



THE ASSOCIATION OF GUILDS OF WEAVERS, SPINNERS AND DYERS

Reg. Charity No. 289590 Website: www.wsd.org.uk
Vice President: Steve Kennett

President: Jenny Balfour-Paul
Life President: Paddy Bakker

Letter to All Guild Members from the Association Chair

December 2018

To All Guild Members,

I am sure by now you will all have received an email from your regional rep but understand from feedback, some members do not understand what a regional rep is, what they will be doing and why we have them.

I have been on the GPC since 2009 and in that time have heard comments from a few members such as; the GPC are remote, elitist, only doing the job to enhance their careers or there business, bit like a secret society and don't understand what ordinary members want/need etc etc.

All of which are completely untrue but unfortunately the perceptions do persist.

Some Guild members have no idea they even belong to The Association or what it means to them. Some think there is a Head Office, that the Chair gets a salary and even a company car!

All this is obviously very sad and needs addressing but with over 114 guilds, the GPC secretary is already working, voluntarily, in excess of 20hrs per week and my role as Chair has a very similar input in terms of hours spent.

It may come as a surprise to some but all GPC members belong to ordinary Guilds from all over the UK. They all serve 5 years on the GPC and then retire, unless they take on an officers position, then retire after a further five years. The GPC is a constant rotating group of guild members from all walks of life. We all work from our own homes, using our own laptops and equipment and meet in London five times a year.

We now have ten regions, so it made sense to have one GPC member assigned to each region, so that **all** guild members, not just secretaries, have a name and a face they can contact, should they wish to do so.

The reps will send out information to their region on things they feel will be of interest to the members. Being part of something so much larger than ones own guild is very special to lots of members around the country and beyond and we hope that others will feel the same if they have more contact with The Association. Some regions have long established regional events, whilst others don't even know their nearest guilds. The reps are not expected to organise a regional event on their own but can help to facilitate this for regions who have not done so before.

We have a rotating calendar around the country for Association events and whilst the rep will be on hand to help and advise, they will not be taking on the role of convener for any of the events. This would not be at all practical as not all reps live in the region they are assigned to and are only on the GPC for a limited time, after which a new rep will take over. These events start life three/four years ahead, so a regional rep may well have retired long before the event happens, so a convener needs to be from a local guild.

Chair
Vice-Chair
Hon. Secretary:
Hon. Treasurer:

Angela Colbridge, chair@wsd.org.uk
Janet Crowther, vicechair@wsd.org.uk
Soo Coates, secretary@wsd.org.uk
Liz Day, treasurer@wsd.org.uk



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All guilds are autonomous of the AGWSD and as such the Association does not hold a list of individual members names. We send out to all guild secretaries relevant information, but we are then totally reliant on them forwarding this on to members of their guilds. We know the vast majority of Guild secretaries work very hard to ensure this gets forwarded on but unfortunately in some instances, for a variety of reasons, sometimes members do not get information from the Association. By having reps and by adding information online we are hoping to avoid any gaps like this.

Many guilds now have a generic email for their secretary and I would urge all guilds to consider doing this, as it makes it so much easier for guilds when they change secretary and stops the retiring secretary being inundated with emails they don't want.

The Association has a lovely new website, with an area for each guild to up load information about themselves and add a programme of events. Whilst some have done so, there are still some with almost empty pages. If Guild Secretaries have had trouble logging into their guild pages please contact the Association Secretary for help.

I hope this now helps make things a little clearer but we are all still on a steep learning curve and it will take time to establish the Reps system. Whilst we appreciate there will be a few guilds who are not interested in having a closer relationship with the Association, we hope in the fullness of time, we will all think, not only regionally but also nationally, so we can all work together to ensure these skills which we often take for granted are there for future generations to enjoy too. The GPC is working hard to be inclusive, not exclusive, to be encouraging, not discouraging but cannot do this alone.

On behalf of everyone on the GPC I would like to wish each and every one of you a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful, Healthy and most importantly creative New Year. Hope to meet up with some of you at Summer School 2019

Best wishes,

Angela Colbridge

Chair for Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers

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