



# Embroiderers' Guild

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Embroiderers' Guild held by zoom on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025

### 1. **Welcome Address**

The welcome was made by Alex Messenger, Trustee, acting as Chairperson for the purpose of the AGM.

### 2. **Apologies for Absence**

These were received from: Mrs A Trott, Pauline Heywood, Catherine Shirley..

### 3. **Minutes of the 2024 AGM**

The Chair referred members to the copy of the AGM 2024 Minutes which have been made available via the Guild website. As there had been no objections or matters arising, the minutes were accepted and will be signed by Penny Hill, Deputy Chairman of the Board.

### 4. **Meet the Trustees**

Alex introduced each of the Trustees and explained their responsibilities.

#### 5.i **Trustee Reports – Financial Overview**

Helen Miller, Finance Trustee, gave a report on finances for the financial year ending August 2024 which show a surplus due to the receipt of two generous legacies. For the current financial year we are forecasting a breakeven position. This has been achieved in the main due to interest income on restricted and designated funds and the receipt of two legacies of £10,000

In 2026 we are forecasting a breakeven position mainly due to interest income and a surplus on Embroidery magazine. The surplus shown for 2026 will be due to the receipt of a further legacy of £10,000. We have achieved our current financial position and protected legacy income by careful financial management and operational activities being undertaken by the Trustees. This will not continue; during the coming year we will be looking at options around managing memberships and marketing.

Except for legacies and interest received the income levels remain largely unchanged. We remain dependent on membership numbers which have remained static over the current year. Our publishing activities - books, advertising and Embroidery magazine - are conducted in a separate trading company; EG Enterprises Limited. Any surplus arising from our publishing activities in a year is paid to the Guild as dividends the following year. We use the surplus to cover graduate and scholarship costs, support DBS checks for young textile groups, and cover a proportion of Guild Collection costs.

We broke even on self-publishing the Retrospective book in 2023-24. We broke even on institutional subscriptions to the Embroidery magazine archive via Exact Editions. We made a surplus on Embroidery magazine in 2023-24 and will do so again this year due to cost savings, tight financial control and WHSmith sales. Overall subscriber numbers have improved but the sales mix has changed with higher cost/lower margin subscriptions dominating.

Costs have remained largely the same. IT, marketing and admin costs will increase in 2026 as we engage resources to undertake more day-to-day activities releasing Trustees to concentrate on new initiatives and further improvements. Ongoing Collection costs and Art UK licence fees increase each year in line with the

consumer price index.

Finance and professional fees next year include an estimate for an insurance revaluation of the Collection and some expertise around VAT. The overall cash position remains stable.

The Trustees have committed to spending legacy income and publishing surpluses wherever possible on improvement projects such as the relaunch of the Inspired to Create courses, support of graduates, scholarships, young textile group initiatives and Collection rather than on operational activities. This remains challenging due to the current levels of paying member numbers.

Two years ago, the Trustees committed to retaining at least three years Collection costs in reserves and a year of Guild operating costs. This continues to be maintained. The Trustees have also committed that wherever possible that legacies received are used to fund specific projects and activities that are of benefit to the embroidery and textile art world and celebrates benefactors' generosity.

We have sufficient funds to cover Guild costs for at least 6 years. In addition, we have sufficient funds to cover Collection storage and curation costs for a further three years. The Trustees will continue to look at alternative income sources and will be looking at options to bring in expertise to reduce their operational roles and therefore strengthen the overall sustainability of the organisation for the future. During the year we engaged a VAT specialist to assist us to undertake some review work and as a result we have been able to reduce some of our costs on an ongoing basis around exhibiting the Collection.

The VAT situation for charities is complex especially where there are multiple income streams. As a result of the VAT review work to date we may need to clarify more clearly our status as an educational body. This would involve a small change to the articles and require a special resolution meeting. We will let everyone know more in the next couple of months. Guild income has covered costs. We are forecasting that this will continue this year and next year. We will continue to apply careful financial management.

## **5.ii Trustee Reports – Membership**

Penny Hill told attendees that our membership is made up of a mix between Members paying an annual subscription and Life Members. Increasingly, we are attracting international membership, and in 2023/24 nearly 9% of members were based outside of the UK. We are aware that some older members are choosing to step away because of ill-health. Concerns about the economy and financial pressures are also a factor that is impacting on our membership numbers.

In order to address some of these concerns, we introduced the option to purchase Gift Memberships, and – shortly after that – an option to pay the annual membership on a monthly basis. Monthly paid membership has proved to be popular, with nearly 3.5% of annual memberships being paid monthly in 2023/24. This has already increased to 8.3% in the current year.

Penny explained that there are now a number of ways in which members can choose to pay their membership fee.

Many still join by signing up to an annual, automatically renewed subscription. Payment is collected once a year on the due renewal date.

Gift memberships enable friends or relatives to pay for one year's membership on a member's behalf. This is not restricted to new members – if you are currently a member, and you are bought a gift subscription, we will extend your renewal by a full year.

Monthly membership allows you to pay the annual subscription on a monthly basis. This includes a small admin charge to cover bank and payment costs. You are committing to pay the full twelve months, but it does help to spread the load.

This year we are also offering the opportunity to purchase a limited number of discounted 5- or 10-year memberships. This means paying up front for the relevant period, but allows us to invest the payment, drawing off the cost of annual membership every year. These membership options can be purchased by existing members, new members, or even be bought as a gift.

Existing members can purchase at any time; the 5 or 10 years will be added on to your existing renewal date so no membership time is 'lost'.

Penny reminded members to let us know details of new cards when the old ones expire via the member account page. Similarly to please update email addresses so that we can continue to keep in touch. Guild membership underpins the charitable work of the Guild, helping us to spread the knowledge and love of embroidery to a wider audience. By sharing our social media posts, members assist in raising public awareness of our work, and by taking part in our Projects and Challenges they help us encourage and inspire others in our community.

But what do members get from the Guild?

The member accounts on our website provide access to a growing library of member only content.

Our monthly emailed newsletters provide regular articles along with information about the Guild's news and activities.

Members have access to a number of discounts – the details and codes for these can be found in the Members' area of the website.

They can also join in both the annual Members' Project and the Members' Challenge - having their work exhibited online and at major UK shows during the year.

Any suggestions for what members would like to see should be emailed to [receptionist@embroiderersguild.com](mailto:receptionist@embroiderersguild.com)

### **5.iii Trustee Reports – Education: Events**

Amanda Smith has recently taken over from Julie Stenning in organising the programme of events from September onwards. In the last year we have hosted 11 Thread Talks, 1 Talking Threads, 9 workshops. We have had 1600 people attending. The Talks have covered a wide range of subjects from historical (May Morris, medieval embroidery and Crewelwork as an example), to design, to contemporary textile artists.

The decision was made not to continue with our Talking Threads series where two artists discussed their work, but this series finished on a high with Jayne Emerson and Libby Ashdown having a fun filled discussion.

Our aim is always to provide a variety of subjects that will attract a wide audience, whether you are interested in history or want to know how today's artists get their inspiration, hopefully there is something for everyone. Our audience now comes from across the world – not just the UK but the US, Australia, Europe, Scandinavia. Unless specified all of our online events are recorded and sent to those who have bought a ticket. On demand recording tickets are also available. The recording is usually ready 14 days after a live event. Thanks were given to Julie who manages and circulates the recordings.

One of our most watched workshops this year was with Jan Beaney and Jean Littlejohn showing us how to take a stitch and use it in different ways. Another popular workshop was with Anne Brooke and I am delighted to say that Anne will be back with us early next year.

It costs just over £13,000 to put on our events programme each year. These costs include

- speaker and tutor fees and commissions,

- licences for Zoom webinar, Eventbrite (tickets & fees), Vimeo (recordings),
- marketing, website and finance costs

The suppliers (Eventbrite. Etc) are passing on price rises and we are not covering all of these costs so we are having to make some changes going forward.

We have to date paid the Eventbrite ticket fees for members on workshops and talks. We are no longer able to do this. Event tickets will remain unchanged but the fees that Eventbrite charges for ticket purchases will be passed on from September onwards. For members this will mean an extra 13p on top of the suggested donation price of £5.50 for talks and an extra 96p on the cost of £2.99 for workshops. There will no longer be a separate option of member or non-member tickets but members will have access to a discount code which will be available to them via the members' area of the website. Discount codes are strictly for members only. We have also looked at the way events are ticketed and reduced the number of steps to book a ticket.

We have 11 talks planned for 2025-26. One thing we discovered through your feedback was that we needed to differentiate between a workshop, where you work alongside a tutor and a demonstration where you watch, listen and learn, and this has been discussed carefully with tutors so that hopefully we have got this right going forward.

Don't forget our 6 free member workshops and all 2024-25 talks and workshops will be available for you to dip into during 2025-26. All details are on the website and we keep this constantly up to date.

#### **5.iv Trustee reports – Education: Getting Beginners Started**

Alex Messenger reminded the meeting that everyone starts somewhere and beginners are a group that we focus on at the shows.

Stitching is a visual art and those who are beginners tend not to know where to even start. Last year ICHF provided us with a stand at the NEC which we used to be the visual equivalent of removing the 'scary blank white page'. Amanda and Alex create samples and/or complete pieces that are colourful, easy to stitch and (relatively) quick to finish. The idea is to tempt beginners to consider, with our help, beginning to stitch. Called Make & Takes, we demonstrate simple projects to a small group of 6/8 people to start them off and, if they don't finish in the time we have, they can take it home to finish.

Trustee Penny went one step further for the Guild in March 2025 and hosted a Chicken-Scratch workshop. A technique that uses the squares of a gingham fabric as a guide to stitching; the attendees were delighted with their pieces.

At the Knit+Stitch shows we have a larger and more varied retail stand where we sell a large variety of textile-based items which have been donated to us. This is an important aspect of our fund-raising. More ideas and projects are sourced from the donations stash of fabrics, threads and bits to create a selection of different kits, nicely presented, and they sell quite well both to beginners and intermediate stitchers. The other goodies, being unique and in short supply, are snapped up by experienced stitchers.

The Embroiderers' Guild holds the record for the World's Longest Embroidery. Due to space restrictions, we can only take out one roll at a time and only to Harrogate. The roll is laid out the tables, needles and thread are available, and anyone can sit whatever they want for however long they want. We are indebted to the volunteers who help out every year, happy to show people how to do the simplest (or not) stitches if asked, thread needles, constantly wind-up stray threads and chat to all visitors. Between them, the 8 rolls now show an amazing social history of birthdays, phrases, anniversaries and images covering well over 15 years.

#### **5.iv Trustee reports – Education: Projects**

The Guild still maintains an interest in what Young Textile Groups are doing and helping where funds allow.

Wonderfil kindly gave us a generous discount on a range of children's kits and we were delighted when the Norfolk YE group said 'yes please' to our offer of these.

In September 2024 we received an email from a Science and Computing teacher at Brockwell primary school in Chesterfield. He had developed (quote) *a strong passion for teaching coding, with a particular emphasis on digital embroidery* and gave details of several projects they had already worked on (including one with David Morrish). The upshot was a request for the Embroiderers' Guild to help fund the Design Doodler software package that would enable his students to do more intricate work and also engage with those who might struggle with coding digital embroidery.

This idea fitted well with using a restricted fund for educational purposes and encouraging younger stitchers so after further discussions about how the pupils would benefit further from the product, setting criteria, and agreeing expected outcomes, the Board agreed to jointly fund the purchase in partnership with 'What On Earth' children's magazine. We also provided materials and threads courtesy of a donation from Bunzl Workwear West Midlands. As you can see from the images, Design Doodler has been used extensively, engaged students at all skill levels and produced some excellent designs. There is a full article on this school project in July/August Embroidery magazine if you would like to know more.

#### **5.v Trustee reports – Education: Course Overview**

Helen Miller reminded the meeting that these self-paced distance learning courses have been running for two years. The course designer and writer, Sally McCollin, an experienced educator, is the course tutor. Sue Weeks from Stitchery stories podcasts supports, answering questions and organising regular community zoom meet-ups

Just over 100 students have signed up so far.

Each level is broken down into sections. If you have any questions, you can ask Sally who will answer them. Whilst the questions and answers are unique to you, you can see other student questions and answers which students find useful.

There are member discounts for each level. They can be found in the members' area of the Guild website. There is the option to pay by instalments or purchase as a gift.

After the tasters there are three levels to the courses. You don't have to start at the beginning but as they are design-led and build on developing your creativity some of our students have started at the taster or foundation level and have found it worthwhile to do so

The feedback we're getting is positive. Those engaging in the courses, like the structured but informal approach and the ability to share without being overwhelmed.

Helen then showed slides of students' work with their comments.

#### **5.vi Trustee Reports – Meeting our Charitable Aims: Graduates**

Anthea Godfrey summarised how we find graduates – selected from the New Designers show at the Business Design Centre each summer and various university end of year shows.

The award involves them attending The Knit + Stitch Shows in Alexandra Palace, London and Harrogate and presenting themselves and their work in a free gallery for the length of the shows, together with a support

package. This year we are enhancing that offer. At the last AGM, we said that donations made in July, August, September last year would be put towards supporting this year's Graduate Showcase. Anthea was very pleased to announce that £2,897 was raised and the money is being used to enhance the showcase offer to further support the graduates, to launch their textile career. In addition to the usual offer, we will be providing the opportunity to access over one year, business advice to the value of £250. The advice being wide ranging from 5-6 small organisations/experts covering: - website and retail advice, marketing and networking advice, online course creation, creating podcasts, costing their work, being self-employed and photography. Anthea thanked everyone for their donations which made this offer possible to give to this year's graduates.

She then showed pictures of the current year's graduates' work. Graduates were Emma Heywood-Higham of De Montfort University; Jeannie Rose Malcolm from Falmouth University; Katie Pilgrim from Bournemouth University; Lola Trivunovic of Falmouth University; Alice Aphra from Nottingham Trent University; Imogen Campbell of the Royal School of Needlework; Lillie Foster from Loughborough University; Alex Barton of Falmouth University and Bonnie McGee from Glasgow University. Bonnie was also awarded one of the six King Charles Fund Awards last year.

Our three Embroiderers' Guild Scholarships are awarded annually to post-grad students whose application is supported by a tutor or associated referee. We are looking for proposals that illustrate how the scholarship will help to further them in their career.

The three categories are:

Post Graduate – up to age 30

Post Graduate – over age 30

Post Graduate Education Scholarship (significant experience within the education sector required)

The application deadline for 2025-26 closed at the end of last month. We will be announcing the successful candidates in a short time. The application form for 2026/27 will be available to download from the Guild website shortly

#### **5.vii Trustee Reports – Meeting our Charitable Aims – Collection**

Anne Haigh thanked everyone that donated money in 2023 towards items to support storage of the collection. The money bought a lot of calico to wrap larger pictures, new boxes have been essential also tissue paper which is used to separate layers in boxes, and on embroidery if there isn't glazing, before we wrap in calico. Lastly we purchased woven labels which are sewn on to pieces where possible. Some old pieces have poor labelling, and these new labels clearly identify the piece as ours and what its unique number is.

We've received new items throughout the year including a large donation of work and sketchbooks from the family of Mary Cozens-Walker, and work done by Barbara Manning and Margaret Charlton. Mary and Margaret's works were gifted by their families, while Barbara left her pieces to us in her will along with a legacy that helps towards the costs of storing and caring for the collection. Anne explained that we do sometimes turn down collections left to us where they are predominantly stitched from kits or commercial patterns however original work is always considered for addition to the collection although not always accepted. We also are delighted to be left embroidery supplies as these can be sold to raise funds at shows etc. Legacies are another way of helping the Guild care for the collection by leaving a donation in your will.

In February 2025 "On a Grand Scale" opened in the Beryl Dean Gallery at Discover Bucks Museum. This was the first exhibition that Nina Glencross, the Bucks Curator, created from the works we proposed.

We are pleased with the layout as pieces have plenty of space to be viewed individually as well as showing the breadth of the collection. Anne showed some pictures of the exhibition space at Bucks.

At the end of last year we worked with the Crewel Work Company on their weekend event including talks by Anthea and Anne, and funds raised from this were donated to the Guild. We also have a partnership agreement through which CWC produce kits based on pieces in our collection. The initial kits are a reissue of the redwork altar frontal, and the Three Kings cushion however we are also discussing other pieces for future kits. We are also partnering with the Sampler Guild for them to recreate samplers in our collection and we will receive a percentage of sales revenue. Revenue from both partnerships will go towards the costs of maintaining the collection

We presented a proposal to Immediate Live in March as the donation of sketchbooks and work of Mary Cozens-Walker gave us an idea. We were delighted that Immediate Live liked the idea and have given us gallery space at both shows. Our exhibition will be based on the work of 5 artists with both sketchbook pages and finished pieces to show their design thinking. The examples of their visual research and development in their sketchbooks to show the development of their creative journey will be fascinating for all to see. Historically these sketch books have been kept very private, as very often the marks ideas colourways and experiments found in them are considered precious and unique. We will be showing the sketches, sketchbooks and work of Valerie Campbell Harding, Mary Cozens- Walker, Audrey Walker from the Guild's collection and are being loaned work by Margaret Nicholson and Shelley Rhodes.

Anne updated the meeting on the digitisation process. There have been 4000 pieces digitised to date (July 2025). There are some costume boxes and newer accessions still to do. At the end of July we will do a floor shoot for 3 pieces and reshoot pieces that we need fixes for – this can be a variety of reasons e.g. missed photo, need more detail etc. After July we will take stock of what we've achieved, what is still to do as well as completing checking of photos before we upload to Art UK. Anne thanked Amanda Smith and Amanda Stinton for their efforts on this so far.

Once this is completed, we can plan more days later in year to complete anything we didn't have time to do, and newer accessions once we've finished accessioning them. 1000 items have been provided to Art UK with more to follow. Anne explained that once the photos have been checked creates a spreadsheet of information ready for Art UK, and then provides access to a folder of photos for them to copyright check and upload to the site.

We couldn't have achieved all this without the help of Ian Lillicrapp, our photographer throughout the project as his skills are showing our collection in glorious detail and without him, we wouldn't have overcome a lot of challenges in shooting the pieces. Anne reminded everyone that she was doing a talk in the afternoon about the Digitisation Project and would provide more information about it at that point.

Stage 2 of the project will be to scan and upload the documents which we have in our archives. The aim is to build a history of the items where we have documents and the artists who created them within the context of society and textile art at the time.

As in previous years, we will ring-fence the ticket sales and all donations received between July and September for a specific reason – in this case, to fund stage 2 of the digitization project, as we need to purchase an OCR digitizer to be able to create electronic versions of this box of documents.

Anne finished by saying that we know affiliated groups would like to keep borrowing the folios, however we need a new volunteer to manage these who can easily get to Halton, Bucks where they are stored. Over the next few months, we plan to audit the folios for pieces that are accessioned i.e. on our asset list as being part of the collection. We will also be considering what more could be added to a folio to improve it e.g. more samples, maps for geographical ones, book lists, technique information etc. We will also be creating online records of each folio for easy reference by trustees and any volunteer who can help us. We will also be trying to work out how we can restart folio loans, if you have any ideas or can help, please get in touch by emailing [receptionist@embroiderersguild.com](mailto:receptionist@embroiderersguild.com)

#### **5.viii Trustee Reports – Embroidery Magazine**

Helen told everyone that the July/August issue is out now and our editor, Claire Waring, a seasoned professional magazine editor, continues to excite and enthuse.

Claire values your opinions and views. Do let her know in plenty of time about any upcoming events and exhibitions that you think other readers might be interested in. The magazine is bimonthly, so there is a 3–4-month lead time. You can find all the contact details and deadlines at the bottom of page 4.

Schools, colleges and universities across the world are continuing to sign-up to the digital archive which we run with Exact Editions. A growing number of print subscribers have taken up the offer of access to the archive for an additional £15 per year. This is great value – the archive holds all 93 years of Embroidery magazine plus current issue, alongside issues of The Embroideress magazine which was published from 1922-1939. Exact Editions have continued to improve the facility. There is an audio function so that you can play a voice recording of each article which works really well.

We have had orders from around the world for our Embroideress tote bags. It was a limited run, there are now only a few left. You can find them in the Guild EBay shop.

We ran a special offer in Nov/Dec offering a Wonderfil Dazzle thread pack on issues sold in WHSmith & Tesco. Guild members can now buy a pack of Wonderfil Dazzle threads retail price £21.60 for £5 plus p&p – the link is in the members area of the website. This offer is strictly limited to one pack per member please.

We have many loyal subscribers, and we want to thank you all, do keep feeding back and supporting this one-of-a-kind magazine – it's a great platform for emerging and experienced textile artists.

#### **5 ix Trustee Reports – Community: Members' Challenge and Pattern Project**

Anthea explained that the Members' Challenge is judged, and awards are made. This year we displayed all the entries for 'Colour Rhythms' (sponsored by Janome) at The Knit + Stitch shows at Alexandra Palace and Harrogate and the NEC.

This challenge is a competition judged in several categories which celebrate the special prowess of deceased embroiderers who have supported the Guild and given a great deal of inspiration and expertise to the embroiderers of their time. They have been so important to us all in embroidery, that we want to keep their names alive, in this way.

Anthea reminded members that she hosted an Eventbrite talk on April 10th 2025, where the 2024/25 winners were announced and that if this was missed, you can catch up via on demand in the Activities Section on the Guild website.

Awards were given as follows:

The Julia Caprara award winner for best use of colour was Fiona Gill

The Beryl Dean award winner for best use of hand embroidery was Zoe Childs

The Jane Lemon award winner for drama and creativity was Suzie Ager

The Artistic directors award winner for Innovation was Catherine Hill

The Margaret Nicholson award for Composition was Janine Pound. Who also won the JANOME award for inspired use of Machine Stitches

The Valerie Campbell-Harding award for machine embroidery was Alyssa Robinson who also won the

Constance Howard award as overall winner  
All the winners are featured in the June/July issue of Stitch Magazine

The theme for the 2025/26 Member Challenge is 'FEAST'. The brief and entry details are available in the members' area on the Embroiderers' Guild website. We are pleased to say that JANOME are awarding a special prize again this year.

Anthea then talked about the Pattern Project which was launched last Autumn. This was intended to help beginners to start using their own creativity with the help of transfer designs using Flora and Fauna transfers from the Guild's own commissioned design collection.

Over 250 members initially showed interest in helping with this project and so we sent them all, quite a complicated set of instructions along with 20 transfers in each category. We wanted to be able to tell a series of stories in sample form which might illustrate the journey that any one of them could take. It was difficult but we needed to get everyone on board as quickly as possible.

From the outset we wanted our members to demonstrate that a design can be enriched with thousands of different colourways and hundreds of embroidery techniques such as surface stitchery, blackwork, cutwork, whitework, canvas work, quilting - the list goes on.

The lovely thing was that everyone decided on their own journey whether it be basic or much more complicated. Some did one sample and some did many as many as 12. Anthea said that it became increasingly exciting to meet the postman every morning as we lurched towards the deadline. We have had over 200 members working on 20 Flora and 20 Fauna transfers and we have had all the samples professionally photographed. Over 450 in total. These have all been annotated and are with our designer ready for the next stage.

Over the coming months we will be updating you in the EG Bulletin. She asked that everyone please remember the books will be aimed at the relative beginner and will be a great source book for anyone who wants to get on the ladder. An ideal present for anyone. Particularly for those who have missed out in their textile education and would love to get started

#### **5 x Trustee Reports – Community: Members' Project**

Alex told the meeting that the theme this year is Land and Sea and pieces will be on show at both Knit and Stitch Shows and in a dedicated gallery at the Fashion and Embroidery Show NEC Birmingham. We look forward to seeing how members interpret this theme – maybe the view of land seen from the sea, or the sea from the land; white tropical beaches or pebbles and rocks, gentle swell or crashing waves. If you are visiting any of the shows, please do come and see the display of work and how members have interpreted the theme.

Alex finished by saying that she hopes it will encourage all members to want to participate in the next Members' Project which will be launched in the Autumn.

#### **5. xi Trustee Reports – Volunteers**

Amanda Smith thanked the following for their work volunteering for the Guild:

- Julie Stenning – although Julie is no longer a Trustee we are very grateful that she has stayed on as a volunteer to organise event recordings and do some of the IT for our online talks
- Diana Springall – Diana is part of the team that makes our graduate showcase selection at the Young Designers show every year
- Susan Weeks – Sue has been a fantastic Talking Threads host and we are sorry that we have

- discontinued the Talking Threads series
- Catherine Shirley – Catherine has been very busy working with Anthea Godfrey on the Pattern Project . Catherine also keeps in touch with our graduates so that we can keep the information we hold up to date at all times.
  - Sue Robinson and Liz Pilgrim (mother of one of this year’s graduates) who have both been helping with the Digitisation at Discover Bucks
  - Amanda Stinton – who has been helping with checking photos for the digitisation project
  - The Members' Challenge judges – Anthea keeps these names close to her chest but we wanted to express our gratitude to them!
  - Susan Canfield, Pauline Heywood, Julie Madeo – all Harrogate Show volunteers and much appreciated for their help there.

We will be advertising for new roles over the next year or so –

We will be looking for Trustees to join us to cover Finance, Marketing and Research/Education  
We are always looking for volunteers to help with the collection or at any of the events during the year (both online and in person)

Amanda asked particularly for someone to volunteer to help Julie with the recordings of our events (talks, workshops and demos). If you have IT knowledge that would be helpful but Julie will give full training. It does also mean you get to see the various events free of charge so please think about it! If you are interested, then please contact us.

If you have any specific skills or experience that you think could help us then please don’t hesitate to make contact via [receptionist@embroiderersguild.com](mailto:receptionist@embroiderersguild.com)

## 6. Summary of Achievements

Alex Messenger took over to summarise what we have done in the past year:

With good financial management, hard work by the Trustees and volunteers, and through developing new collaborations, partnerships and publishing, the Guild is continuing to maintain financial stability.

At the NEC, we added to our offering of Make & Takes with an exhibition gallery that enabled us to show both Members’ Challenge and Project pieces. This put us in front of a wider audience, particularly those new to stitching.

We received a large donation in 2024 and have sold many items from this via our Ebay shop which has greatly contributed to our fund raising.

We launched a new members’ participation project in The Pattern Project. Members show how to take transfers to a new level we look forward to the launch of the book later this year.

Embroidery magazine continues to be the flagship of a quality textile magazine, providing the best inspiration in the market. We have now launched into newstrade in Europe and Tesco stores. Two very different markets but our aim is to increase circulation and subscriptions.

The Guild was delighted to offer sponsorship of the National Embroidery Awards, giving us the opportunity to work with David Morrish and his colleagues on the re-launch of what was previously the Maderia competition.

We have continued to make significant progress on digitisation of the Collection. We are at 4000 items and

with improved storage, are now beginning to again accession new items. Sharing the excellent photography on sites such as Art UK will introduce a new audience to the range of superb articles that we hold, as well as enable further research.

An offshoot of this project, is that we are now able to engage with specialised insurance experts to revalue the Collection. Because of the breadth this, it requires a specialist who looks not only at the overall collection, but in particular detail at some of the more 'note-worthy' items, their history and condition, and who understands the specific requirements of the insurance industry today

## **7. Looking Forward**

The Guild will continue to be a leader in the world of textiles and our plans aim to benefit all members.

However, we are very aware that plans rely on revenue streams and in particular memberships. This is the driving force behind the activities that are aimed at beginners. We need more members in order to build a stronger base that will enable us to fully achieve our future plans. So if you know somebody who might be interested, or you belong to a stitching group, please tell them about us. You already know that stitching with like-minded friends brings enjoyment –and there is nothing better than personal recommendation. With a little encouragement we can further build the membership for the benefit of all.

We equally value the members who have continued to support us. We say thank you for signing up for the talks and attending the workshops, continuing your subscription to Embroidery magazine, buying from us at the retail stand, or participating in the Members' Challenge or Project which enables us to show work to a wider audience. By doing any or all of this, you have helped us rebuild. We hope you will continue to do so as we continue to move forward.

So what are the future plans?

We are delighted to continue our relationship with Janome who will again sponsor The Members' Challenge

We have already put in place a 12-month programme of talks and workshops to interest and inspire you introducing both established textile artists and new-comers.

The insurance revaluation should be complete by the end of 2025, giving confidence to both Trustees and members to know the Collection is accurately represented.

We visited the New Designers show earlier in July and were heartened to see an increase in the standard of design and hand-stitched textiles. We are now in the process of offering eight graduates an enhanced package and inviting them to join us at Knit & Stitch.

We will be partnering with Hand & Lock to sponsor a new category of prize winner – the Innovation and Design award. Their theme this year is 'Artistry and the Archive' which encourages reference to archival sources and we felt this fitted particularly well with our 100 years digital archive of Embroidery magazine.

We plan to increase circulation of Embroidery magazine by offering the option to subscribe in overseas currencies

The Members' Project will continue with a new theme to be announced in the Autumn

The Pattern Project book will be launched later this year and we anticipate the launch of a follow up, second book. We are also investigating other publishing partnerships.

We will be looking for opportunities to increase our public visibility. As said at the beginning, the more stitchers who see us and know about us, the more chance we have of increasing membership.

## **8. Questions and Answers**

**Q** How many members does the Guild currently have?

**A** 1575 overall, 1072 annual members and 503 life members

**Q** Is there an opportunity for group visits to Bucks Museum?

**A** Yes, Bucks Museum is open to the public. They have a new exhibition up which has a curtain over the entrance to our exhibition but you can go through the curtain. Most of the collection is not at the Museum or on display at the museum, but if you want to see more and have a specific interest in an item/s you need to come to Halton, about 5 miles away from Aylesbury. If you contact us through the receptionist email, we can arrange a time, day and for someone to be there.

**Q** are you able to offer curator talks on current exhibitions?

**A** see above

**Q** How are you increasing your public visibility, with the aim of getting more members to sign up?

**A** We have a raft of actions to increase our public visibility. We have a monthly programme of website articles, social media posts, a What's On newsletter (available to anyone who wishes to subscribe). We have stands and galleries at three shows each year (Knit+Stitch London & Harrogate, Fashion & Embroidery Birmingham). Embroidery magazine which has worldwide coverage features Guild initiatives. In March we supported the Broderers Exhibition with our logos on their website and at the exhibition. We are sponsoring a prize with Hand&Lock in the Autumn and the annual National Embroidery Awards. We partnered with the Crewel Work Company for an online give-back weekend last December providing talks on what we do. We will be publicising our Collection on ArtUK for all to see as more photos are loaded. We will be looking specifically for marketing expertise and support in the coming year. Ideas and offers of help welcomed please contact: [receptionist@embroiderersguild.com](mailto:receptionist@embroiderersguild.com)

To note: Anthea Godfrey mentioned that she has been asked to give half an hour lectures at K&S and would love to meet members there – more details on the Knit+Stitch website in due course.

**Q** How do individuals make donations to threads/materials to you?

**A** please email us in the first instance to receptionist and we will get back to you. We do value every donation. Please do not post to the museum as post does not always get to us in a timely manner!

**Q** Which edition of Embroidery magazine has this years' Members' Challenge?

**A** Stitch magazine has a three-page Members' Challenge feature in Jun/Jul issue. Alyssa's piece (Overall Winner) is featured in an article in embroidery July/August issue. Claire will be including more Members' Challenge pieces in further issues Entries will also be featured by Janome, in our newsletters and on our social plus they will be exhibited at three Shows the Guild attends.

**Q** How might you work with localised independent or affiliated stitch groups for mutual benefit?

**A** Affiliated stitch groups are listed with contact details on our website. This is our most visited page. We also include details of exhibitions in the monthly What's On newsletter. We have said that we want to make folios available to stitch groups again. We are working on this. We want a solid coordinated, planned approach, so please bear with us. Any ideas or offers of support welcomed. Please email [receptionist@embroiderersguild.com](mailto:receptionist@embroiderersguild.com)

Alex Messenger wound up the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. The meeting closed just before 12 noon.

