

1. Apologies For Absence

Apologies were received from Hari Devasagayam

2. Minutes Of The Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were read, these were proposed to be a true record by Bob Walsh, seconded by Tony Lynn and accepted by all.

3. Matters Arising From Previous Meeting

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman started his report by referring to the sad demise of several long serving members including the President Dick MacAuliffe. However it was pleasing that Tony Lynn had been appointed as President which rightly represented the esteem in which he is held.

He then referred to the impact that digital photography is having on the Society's operations. He assured the members that the Committee was working hard to accommodate these changes whilst striving to serve the needs of all the members.

He went on to say that the second season of practical nights which had been largely orientated towards the various aspects of digital photography had served to take all involved further up the learning curve. He expressed a debt of gratitude to all who contributed to these evenings and Peter Appleton in particular for his role as coordinator.

He said that the Committee is well aware that the declining membership (in common with many similar organisations) is something that needs to be addressed and commented that there has been some lively debate on how this might be achieved.

He then thanked the Committee Officers for their contribution over the last season much of which goes unseen by the members but without which SPS would not exist. He particularly thanked Geoffrey Darling and Jim McCormick for their considerable efforts in organising the NYSDPA annual competition.

He was pleased to report in addition to our work being on display in James Cook Hospital, discussions are ongoing that may lead to further work being put on display in the Middlesbrough BBC Radio Tees studio.

He concluded by drawing attention to the Coffee Morning to be held in August and appealed for donations of cakes, raffle prizes and photographs that may be used to raise funds for the Society.

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the reduced membership this year of eight ordinary members and three family memberships had reduced our income from subscriptions by £105.50 compared to last season. He commented further that without the increased fees implemented this season this loss would have been more than doubled. In summary of income and expenditure for the season he said that the accounts show a surplus of £203 which

was about £80 less than last year, with income being £20 higher and expenditure £100 higher than last season.

The main points of note being:

- Reduced subscription fees mentioned above.
- Fund raising and donations being £? higher than last year
- Interest on the account £??, greater than last year.
- The cost of hall hire appears high in the accounts at £??? compared to £??? last year, however this is largely to do with how the bills have been presented to SPS by the church hall administrators.
- Although there had been a slight increase in the cost of printing the syllabus this was because of the need to print the updated competition rules. Thanks to Jim McCormick the cost of syllabus printing had been reduced by about £??? compared to the previous commercially produced booklet.
- A memorial donation of £?? was made in lieu of Dick MacAuliffe. A further three £?? donations will be made in lieu of Frances Blenkey, Judy Cook and George Healing but these will appear in next year's accounts.
- The cost of hosting the NYSDPA inter-club competition was largely recovered from NYSDPA.
- The balance in the account to be carried forward to next season is £?,??? of which £??? is a provision from the Awards For All grant.

Geoffrey Darling suggested that where known expenditure misses the accounts because of the timing of presentation of the bills, provisions could be made in the accounts to cover this, so keeping the Balance Sheet more in line with the season.

Alan then summarised the position with the Awards for All grant, stating that of the £??? carried forward from last year £??? was returned to A4A and £??? had been spent mostly on software. It is planned to spend the remaining balance of £??? on cases for the monitor and film scanner.

He recommended that because of expected increased costs next year membership subscriptions should be raised by £1, making the ordinary rate £20 and the family rate £30. Peter Appleton proposed that this recommendation was accepted this was seconded by Jim McCormick and agreed by all.

Alan stressed however that encouraging new members and increasing fundraising was vital to the survival of the Society and would reduce the need for further increased subscription cost.

Various suggestions were made by members to increase donations to the Society, for example a table top sale or eBay sale of unwanted items.

6. Syllabus Secretary's Report

Jim McCormick said that having completed his third syllabus he had received feedback indicating that the majority of our members thought that the balance of the programme was about right. He said that in compiling the programme he attempted to bring speakers with a broad spectrum of skills and knowledge that members would appreciate. This year provided a mix of photography covering Travel, Natural History, Landscape, Underwater with plenty of tuition thrown in for good measure. He said that he had particularly made an effort to invite more lady speakers and said that he thought that their contributions had been excellent.

He said that in future the second half of the season will be fixed to twelve sessions after New Year, this will avoid

the varying length of the second half of the season resulting from the season's end date being determined by Easter.

He said next season's syllabus had been completed and in addition to the usual mix of topics there will be a few new introductions e.g. an exchange night with Gallery Photo group, a digital portrait night, 10 favourite pictures – how and why, a Photo Harmony night for digital AV's.

Jim concluded by asking members to pass on to friends how varied and what good value for money our programme is in an attempt to recruit as many new members as possible.

The Chairman said special thanks were owed to Jim for his development of our syllabus and also the new style of production which had saved the Society a considerable sum of money

7. Competition Secretary's Report

Mike Sidgwick gave details of the trends of competition entries over the last three seasons, he said that the trend of increased entries last year had been reversed this season with a reduction of 28% in both the monthly competitions and the annual competitions. He said that the Moore trophy for short sets was the only competition that had an increase in entries where all seven sets had been digital with no slide entries at all. He was pleased to report that there had been several new members who had taken part in the competitions.

He said that generally he had received positive feedback regarding the competition judges, however concerns had been raised about two of them, and these concerns have been noted for future reference.

With regard to rule changes for next season he said that due to the decline of slide entries in the intermediate class, the intermediate and advanced classes will be merged into one class next season. Also following the work of the sub-committee who made recommendations with regard to the inclusion of digital projections in our competitions, these will now be allowed in the following competitions; Les Gould, Studio Tristan, Harry Brittain, Ladies and Frank Sanderson. He said the rules had been updated to reflect these changes and he asked members to take a copy and discard the old set of rules.

He reminded members that the two themed monthly competitions next season are Urban Scene and Water and the two for season 2009/10 had been set as Rural Scene and Action.

In conclusion he encouraged members who are currently not taking part in the competitions to give it go to help reverse the downward trend of this season. He thanked all who had taken part in the competitions and those who had assisted him in various ways over the last season, saying every request he had made had received a positive response from the members.

Peter Appleton requested that members should note that the intention is that digital projections will be added to the monthly competitions in 2009/10. Mike pointed out that this position would be reviewed at the end of next season.

8. Publicity Report

Tony Lynn commented that the Talk Of The Town and the Darlington and Stockton Times had continued to provide good coverage of our activities. He endorsed the Treasurer's and Syllabus Secretary's appeal for members to encourage new members to come along as our own members are the best means of attracting new

interest. He said he hoped that our potential connections with BBC Radio Tees and an event to be held with Huntcliff School representatives will provide further opportunities to inform the local community of our exciting programme.

9. NYSDPA Report

Geoffrey Darling summarised our performance in the NYSD annual competition where we were fourth out of twelve clubs in the prints competition and third out of ten clubs in the slides, finishing fourth overall. He thanked all entrants for their contribution and mentioned in particular Alan Parker and Mike Sidgwick who were respectively second in the prints and third and highly commended in the slides.

He said that Wensleydale will host next year's competition where it is hoped that a new competition for digitally projected images will be introduced to offset the expected reduction of slide entries. SPS had been particularly proactive in developing recommendations for this new introduction following the work of a sub-committee building on our own deliberations for SPS.

He explained that the annual exhibition of inter-club prints had not taken place as planned as the provider of the print stands was not willing to loan the stands because they had been damaged by another user. It is hoped that this situation will be resolved in time for next year's event.

He said that the donation of prints for display in James Cook Hospital had been extremely well received and further donations will be passed on to the hospital in the near future.

With reference to the results presentation night for the inter-club competition held in November he said special thanks needed to be made to Jim McCormick for all his efforts in providing digital copies of the prints which were projected and significantly improved the quality of presentation for the audience. These projections were synchronised with the judge's comments including titles and club. He said thanks also needed to be recorded to acknowledge the hard work of Saltburn WI for providing the interval refreshments at this event.

He concluded by saying that as he will be Secretary for the NYSDPA Committee next year he would not be standing for re-election to SPS Committee and thanked all for their suggestions and comments that had helped him make sure SPS's views had been represented at NYSDPA level.

The Chairman thanked Geoffrey for his efforts and wished him good luck in his new role next year.

10. Coffee Report

Christine Parker reported that the cost of supplies had been significantly greater this year and as a consequence even with donations of £10 the coffee fund had shown a loss of £4.13. She said the planned purchase of vacuum jugs had not gone ahead as it was understood that a water heater was to be installed in the kitchen. She suggested that the purchase of the jugs should still go ahead to allow hot drinks to be available for members as they arrive if they wished to make it themselves.

She said that as she will become Chairman next season she would not be available to make drinks and asked for volunteers to provide this service, although she is still prepared to look after the box of supplies.

She reported that there is a surplus of £18.80 in the Coffee fund but it was unlikely that this would be sufficient to

pay for the vacuum jugs and it may be necessary to supplement this by fund raising.

Several people commented that the heating problems probably resulted in members not staying for coffee. Alan Richmond reported that the heating thermostat had now been installed and hopefully the lack of heat suffered in the hall this season should be less of an issue in future.

11. Newsletter Report

Alan Meek said that he was pleased to report that as usual two editions of the Newsletter had been issued over the season and this had been at no cost to the Society thanks to the printing arrangements. He said the Newsletter had been used to disseminate information and also the views of the members. He asked that members should use the Newsletter as an opportunity to get their views expressed and in that way we could get some useful discussion going on members wishes.

He said that progress on the development of the website was being made and it is hoped that over the summer this would be made more informative and interesting, he encouraged members to look up the website to keep an eye on these developments. Also if members have any ideas on what they would like to see in either the Newsletter or website he requested that they should let their views be known.

12. Practical Night Report

Peter Appleton said that as the final practical night of the season would not be held until the Thursday after the Annual Dinner his report was something of an interim report. He said that the move from the Library to the Church Hall had gone well; however having only one readily available power point has proved to be something of a constraint.

He said attendances had been variable with some sessions apparently proving to be of more interest than others. Next year's sessions have been broadly planned and will cover some of the more basic photography techniques in addition to Photoshop and digital AV instruction. As last year these will be run on a monthly basis from September to March.

The chairman thanked Peter for his considerable efforts in coordinating these extremely useful sessions over the last season.

13. Election of Officers, Committee and Account Verifiers

President	As stated at the start of the season Tony Lynn was appointed following the sad loss of Dick MacAuliffe.
Chairman	Christine Parker moves from Vice Chairman to start her two year term
Immediate Past chairman	Bryan Clare steps down from Chairman.
Vice Chairman	Mike Sidgwick was proposed by Alan Parker, seconded by Bob Walsh and agreed by all.
Secretary	Malcolm Blenkey is in the middle of his second two year term.
Treasurer	Alan Parker is in the middle of his two year term.
Competition Secretary	Mike Sidgwick is in the middle of his third two year term.
Syllabus Secretary	Jim McCormick wishes to stand down after developing the syllabus for four seasons. A replacement is still to be identified
Publicity	Tony Lynn is willing to continue.

NYSDPA	Jim McCormick was proposed by Geoffrey Darling, seconded by Tony Lynn and agreed by all.
Newsletter Editor	Alan Meek is in the middle of his two year term.
Ordinary Members	Geoffrey Darling and Ken McDonald did not wish to be considered for re-election a written nomination had been received for Tom Ridley who was proposed by Alan Parker, seconded by Peter Appleton. A written nomination had also been received for Alan Richmond who was proposed by Tony Lynn and seconded by Alan Meek. All were in favour.
Account Verifiers	Rita Price is willing to continue but as Tom Ridley had been elected to the Committee a replacement was required. Valerie Attard is willing to fill this position.

14. Any Other Business

- Christine Parker asked members to note that a list of summer outings was included in the Newsletter.
- Tony Lynn said that there were still a few vacancies for the trip to Keswick on Saturday 7 June at a cost of £12
- Geoffrey Darling proposed that the start time of the Wednesday night sessions should be moved to 7:30 pm.

This was put to a vote by the members and was carried with all but one member in agreement.

- Lucille Johnson asked if the open surgery for feedback on potential competition images would be available next season. It was confirmed experienced members would be willing to provide their comments if requested.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10 pm in the absence of any further business. There were 26 members present.

Signed as a true record by

Chairman