

Minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting of Knitting & Crochet Guild Ltd held at 2 pm on Saturday 7 July 2012 Deritend Room, St Martin in the Bullring, Edgbaston Street, Birmingham B5 5BB

1 Welcomes and apologies

The meeting started at 14:00. The Chair, Jennifer Short, welcomed 25 members to the meeting. 16 apologies/proxies were received in writing or by email.

2 Announcements

The Chair explained the domestic arrangements and indicated the location of fire exits.

3 Minutes of the reconvened AGM on 15 October 2011

No comments were made and the minutes were approved by the membership.

4 Reports and Accounts

The Treasurer, Julia Blanchett, used a series of slides to present the Statement of Financial Activity and Balance Sheet for the previous financial year to 31st March 2012. There was a positive cash flow of £100, including £8,000 received from KCGTC. She then provided the meeting with a summary of the financial situation. Income and expenditure is monitored on a monthly basis. A full copy of the accounts is available to members on request.

Income from membership had reduced in the past year. It was proposed that membership fees be increased by £5.00. There followed a discussion among the membership. It was pointed out that the fees had been increased from £18.00 to £20.00 four years ago. One member stated that the new rate would be competitive. Another member made the point that, if everyone who could Gift Aided his or her subscription, the Guild could raise a further £2500. It was suggested that, as a high proportion of members were older, they might not be able to use Gift Aid, although this could be done by a tax-paying spouse. Arrangements for Gift Aid are to be changed on the new membership forms, which start next calendar year. A decision on an increase in membership fee would be made later in the meeting under Agenda item 8.

A long serving member said that Junior subscription had been tried in the past. The Chair said that the Board had discussed reduced membership, and they would consider this in the coming year, including student membership. Sales of surplus from ebay had raised £7,500 and less than half the surplus had been sold so far.

The membership voted unanimously to accept the accounts.

5 Appointment of Directors

Lynne Madeley and Maureen Wheeler had both offered their resignations from the Board, due to personal circumstances.

Jennifer Short and Julia Blanchett were required to retire as Directors having been co-opted in the year 2011-2012. Both submitted nominations and spoke to the meeting. One other nomination had been received from Jane Smart.

All the above were unanimously appointed by the meeting.

6 Appointment of Office-Bearers

Jennifer Short was re-appointed as Chair until AGM 2013.
Julia Blanchett was re-appointed Treasurer until AGM 2013.
Jane Smart was appointed as Secretary until AGM 2013.

From the conclusion of the meeting they would assume these roles.

Thanks were expressed on behalf of the meeting to Lynne Madeley and Maureen Wheeler for their roles on the Board.

7 Alteration to the Memorandum and Articles

To consider and vote upon the following resolution as a special resolution.

That the Articles of Association of the Guild (the "Articles") be amended as follows:

- the wording of article B4(3) of the Articles to be deleted and replaced with "any sum (other than the annual subscription) due from the member of the Guild is not paid in full within six months of it falling due";
- a new sub-clause B4(5) be added to state:
"any annual subscription due from the member of the Guild is not paid in full when due"
- the last sentence of clause E25 of the Articles which reads " If there is only one Director he or she must retire" be deleted;
- a new sub- clause E 34 (7) be added to article 24 of the Articles to state:
"A meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the directors in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants."
- a new sentence be added to the end of article 35(1) to state:
"Present' includes being present by suitable electronic means agreed by the directors in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants."

The wording had been changed last year but was still slightly ambiguous. The new wording had been provided by the Guild Solicitor. There were no questions following an explanation for the changes, and these were accepted en block, unanimously, by the membership.

8 Membership fees

To consider and vote upon the following resolution as an ordinary resolution.

That the annual membership for Adults be increased to £25 from 1 August 2012.

The Membership Secretary pointed out that those renewing were no longer including extra donations as they had in the past. Some members expressed their concern about the percentage increase. The Board noted the concerns.

The resolution was passed with 23 votes for and 3 abstentions.

9 Board reports on activities during 2011-2012

9.1 Secretary's report

The Secretary began her report by thanking everyone who had worked hard throughout the year to establish a firm platform to move the Guild forward into the future. The Guild had worked hard over the year to keep members informed of its activities.

She expressed thanks to Mary Hawkins for her hard work in the production of SK 134 and welcomed Lesley O'Connell Edwards as the new editor. SK 135 had been produced on a reduced budget, in black and white, and had been very well received. The new Printers and Distribution service was working well, and had supplied new fliers, which included an application form. The website was getting over 6,000 visitors per month and Ravelry was very active.

The Guild had been represented as a number of shows over the year including, Alexander Palace, Harrogate, Manchester, Newcastle, Leighton Buzzard and several Craft Fairs at Standage, in West Yorkshire.

Unfortunately, it had not been possible to organize a weekend workshop this year, as there wasn't sufficient interest from membership for the Blackpool weekend. However it is hoped something can be arranged for next year.

The Board had met on six occasions over the year, both at Lee Mills and in Birmingham. The following issues were raised and actions taken:

- In August there was a full review of the financial position and it was decided there were enough funds to continue with the Guild for a further year. Arrangements were made for the reconvened AGM in November.
- In October, the Forward plan for 2011-2012 was finalized, AGM arrangements made and Yahoo was used to ask for help on the board.
- In November, Julia Blanchett replaced Chris Fox as Treasurer. It was decided to arrange an independent survey at Lee Mills before the lease expires on 31/12/13 with respect to decoration and upkeep. Use of GroupSpaces for online membership was approved.
- In March, a new accounting package was introduced to track the finances. It was agreed to make membership renewal independent of SK and to be online where possible. Guidelines for shows were produced and a weekend workshop outlined. Everything was returned to Lee Mills from temporary storage.
- In May, it was decided that the accounts would be prepared using the same format as for previous years, that education would be a priority for next year. An option appraisal on the future of the Guild was discussed and a draft Risk Register was produced.

Finally the Secretary thanked everyone for their help over the year.

9.2 Collections Manager's report

Barbara Smith, Publications Curator, at Lee Mills, deputized for Lynne Madeley, Collections Manger, who was unable to attend the meeting.

Lynne had stated that when she joined the Board two years ago she did so with the promise that she would deal with the Lee Mills Collection, and undertake a full rationalization.

She reported that all items had been returned to Lee Mills from temporary storage and the first stage of rationalization was complete for knitted and crochet items. The original 3,000 boxes had been reduced to 220, 93 had had their contents photographed and a further 18 had a searchable inventory.

The magazines had been sorted and listed; many duplicates are still to be disposed of. Pattern booklet sorting and listing is well underway. A large number of magazine supplements, free patterns etc were sorted, some listed. It was estimated that there are 150,000 leaflets, possibly 50,000 different ones. They have been sorted by spinner. The next stage will be sorting numerically/chronologically.

Other items including knitting needles have been paired up, tools remain to be sorted, shade cards sorted and listed, on a database, and yarn samples have been recorded.

Items which should not be in the collection have been disposed of, some returned to donors/lenders. As much as possible has been sold to raise funds.

Items are available for display/shows have been on display at Leighton Buzzard, will be displayed at In the Loop in Winchester in September, and later in the year at Alexandra Palace and Harrogate.

Members of the Textile Department at Huddersfield University are to visit Lee Mills and the collections available for research. Linda Newington (Knitting and Crochet Library, Winchester School of Art), visited Lee Mills and was impressed by the scale and scope. 'A remarkable collection in the making.' For some spinners (eg Twilleys) the Guild Collection is probably the largest pattern collection still in existence.

Without another source of funds it seems likely that the Guild will not be able to maintain the Collection for much longer. The next stage is to apply for grants and seek external funding. The Guild will try to ensure that the Collections remain intact and retain the name of the Guild, even if different components are housed in different locations. It is clear that we have a nationally important resource to be proud of and we will encourage members and the wider public to use and enjoy it.

10 Board report of the future plan for the Guild

The Chair expressed thanks to Linde Merrick for her continuing role as Membership Secretary, to Marion Dye for auditing the accounts and to Chris Fox as retiring Treasurer.

The Chair spoke about some of the issues identified by the Board and what they planned to do. The Guild needed to retain members and gain new members, increase income and control costs. For the Guild to thrive we need members to be actively involved: as directors and office-bearers, undertaking these roles which are reviewed annually; in leading and attending local groups; taking part in Guild activities and events.

To tackle these issues the Board has to manage the Guild as a limited company, to continue to manage finances carefully and control costs, as well as raise income. Three areas of activity were crucial for the Guild:

- Publicise the Guild with its remit of education, innovation and preservation
- Develop the Guild as a membership organisation (with tangible benefits for members)
- Promote the Guild as a national charity (for the wider good)

Tangible benefits for members are important and the Board want to continue these: SlipKnot published quarterly in an affordable format; local groups and coordinators who are encouraged and supported; running workshops to share knowledge and skills; providing the website and use other online channels (Yahoo, Ravelry, Facebook etc) for information both to members and the wider knitting and crochet community. By encouraging members to be active volunteers in the Guild we can do more and develop new initiatives if members want them.

The Guild's role as a national charity helps make it unique. To continue this, the Board is planning to work in partnership with other organisations and funders. The aim is to preserve the unique collection of textiles, artefacts and documents so it is affordable; to use the rationalised collection to promote the Guild as a custodian of the crafts and their social history as well as for research, education and as a source of inspiration, creativity and innovation. We want to make the collection available by various physical and virtual means, and offer members more in depth access as a special benefit.

The Board is mindful that the Guild is in competition for members and money with many other charities and membership organisations. We have to be realistic about what we can achieve with only three directors and a very few long-serving, active members who run most of the activities. So we have set some targets for 2012-13 to measure how we are doing. This will help plan a future for the Guild. If we have succeeded we will have:

- Funded core activities from membership fees, not from reserves
- Secured additional funds (from donations, grants and sales)
- Increased the retention rate to 80% of current members
- Attracted sufficient new members to replace lost members
- Achieved not less than 650 members at 31/03/13
- Increased the number of user visits to website to more than 6000 each month by 31/03/2013
- Attracted and retained a minimum of 4 directors to manage the Guild on behalf of members by 31/12/2012
- Attracted sufficient volunteers to support planned activities and events

Having presented the issues and how the Board was planning to tackle them, the Chair invited members to discuss and comment, posing these questions:

- What do you think about the Guild's future?
- What do you want the Guild to do?
- What can you do for the Guild?
- Do you support what the Board has outlined for its priorities and budget?

There was then a positive and constructive discussion with all members keen to see the Guild continue. Members voted unanimously to support the proposals and future plans outlined by the Chair.

11 Any other business

The following issues were raised by the membership;

Publicity – it was felt that we needed to do more to raise our profile, but need someone to take on this role.

Schools - there is no Education Policy at the moment, and the Board will consider this in the coming year.

Attracting younger members – suggested having a presence at Freshers' week at Textile Colleges.

Collection – way forward to use it as a research archive.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:30.

Minuted by Maureen Wheeler 02 August 2012.

[End of AGM Minutes]