

Guild Rules and why they have to change.

The last item on the agenda for this years AGM bares a little explanation.

Toward the end of my first year as President, Standing Committee (SC) considered how the SC functioned and how membership could best be managed. From those reports came decisions to commission a new website (that was almost inevitable with the date for the conclusion of the implementation period for the General Data Protection Regs. fast approaching) and the role of membership secretary.

The report also recommended that the size of the Standing Committee be significantly reduced, a measure which was supported by a majority of the SC and which failed to gain an overall majority at last years AGM although it was clear that in part that was because the proposal did not allow for sufficient district representation.

This comes up for discussion again because it will form part of the SC discussions when they debate new rules. The reason being that as part of the report on SC function I read several of the guidelines issued by the Charity Commission (CC) together with large parts of the 2011 Charities Act (and others where necessary).

By virtue of S.177 of the 2011 Act aforementioned and because the “executive officers” of the Guild have no powers apart from the SC, all members of the SC are trustees by operation of law.

My reading made it very clear to me that the existing rules are woefully inadequate and do not meet Charity Commission guidelines.

Each year, as a registered charity, the Guild files a “return” with the Charities Commission. Our treasurer, Rosie had cause to telephone the CC who confirmed my position and when I contacted them about the rules they confirmed that they did not provide for the changes we needed to make or very much else! Between myself and Rosie we established that the CC were fairly relaxed about our position because we were both clear that the Guild would put its house in order. The Guild has until October however, we feel that as long as the Guild can demonstrate a work in progress it could probably take a year to produce new rules and a structure. Cut off day will therefore be say February 2020.

All the guidance is objective and makes it very clear that all decisions are taken objectively in the best interests of the Guild and it’s membership (it being a membership charity).

I did not disclose this fact at the last AGM as I had hoped to secure a reduction in the size of the SC and could then have dealt with it easily with a small group and be in a position of presenting new rules today. As it is, not all of SC has chosen to accept my advice as to the their legal position and not all of SC has provided the basic information required by the

CC. However, it now finds itself in a position of having to ignore self interest and provide what is best for the Guild.

I remain firmly of the view that the fewer trustees the better, that in its present form SC functions poorly (attendance is patchy) and that charitable objectives are not often met. Having said that, we have achieved quite a lot in the past 3 years albeit not as much as I had hoped and on the other hand, I inherited an agenda item concerning a memorial to those lost in WW1 which has yet to be concluded!

SC will need your support over the next year as never before.

Annie Holland
TDGR President
6th April 2019