excellent seats and everyone enjoyed the day.

September

This month we visited the famous **Leeds Castle** on a lovely sunny day with 29 members. We were free to explore the castle and grounds. A mobility bus if needed took us to within a few minutes walk of the castle. Helpful guides were on hand to answer any of our questions. Although the original castle spans 900 years, much of it has now been rebuilt. There were plenty of places for lunch including a terraced restaurant overlooking the castle. We could also visit the brilliant Birds of Prey centre with daily Falconry displays. There are over 30 different birds to view. The gardens are so impressive we could have spent a much longer time there. Everyone really enjoyed their day.

October

A small group of us visited the famous **Musical Museum** in **Brentford** where we had a fascinating tour of the museum, including instrument demonstrations, and ending with some renditions from the **Mighty Wurlitzer**. We ended the visit with tea and cake and all agreed it was a fascinating afternoon.

December

20 of us enjoyed our annual Christmas outing to hear **The Sixteen** at **Cadogan Hall**. We had the added delight of seeing the amazing Christmas Lights in Sloane Square. This was a very popular and enjoyable concert.

February

20 of us visited the exhibition about **Lee Miller** at **Tate Britain**. This is always a very popular kind of trip with our members. Coffee was followed by an illustrated talk on the exhibition followed by a good buffet lunch. The exhibition was then free flow so everyone could go at their own pace and enjoy the vast collection of Lee's photographs. A very worthwhile visit.

9. Music Committee

Chair: Hilary Dodman.

Committee members: Geoff Acton, Cllr. Jo Humphreys, Hugh Rogers and William Summers.

This rejuvenated committee has worked on two projects: the choral workshop and a brand new project, the Phenomenal Females Festival. The flagship concert was held on 8th March at the Landmark Arts Centre and was attended by our Patron Roxanna Panufnik and Wolf Hall composer Debbie Wiseman. The enormous success of the evening was almost entirely due to the diligence and sustained effort of Hugh Rogers who saw the project through from idea to fruition. This included completing a successful application to the borough's Civic Pride fund. We are grateful to the council for their support.

Choral Workshop on January 24th 2026 we held a Come and Sing Day conducted by Richard Harker and accompanied by Jonathan Booth at St Richard's Church in Ham, singing songs from Oklahoma. Numbers were down on last year due to timing and availability of the MC, however the participants all had a wonderful day and a great deal of fun. The final performance was attended by a good number of family and friends who enjoyed a rousing performance.

The committee is working hard to extend the range of its activities.

10. Assuring quality for Arts Richmond members and funders.

This is achieved through:

- Our office being open for contacts and prompt responses every day from 9.30am to 12.30pm.
- Our attention to the regular production of a high quality newsletter giving accurate, in-date information about the activities of our affiliates and ensuring they receive value for money for their membership fee; our attention to the development of our social media platforms and our constant striving to increase our profile in these areas.
- Our Trustee Board meeting regularly to consider members' views and expectations and take them into consideration when instigating projects and planning for future events.
- Our trustees working to ensure the probity and financial stability of the charity.

Arts Richmond

President 2025-2026 Richard Pyne

Vice Presidents: John Coombs, Hilary Dodman, Pam Frazer, Sandra Green

Trustees 2025-26

Co-Chairs: Sue Pandit and Jean Wit
Treasurer: Simon Bartlett
Geoff Acton
Peter Cregeen
Sandra Green
Pauline Orchard
Rick Plata
Gillian Thorpe
Rachel Tranter MBE

Assistant Treasurer: Samantha Gore
Administrative Officer: Linda Hansell

Art Form Committee Chairs:

Hilary Dodman (Music)
Hilary Dodman (Visual Arts)
Sue Pandit (Literature)
Jeremy Gill (Drama)
Janet Langhorne (Showcoach)

Past Presidents

2013 Anne Sebba
2014 Dame Jacqueline Wilson
2015 Clive Bradley CBE
2016 Sara Burn Edwards/ Howard Greenwood BEM
2017-18 Samantha Bond
2018-19 Roger McGough
2019-2020 Lynne Faulds Wood & John Stapleton
2021-2023 Sir Vince and Lady Rachel Cable
2023-24 Lady Camilla Panufnik & Roxanna Panufnik
2024-25 Clive Bradley CBE

Patrons

Sir David Attenborough OM, CH, KBE
Diana Armfield R.A
Gyles Brandreth
Clive Bradley CBE
Prof Ian Bruce CBE and Prof Tina Bruce CBE
Sara Burn Edwards
Sir Vincent Cable and Lady Cable
Liz Crowther
Clive Francis
Michael Frayn and Claire Tomalin
Julian Glover and Isla Blair
Petina Hauptfuhrer
Anthony Horowitz

Claire Ireland
Lee Langley
Roger McGough CBE
Nuala Rowland
Lady Panufnik
Roxanna Panufnik
Helena Richardson
Anne M. Sebba
Axel Scheffler
Colin Squire OBE
Sam Walters MBE and Auriol Smith
Kay Williams
Mark Vellacott