



-Making Women's lives better since 1929

Report to the 6 "O" meeting February 2021

Please accept my apology for the lateness of this report.

Much of my report will echo your own – with work being done mainly online from home. No staff have returned to the office full time yet, but a couple visit once a week to keep things moving!

Our focus has been member engagement. Our definition of Guild autonomy means that we do not tell Guilds what they should be doing, though we do make suggestions and flag up excellent practice! This has led to quite a range of different reactions to forced closure.

We have continued to send out our magazine, often with late updates, quarterly, and our supplementary newsletters. Our online activities have expanded greatly. We have formed two new internet-based Guilds, and many established Guilds meet through our secure platform. We have also developed a range of specialist online groups including family history, crafting, book clubs and creative writing, plus of course opportunities to simply chat. These are attracting new members too.

We were pleased to be able to create an online carol service and were fortunate to have a window in which to record readers in Bristol Cathedral, during a very short period of reduced restrictions.

Campaigns

In October we launched our "In our hands" campaign. This is our response to the range of issues that are affecting our planet and its flora and fauna. We felt that all our members can do something towards "saving" the planet and our older members who lived through the last war and post war austerity would have a lot to share.

The campaign is multi-level, and we hope that when they meet Guilds will take the opportunity to educate themselves and hold their local authorities to account. Nationally we are working to form partnerships with other organisations.

In January we gave our first 2021 newsletter over to a Climate Change special which set out ideas and challenges to members in a form which we hope many will share with family and friends as they are able. This is very much something which affects all generations, and we hope will prove to be a useful conversation starter with extended but separated families.

Like everything it has not been received with universal approbation but even it does make people think of something other than their situation– so important at this time.

We keep a watching brief on all past mandates and have offered encouragement and pressure to wider campaigns. We have responded to several recent consultations especially around Violence Against Women and Banking.

Other Activities

As most of you will know we have taken our IWD event online with “Writing Women into History” and a huge thank you to those who took part in our discussion last Thursday.

Sheila Petersen has asked if members would share the information about their selected women and I would be happy to collate this.

I sent out a flier about the event for sharing with members and am pleased to confirm that all 6 “O” members will be able to access at the same price as our members (£5). Passes can be purchased through the link I gave in the flier and we will then send out the access detail for the Festival site from 1 March. The talks will be released over 5 days and then available for the rest of March (possibly longer).

Our AGM has not yet been cancelled but it is increasingly likely that once again it will be a virtual event, though I am concerned that some Guilds may feel disenfranchised by this. Our constitution allows postal voting on “business” matters but not on mandates.

Everything else has been cancelled or deferred.

Oh, for a crystal ball!

In TG Friendship

Penny Ryan

National Chair

February 2021