

**North East Open Studios**  
**Annual General Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting Date: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**Present**

Tony Scott	Lynne Staples-Scott	Val Thomson
Drew Markou	Mike Markou	Louise Lemmon
Cindy Dickson	Lynda Rattenbury	Kath Duguid
Clare-Louise Battersby	Amanda Calmus	Joanna Wilson
Jess Petrie	Lilian Lindsay	Gerrard Stott
Lorna Crawford	Kymme Fraser	Elaine Thomson
Jen Humphreys	Jamie Dyker	Nikki Bruce
Margaret MacDonald	Charles Smith	Charley Sim
Brian Burnett		

**Present On-Line\***

Julie McLean	Juliet McLoud	Paula Silverter
Linda Colquhon	Jane Gospel	Erin Matheson
Ruth McEvelly	Cheryl Margiotta	Sheila Wiseman
Rusudana Glonti	Carol	Nik Munro
Mahri Prince	Tilly Howie	Bruce Swanson
Jennifer	Amy Woolvin	Robert Greenwood
Nicholas Thomas	Susan Bedford	Anne Marquiss
Katie Hammond		

\*Other members joined the meeting on-line, but their names were not recorded or shown correctly by Zoom.

**Apologies**

Glynis William	Morag Tweedie	Ellie Rattenbury
Jane McMillan	Ian Williams	Angela Neilson
Hilary Firth	Lise Brundrett	Ellen Wilson
Sue Blow	Jenny Colbeck	Liz Horgan
Sashe Mannin	D Murray-Dilger	Cath Roberts
Angus Grant	Glynis Knowles	Fiona Leask
Lindsay Hamilton	Suz MacInnes	

## **Agenda**

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023
3. Matters arising and not dealt with later
4. Chairperson's Report for 2024 including Financial Report, Co-ordinator Report and Social Media Report
5. Election/Approval of Committee and Post Holders for 2025
6. Approval of North East Open Studios dates for 2025
7. Introduction of New Chair
8. Questions/Discussion.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

Lynne welcomed members present and on-line to the AGM and confirmed the meeting reached the quorum. Lynne said several apologies have been given and will be included in the meeting minutes.

### **2. Approval of minutes of the AGM held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

Lynne asked for approval of the minutes of the 2023 AGM and asked for any amendments. The minutes were approved, and no amendments requested.

### **3. Matters Arising**

No matters arising.

### **4. Chairperson's Report including Treasurer's report; Co-ordinator's report; Social Media Report**

Lynne shared the Chairperson's Report, the full report is available on the NEOS website at <https://www.northeastopenstudios.co.uk/about-us/documentation>. Lynne spoke about the following:

- 2024 is the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of North East Open Studios
- Initial feedback shows there were mixed experiences for NEOS 2024 members, and downturn may be due to the current volatile economy
- The committee focused on what makes NEOS unique; the open studio experience and the opportunity to engage with creatives and makers
- The committee had an objective to grow the NEOS audience into younger age groups to try and future proof the event.
- Developing and implementing a new website funded by The National Lottery was a large project for 2024. The website includes new functionality for members

including a gallery facility, online payments and the ability to edit throughout the year. Lynne shared the website traffic statistics with over 90k unique website visits.

- NEOS was promoted by the NEOS Book, Pushing out the Boat magazine, Artmag, radio advertising, Lifestyle Magazine prize, posters and press releases. 20,000 books were printed and distributed by members.
- The NEOS App was downloaded by 1807 people and used over 6,600 times.
- Member communications included approximately 50 newsletter updates, an Internal Facebook Forum and graphics support
- Visitor survey results showed 15.8% of visitors were new to the event, visitors are mainly from the Grampian and Moray areas and 81% are in the 55+ age group.
- The survey also reported that 90% of visitors had a book; 50% downloaded the app and 47% used the website. Lynne said the feedback shows the book is still important and many are using the book and app together.
- A members survey will be sent out by the new committee before the end of the year.

Lynne shared the Treasurer's Report prepared by Carla Cummins. The full report is available on the NEOS website at <https://www.northeastopenstudios.co.uk/about-us/documentation>. Lynne spoke about the following:

- A summary of income and expenditure was shown with the bank balance as at 16/10/24 is £21,888. Lynne said there is no proposal to increase membership fees for 2024. An analysis of expenditure confirmed the book remains the main spend.
- Updates to Microsoft licenses has brought more efficiency to the organisation including a centralised filing system.
- Lynne said expenditure had kept within budget and asked for any questions. No questions were asked.

Lynne shared the Co-ordinator's Report prepared by Louise Lemmon; the full report is available on the NEOS website at <https://www.northeastopenstudios.co.uk/about-us/documentation>. Lynne spoke about the list of tasks undertaken by the co-ordinator and shared membership statistics, highlighting there were 339 member registrations this year with 39 placed on a waiting list, significantly up on last year.

Lynne shared the Social Media Co-ordinator's Report prepared by Louise Lemmon; the full report is available on the NEOS website at <https://www.northeastopenstudios.co.uk/about-us/documentation>.

Lynne shared details of the work carried out by Louise as the Social Media Co-ordinator and the role of the volunteer social media team. Social media insights were shared showing a significant increase on last year with a Facebook reach of 174k, 647 Facebook Followers and Instagram reach of 32k. Full Facebook and Instagram Insights are available on request. Lynne thanked members for liking and sharing.

Lynne shared details of the new TikTok campaign led by Clare-Louise Battersby and its objective to reach a younger group and grow an audience for tomorrow. Statistics, positive feedback from participating members and comments from visitors were shown.

The campaign running from June to September gained 1080 followers with 62k post views, 48.5% of followers were in the 35-45 age group and 21% in the 25-34 age group, reaching the new target audience.

Lynne said the total social media time commitment is approximately 300 hours, the equivalent of 8 weeks full time work.

Lynne said approximately 1000 hours of committee time is volunteered to support NEOS every year, an estimate of £25,000 given to members free of charge above their membership fee.

Lynne thanked the NEOS 2024 committee; Charley Sim, Val Thomson, Carla Cummins, Louise Lemmon, Shona Cammack, Drew Markou, Tilly Howie, Brian Burnett, Carol Hiles, Connie Robertson, Cindy Dickson and Paul Lawson for their hard work. Lynne also thanked Tim Hendy at TH Studios for website work, Clare-Louise Battersby for the TikTok project and Bob Dow for press support.

Lynne asked for questions:

A member asked why NEOS books had not been distributed to libraries and said the libraries had not been made aware in advance of the change. Lynne said she had emailed the central library and was sorry the message hadn't filtered down to local libraries. Lynne said with a full membership of 300, the books were used by members and there had been feedback that books were not getting to local libraries and some libraries didn't display the books well and the books were recycled. Lynne said there was a demand for more books this year and ordering a larger number of books can be considered next year.

A member asked if there is an expenses policy. Lynne said there is and NEOS will cover committee expenses, although some committee members chose not to make claims and the full expenses budget was not used.

A member thanked Lynne for the presentation and said it was a great summary, very clear and of value. The committee were thanked for their hard work.

## **5. Election/Approval of Committee and post holders for 2025**

Lynne shared details of volunteers for the 2025 committee and the following key post holders were elected for 2025.

Chairperson – Drew Markou

Vice Chairperson – Clare-Louise Battersby

Secretary – Rosemary Kaye

Treasurer – Carla Cummins

Co-ordinator – Louise Lemmon

Carol Hiles, Connie Roberston, Tilly Howie, Cindy Dickson and Lynne Staples-Scott were elected as committee members.

Prior to the election, Lynne asked for further nominations and no other names were offered.

## **6. Confirm Date of North East Open Studios 2025**

Lynne confirmed the dates for North East Open Studios 2025 as 13<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of September. The AGM for NEOS 2025 will be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October.

## **7. Introduction of New Chairperson**

Drew Markou spoke to members and said he is a jewellery designer, maker and has worked as a university lecturer.

Drew said he has a great love and passion for art and design and when he joined in 2019, NEOS gave him a community. Drew said he will make sure community and supporting makers is at the heart of NEOS.

Drew thanked Lynne and the 2024 committee for their work over the past year.

## **8. AOB**

The following items were raised by both on-line attendees and attendees in person:

A member asked if there can be an increased allocation of books for each member. Lynne said this question can be considered for next year.

A member asked if the map can be printed separately again and not integrated into the book. Lynne said this is a conversation to take forward to the new committee, the decision to integrate it had been made because the map only works with the book and there are cost implications of having the map printed separately. Lynne said the functionality of the app gives more options and can be used alongside the book. Charley said it is difficult to place all members on the printed map due to its scale. Lynne suggested feedback on member's views be taken on the members survey.

A member asked for more integration and support for new members. Lynne said the committee had offered meetings and calls in the past with very few takers, but this can be reviewed.

A member said that there is feedback that NEOS is too big and suggested it should be split with Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire taking part one year and Moray and other areas taking part in the next year. Lynne said requests to join from additional areas out with Grampian had been rejected because of the size of NEOS and NEOS had been run as a three week event with areas taking part on different weeks in the past and it didn't work. A member said makers rely on the event for annual income. Drew said there had been a lot of conversations about the scale of NEOS and each maker can choose how often they want to commit and can take part every second year if they choose to, the scale of NEOS gives visitors a choice of makers and areas to visit, they are not expected to visit every venue. The group discussed splitting areas to run the event at different times of

the year and it was agreed that it would need multiple committee / organisations to do this.

Members joining the meeting on-line also suggested the following:

- A campaign to explain what NEOS is and what makes it unique
- A campaign to explain the real advantages of the app next year
- Highlighting geographical areas more to ensure all areas are included
- Ongoing sharing of member's events to keep engagement

Lynne thanked everyone for attending in person and on-line and closed the meeting.