

Planning a way back to “normal” meetings

At the beginning of this very challenging and strange season, and in line with feedback from member surveys, we recognised that our 20-21 programme would have to be very flexible and adaptable to cope with the many uncertainties ahead. For us and many similar societies, Zoom meetings have been a lifeline and have allowed us to continue running an interesting on-line programme of photographic events since the first lockdown in March. We have also used our Facebook page to create some fun photographic challenges. Nevertheless, Zoom meetings and electronic communication have their limitations. Some members have not wished or not been able to participate on line, and others have said they can't wait to get back to “real” meetings once it is safe and practicable to do so.



When we planned our programme, we therefore designed a flexible but hybrid approach, with Zoom meetings through the autumn and then a mix of Zoom and hall meetings after Christmas, assuming this was allowed and could be run safely.

Over the last few weeks, we have been working with the team at our new Methodist Hall venue to develop a format for Covid secure meetings as soon as this is allowed again. Based on a very thorough risk assessment, a protocol has been agreed with the hall, which has been confirmed with local public health officials as both safe and fully compliant with official advice. Any meetings held under this safety protocol will clearly not be the same as those before the pandemic, but we believe that they will allow us to meet under a “new normal” format until we can hopefully get back to something akin to the old normal sometime during 2021. The main points will be:

- All attendees must register before the meeting and obviously not do so if they have or develop virus symptoms or are self-isolating. Door fees will be cashless by card.
- Hand sanitiser must be used before entering the hall and numbers will be restricted to allow strict 2m social distancing between seats. Attendees will be required to wear face coverings and not mingle with other attendees whilst in the hall
- Refreshments will not be provided but you may bring your own drinks if you wish
- All chairs and other surfaces that may come into contact with people, will be cleaned and disinfected before and after the meeting

As you will have seen from the programme circulated with previous newsletters, we have provisionally scheduled one hall meeting a month from January to run alongside the Zoom meetings. If possible, we may do a trial hall run before Christmas although this is not certain. The planned meetings are:

Wednesday	06/01/2021	Harish Chavda – Sports and landscape images
Wednesday	03/02/2021	Verity Milligan – Locally based photographer and educator
Wednesday	03/03/2021	Andy Thorpe – People, places, and things
Wednesday	31/03/2021	Ashley Franklin – Part 2 : Wider world of photography
Wednesday	28/04/2021	Annual Print competition– Judge Anne Sutcliffe
Wednesday	26/05/2021	AGM and social (we hope)

It would be extremely helpful if you could let us know which of these meetings you might consider attending. There is no commitment at this stage just some indication to help us plan ahead would be really appreciated.