

Minutes of the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Knitting & Crochet Guild held on-line on Saturday 12th September 2020 at 11am.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Janet Collins opened the meeting noting 1216 members were eligible to vote and 372 (31%) have registered their vote. 188 members have signed up to attend the AGM, the quorum is 40.

Presentation has been recorded in advance due to Covid-19 followed by live Q&A with Board Members. Attendees could ask their questions using the Q&A facility.

2. Minutes of the 41st AGM, July 2019

Minutes of the 41st AGM held in July 2019 were approved by 321 members, 51 abstained.

Minutes of the 41st AGM were accepted.

3. Reports and Accounts 2019-20

333 members voted to approve the reports and accounts, 39 abstained.

Reports and accounts for 2019-20 have been accepted.

Suzan Turner - Treasurer

Net income for the year was just over £5000. Charitable income is mainly membership fees whereas charitable expenditure is mainly related to the Convention and the Guild's operating cost.

The Heritage Lottery Fund was a one-off payment to the previous year's accounts. Another one-off payment was received in the current year from the Guild of Machine Knitters (GMK) resulting from the merger.

Sales income relates to the sale of patterns and excess articles.

The largest income category for the fund is membership, the largest cost is the Convention followed by Slipknot. The costs of the Convention are met by the attendees.

Board expenses have been lower during the period after the accounts. COVID restrictions have led to meetings being on-line. We have moved the Collection to Britannia Mill, where we had a rent-free period initially. Postage costs will be saved by our use of email.

A copy of the accounts is available from the Guild website.

4. Directors who have left the Board this year

Janet Collins gave thanks for the huge contribution made by these directors.

Gillian Oliver
Barbara Kolator
Jacqui Taylor
Julie Hulme

Marian Dye

5. Results of voting poll on Directors and Office Bearers

New Directors

Janet welcomes our new directors

Dianne Chan
Steve Foreman (co-opted during year)
Libby Hood
Desiree Jeans

All accepted

Office Bearers

Janet Collins – Chair – re-appointed
Clare Griffel - Vice Chair- new appointment
Suzan Turner – Treasurer-re-appointed
Susannah Matthews – Secretary – re-appointed

All accepted on election

6. Activities and achievements in 2019-20

Membership

Fiona Mannifield

Overall membership numbers are consistent, with a peak in May 2019 when 550 new members joined as a result of the merger with the Guild of Machine Knitters. The number of members that have not renewed their membership is consistent with the year 2018-19.

Consistently around 50% of new members do not continue after one year. For those who provide a reason for not renewing their membership, the main reason is the lack of a local branch.

Website

Linda Curry

Busiest day on the website was the 6th Feb 2020 which coincided with the 100 Objects project featured sampler book, machine knit wedding dress, and fair isle sweater.

There has been an increase in new members from overseas.

Collection

Maureen Wheeler and Alex Rudkin

The Collection moved to Britannia Mills Feb 2019, commemorated with an Opening ceremony in June 2019. Louise Harding (patron) officiated. During lockdown work commenced on the database cataloguing the items in the Collection. During 2020 there has been an increase in pattern donations, as well as increased demand for digital patterns by members. A freezer was acquired to be able to quarantine any new item prior to including it in the Collection.

A 4-year plan has been produced covering long-term storage for yarn samples, shade cards, textiles, and the Patons Archive.

The Heritage Fund 'Collection in 100 Objects' project started during May 2019, which features 100 Objects covering a variety of categories (knitting, crochet, machine knitting, publications) selected from the Collection by our team. The team researched each item and wrote the captions. Each item was professionally photographed by Norman Taylor and captions were written. Posters and leaflets will be produced to be used, among others, at places where the guild has a presence to draw the attention to the 100 Objects project and on social media.

Parts of the Collection have been shown at, among others, Yarnale, Nottingham Yarn Expo, Shetland wool week, and local branches. The Collections team continued to work with the University of Huddersfield facilitating visits and placements. Patterns from pre-1950s domestic magazines were digitised by Dr Ellie Reed while researching her post-doctoral thesis. Designers use the collection for research. Emma Vining is one of them. There has been only a very small number of branch visits during the year.

Outline of plans for 2020-2021

Largest project is to put another section of the Collection online.

The Collection team was thanked for their hard work.

IT Update

Alison Peck and Steve Foreman

Yahoo Groups program, which was previously used by the Guild, was discontinued in September 2019. After extensive investigation, Microsoft 365 Business Premium was selected as the best platform. Charities are provided with 10 free licences with any additional licences at a significantly reduced cost. To date the free licences have been sufficient.

Board meetings have successfully moved to Zoom resulting in a cost reduction due to the lower travel expenses.

Multiple platforms were used for membership which resulted in duplicate manual inputs of any changed member information. This was a significant volunteer effort with a large possibility of errors. A new membership management system has been acquired (Sheep CRM) which is more integrated and allows members to control their own information and preferences. This a safe and secure system, which will save your and our time. Volunteers will still be on hand to assist those unable to use the online membership tools.

Patrons

Janet Collins

New patrons since the last AGM - Jane Crowfoot and Lorna Hamilton-Brown.

Other activities and achievements

- * Special thanks to Board, branch co-ordinators, and all volunteers.
- * Un-Convention was successful with a large number of attendees
- * Janet Collins will step down as Chair at the next AGM. A new Chair will be sought during the year.

7. Future Plans and priorities for the Guild for 2020-2021

Specific highlights:

- * Continue to update use of technology, including website and on-line access of the Collection.
- * Appropriate storage of Collection to aid access and preservation.
- * Plan September 2021 Convention in Leeds.

8. Questions and any other business

Attendees could ask questions during the AGM using the Q&A facility. All questions have been answered during the meeting by Alison Peck.

There were a number of comments and questions submitted via the voting forms. Comments have been passed to the relevant people, the following questions were addressed during the meeting:

- * Are there any plans to add membership only content? - Across the Needlebed (machine knitting) is made available on the website for all members
- * Are there any plans to obtain legacy bequests campaigns, sponsorship, raffles etc? - The 200 club and donations are already in place. The 200 club can be joined at any time during the year. When contacted for refunds for the Convention, many members have donated their refund to the Guild.
- * Is there any progress on diversity within the Guild? - we are working with Lorna Hamilton-Brown on diversity. She has expertise in this area. The Guild did not collect background information on ethnicity etc from members. (We are doing so with the introduction of Sheep.) Anyone who feels underrepresented is urged to get in touch.
- * Can the AGM location be moved South? - Choosing a location is difficult since any location will be difficult for some members to get to. Perhaps on-line or combined in-person and on-line AGM is the answer to allow more people to attend.
- * What effort is made to raise the profile of the Guild among younger people? - Collection team members are working with Universities. Janet produced a video on how to knit a cat for young people. No specific other efforts are made at the moment.
- * It is difficult to vote on things before being able to ask questions - Unfortunately it was necessary to ask members to vote beforehand due to the need to have votes at AGM, the abstain option was specifically introduced for this situation.

- * Why can I vote “against”, we’re all volunteers? - There may be something you know about someone. All Board members had a small handful of people voting against them.
- * Will information from the GMK website be made available on the KCG website? - After it is checked thoroughly to ensure it remains current.
- * Will the recording of the AGM will be available on the website? - Yes. Janet-We could have an online AGM in future.
- * Can I borrow books from the Collection? - No. Books cannot be borrowed but only used at the Mill. There is currently no official catalogue, but we have a library list.
- * Has the increased engagement via FB been positive on KCG membership? Early to say, but there has been a large number of new members during the start of the lockdown period (10 a day for a few days).
- * Will back issues of Slipknot be available on the website? - Currently being worked on
- * Will all material from Un Convention be available? - In the short term it will be available on the Un Convention website and later on the Guild website. The decision will need to be made whether the content will be members only or not. Contributors may ask for things not to be added.
- * Copyright information has been requested - this will be made available on website/Slipknot.

Judy Jones and the 200 Club

Mary Graham is the winner of £50 of the AGM 200 Club AGM

The Board members were thanked for all their hard work.

Rachel Lemon sends her thanks to the Board and volunteers.

Meeting closed at 11:56