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1. Consultation with the Visual Arts Sector, 5th May, The Collection, Lincoln:

A consultation event for the visual arts sector in Lincolnshire is taking place on Wednesday 5th May and they would like you to be involved. There is the potential to develop a network for everyone working in the visual arts in the East Midlands. Your ideas and thoughts will shape what the network is and how it works. They want to hear from people working in different roles in organisations as well as individuals.

A regional consultation event took place on 29th March at *QUAD* in Derby. It has provided a very valuable insight into what kind of network might help the visual arts in the East Midlands. The Lincoln event will be your opportunity to learn about the findings from the Derby event, to discuss what we do well in Lincolnshire and look at new ways of working together and creating a voice for the visual arts.

Unfortunately due to limited space there are only 100 seats available. To ensure yours is reserved please call *The Collection* on 01522 550965.

The Collection is part of the East Midlands Visual Arts Network steering group. The group is made up of staff from 10 contemporary and historical visual arts organisations. They are: The City Gallery, The Collection, Derby Museums & Art Gallery, Fermynwoods Contemporary Art, Hub: National Centre for Craft & Design, New Art Exchange, New Walk Museum, Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery, Nottingham Contemporary and QUAD.

They look forward hearing your thoughts on 5th May. The event is free and there will be some refreshments.

2. Helpful Information on How To Run Successful Open Studio Events:

The AOTM Steering Group has been looking at ways of producing useful information to members, particularly to new members, on how to get the most out of our Lincolnshire Open Studio events. At present we are all fairly hard pressed, on the Steering Group, to take on additional tasks, and none of us enjoy reinventing wheels.

However, the national Open Studio Network has been working on a series of Handbooks covering most aspects of Open Studios. Those handbooks are now available on the web and cover most aspects that we are likely to need. Therefore, we recommend that you refer to those helpful handbooks. You can gain access by registering with the national Open Studio Network Website at <http://openstudiosnetwork.ning.com/>

The following handbooks, on how to make the most use out of our Open Studio events, are now available from the national Open Studios Network.

- Handbook 1 – Introduction
- Handbook 2 – Setting up
- Handbook 3 – Finance
- Handbook 4 – IT
- Handbook 5 – Accessibility
- Handbook 6 – Marketing
- Handbook 7 – Public Relations
- Handbook 8 – Publicity and advertising
- Handbook 9 – Monitoring and evaluation
- Handbook 10 – Further information sources
- Handbook 11 – Appendices

3. Welcome to Two New AOTM Members:

We are delighted to welcome two new members. Denise Hallam is our latest ex-member to re-join AOTM for 2010. Denise works in textiles and lives in the West Lindsey Cluster Group area. Martin Cameron is a photographer and he lives in the Vales Cluster Group area. Full details for both members are on their AOTM website pages.

4. Analysis of 2009 Open Studio Returned Questionnaires:

(Compiled by Peter Montgomery [AOTM Membership Secretary] 30 April, 2010)

a) Simple Updated Analysis of AOTM 2009 Open Studio External Questionnaires:

For the last ten years AOTM has used an Open Studio Visitor's Questionnaire for visitors to complete, if they wish. The visitor's form is provided so that we can better understand who the visitors are, where they travel from, why they visit the Open Studios and what they think about the events. The forms are also used to collect additional information so that we can try to improve the Open Studio events in the future and to inform potential supporters of AOTM, such as Local Authorities.

Visitors were invited to complete the forms before leaving the studios. Many visitors declined to do that for a variety of reasons, and those decisions were respected. However, 161 visitors did complete eighty-five Visitor's Questionnaires during the AOTM Open Studio year, from October 2008 to September 2009.

Visitors ranged from single people to groups of 2, 3 and 4, but one or two people were the most common groups. The following details have been extracted from the completed forms and the number of visitors in each of those categories is shown in the brief summary tables below. Thirty-four of the visitors also asked to be put onto the AOTM mailing / email list.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|--------------------------|
| Age Groups? | 1-11 | 12-17 | 18-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65-74 | Over 74 | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 20 | 7 | 3 | 15 | 55 | 16 | 3 | Remainder |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------------------------|
| Number of miles travelled? | 1-5 | 6-9 | 10-19 | 20-39 | 40-79 | 80-160 | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 33 | 17 | 13 | 13 | 7 | 4 | Remainder |

| | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----|-----|----|--------------------------|
| How Many Visits to this studio in past 12 months? | First time | 2-3 | 4-6 | 7+ | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 113 | 16 | 6 | 1 | Remainder |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------|----------------|----------|--------------------------|
| How did you hear about AOTM? | Press/Radio | Flyer/Poster | Friends | Visited before | Web site | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 52 | 40 | 38 | 12 | 3 | Remainder |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|---------|-------------|--------|--------|--------------------------|
| Reason for Visit? | AOTM | Day Out | In the area | To Buy | Friend | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 115 | 21 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Remainder |

| | | | |
|--|-----|----|--------------------------|
| Do you intend to visit more than 1 studio? | Yes | No | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 41 | 0 | Remainder |

| | | | |
|--|----|-----|--------------------------|
| Did your visit coincide with other visits in the area? | No | Yes | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 30 | 14 | Remainder |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|
| Did you use the following AOTM product? | Brochure | Website | Neither | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 37 | 11 | 4 | Remainder |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------------|--------|-----------|----|---------|--|
| How was AOTM brochure acquired? | Studio | Art Gallery | Friend | Mail Shot | PO | Library | |
| No. of Visitors | 24 | 19 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----|--------------------------|
| Is AOTM Brochure Fundamental to you? | Yes | No | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 42 | 8 | Remainder |

| | | | |
|--|-----|----|--------------------------|
| Will you keep brochure for future reference? | Yes | No | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 54 | 0 | Remainder |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| Would you use AOTM website? | Yes | No | No reply | Not sure | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 23 | 25 | 6 | 5 | Remainder |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|-----------|-----------|
| How would you rate your visit? | Very Good | Good | Average | Poor | Very Poor | Not asked |
| No. of Visitors | 56 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Remainder |

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Most Memorable? | Meeting artist | Something being made | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 16 | 2 | Remainder |

| | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|
| Would you like to be added to the AOTM Mailing List / email List? | Yes | Not asked or no response |
| No. of Visitors | 34 | Remainder |

Additional Comments from 2008 – 2009 Visitors:

High quality workmanship;
 What a good idea to open studios for us to visit;
 Excellent workmanship and so friendly;
 So good to see skilled artisan and wonderful workmanship;
 Super displays and explanation of construction principles;

Advertise in other UK art venues, to emphasise extra reason for visiting Lincolnshire;
 An eye opener – well worth doing for artist and visitors;
 Organised better, now that it is spread over more weekends;
 Having spoken to artist we realise what an important role AOTM plays;
 Everything was wonderful;
 Some studios didn't have signs saying *Open*;
 More publicity in Grantham library & Guildhall would help;
 Arrange an AOTM exhibition in Lincoln;
 Prefer summer;
 Possible commission for artist.

Based on the experience of trying to analyse five different versions of the AOTM Open Studio Visitor's Questionnaires, returned in 2009 (after the final Open Studios in September 2009), a revised form was produced for 2010.

The Visitors Questionnaire for 2010 is restricted to one page and has simple boxes for visitors to highlight as appropriate. When the returned forms are analysed in the future, those details should provide information which should be helpful to the AOTM Steering Group and other potential supporters, such as Local Authorities, when planning Open Studio events in the future. This form is downloadable/printable from the 'Member's Area' of the AOTM website.

b) Simple Updated Analysis of AOTM Open Studio Internal Questionnaires

In the year from October 2008 to September 2009, up to eighty-nine AOTM members agreed to take part in the Open Studios by opening for two weekends in the spring and two weekends in the autumn. All members agreed to return their completed AOTM Internal Questionnaire, after the Open Studio period, so that the Steering Group could assess the success, or otherwise, of the events. By analysing those details the Steering Group would have firm evidence to plan for, and improve, the Open Studio events in the future.

The AOTM Internal Questionnaires returned for the above Open Studio dates have now been analysed and updated (as at 19 April, 2010) and a summary of the findings are as follows:

| Topic | Number | % of total members |
|--|--------|--------------------|
| Number of AOTM members | 89 | 100% |
| Number of returned questionnaires | 58 | 65% |
| Members who did not open their studio | 08 | 09% |
| Members who did open their studios | 50 | 56% |
| Number of recorded visitors to studios | 1,175 | - |
| Average visitors per open studio | 24 | - |

Based on a more detailed analysis of the returned questionnaires, it would appear that the autumn openings attracted about the same number of visitor per member as the spring, and that Sundays attracted slightly more visitors than Saturdays. Members were given the option of opening their studio on a pre-Christmas weekend; only a few did so, but some of those members who did open said that it was their most successful weekend.

The total sales for members who opened their studio were £10,477, giving an average of £210 for each member. However, as usual, there was a wide range of experiences. Sales ranged from nineteen members with no sales (but with some commissions), nine members with sales of up to £99 (and some commissions), twenty members with sales between £100 and £800 (and commissions), and three members with sales in excess of £1,000, as summarised in the following table:

| Amount of Sales | £0 | £8 to £99 | £100 to £399 | £400 to £800 | £1,000 to £1,675 | Sub-total |
|-----------------------|-----|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|
| No. of members | 19 | 09 | 11 | 09 | 03 | 50 |
| % of Members | 38% | 18% | 20% | 18% | 06% | 100% |
| Total sales | £0 | £216 | £1,936 | £4,395 | £3,930 | £10,477 |
| Average sale / member | £0 | £24 | £176 | £549 | £1,310 | £210 |

The AOTM Steering Group thanks the majority of members who completed and returned their questionnaires. The analysis shows that, overall, we are continuing to do well, but that we must continue to make improvements in some areas for our Lincolnshire Open Studio events.

Naturally, the above figures would probably have changed if all members had completed and returned their questionnaires. More importantly, that would also have given the Steering Group a better overall assessment of what changes need to be made for the AOTM Open Studios in 2011 and beyond. Therefore, we look forward to receiving your completed Open Studio questionnaires for the 2010 events, so that we can continue to improve over the years to come.

In summary, all we need to know is how many visitors you had, and the amount of your sales, during the spring and autumn Open Studio events. As always, that information will remain confidential and will only be used to produce overall figures, as shown in the example above. This Internal Questionnaire form is also downloadable/printable from the 'Member's Area' of the AOTM website.

As usual, please print copies of these forms, as required, and then forward completed forms either to your Cluster Group Coordinator, or to the AOTM Membership Secretary, after the spring and autumn Open Studio events. Thank you.

5. AOTM Open Studio Handbook:

You may remember that about six months ago we mentioned that we were hoping to produce an AOTM Open Studio Handbook. The idea of the handbook was to help improve our effectiveness. Unfortunately, the last six months has been an extremely busy time, but the good news is that we are getting much closer! Hopefully, there will be more details in the June Newsletter, which may help with our autumn Open Studio weekends.

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Please send your news for next month's issue to the Newsletter Editor: graham@forgearts.co.uk

Please note that the order of news articles is based solely on the order that they arrive on the Editor's desk.