



Embroiderers' Guild

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Embroiderers' Guild held by zoom on Saturday 5th June 2021

1. Welcome Address

The welcome was made by Amanda Smith, Trustee for Education, acting as Chairperson for the purpose of the AGM.

2. Apologies for Absence

Anne Beckingham, Jean Goodfellow, Jenny Parry, Ann Williams.

3. Minutes of the 2019 AGM

The Chair referred members to the copy of the AGM 2019 Minutes which have been made available via the Guild website. She asked if the Minutes could be taken as read and signed. An online vote was carried out and there being no objections the minutes were accepted and will be signed by Penny Hill, Deputy Chairman of the Board.

There were no matters arising.

4. Introduction of New Trustees

The Board is very pleased to welcome Neil Hitchens back and will be appointing Julie Stenning and Helen Miller to the Board shortly. We are looking to replace Alice Kettle as President once we have a stronger Board and the Guild is more settled. The Chair asked that if anyone would be interested in coming forward as a Trustee or as a volunteer in some way to please contact the Trustees.

5. Report on the Finances of the Guild 2019/20

Report given on behalf of the Trustees by Neil Hitchens. A full copy of the report will be posted on the Guild website - in summary:

The main sources of income of the Guild are members' subscriptions, donations and legacies, and profit on the sale of magazines from our trading company EG Enterprises Limited, (EGE). In addition, these accounts include income from branches and regions. Branches have continued to make a significant contribution to group turnover with income generated from classes, workshops and lectures, exhibitions and projects, outings, social events and meetings, despite the impact of the pandemic lockdown restrictions in the latter half of the year.

The report for the latest financial year, ending 31st August 2020 shows the severe impact to the second half of the reporting period caused by the Covid-19 lockdown in the UK from the end of February 2020. A survey of the entire charitable sector shows that already over 10% of all registered charities have been forced to close and the eventual impact is likely to be far more encompassing and far deeper than has so far been reported.

The Embroiderers' Guild Group (Head Office, Regions, Branches and EGE Ltd) recorded a deficit of £73,192 (2019: deficit of £67,305). Within this, the Guild recorded a deficit of £114,008 (2019: deficit of £47,446).

The Guild Head Office deficit was primarily due to a decline in donations received in the year. The Guild continues to be extremely grateful to its benefactors. Guild Head Office continue their commitment to

monitoring all of and exercising tight control over costs, and in this regard achieved a reduction in support costs.

Membership subscriptions paid to the Guild and Branches decreased by £29K in 2019/20 to £308k, of which £16K was a decrease in amounts paid to Head Office.

Branch income decreased from £589K to £417K (29%). Branch expenditure, however, also decreased from £642K to £445K (31%) reducing the deficit on branch activities from £53K in the preceding year to £28K. Remaining funds left over on the closure of branches continue to be designated within the Branches Support Fund by the trustees.

6. **Report on the Finances of the Guild moving forward 2020/21**

Alex Messenger delivered, on behalf of the Trustees, a report on financial matters.

The original budgets for 2020/21 had been set in June 2020 when it was becoming evident that the pandemic was having a detrimental effect. At the time of the AGM, the Board is not yet able to accurately calculate the expected deficit for year-end 2021.

The background to asking members (in September 2020) to pay subscriptions directly to Head Office was explained. This was driven by the cancellation of face-to-face branch meetings, but the need for subscription income to be received by Head Office in order to maintain cash flow.

By November 2020 it was calculated that nearly 30% of the membership had not renewed their subscription. Neither had any income been received from large-scale textile shows. The loss of income was therefore judged to be causing a precarious situation which would have to be addressed. The Board realised they would have to take drastic action in order to preserve the Charity. The option of sitting back to see how the situation would develop and/or do nothing was not available and time was limited. The report moved to look at the figures for 2021-2022. A detailed explanation was given but in broad terms, income was estimated at £180,500 and expenditure at £180,000. As in previous years, subscriptions made up the largest part of the income figure. Many of the costs were fixed (the largest being staffing at £83,000) and it would be difficult to bring expenditure down any further without detriment to Guild activities.

It was pointed out this “break even budget” (where income and expenditure match) meant that the Guild had no room for flexibility and that financial uncertainty would make long-term planning for the future very difficult. The Board were therefore faced with looking at the Charity as a whole and assessing what resources were available to ensure the long term viability of the organisation.

The report returned to the action of freezing branch accounts taken in February 2021. It was explained that cash flow (ie money in the bank to cover future commitments) is vital to any organisation and a continued dwindling of income to Head Office would jeopardise the Guild’s long term future. Head Office, the regions, branches and members were considered to be component parts of a single Charity. The Board had discussed all options and decided there was no intention of closing down, abandoning or closing branches or region, or selling the Collection (it’s only realisable asset). Therefore the money held in the branches was the only resource Trustees believed could be accessed in order to provide the best opportunity to ensure the long-term survival for everyone.

The total amount generated by transferring branch funds was just over £510,000. Of this (as at the date of the AGM) £66,000 had been paid out for branch expenses/speakers/refunds. Approximately £58,000 would be returned to the Independent Stitch Groups (including YE) as restricted funds and start-up grants. Those branches who had banked outside Unity Trust Bank were encouraged to contact Head Office with a view to transferring their funds. The Board hoped to put aside £125,000 for the continued preservation and enhancement of the Collection. The balance would have to cover the 20/21 deficit and provide for the

future.

The Board recognised the level of feeling amongst the membership and acknowledged that it will take hard work, but they believe that it is possible for HO and the Independent Stitch Groups to work together and rebuild a new future for both the Guild and its' members.

7. Report by Artistic Director on the activities over the year 2019/20

Anthea Godfrey reported on Guild's activities up until August 2020. In a year like no other the Guild members have come together in many ways.

Members' Challenge – 'My Favourite Things' - the winners were announced and pictures shown of the winning pieces. In future it is intended that members' work will be recorded in e-books which will be available to members via the website.

Scholars 2019 – Anthea read out statements from each of the Scholars on why this had been so important to them.

Graduates 2019 – there were six and Anthea gave a short statement from each of them. Graduates were Ellie Foreman, Alex Vincent Turner, Elli Bignell, Rosie Gee, Catriona Charlton and Tabitha Bucknell.

Scholars 2020 – The three scholars were announced with detailed information and pictures from each of their CV. These were Elnaz Yazdani, David Morrish and Jayne Childs.

Graduates 2020 – We were unable to interview any graduates for this year but we are working on a Graduate and Scholar Retrospective for the Knitting and Stitching Shows 2022 which will celebrate 30 years of Embroiderers' Guild support in collaboration with Upper Street. However there was one Graduate, Lily Cellan-Jones, who was a worthy winner of the award.

Beryl Dean Award – the winners of the award for excellence in the teaching of embroidery were announced. This year the winners of the award were Joint winners Isabel Dodds and Sonja Galsworthy. Runners up were Zoe Hillyard and Elnaz Yazdani

Bucks County Museum – plans have been made for the future during the lockdown. We have had some useful donations made and these will be accessed to the collection.

Buxton Museum and Art Gallery – the Embroiderers' Guild has benefited from the disposal of the textile exhibition from this Museum and 30 items have been accessed to our collection.

Members' Project – The exhibition 'Home' was displayed during the 2019 Knitting and Stitching Shows. Details of the next members' project will be released shortly.

Members' Challenge – 2020 Exquisite Containers – an e-book of the entries can be found on the website. There are plans afoot to display the entries at an exhibition at the Knitting and Stitching Show this autumn along with appropriate items from the EG collection. The winners were announced.

Reasons to be Thankful Project – Three large panels have been made up from the 4" embroidered squares that many members produced to show their support for the NHS. The Royal College of Nursing has graciously accepted these and we are waiting to hear where they are to be hung.

In the coming year the Board will continue to investigate and re-evaluate all that the Guild does and how it is done. We are looking at ways to

- Review the structure and activities of our regions
- Develop a new website to inform our members and the public and act as a hub for the stitch and textile community
- Redevelop the members' side of the website
- Create a new community area for 'Friends of the Collection'
- Looking at adding small items for sale in our on-line shop
- Pursue fundraising opportunities
- Develop a public facing community information hub
- Support the affiliated ISGs
- Continue to work with our commercial partners – Warners, Aurifil and Upper Street
- Create an online archive of Embroidery magazine
- Make improvements to ThreadIT and our online courses site

8. **Report looking forward to 2020/21 by the Artistic Director Young and Student**

The affiliation scheme will be looked at and revised for future years. Those groups that are affiliated will have an increased benefits package.

A regional review is being undertaken with the aim of having more outward facing events available to more. Member subscription will remain at £38 with ThreadIt being an additional charge. We are also considering a Friends of the Collection subscription.

ThreadIT will continue to be expanded and we encourage members to continue to support and to add to it. The Members' Challenge will be continuing and the new title has now been announced.

The Guild will be back at the Knitting and Stitching shows this autumn with an exhibition showcasing last year's Members' Challenge as well as items from the collection.

A new members' project title will be announced shortly.

National Awareness Days project is being promoted via the website and facebook.

Contact and the e-books will continue and we encourage members to let us have stories for Contact.

Members will be able to renew and update their subscriptions and profiles online

More courses will be developed and available

Embroidery magazine is continuing and we are in the process of having the full back run digitised as a unique library available to members

Textile artists will be promoted widely through the website

Young Embroiderers, Graduates and Scholars will continue to be supported by the Guild

The webinar chat room was opened at this point.

7. **Review of Resolutions being put to members**

- 1) Re-appointment of Knox Cropper as auditors –
- 2) To approve a change in the Articles of Association to enable further notification of meetings to be sent via email where possible.

Members have been asked to vote by post and the outcome of the vote will be announced on the Guild website once the votes have been counted.*

10. **Questions from Members**

All questions received have been placed on to the Guild website with answers attached.

11. **Thank you and message for the future** – please continue to support the Embroiderers' Guild and to help us to achieve our charitable aims. We believe we can build a better and brighter future with your help and support.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm

*Outcome of the votes – 326 votes for the reappointment of the auditor - Yes 319; No 7
324 voted for the amendment of the Articles – 314 Yes; No 10