

Minutes of the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Knitting & Crochet Guild held on 10 July 2011 at University Hall, Cardiff

1 Welcome and apologies

The meeting started at 11:07. Linde Merrick, Vice-Chair, who was acting as Chair for the AGM, first read the list of those members who had apologised for their absence. At this point only 37 members were present and this number was insufficient for a quorum. Linde then explained that as the meeting was inquorate it could not deal with the formal business, that is the Special Resolutions 1 to 9 or the Ordinary Resolutions 10 to 15 as listed on the Notice of the AGM.

Linde pointed out Special Resolution 6, if passed, would require her to resign as a Director. However as the resolution was not voted on she would remain as a Director and in the office of Vice-Chair until the re-convened AGM was able to consider and vote on the Resolution. Similarly Mary Hawkins would remain as SlipKnot editor since no vote could be taken on Resolution 15.

2 Chair's report

In the interests of informing members present of the activities of the Guild during the past year, Linde read the Chair's report.

"Chair's Report for AGM

This year has been another eventful one for the Guild. The Extraordinary General Meeting held in October 2010 was well supported and gave members an opportunity to air many concerns. Although not all the Directors elected at the EGM have continued on the Board, the remaining Directors have managed to cover the additional tasks so that we have done all that we needed to do. One result was the review of the Guild's Articles of Association. Resolutions for changes to these, incorporating requirements of the Companies Act 2006, were therefore proposed by the Directors for ratification at this 2011 AGM by the members.

The catastrophic fire at the trading arm, KCG Trading Limited in August 2010 necessitated a review of its raison d'être and the Directors of KCGTL agreed at their AGM in March 2011 that the company could not be revived by them and so would cease trading. The outstanding loan to the Guild was repaid in November 2010 in accordance with the loan agreement. The remaining funds which are in excess of £8,000 will be transferred to the Guild as the sole shareholder when all the formalities have been completed.

The incursion of water at Lee Mills during December 2010 was another unpleasant shock. The Directors would like to thank all those volunteers who so generously turned out at the time to cope in truly appalling conditions and have slaved unceasingly since to manage this major activity. Special thanks must go to Maureen Wheeler and Barbara Smith for their incredibly hard work. Over 1300 hours were logged at Lee Mills in January, February and March and the work continues to turn a crisis into something positive. There is now an increased team of 14 volunteers, we are in a better position to rationalise as per the EGM remit and have made enormous inroads into the document collection. A great deal of rubbish has gone and the surplus is being sold to raise funds; to date this is to the tune of nearly £2000.

Our membership has unfortunately continued to decline: we now have only 725 paid up members, 21 life members and 4 patrons, a reduction of 15% from the numbers at the end of 2009. Many of our members generously add a donation to their subscription and the Board would like to thank them for this additional income. A thank you is also extended to those members who gift-aid their subscriptions and donations as this provides a very well welcome increase to Guild funds.

Our journal *SlipKnot* however has continued to provide well researched, interesting and informative articles for the members and provides the major contact with the members. Our Editor, Mary Hawkins handled the change of printers from Veldonns to Peak Press in a seamless fashion. Mary has also now established a very professional relationship with Peak Press which is of enormous benefit to the Guild. Mary will be our Editor until the publication of *SlipKnot 134* and then for personal reasons wishes to hand over the editorship. We are looking for a dedicated person to join us and take over Mary's role in the near future.

A major success for the Guild has been the work done by the Website committee in establishing our new website www.kcguild.org.uk. The Directors hope that this will become a lively, modern face for the Guild. We would like to thank Jennifer Short and her team for their commitment to the project and we extend heartfelt thanks to James Walters for his unstinting efforts as the Guild's Webmaster for our old website.

The Guild's presence was again made possible at some Shows and events due to the unstinting efforts and goodwill of many of our long-standing members. Their hardworking efforts to continue to promote the Guild's main objective of education and ensure knowledge of our crafts has a public face is greatly appreciated by the Directors. We would like to thank them all and their fantastic teams of volunteers who man the stands, provide items for display and demonstrate techniques as well as answering myriad questions. The Directors would also like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all the Branch organizers who do so much to make our members feel part of a thriving community of like-minded enthusiasts, as well as providing opportunities for continuing learning and education in the crafts.

Linde Merrick, Vice-Chair"

In conclusion Linde thanked her fellow Directors and their teams of volunteers. No vote was taken on the report but members concurred with this expression of thanks to everyone who had worked hard in support of the Guild during the past year.

3 Conclusion of AGM

As the meeting remained inquorate, the formal business was concluded at 11:15.

4 Informal Meeting

As there were matters which did not require formal decisions, the members present continued their discussions in order to express their views to Directors and give general direction to the Board until the reconvened AGM.

4.1 Education certificate

Margaret O'Mara's had reported back on the item discussed at the EGM about the Guild offering an education certificate. Although Margaret had received no contributions from other members to

include in her report, she had herself carried out further research. She concluded that at least 20 examiners would need to be trained to the same standard in order to cover the skills sets needed across the three disciplines, to carry out cross training and to moderate students portfolios. She had calculated the cost would be about £400 per student. Given the lack of response to date for members to act as examiners she concluded it was not feasible for the Guild to establish its own certificate at this stage. Nevertheless she had put together a folder of crochet samples to illustrate the kind of evidence which the student would need to submit. Jane Barton proposed a vote of thanks to Margaret for all the work she had done.

During the discussion which followed, Chris Lelliott offered to help evaluate the folder. Jane Smart said she would be interested in learning more about the role of an examiner. Mary McLean suggested that the Guild was too small to take on this initiative and perhaps the WI with 2 million members may be more appropriate. Chris Lelliott mentioned the Arts Council NCFE scheme. Linde thanked members for their suggestions. The Board would consider this further but it was unlikely any initiative could be pursued in the near future.

4.2 The Collection

Lynne Madeley gave a presentation on how the team of volunteers at Lee Mills had progressed the resolution from the EGM to rationalise the Collection. Work had been completely disrupted by the flood and Lynne showed slides of the team working to clear up the mess. Despite these setbacks the following had been achieved:

- A small heated office created in the area previously occupied by the library so that volunteers had a reasonable space in which to work.
- Special items set aside to be catalogued by the textile historian
- Setting up grab boxes for emergency evacuation
- Properly stored magazines
- Catalogued shade cards
- All the vintage patterns had been sorted, filed or disposed of.

Despite efforts 1,000 banana boxes, thought to contain textiles remained in the store in Huddersfield. There was no space to sort at the store so all items had to be returned to Lee Mills.

Lynne explained the approach to sorting and disposal. Museum and excellent quality items are retained. All boxes have to be checked as valuable items have been hidden beneath rubbish. Many boxes contain items of no interest or rubbish and showed a typical example of what the volunteers had found. Only 30% of boxes with textiles have any documentation so it may be impossible to identify former owners. Lynne said that if members wanted items returned they need to send her details and if possible a photo but she cannot guarantee that the item will be identified and found. Some boxes were so damaged or dangerous they had to be disposed of without inspection. Once a box has been sorted the contents need to be retained, put aside for sale or disposed of. Unfortunately there is no space to store the items for disposal on site, as space is needed for the next load of boxes.

Lynne said that they had contacts with local museums and other key group and so were able to check if unwanted items were of interest to other collections. Lynne emphasised that museums and collection professionals were of the view that the documents, 100,00 non-vintage patterns and

shade cards were the unusual and interesting aspects of the Guild's Collection in addition to the museum quality textiles. Lynne and her team's efforts were focused on getting the textile collection out of store (to reduce costs) but as this was rationalised, together with the work on the documents, it was likely less space would be needed for the Guild's holdings. The pattern lending library and the documents as a resource for learning techniques would be of special interest to members. Advice from the museum professionals suggested the document collection could attract funding.

Chris Lelliott suggested two strands for the textile collection: the museum quality and those suitable for a handling collection. Lynne said that only two groups had asked for the use of items and Linde said that at the moment the cost of transport had to be considered.

Sue Blacker asked whether patterns would be scanned. Lynne said this was a slow process with the current scanner but once the value of the patterns was ascertained it might justify getting a larger scanner. Sue said this might attract specialist grant aid.

There was discussion about how quality, dating and currency of items was assessed and how this affected disposals. Several members said that today's ordinary items might become special over time.

In response to a question from Mary McLean about the lease at Lee Mills, Linde explained that a 3 year lease was signed earlier this year(2011) but it contains a break clause for summer 2012 with a potential to extend until December 2013.

Lynne confirmed that items by Jane Messant were saved in the flood but were being dried out and conserved.

Sue Blacker suggested a disposal hierarchy: rubbish, scrap store, free cycle, eBay, sale room. She also offered to enable the Guild to use her website to sell items. Lynne and Chris Fox confirmed that all these routes are currently being used but the volume of items to be gone through and the storage restrictions on site at Lee Mills meant the practical solutions had to be quickly found. £1300 has already been raised through eBay sales which goes into general Guild funds at present. Maureen Wheeler was thanked for the work she had done to get the items listed on eBay.

Juliet Blake asked why the Guild has a Collection as it will never be able to afford to run a museum. Linde explained how it was started from an event in Bradford in the 1980s and has been added to by donations and purchases. No one else was collecting domestic knitting and crochet. Over the years the Guild sought to work with other museums and groups but this was not successful. Although the Collection would reduce in scale the Guild would remain as a centre of excellence. Chris Lelliott said she was attracted to join the Guild because the Collection reflected the social history of women and she felt this was special.

Mary McLean said she would be willing and thought that other member would also like to go to Lee Mills to help out for say 4 days, if B&B could be arranged. These members would pay their own expenses but she asked if someone at Lee Mills could make arrangements as they best know the area. Barbara Smith explained that accommodation could be scarce in the peak holiday season and early in the autumn it becomes too cold at Lee Mills to work comfortable or safely for long periods. Barbara agreed to take name of any volunteers at the meeting or members could email her if interested.

5 AOB

Linde asked if there were other topics for discussion.

5.1 Location for reconvened AGM

Chris Lelliot suggested the location of the reconvened AGM should be somewhere central such as Birmingham. Jennifer Short asked if they could consider the venue used for the EGM. Linde said that they had checked where members lived and it was roughly 50/50 North /South from a line from the Wash to the Severn. The Board would consider the venue carefully as they were mindful of the cost of travel to London in peak hours and the cheaper rail tickets only being available for advance booking if there was adequate notice.

5.2 Branches

Queries had been raised about the status of branches and any rules for their conduct. Linde said that there were no detailed rules but the understanding that if the group was a Guild branch then the person leading the group should be a Guild member and do the general organising but would not have to attend every meeting necessarily. Rebecca Price explained her practice in Melton Mowbray and the ways she encouraged group members to join the Guild.

5.3 Contact details

Majorie Needham asked about contact details published in SlipKnot. Mary Hawkins confirmed that those details had been agreed with the person concerned as their preferred method of communication. If a member wanted to use a method not listed to contact an individual then it would be best to contact one of the Directors instead.

5.4 Workshop events

Chris Lelliot said that she thought the weekend reflected what the Guild did best: members meeting and sharing. She would like to see more workshop events throughout the year.

6 Conclusion of meeting

Mary Graham proposed a vote of thanks to the Directors for arranging the events and Chris Fox also thanked all the tutors for their workshops.

Linde summed up. She explained that Alison Williamson had resigned so there were again 3 Directors but others may be willing to come forward. She ended by saying that the next communication would be the notice of the reconvened AGM after the Directors have given careful consideration to the points raised. She asked members to make a special effort to attend the reconvened AGM in order to make their views known about the future of the Guild. Linde emphasised that it was the members who gave direction to the Directors to act on their behalf and to carry out those wishes.

Meeting ended at 12:30.