

Abbeyfield School Art and Photography Exhibition

Sponsored by The Arts Society, Kington Langley
The Foyer, Chippenham Town Hall
8th – 11th October 2018



This exhibition was the culmination of our first collaboration with Abbeyfield School. We sent an initial letter to the head stating who The Art Society was and our interest in supporting and enriching arts education. To our joy we had an email from the school the next day asking us to visit them.

We met Simon Down, Head of Creative Arts who had a project already to discuss. He wanted a public exhibition that the students could curate and organise so that they understood the need to work to a deadline but also to get an insight into how exhibitions are constructed.

The Arts Society Kington

Langley Young Arts Representative Jackie Jones and I said that we would undertake the finding of the venue, and organising a private view if the school undertook the advertising at their end. After contacting various potential venues we decided the best one was The Foyer in the Town Hall, Chippenham. This gallery was on the High



Street, with a good footfall, easily reached by students and family and readily accessible for the school to bring in display boards and artwork. The Town Hall manager was really excited to have the students work on display and helped with costings, support staff, equipment and contacts.

We were also honoured to have the Mayor, Cr Phillips, to open the private view.

We met up a couple of times to discuss plans and then I met the sixth form students to look at time lines, and practicalities. I asked the Swindon Museum and Art Gallery to organise a meeting with their museum curator so that the students would have professional support as they put their work together. This meeting didn't take place however as it is increasingly difficult to get the students out of school but we can build on this contact in the future.

Posters and invitations were designed and printed by the students and the great day arrived as teachers and students arrived at the venue to

unload display boards and then arrange all the work. They came with rulers, set squares, levels etc. so that everything could be as professional as possible.

We arranged The Arts Society promotional materials display to show our sponsorship and our values along with cards the students had made for sale.

There was a constant flow of people through the exhibition over the three days. Our private view however was postponed due to the main electrical lead into Chippenham being cut through meaning that the town was shut down. However the reception staff in the Town Hall and also at Abbeyfield School rose to the occasion and contacted everyone and we reorganised for the following evening.

Students, parents, friends and family turned out as well as members of The Arts Society to celebrate the success of the students. The Mayor made a rousing speech about



how spectacular the work was and the benefits of arts in education. Lots of Mocktails and canapes were consumed and parents were really proud and pleased to see the just how good the work was. Students told us that this had given their studies a huge boost, had made them understand the need for a deadline and “finishing”. It has made them focus on where to go next with their coursework and in at least two cases two school refusers finished work, came in and hung it and then attended the private view. Those parents were very pleased indeed.

The end of the exhibition came. Work and boards cleared away and the money from the sales of cards will assist the department in some manner.