

Minutes of the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Knitting & Crochet Guild Ltd held at 11.00 on Saturday 12 July 2014 at the Hallmark Hotel Derby, Midland Road, Derby DS1 2SQ.

1 Welcome and apologies

The meeting was quorate and started at 11.00. The Chair of the meeting, Jennifer Short, welcomed 50 members who were present. She had received 34 proxies and 39 members who could not attend had given their apologies, including Guild Secretary, Barbara Kolator and Director Anthea Winterburn.

2 Announcements

The Chair explained the Health and Safety arrangements, including fire exits and procedure for evacuation in the event of a fire.

The current director, some of whom were standing for election later in the meeting, introduced themselves: Tricia Basham, Annmarie Hedges, Elspeth May, Jennifer Short and Maureen Wheeler.

3 Minutes of the 35th AGM on 13 July 2012

The previous minutes were agreed and there were no matters arising.

4 Report of the Directors and Statutory Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014

Treasurer, Tricia Basham, ran through the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014, which had previously been circulated. She drew members' attention to the surplus for the year of £4688, compared with £1985 for the previous year. Following a member's question, it was noted that the comparative figure for "other incoming resources" shown in the Accounts which had been previously sent to members should be £1181 not £194 as shown.

The question of payment from the BBC in respect of the Guild's co-operation on one of their programmes had been raised at the previous year's AGM. In response to a member's question, the Treasurer reiterated the comments from the Board last year, namely that, without a purchase order number, the BBC would not process a payment. No such purchase order number had been obtained but the Chair confirmed that the Guild would learn from this experience and ensure that, in future, no work should be done by the Guild for outside bodies without considering the question of a suitable fee, at the outset. Further, once such a fee had been agreed, the purchaser's invoice processing procedures would be followed to ensure prompt payment to the Guild.

The Treasurer continued her summary of the accounts by reminding members that the Guild continues to need more members. In the last year, 96 members had joined the Guild but a similar number had resigned. She referred to an ongoing initiative to contact new members and try to secure their membership renewal at the end of their first year, since experience suggests that, once a member renews at the end of their first year, they tend to stay in the Guild for some years.

The Guild's funds were in a healthy state the Treasurer reported. She had recently invested some funds with Virgin Money, a bank that provides more favourable rates than NatWest in the past. The Guild continues to bank with CAF bank and the Treasurer anticipated that this would gradually become its main banker. As one

member pointed out, it is desirable to retain the NatWest current account for the time being as this is the account into which members pay their standing orders.

Once the cataloguing of the collection at Lee Mills had been completed, an updated valuation for it would be obtained, this comprising the Guild's Heritage Assets as shown in the Accounts. The Chair pointed out that such a valuation could affect the insurance premium, although currently the collection was insured for more than its accounting cost. While the time it would take to complete cataloguing of the collection was uncertain, the current best estimate of this was 12 months.

In response to a member's question about Paypal payments and Ebay, the Treasurer confirmed that previous problems had all been resolved.

Following a show of hands, the Accounts were unanimously accepted. The Chair thanked the Treasurer for all her hard work in producing them and for dealing with numerous bank arrangement difficulties during the year.

5 Appointment of Directors

The Chair, who is retiring from the Board at the end of the AGM, said that there had been no nominations for the post of Chair and Vice Chair. This role would remain unfilled for the time being.

Consequent upon this, Elspeth May withdrew her nomination for re-election as a director.

Tricia Basham and Annmarie Hedges, directors who retire under Articles 26(1) and 30(3) were standing for re-election and the members duly elected them for a further term. Katy Scrivener who was standing for election as a new member of the Board was also duly elected. With effect from the close of this AGM, the Board comprises Tricia Basham, Annmarie Hedges, Barbara Kolator, Katy Scrivener, Maureen Wheeler and Anthea Winterburn.

6 Appointment of Office-Bearers

The Chair confirmed there were no new nominations Office Bearers. Members elected the following Directors to continue to fill their roles until the AGM in 2015: Treasurer, Tricia Basham; Secretary, Barbara Kolator. Chair and Vice-Chair remain vacant.

7 Friends of the KCG Collection

The Treasurer explained the Board's desire to create a new type of supporter, namely Friends of KCG Collection. The rationale for this was to raise funds from non-members, particularly in light of the lease at Lee Mills expiring in approximately 2 ½ years time. There might also be opportunities to raise funds for the Guild's 40th anniversary in 2018.

In response to questions from various members she described how this initiative was ongoing and the precise definition of what/who constituted a Friend was being considered. It would be possible for an individual to be both a member and a Friend. Overseas Friends would not be excluded. Elspeth May, who was part of the working party considering this issue, explained that Friends would not constitute a new category of membership. The need to distinguish between the benefits which members obtain and the consequences of being a Friend would be carefully considered. It was noted that corporate organisations may make particularly suitable Friends.

A member asked the Friends would need to be organised as a separate charity and the Treasurer confirmed that this would be considered.

The Chair reminded members that the purpose of the resolution put to the AGM was seek their approval for Friends of the KCG Collection in principle. On a show of hands, approval was given for the Directors to create this new category of supporter. Six abstentions were noted.

In response to a further vote to authorise the Directors to determine the appropriate fee(s) to be charged to Friends of the KCG Collection, this was similarly approved. Six abstentions were noted.

8 Board report on 2013-14

The Chair presented her report for the year. It had been a largely successful one, highlights being membership up from 444 to 456, and two new branches making 29 in all. Slipknot had been published quarterly and the Guild's online profile had been good, with 11,000 plus visitors each month to the Guild's website and 500 plus Facebook supporters. The Guild had been present at several shows including those at Alexandra Palace, Harrogate, Leighton Buzzard Open Day, Yarnale, Yorkshire Wool Week, and Malvern.

Board membership was at a healthier level than in recent years and, as outlined in Slipknot, all Board members now had clear roles and responsibilities. All statutory obligations had been completed and the Lee Mills lease renewed. A stronger focus on marketing had resulted in a number of successful magazine references to the Guild, following press releases to their editors. A working party comprising Tricia Basham, Barbara Kolator and Elspeth May, had been created to look at revenue raising ideas. New partnerships with Stichtopia/Arena Travel and ECT Travel will provide holiday discounts for members.

The Collection team's hard work during the year had resulted in substantial progress on cataloguing the Collection. Gaining the Coats and Patons' archives had been a major coup for the Guild, although the work of the Collections team had increased considerably as a result. A number of patterns were now available to members via Group Spaces. There had been visits to the Collection from members, academic researchers and designers, and the visitors on the Vogue Knitting Tour 2013 had greatly appreciated their time at Lee Mills. There had been 4 open days in 2014 and a very successful Hook and Needle week. The Collection has achieved significant coverage in the Huddersfield Examiner. Publicity in Rowan magazine had been particularly useful to the Guild, as had its inclusion in a BBC TV programme on knitting, broadcast last autumn. The Collections Twitter account would now also incorporate news items about the Guild generally.

It was especially pleasing to read in a recent Slipknot of the experiences of students from Huddersfield University who volunteered to work on the Collection. Their enthusiasm for their experience gives hope that the Guild can increase its reach amongst younger knitters and crocheters. Looking ahead, there is still considerable work to do on the Collection and two grant applications were submitted during the year which sought to raise much needed funds. Although neither was successful, the team has gained valuable experience of the grant application process and further applications will be made in future. This will be important not least because the availability of items for the team to sell on Ebay (a useful source of funds) will diminish in the coming year.

The Chair concluded her report by thanking all those who had supported the Guild during the year including the Collections team; Rita Taylor as Group co-ordinator and the Coordinators of local branches; all those who had helped organise and man stands at shows; Lesley o'Connell Edwards and Wendy Poole editors of Slipknot and all those who contributed articles; moderators for Ravelry, Facebook and Twitter; former and current Board members; members' spouses, partners and family; and everyone who had attended the AGM.

In the discussion which followed the Board report, one member drew attention to the need for more articles on crochet in Slipknot. Lesley (editor) agreed that this was desirable and encouraged all members to consider writing a piece for the newsletter about any aspect of crochet. Another member requested that all our show stands should include a list of branches. This will be provided and the information is also available on the website. Jennifer reminded members that we refer to our local gatherings of members as 'branches' rather than 'groups' in order to differentiate them from other craft groups. Another member raised a query about Tyne & Wear branch and Jennifer outlined the requirements for branches to be affiliated to the Guild. A further point was made about the desirability of getting other universities involved in the Guild beyond Huddersfield.

There being no further questions, the members accepted the Board's report.

9 Future of the Guild

Jennifer summarised some of the key challenges and opportunities for the future. Last year we all agreed:

- We are a nationwide community of knitters and crocheters committed to education, innovation and the preservation of these crafts
- We aspire to excellence and to achieving high standards in our practice, at every level of experience
- We are known for our expertise and our readiness to share this wealth of information about knitting and crochet
- We encourage members and others to appreciate the skills, knowledge and techniques needed for the art and craft of knitting and crochet
- We are supported by our Patrons: Debbie Abrahams, Kaffe Fassett, Jean Moss, Sasha Kagan.

Looking back, we achieved a great deal last year. The key issues now are to retain new members; increase our income and be clear and consistent about what is our unique selling point which makes the Guild different and attractive. The Board's priorities for 2014 are to sell the benefits of belonging to the Guild; and raise both the revenue and profile of the Guild. The Board are already

- making personal contact with new members and members not renewing
- promoting the benefits of membership
- working with partners who offer additional benefits to members
- encouraging new ways to support the Collection
- supporting new local branches
- developing workshops
- promoting the Guild across a variety of media.

Jennifer emphasised that with more help, the Guild could make more rapid progress. Her plea, as retiring Chair, was that more members would help wit our work since we

rely entirely on volunteers. The Guild will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2018 and it is to be thriving at that time, we need members to be active and involved.

In response to a query about our Patrons, Jennifer confirmed that the Board was looking at the best ways in which we can work with them. The members then accepted Jennifer's report on the future of the Guild.

Julia Blanchette, on behalf of the members and the Board, thanked Jennifer for her considerable contribution to the Guild over her term as Chair and wished her a happy retirement from the Board. A small gift was presented to Jennifer in recognition of this.

10 Any other business

A question was raised about whether or not members could knit for other charities. Jennifer pointed out that our Articles make it clear that the assets of the Guild should only be used for Guild business but there was nothing to stop members knitting/crocheting for other charities as individuals. How such activities were promoted through the Guild's social media needed to be handled carefully.

The meeting closed at 12.40.