

# APPG *for* CRAFT

## All-Party Parliamentary Group for Craft

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 18th May 2022 at 9.45am on Teams

---

### Attending

Juliet Baillie	Historic England	Caroline Jackman	Crafts Council
Professor Sarah Brown	University of York	Patricia Lovett MBE	APPG Secretariat
Daniel Carpenter	Heritage Crafts	Carole Milner MBE	Heritage & Craft Funders Network
Judith Cobham-Lowe OBE	Worshipful Co of Goldsmiths	David Mortlock	Worshipful Co of Wheelwrights
Dr Kelly Cordes	Independent Researcher	Michael Osbaldeston	City & Guilds
Dr Harriet Deacon	Coventry University	Ann Packard	RSA MCICH Network
Phil Foxwood	DCMS	Julian Pindar	Luthier
Dr Chrissie Freeth	Tapestry Weaver	Geraldine Poore	Basketmaker, BA
Baroness Garden	House of Lords	Greg Rowland	Wheelwright
James Grierson	ICON, York Consortium Craft & Consn	Rebecca Struthers	Watchmaker
Lisa Hammond MBE	Adopt-a-Potter & Clay College	Ann Whittall	National Wool Museum
Sir John Hayes MP CBE	Chair		

1. *Welcome and Introductions*: While Sir John Hayes and Baroness Garden were delayed, Patricia Lovett welcomed the Members, Associate Members of the APPG and guest speakers.
2. *Apologies for absence*: Apologies for absence had been received from: Deirdre Brock MP, Lord Cormack, the Earl of Clancarty, Greta Bertram, Derek Stimpson, Laura Trott MP, Lord Lingfield, Professor May Cassar, Sharon Hodgson MP, Gil Dye.
3. *Phil Foxwood: International Culture and Diplomacy Team, DCMS*  
Phil outlined different UNESCO Conventions and their significance and explained that, amongst other tasks, he was exploring the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage. (Ratification of this Convention is something that the APPG for Craft have been pursuing actively in that the UK is now one of only 12 countries of 193 signed up to UNESCO that hasn't ratified this.) Phil emphasised that there has been no formal decision or public announcement, but he was talking to stakeholders and was at an early stage. Phil outlined the five domains emphasising that this was a broad Convention and encompassed a lot. The benefits would be that the status of ICH would be raised, that it would create debate, and that those benefits would be different in different areas. It would also be a way of raising the profile of ICH, or living heritage – a verb, not a noun – and it was important to appreciate that this was a bottom up process. This would be community-led, there would be no gatekeepers, it

is very accessible and very inclusive, which is a strength. The challenges are that unlike World Heritage the approach is very loose, so:

1. What is ICH? What's included and what's not? How old do things need to be? How many people need to be doing this? And practices with gender, animals and, eg, black faces, do present problems.
2. Listing – this is complicated – who should decide and how can we whittle this down from the whole of the UK to about two a year? Is it best not to list, certainly at the start?
3. What criteria should be used for an inventory? How often should it be updated?

However, the important thing is that when ratified, if we do, it is done well.

*Questions and points:* JG – This is encouraging progress. What is the timescale and can we learn from other countries who have done this successfully? PF – formal ratification takes 6 months, so not this year but hopefully next year. Yes, certainly copy other successful countries.

AP – no mention of cost and the advantages of mental well-being and community support. PF – The Cultural Heritage Project (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/culture-and-heritage-capital-portal>) may be of interest. Absolutely, social and community inclusivity is very important.

DC – Very encouraging to hear this report as much more optimistic than previously. Heritage Crafts already has methodology developed in the Red List of Endangered Crafts which can be applied elsewhere and in other domains. Also, there may be only one practitioner, but that is still important as far as out heritage is concerned.

#### 4. *Geraldine Poore: Basket maker, and Chair, Basketmakers Association (BA)*

Geraldine explained that there were 800 members in the BA, 50 in the EU, and 250 make a living from their baskets. Baskets can be made out of hemp, willow, rush, paper, ash or oak, and Esparto grass. Willow has different varieties and qualities, some bend more easily, others are coloured, and so imports and exports are important. There is regular cross border traffic between Northern Ireland and Ireland, also with France. Esparto grass comes from Spain and North Africa. There is now a shortage of willow coming from Somerset, where it has traditionally been grown, and now Dutch rush and esparto grass cannot be imported. Geraldine highlighted BA members comments, including:

‘Sales have been lost with the EU, buyers are not willing to pay additional VAT nor import duty.’

‘I no longer sell in the EU as there's too much red tape.’

‘Basketmaking tools have been returned as ‘cutting tools’ are not permitted as imports in the EU.’

(A BA member in Spain) ‘It costs too much to send goods to the UK now compared with EU countries.’

UK willow growers no longer export to Ireland because of complex regulations, and willow workshops have had to be cancelled, with a loss of income. Teachers from the EU to the UK and vice versa have problems with materials for workshops as they are regarded as imports and so have to pay duty. Pieces for exhibitions are regarded as imports and duty is charged, and if sent to the EU for exhibition, import duty is charged when they return. There is a sharp increase in paperwork with also an increase in complexity and uncertainty. Advice websites are not helpful for the sole trader and micro businesses.

**Questions and points:** CJ – Also challenges for silversmiths and ceramicists.

CF – Tapestries take 1200-1500 hours to make but she is having to pay for the return of a tapestry for an exhibition in the EU that she can't afford, so has said to destroy it!

JP – there is tax relief in sending craft abroad and importing it back but have to register with HMRC (form C1314) but have to deal with every one of the 27 members states.

CJ – the Crafts Council has help on their website:

<https://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/business-skills/craft-business-resources/sell-and-showcase-your-work-overseas>

*Sir John Hayes then took the Chair.*

##### 5. *Julian Pindar: Luthier and Secretary, British Violin Makers Association*

Julian explained that the purpose of the BVMA was to raise skills, promote the industry and create fellowship for all. Two-thirds of members were from the UK and one-third from abroad, mainly the EU. The skills required were a mix of antique restoration with fine art and craft, and the costs of an instrument ranged from £100 to £100 million. There was a cross-border trade with UK which exported boxwood pegs and chin rests, and horsehair imported from Mongolia, wood from the Alps etc. The challenges are that the UK was a beacon of training, but colleges are finding that there are now few if any students from the EU. There were 15 international students on the course at Newark but now only 1 and that 1 from the UK. There is a problem of recruiting and maintaining staff to teach. Exports are a huge issue because a buyer will want to try 3–4 instruments and return the ones not needed. Complicated forms have to be completed and each country's embassy has to be contacted to find the specific requirements. Many in crafts are dyslexic which is an additional problem. The cost of transport has also risen exponentially, with 40-foot container from China now costing £16,000 whereas it did cost £2,500. London was the centre of buying and selling high-end instruments but this is no longer the case with the main auction house moving to Berlin. There is confusion, and increase in paperwork, logistics and cross-border costs, and a decrease in education and training.

*Questions and points:* JH – what has been done to let schools and colleges know of the opportunities? JP – BVMA is a small organisation and limited resources.

JH – what about apprenticeships? JP – problem is that craft skills not now taught in schools so need to go to colleges to learn these before a maker will take on an apprentice.

DC – Heritage Crafts have a new pilot project funded by the Dulverton Trust to work with one in three schools in the UK providing careers advice about crafts. Would like to expand but limited by funding. Also IfATE have approved recently a generic Craft Trailblazer which consists of a core and options, and it may be useful for gaining access to government support for apprentices.

6. *Judith Cobham-Lowe OBE: Previous Prime-Warden, The Goldsmiths Company*

Judy reminded the group of the problem of hallmarking and exports to the EU.

Before Brexit UK hallmarking was recognised but now it isn't even though the UK has the oldest and highest standard in the world. As a result of the APPG for Craft JH had raised with the Secretary of State at BEIS who referred it to the British Hallmarking Council. There has been little progress though, and the concern is that the view may be that only small companies are involved, but there are 20,00 small traders and 10,000 antique dealers who are affected by this. Exports are not being made because it costs £250 to hallmark a £200 ring in France. In Spain it's even more complicated because of assay offices in different regions. There is the EFTA Common Control Mark but only 16 EU countries recognise this, and not the ones where most goods have been sold.

*Questions and points:* JH expressed concern that no progress had been made since he raised this with the Secretary of State a year ago and promised to take it up again. JC-L was asked to get evidence from companies of the problem which could then be also brought to the House.

7. *Professor Sarah Brown: University of York and Stained Glass Artist*

Sarah raised the problem of a proposed EU Directive that would stop the production of lead because of concerns of health. She explained that those working with lead, particularly in stained glass, understood the risks and mitigated them, and for stained glass, the risks were minuscule compared with lead in batteries, for example. Lead was also used in masonry, organ building and museum conservation – all crafts. Why would the UK be affected by an EU Directive? Because the EU is a major supplier of lead and this would have a knock-on effect also on the craft of mouthblown glass used in stained glass. There is no substitute for lead. There are suppliers in Canada but if lead is banned in the EU this would affect supplies in the UK.

*Questions and points:* JH – suggested that this could be a great opportunity for a UK company to produce lead. SB – will take generations to do this and

would need a sea-change; the impact of no lead would take a long while to recover from. No mouth-blown glass in the UK and only one lead supplier, most get their lead from Canada or the EU. The UK couldn't offer the levels of supply required for the EU as well and stained glass is international and part of the shared heritage of north-west Europe.

JH – promised to take this up and would investigate the appropriate channels.

PL said she would contact SB for more detailed information to do this.

8. *AOB*

There was no AOB.