

# BARNES LITERARY SOCIETY



Report and financial statement year ended 31 July 2024

Presented at the AGM 12 November 2024

[www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk](http://www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk)

**Barnes Literary Society**  
**Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2024**

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**Society Information**

Patrons	Isla Blair Julian Glover Roger McGough Patrick Neate Fiona Smith Harriett Gilbert	Venetia Vyvyan Rhidian Brook Joanna Trollope
Trustees	Sue Pandit (Chair) Kathy Owles (Vice Chair, Membership) Kathy Kock (Treasurer) Reka Czeglédi-Brown (Secretary) Fina Mason (Events) Louise Carr (Hospitality) C. Elaine Redler (Publicity)	
Principal address	PO Box 28868, London SW13 9XH	
Bankers	HSBC 172 Upper Richmond Road Putney London SW15 2SH	

## **Barnes Literary Society**

### **Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2024**

The BLS celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. Founded in 2004 by Fiona Smith and a group of Barnes friends, a committee was formed, and a number of high-profile writers and actors agreed to be patrons. Since then, we have had 135 brilliant authors and academics covering a wide range of literary topics ranging from fiction, biography, poetry to history, science, publishing and journalism. An anniversary booklet showcasing the authors that we have been privileged to welcome to Barnes and the individuals who have made the BLS such a great success was produced. We also celebrated the anniversary at the summer party held in June with the special entertainment provided by our patron Roger McGough and his band The Little Machine.

Jo Weinberger retired as Chair of Trustees after last year's AGM and was succeeded by Sue Pandit. Jo led the BLS through the difficult years of the pandemic. We moved to filming our speakers, using a local professional film company, and only lost a couple of events. She also led the important move from a membership organisation to a charity. We are now able to use our surplus funds to give small donations to local schools, charities and other public sector organisations. We see this as a very important part of our activity. Further details are provided below.

Our opening speaker for 23/24 was due to be Kate Mosse talking about the latest book in her Joubert Family Chronicles, *The Ghost Ship*. Unfortunately, she was unwell and Tracy Borman, Joint Chief Curator of Historic Royal Palaces, stepped in to give us a wonderful talk based on her book *Anne Boleyn & Elizabeth I*. In November we welcomed Lindsey Davis who talked about her Flavia Albia crime series set in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Rome. We were fascinated by her attention to historical details as she spoke about her latest novel *Fatal Legacy*.

In January Janice Hallett was in conversation with local crime writer Anja de Jager, talking about her latest novel *The Mysterious Case of the Alperton Angels*. Janice introduced us to her unusual epistolary writing style.

In February we had a music themed event when we welcomed Fiona Maddocks to talk about her biography *Goodbye Russia: Rachmaninoff in Exile*. She was in conversation with Eleanor Oldroyd, BBC broadcaster. We were able to combine music with a fascinating conversation. A highlight of the year.

In March Diana Evans, the prize winning author of *Ordinary People*, discussed her work with BLS patron Harriett Gilbert. Diana's work focuses on black and mixed-race middle class family life in London. *Ordinary People* has its own play list, some of which we were able to play in the church. In May Emma Tarlo gave us a talk about her fascinating book *Under the Hornbeams* an account of her conversations with two men who were living, during lockdown, in a wild corner of Regents Park.

Our literary outing in March was to the British Library. About 40 members were treated to a comprehensive tour of various parts of the BL including the fascinating Treasures Gallery. The BL was suffering from a major cyber-attack which limited access to some areas.

We introduced Creative Writing courses during the year, both introductory and advanced. These were led by the very experienced Susanna Jones and took place at the Old Sorting Office. The fees for the initial course were subsidised by the BLS's charity giving but subsequent courses were priced to cover the full costs. Feedback has been excellent. We are continuing the courses in 2024 and are now reviewing how often we run them in the future.

Membership levels for the year were 378. Our single membership fee remained at £30. It has been £30 since 2014. We are planning to increase the fee to £40 from the beginning of the 25/26 season. This will be for 7 events, still excellent value at £5.70 an event when most other local author events charge between £10 and £20 per event. This increase will enable us to expand our grant giving activities.

There are a number of people I would like to thank.

We are lucky to have supportive patrons at the BLS several of whom regularly attend our events. We have a very hardworking group of volunteer trustees.

I would like to thank Sarah Arthur who manages our website and features BLS news in the Barnes Bugle, the Barnes Community Association for providing coverage of our events in their publications, and all the local shops, businesses, and libraries who take our publicity posters.

Cheryl, Phil and others at St Mary's who offer support for events at the church throughout the year also get our thanks. We really appreciate the recently upgraded AV at the church-

We have been working with the OSO this year. They have been handling the promotion and bookings for the Creative Writing Courses and the BLS has provided grants to support some of their activities for low-income residents. We have cooperated more closely with the Barnes Music Society this season.

Our focus for 2024/25 is to obtain more feedback from our Members on our activities, to expand the number of trustees and to find new patrons, alongside, of course, delivering an excellent and thought provoking programme of speakers.

I would like to comment briefly on the Treasurer's report on income and expenditure, attached below. This account has been prepared on a cash basis in line with the requirements of the Charity Commission and has been submitted to the Charity Commission as required as part of the Annual Return. We delivered a surplus before grants of £4128 compared to the previous year's surplus of £6330. After making donations of £4382 in grants (see below) we ended the year with a net deficit of -£254. We aim to distribute between £3,500 and £4000 a year in grants. Given the very strong reserves that we have built up over recent years we are confident that this level of grant giving is sustainable.

Reserves at 31 July 2024 were £32,351, represented by cash at bank. Our financial position remains strong and as a charity we may now apply for gift aid from the HMRC which increases the funds for further grant giving activities.

Grants: A total of £4,382 was awarded to seven recipients. These included:

- Barnes Children's Literature Festival to enable them to purchase two digital visualisers for their schools' programme,
- Arts Richmond to support their Young Writers annual competition,
- St Osmond's School library books,
- Mortlake Community Association, books for Santa's Grotto,
- Castelnau Community Centre, reading materials,
- OSO grants for set up and run a book club, the Writer's Studio, the Youth Theatre Programme, support for low-income participants,
- Achieving for Children, funds for a book club.

We particularly want to strengthen our relationship with the local state primary schools.

Sue Pandit  
Chair of Trustees  
Barnes Literary Society

## Barnes Literary Society

### Income and Expenditure Account Year ended 31 July 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>		
Membership Fees	11310	11730
Guest Fees/Ticket Sales	3125	3010
Profits from the bar	964	223
Tax reclaimed on gift aid	1625	1685
Bank interest	546	72
Other event income	120	155
	<b>17690</b>	<b>16875</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Venue hire and rental costs	1250	2000
Speaker costs /other event expenses	3489	3780
Subsidy of creative writing course	1540	0
Postage,Printing and Stationery	920	1096
Insurance	148	144
Bank charges etc	358	377
Software	132	132
Website	460	1924
Special event costs	2760	0
Publicity	2370	606
Other costs	135	486
	<b>13562</b>	<b>10545</b>
Surplus before grants	<b>4128</b>	<b>6330</b>
Grants for charitable purposes	-4382	1600
Net surplus/(deficit )for year	-254	4730
Reserves brought forward	32605	27875
Reserves carried forward	32351	32605

**Barnes Literary Society  
Balance Sheet 31 July 2024**

	£	2024	£	2023
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash at bank		32351		32605
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>32351</b>		<b>32605</b>

**Represented by**

General reserves	<b>32351</b>	<b>32605</b>
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These accounts have been prepared on the cash basis as allowed by the Charities Commission

Approved by the committee and signed on their behalf

Chair:

*She Pandit*