

Present: 62 members online

IN THE CHAIR: Julie Goucher, Guild Chairman

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| 1) | WELCOME |
| | Julie opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the meeting. |
| 2) | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE |
| | <p>Apologies had been received from: Susann Winlow, Joan Chopping, Barbara Griffiths, Peter Brandish, Robert Sterry, Yvonne Masters, Doreen Fawcett, Jane Chapman, Alfred Gracey, Elizabeth Bowsher, Susan Hundleby, John Vincent, William Corser, Peter Astle, Alan Beattie, Karla Von Fumetti Staudt, Andrew Kemp, Colin Stevenson, Peter Hagger, Stephen Annandale, Neil Hounslow, Ian Gotts, Geoff Chew, Philip Runacres, Michael Edgoose, Paul Howes, Sandra Roberts, Ros Escott, Caroline Proudlove, Maureen Mitchell, Sophie Kay, Andy Micklethwaite, Karen Docherty, Howard Benbrook, Marilyn Astle, Pat Adamson, Stuart Beavis, Anni Berman, Stuart Goucher, Stephen Daglish, Lynn Scarfe, Pat Adamson, Nic Cox, John Payne</p> <p>Remembering those who have passed: The Chairman advised that the Guild has discovered or been notified that the following members had passed away during the last 12 months and there was a short pause to remember them:</p> <p>Charles Napier (3698) Peter Balson (3344) Eric Orbell (417) Brian Philpott (1142) Barbara Sanders (1779) Gordon Adshead (3331) Pamela Lydford (5686) Dave Nixon (2474) Michael Harmer (1313) Andrew Sackville (1758) Alexander McGahey (3682) Clive Sheppey (1176) Keith Jacobs (3453) Merryl Wells (1757) Michael Bunting (1696) Hugh Cave (25) Alfred Pagan (102) Jeffrey Knaggs (4044) Peter Relph (8532) John Oswald (100) Bruce Peeke (6753) Kate Cunningham (7745) Mike Day (4191) George Hamber (7726) Emma Waltham (7721) Peter Amsden (1053) Howard Mathieson (4328)</p> |
| 3) | MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM - 21 APRIL 2023 |
| | <p>Votes by proxy in advance of the meeting - 250 voted. For 225, Against 1, Abstain 24</p> |
| 4) | MATTERS ARISING |
| | No matters arising from the members. |

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| 5) | <p>RESULTS OF THE GUILD COMMITTEE ELECTION</p> <p>Having made the change to CIO we introduced a termed structure for Trustees. Each Trustee undertakes a term, and the existing Trustees would serve either one or two years, with any new Trustees serving a three-year term. This way we are able to provide some continuity. There was only one nomination received and that was from Pauline Neil. Therefore, there are six Trustees and three vacancies.</p> |
| 6) | <p>TRUSTEES REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GUILD</p> <p>As we begin, I want to give some context to the Trustees report. This report is going to address the work we have undertaken in the last year, effectively from the last AGM. Whereas the report that the Trustees present to the Charity Commission looks at the last 11 months, up until 31 August.</p> <p>The last six months have been a significant challenge. Firstly, the loss of our secretary had significant impact, just as we began the task of moving to the Trustees Report. The role of the secretary is a vital part of the Guild, for a variety of reasons, but most importantly governance of our organization. From November until just a few weeks ago I was personally filling the gap in addition to various other posts and being the Chairman.</p> <p>We were faced with two options; splitting the secretary role or employing an administrative assistant. On a personal level, I was not enthused by either option, but I did feel that the better of the two was to split the role. We were very fortunate that Samantha Godley stepped forward and offered to be our minutes secretary, which we gladly accepted.</p> <p>We then moved into another issue, and we underwent a challenging time resulting in my needing to contact the President and four Vice Presidents. Whilst the roles are honorary positions, their support was greatly appreciated. In the space of six months, we had reduced our number to five Trustees and a co-opted Trustee that was Pauline.</p> <p>At the same time as all that was happening, the Guild continued to function, but these events did highlight that we simply could not function and continue our excellent governance whilst having so few Trustees. As I said a little earlier, we had one nomination, which was Pauline Neil, and we are now a firm team of six people.</p> <p>Our Trustees report is usually presented to the members to review if they would like to. There is not a member vote, because the responsibility lies with the Trustees. Given the turmoil, the part of the report written by the Trustees was signed off a several months ago, but the full report is still with the examiners, who advised us yesterday (30 May) that they wanted our risk assessment, which they received this morning (31 May) . As soon as the report is with us, we will make it fully available to members. In the last four days we have caught up with the outstanding documentation and they are available to view on the website.</p> <p>Our UK based Seminar Committee organised three in person seminars, going forward the seminar committee will continue with their original format of in person events.</p> <p>We held our conference in Newport, Wales.</p> <p>We also organised a series of webinars, which are held typically monthly, in the last year there have been a total of 15. These are available to both members and non- members and are free of charge to attend and are an important part of our charitable outreach. Webinars are typically structured around five key themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Technology Tools b) Resources for your Study c) Researching in..... d) Connecting with ... where we connect with another society or institution. e) Spotlight on... this is where we focus on a particular topic, study, or event, f) Discussion Forum <p>A huge catalogue of recordings from both seminars and webinars is available online.</p> <p>We attended a variety of events during the last year, most with within the UK, but not all - and a mix of virtual and in person events.</p> <p>Several members gave talks around surnames and one-name studies, all of which promotes the Guild, again these were delivered in a variety of formats and locations - across the UK, Australia, and the United States. We could achieve none of this without the work and support of our members, and in the case of recording in-person events, such as seminars and conferences, we thank Bob Cumberbatch.</p> <p>Furthermore, all our publicity material is produced and organised by our marketing team and by our production manager.</p> |

We continue to grow and promote our Members' Website Program offering, which is part of our preservation options, something which we are committed to. This enables members to preserve their studies, whilst continuing to grow their studies and promote their studies. The MWP team are very supportive to members who are not experienced, so do reach out to them if you would like some support or guidance.

We continue to digitise studies that are retrieved from former members, or received from the family of those who for whatever are unable to continue their studies.

We have continued to produce our excellent journal under the care of JM Bazzoni and of course we publish our Register of Studies.

Our website continues to be a significant part of the Guild, access to and by members and non-members alike and we increasingly try to find innovative ways to share and educate. Our website team do a phenomenal amount of work.

The Master Craftsman Award is a way that we as an organisation can acknowledge the contributions made by others, whether that is a contribution to helping the Trustees facilitate the running of the Guild, demonstrating an excellent One-Name Study, either for their own or in the broad education of Surname research. Sometimes the award is made in recognition of an amalgamation of all the above.

The Guild of Master Craftsman are an appointment led group, meaning that there is a co-Ordinator who organises the panel, the panel assess the merit of the nominations and the panel changes every year. All Guild members can nominate individuals who they believe demonstrates the principles of the Master Craftsman. MCGs can nominate members in the same way the wider membership can and those MCGs are not on the panel for that year.

The October journal announces that the nomination process is open and there is a usually a window of two months when nominations can be received. There are two pages on the website where you can read the criteria and other relevant information.

In the spirit of transparency, I organise the panel, by asking MCG's if they would like to be on the panel for that year. The panel then receives the nominations and undertakes the assessment. The Co-ordinator is not involved in the voting of the panel and is purely a facilitator. The results of the panel are then passed to the Chairman so the results can be announced at the AGM.

For the last two years, the Master Craftsman Panel received no nominations and consequently no appointments were made. This year no nominations were received.

The Guild Award of Excellence is another important element in the Guild calendar. A lack of volunteers from those that have received past awards meant that sadly no awards were made last year, nor this year. However, the material that has been published or submitted will be considered as soon as we have gathered a panel.

Up to 31st October 2023 we had 2439 members (down 147 on the previous year) and 2270 registered studies (down 85 on the previous year). The decline may be in part due to extended memberships purchased at events coming to an end and people not renewing. New member levels may not be as high as previous years due to the lasting effects of the pandemic and reduced number of events. 2023/2024 membership is about on par to meet the levels of membership for last year.

7) FINANCIAL UPDATE

Tracy gave an update on the finances.

We budgeted last year to make a loss in order to use up some of the surplus reserve, however, funds have instead increased. If anyone has any ideas on what they might like to see added as member benefits please let us know.

Income £90,000
Expenditure - £85,000
Profit - £5,000

Gift Aid amount is declining but we are doing ok. We have plans for campaigns to encourage eligible members to sign Gift Aid Declarations. Once signed we can back claim for four to six years.

Subscriptions are down £1000 on the previous year but still brings in £41,000.

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| | <p>We have received word today from the auditors to say there are no problems with the accounts , they just need a copy of our risk assessment which has now been sent.</p> <p><u>Answers to Questions</u> The reserves are used to cover the management of the Guild, administration and support costs. We want six months' worth in reserve (£24,000), we currently have £90,000 in unrestricted reserves.</p> <p>We do set funds aside from the reserves for supporting system changes, Conferences, Seminars, MWP and preserving the website. We hold £10,000 back for supporting the MWP and we have £24,000 in advance membership which is transferred each year for the longer-term memberships.</p> <p>Our interest levels are low but more than they used to be. We do have problems around where we can invest as banks won't accept us as an organisation due to the mix of Trustees. It is one reason we moved away from Santander; they would not accept overseas Trustees.</p> <p>Julie Goucher replied to a question about competitions for children asking for anyone with grandchildren who are doing the Duke of Edinburgh awards to contact her so that we can engage with any young, budding genealogists.</p> |
| 7A) | APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER |
| | <p>Motion: that Azets Audit Services be appointed Independent Examiners for the financial year ending October 2024.</p> <p>Votes made by proxy in advance of the meeting. For 240, Against 2, Abstain 8. Total number of members voting 250. Motion Carried.</p> |
| 8) | ELECTION OF RETURNING OFFICER |
| | <p>Motion: That Alan Toplis be appointed as Returning Officer for the year 2024/2025</p> <p>Votes made by proxy in advance of the meeting. For 246, Against 1, Abstain 3. Total number of members voting 250. Motion Carried.</p> |
| 9) | MASTER CRAFTSMEN OF THE GUILD OF ONE-NAME STUDIES |
| | No nominations received for this year. |
| 10) | GUILD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE |
| | No nominations received for this year. |
| 10) | DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT CONFERENCE AND AGM |
| | <p>The date and location of the 2025 Conference will be 25-27 April 2025 in Holiday Inn (city centre), Liverpool, hybrid event. Melody explained that they will live stream speakers with Q&A session after for those watching remotely. Saturday night will have hosting and speakers from North America and Australia and social events too.</p> <p>The date and venue of the 2025 AGM will be 31st May 2025 online.</p> <p><u>Answer to Question</u> Splitting the AGM and Conference allows more time to prep for the AGM, Financial Reports etc. Now we use zoom for the AGM it is possible to dedicate time to the AGM and have enough members attend to meet the required quorum.</p> |
| 11) | ANY OTHER BUSINESS |
| | <p>Paul Featherstone asked if it was possible to employ someone to take on the Secretary role. Julie Goucher explained this role was in the process of being split up into Secretary (taken on by John Lisle), Minutes (Recording) Secretary (taken on by Samantha Godley) and a Charity Commission Advisor role similar to what Peter Copsey provides for the Constitution. Julie explained that the role is now covered but it has been a challenging six months over the busiest period of the Guild (Nov - Feb) to get here. Nick Tyrrell suggested that having made the decision to split the Secretary role, we should allow a period of 12 months before doing something else.</p> <p>Mary McCarthy asked what the Trustees do, to which John Lisle replied that there was a job description detailing this on the website. Julie Goucher agreed to email the details to Mary after the AGM.</p> |

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| | Meeting closed: 10.08 pm |

Signed

Chairman

Date: