

# APPG for CRAFT

## All-Party Parliamentary Group for Craft

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 16th May 2023 at 4–5.45pm

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### Attending in person:

Ian Bettles	Sir John Hayes' Office
Earl of Clancarty	House of Lords
Judith Cobham-Lowe OBE	Worshipful Co of Goldsmiths
Prue Cooper	Potter
Dr Kelly Cordes	Independent Researcher
Baroness Garden	House of Lords
Sir John Hayes MP CBE	Chair
Patricia Lovett MBE	APPG Secretariat
Jeremy Nichols	Art Workers' Guild
Michael Osbaldeston	City & Guilds
Wendy Shorter-Blake	WC Upholders & AMUSF
Margaret Walker	City & Guilds
Baroness Warwick	House of Lords

### and on Teams:

Juliet Baillie	Historic England
Daniel Carpenter	Heritage Crafts
David Dowdle	Crafts College
Phil Foxwood	DCMS
Dr Chrissie Freeth	Tapestry Weaver
James Grierson	York Consortium
James Lane	NfCE
Carol Levey	Inst Brit Organ Building
Kate Mason	Soc Designer / Craftsmen
David Mortlock	Worshipful Co of Wheelwrights
Ann Packard	RSA MCICH Network
Paul Playford	Benefact Trust
Rose Sinclair	Goldsmiths University
Rebecca Struthers	Watchmaker
AnnWhittall	National Wool Museum

1. *Welcome:* Sir John Hayes welcomed the group.
2. *Apologies for absence:* Apologies for absence had been received from: Susan Coles, Lord Cormack, Brian Crossley MBE, Gil Dye, Lisa Hammond MBE, Sharon Hodgson MP, Natalie Melton, Carole Milner MBE, Derek Stimpson.
3. Sir John Hayes gave an update on the progress on ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage and explained the difficulties with the SoSs changing so frequently. He also explained the conversations he had had with previous SoS and explained that ratifying the Convention costs only \$150,000 a year which is comparatively small change. Sir John had written on behalf of the APPG for Craft to the current SoS Lucy Frazer and had received an encouraging response from Minister Rt Hon Stuart Andrew on the SoS's behalf. Sir John read out a paragraph from that reply: 'The Framework that UNESCO provides seems a clear way to take forward work on living heritage. The Secretary of State can also see that UNESCO offers the opportunity for greater international engagement and the benefits of a multilateral stage on which to use the UK's 'soft power superpower' to increase our global influence'.  
**Phil Foxwood, DCMS, commented online (only seen after the meeting):** Ratifying and paying the subscription is just the first step. It will certainly signal intent, but the value of the Convention to sectors will come from it being implemented (well) in future years.
4. **Margaret Walker:** *City and Guilds*  
The Charter for C&G was in 1900 and now C&G operates all over the world including Bahrain, Afghanistan, Canada, the Emirates etc. Qualifications cover three levels of increasing difficulty, and all levels contain elements of

design, not copying. All students establish a design brief leading to an artefact, a high quality hand-crafted product many covering a wide range of heritage crafts, which need protecting. During the pandemic, many turned to crafts and some said that 'it saved their souls'. A solid background in craft leads to lifelong skills including hand-eye co-ordination, dealing with failure, working from 2D to 3D etc. Students are required to research the history first, as well as the culture and environmental impact of their craft. Individual crafts also have connections – lace making occurs all over the world and this leads on to knitting and also fishing with net making.

*[Sir John Hayes left the meeting and Baroness Garden took over the Chair.]*

Culture also plays a part and Margeret outlined the work of Turquoise Mountain (set up by the then Prince of Wales and Rory Stewart) and covers jewellery making, silversmithing, calligraphy and wood carving for women and men.

Level 1 is a 30-hour course and craft is learned by sampling to make two artefacts. Literacy and numeracy are included but hidden within the process – measuring, working out costs, writing a brief etc. Evaluation is also important.

Level 2 is similar but has 10 units of craft.

Level 3 requires a high level of craft.

C&G qualifications have outlasted School Certificate, CSE and GCSE, and don't equate with any of them.

The Coronation showed how important it is to keep craft skills – metal thread work on Coronation robes etc done by Royal School of Needlework and volunteers at individual churches but the skilled makers are ageing. There are no young people to decorate drums and those that do are in their 60s and 70s.

One of the problems is that there is no funding for institutions to run courses and so independent centres run them where students have to pay for themselves.

***Points and questions:***

SG: The first APPG for Craft meeting featured Professor Roger Kneebone and needle lace maker Fleur Oakes which showed how craft skills are used in many different contexts, not just in making.

NC: It's interesting how numeracy and literacy can be included in C&G.

MW: Costing is very important – how to charge for materials? Should the total cost go to one client or shared between a number? All involve maths.

JCB: Goldsmiths have a Level 5 which isn't recognised but is the highest standard in the world, and there is no funding and it's not recognised because a high standard of literacy is required which isn't necessary for the making. As DfE doesn't seem to understand this shouldn't craft skills be in DCMS?

PC: Outlined the great work at Art Workers Guild where for years their Outreach Programme has involved artists and craftspeople with those in

science and medicine to great effect.

**5. David Dowdle:** *Previously involved in the Crafts College*

(Teaming in from Pakistan) A decision has been taken whereby it is agreed that it is necessary to create a flagship institution in the UK for craft. David contacted private backers and raised £30m for the residential premises with two potential sites in Buckinghamshire and Surrey. The business plan is written and the Advisory Board set up, what is now needed is operational funding, and with that it could be up and running very soon. There are similar colleges in places like France, Japan and the US, we should be replicating that in the UK.

**Points and questions:**

PL: This sounds absolutely fantastic, and would answer a lot of craft needs; David is to be congratulated for getting so far.

DC: Heritage Crafts have been working with David since last September and realised the huge potential in this project. It is a vast sector but has lots of niche occupations, most needing to develop qualifications but each having a small cohort. It is hoped that the Craft Trailblazer can be front loaded so that there are 6–8 weeks of required experience not in the workshop, and then participants are free to spend the rest of their time learning their craft. DCMS has been approached for funding.

DD: The £5m for operational funding will ensure that the project will run for at least five years.

*(Many thanks to David for his patience when yet again technical problems delayed the start to his presentation.)*

**5. James Lane:** *T-Levels*

James explained that T-levels were a 2-year programme for 16–19 year-olds and was a technical equivalent to three A levels, with a \* equivalent to 3 As at A level. It is a collaborative qualification run by IfATE, and also has UCAS points. Its main focus though is to direct employment, including self-employment, with as many opportunities as possible. There is a core and then occupational specialisms, with 2 parts to the T-Level – one part focusing on project management, business skills etc, and then work experience for 45 days arranged by educational providers which can be in one chunk or spread out. Currently there are four options in the Creative and Design T-level – jewellery, furniture, textiles and fashion. There are two written papers and an employer set project. It is due to be launched in 2024. So far, lots of employers want to offer work placements. Every 12 months there will be a review to ensure that the qualification is relevant and fit for purpose.

**Points and questions:**

JCL: Peter Taylor and Judith have been working with Aston University to develop the first iteration of T-levels there, with 10 companies and the assay office

involved. There is a lot of interest and they are having to turn companies with work placements away.

SG: Is there any difficulty in getting work placements?

JL: This does depend on geography and is very relevant. There will be potential exchanges between colleges and different providers.

DC: Any insights as to why T-levels are delayed for a year?

JL: Think it's so there's more time to prepare, but this information isn't shared with him.

SG: At the moment we're fighting for BTechs not to be discontinued as they're very different to T-levels, being more hands-on.

JCL: Goldsmiths are themselves funding outreach projects and children are very responsive to these.

MO: This also works with National Saturday Clubs.

WSB: Upholsterers concerned that IfATE is trying to fit every qualification into the same formula, and this doesn't always work.

MW: The written elements are not always suited to those who want to make. Those buying craft are more concerned that the maker is proficient than that they can write essays.

DC: Sits on the T-Level Advisory Board and has emphasised that there should be more emphasis on practical skills.

RS: How do T-Levels sit alongside C&G equivalents?

JL: C&G sit on their own and are not T-Level equivalent.

SG: The Government wants to have academic equivalence but it's practical skills that are needed.

WSB: Practical skills should be in both years not just the second. Employers want work experience students to be able to contribute not just sweep the floor.

MO: If not practical experience in year 1 then not experienced enough for year 2.

MW: If students want to take on a craft they want this from day 1; often they're disenchanted with academia.

JL: T-Levels not for everyone and they need academic rigour because they're equivalent to 3 A Levels. There is flexibility but it won't be a complete fit for every student.

WSB: Students need an academic ability to start with.

## 6. AOB

Patricia Lovett announced to the group that Heritage Crafts had produced the next iteration of the Red List for Endangered Crafts with 259 crafts assessed, 62 critically endangered – up from 56 last time – and 84 endangered – up from 74 last time. So the picture isn't rosy and there is clearly more work to be done. It is hoped that Heritage Crafts can present on this in a future APPG.

The meeting closed at 5.45pm and Baroness Garden thanked the speakers and everyone for attending.