



Laura Ford, President's speech

This year, the focus has been on “*Creating a Home for Sculpture.*” Caroline, together with the building committee and a small fundraising group, has been working hard to ensure that what has been envisioned will be successfully delivered.

As with any building project, there have been significant challenges, and this one is no exception. Caroline, as ever, has been nothing short of exceptional, navigating these complexities with determination and skill, supported brilliantly by the building committee. My sincere thanks go to Gordon Watson for his expert leadership as Chair, and to all members of the committee for your ongoing commitment and dedication. And a special thank you to Andrea, who has been keeping a very careful eye on the numbers.

Operating without a gallery has also presented its own challenges. Caroline and her team have responded with creativity and resilience, securing alternative venues to ensure that key events such as the Members' Summer Show could still take place. The Christmas party, held at the magical Art Workers' Guild in Bloomsbury, was a particular highlight.

Residencies and opportunities have continued to develop and grow. A big thank you to Maria, who is always on the lookout for opportunities for all of us, and a warm welcome and thanks to Eilidh, who has joined the team and has been doing an excellent job coordinating residencies and exhibitions.

Our Zoom sessions remain an important part of the programme, with members increasingly taking the initiative and shaping their content and direction. I would like to extend special thanks to the sculptor trustees who lead these sessions with such generosity, giving their time and expertise to support fellow members and foster a sense of community—something that is increasingly leading to more in-person meet-ups.

Our talks programme—including *Material Encounters*, *Behind the Studio Doors*, and others—has continued to offer engaging and thought-provoking conversations. These talks now form a valuable and growing resource, accessible to members via our Vimeo channel.

Laura Ford, President May 2026