

Minutes of the Reconvened 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Knitting & Crochet Guild held on 15 October 2011 at Deritend Room, St Martin in the Bull Ring, Birmingham

1 Welcome and apologies

The meeting commenced at 14:00. Christine Fox Treasurer, who acting as Chair for the AGM, welcomed 32 members to the meeting.

Apologies were received on behalf of Margaret O'Mara. There were 21 apologies/proxies received in writing or by email.

2 Announcements

The Memorial service for Richard Rutt (President) is to be held at Leicester Cathedral at 14:30 on Saturday 22 October 2011.

Christine explained that due to work commitments she would be leaving the Board on 31 October 2011.

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11 July 2010,

4 Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 30 October 2010

5 Minutes of the inquorate Annual General Meeting held on 10 July 2011

The above minutes were considered as a block, and there being no queries were approved unanimously.

6 Appointment of Directors

It was noted that under Article E 30(1) the Board had co-opted Jennifer Short and Maureen Wheeler following the Annual General Meeting on 10 July 2011. They will retire at the next Annual General Meeting in 2012.

7 Alteration to the Articles of Association

It was proposed by Ruth Gilbert and supported unanimously by the membership that all alterations be considered as a block. There being no questions or queries, the alterations were approved unanimously.

8 Financial Accounts of the knitting and Crochet Guild

The Treasurer referred members to the Summary Financial Statements, published in the July edition of SlipKnot (132). She said there had been an improvement in figures in 2011 from 2010, but drew attention to the following issues:

8.1 Cost of the Flood at Lee Mills (home of the Collection)

Approximately £3000 had been received from contents insurance. The firm where the burst pipe occurred is now in liquidation and no reimbursement could be expected from them. To attempt to gain compensation from them by legal channels would incur greater costs to the Guild in legal fees. The cost of storage, hire of skips etc would have to come out of Guild funds, although this was being offset by sales of surplus from the Collection.

8.2 General Running of Lee Mills/SlipKnot

At present, costs were more than income and this could only go on for so long. There was £35,000 in the bank, £20,000 being tied into the lease and dilapidations budget. Closing the Guild would incur a cost of £20,000 because of the lease. She pointed out that, whatever was decided about these aspects of the Guild, they had to be paid for.

8.3 Membership

In 2010-11 membership was 730. Current membership is around 640 and so needs to increase in order to fund all the activities which members want". There had been generous donations from members and shows, including a gift of £100 from a life member. Gift Aiding of subscriptions raised £2,000. It was pointed out by a member that if the member was a non tax payer, their spouse could be the Gift Aider.

In conclusion, the Treasurer stated that the Board were being as careful as possible with the funds. £1,000 had been saved from the cost of SlipKnot, and presently cost £8,000 to produce four issues. She had made the points above in order to help members with decisions that had to be made later in the meeting.

The Financial Accounts were approved unanimously by the members.

9 Board Report on the Guild's Strategy

9.1 Guild Forward Strategy

Jennifer Short gave a short presentation on the future of the Guild. From a study of the accounts at the Board meeting in August, it had been decided that it was possible to continue. She said that, after consultation, what people wanted from the Guild was: SlipKnot, local groups, the Collection and the website. Through these activities, the Guild's aims of Education, Innovation and Preservation could be promoted, together with the celebration of hand knitting, machine knitting and crochet. There were, however, a number of challenges and these had been prioritised as: retention and recruitment of members, preserving the Collection, promoting local groups and generating income.

Recent Activities

A newsletter to local co-ordinators has been produced by Rita Taylor, the Hot Water Bottle Cover Competition was being supported, and the Kathleen Kinder samples were available for members to try. The Alexandra Palace show had been a success, with several positive comments made. A vote of thanks was given to the organisers of the Show. Jennifer also mentioned the upcoming Harrogate Show (24-27 November).

There followed an informal discussion on the future of the Guild, which tended to focus upon how the Guild promoted itself. The website had over 5,000 hits per month, there is a Facebook page, Yahoo and Ravelry groups.

One member was concerned that a series of interviews with modern knitters that had been undertaken for the website had not been supported in the past by the Guild. Jennifer was keen to point out that these had been included in the new website. A recent survey of the membership had indicated that 50% could be contacted by email. The organisers of the stand at Alexandra Palace indicated that 80% of visitors used the internet, but there was a mixed response as to whether other visitors had heard of the Guild. One member asked if it were possible to add comments about Guild activities on the website. Jennifer said this was not possible at present, but there were such options on Facebook, the Yahoo group or Ravelry.

9.2 The Collection

Lynne Madeley, Collections Co-ordinator, gave an update on the progress made to restore order after the flood and the process of rationalisation of the Collection. There were over 150,000 patterns waiting to be sorted. Cynthia Young, who had recently spent time at Lee Mills sorting patterns, commented on the improvements that had been achieved since the previous update in July 2011. Yarn and needles have been made available to anyone requiring them for educational purposes.

The Textile Historian, Ruth Gilbert, gave a brief description of the work involved in conserving rescued items and spoke about three items that were displayed on the screen for members to see. Documentation only exists for 300 out of the 1000 boxes of items. There are alleged to be 10,000 items and each one takes about two hours to trace in the catalogue, assess, pack and document. Lynne pointed out that most of these items would not be kept.

In March, when all items were put into storage so Lee Mills could be dried out, they occupied 14 storage units (each unit being the size of a single garage). At present, there are 3.5 units still to be returned, so 10.5 units have been rationalised. All documents have been returned and the last of the boxes of magazines, have recently been returned, to be catalogued.

There followed an informal discussion about the Collection.

It was suggested that surplus books could be taken to sell at shows, but there were problems with transportation due to their weight. A list of over 400 surplus books had been compiled to go on the website and those not on line could obtain a paper copy from Lee Mills.

A regional co-ordinator wanted to know if Lee Mills were accepting items (ie patterns) that could be sold. It was suggested that help could be offered to find outlets for these, but the Collection may need to acquire specific items to complete series etc at a later date.

An offer to send items from the Collection to regional Open Days had been made and the Leighton Buzzard group are to hold one in May 2012.

It was also suggested that parts of the Collection could be lent to Museums in different parts of the country.

A further suggestion was made that items from the Period Garment Scheme could be used for handling. This raised a further issue that valuable items loaned should not be handled and would need a high level of security at the venue. Another suggestion was that Vintage Fairs could be a possible venue to display items.

A final point was raised by a member of the possibility of a further flood at Lee Mills. Lynne explained that a Winter preparation plan was in progress to avoid this.

10 Board proposed Resolutions

Before voting on the Ordinary Resolutions, the Chair suggested there be an informal discussion on each of them.

10.1 That, until further notice, the Guild will only publish three issues per year of the members' journal SlipKnot, starting from issue 133

One member suggested there could be two issues per year; Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter, with an interim letter. The Chair pointed out that as the editor, Mary Hawkins would be handing over after issue 134, and that unless someone could be found to be the new editor, there would be no further issues of SlipKnot. Attempts had been made to reduce production and distribution costs, and a budget fixed at £8,000 pa. Postage costs had been reduced by using Business Rates. It was suggested that the size could be reduced from A4 to A5. Mary Hawkins said that it was postage, rather than paper size that was the major cost. A further suggestion was that distribution could be done electronically, but it was pointed out that there were members not on

line, or who did not use email. One member asked if there was a minimum print run. Mary said that the present printers did not expect this, and could print extra copies on request. A member asked if extra copies could be sold by co-ordinators as a means of raising the profile of the Guild, but Mary had been informed that to put a price on the cover was illegal. She said that it took approximately 45 hours per issue to produce, she had written an operations manual, there was a computer available and that it was a matter of common sense.

The Chair summarised the situation. The production of SlipKnot was dependent upon finding an editor and it would be possible to go back to 4 copies per year without a further resolution.

Voting

For	32 and 21 proxy votes
Against	0
Abstentions	1

10.2 That the knitted and crocheted items in the Collection be reduced solely to those which are of museum quality or interest, these to be offered to museums nationwide, and the Guild Collection be reduced to patterns, magazines, periodicals, books, yarn samples and shade cards to create a valuable source for research.

Lynne Madeley explained that the resolution should include, "on loan", to museums. Ruth Gilbert commented that by lending to museums they would store items and people could see them. She would be contacting museums for this purpose. Items could be offered to colleges for educational purposes, but would still be in the ownership of the Guild. It was seen as a means of promoting the Guild and enabling people to enjoy the Collection. Members agreed to the amendment.

Voting

For	31 and 21 proxy votes
Against	0
Abstentions	2

10.3 That, once the patterns, magazines and periodicals have been listed, the Documents Collection be permitted to accept donations.

This was approved unanimously.

It was also stated that garments were not being accepted for the Collection due to prohibitive costs of boxing items already acquired, but it would be possible to help those who had items to donate to find alternative locations. There was a difference between items to be sold and items for the Collection. Items to be sold to help raise funds could be accepted, or help given to those wishing to sell items as fundraising.

10.4 To reappoint Mary Hawkins as Editor of SlipKnot until issue 134, published in December 2011: no further issue of SlipKnot can be published after that until such time as someone with the requisite editorial skills offers their services.

This was approved unanimously.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 Period Garment scheme

One member asked what was happening to this initiative. Lynne Madeley said that some items that had black mould had been disposed of, and Rita Taylor was receiving the remainder and continuing to organise the scheme. A further member asked how many garments there were, but, as they are not all documented, and some are in with the Collection, Lynne said it was not possible to give an answer. She would consult Rita, who may have documentation.

11.2 Role of Patrons

A member asked what contribution they made to the Guild. A member of the Board said that some of them had donated prizes for the AGM. Jean Moss was to judge the Hot Water Bottle Competition and was using items from the Collection for a display in May 2012. Sasha Kegan and Jean Moss had been interviewed for SlipKnot. Another member asked about their role. The Chair responded by saying that in the past they had not been given a remit, but could be expected to promote the Guild at shows etc. She did point out however, that they were not driving forces.

11.3 200 Club

Judy Jones, the member who organises the 200 Club, gave a short presentation to promote this initiative. She said it was a good way to raise funds, but had too few members. She explained that members could buy a £10 share. Half the proceeds went in prizes and the rest to Guild funds. She distributed membership forms, gave details of how to join and said that information is also available on the website.

11.4 Future Events

A Regional Day, organised by Jane Barton, is to be held at St Barnabas Church Hall in Leighton Buzzard on 5 May 2012. Items from the Collection will be on display. It was suggested that this could be publicised on Facebook, Yahoo etc.

Harrogate Show 24-27 November, where the Guild theme will be "Trees".

A vote of thanks was given to Jennifer Short and Maureen Wheeler for offering to serve on the Board and to all those who worked at Lee Mills.

A vote of thanks was given to Christine Fox for Chairing the meeting and for all her efforts as Treasurer.

The meeting closed at 16:00.

Minuted by Maureen Wheeler 17 October 2011.