

# APPG *for* CRAFT

## All-Party Parliamentary Group for Craft

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28th February 2023 at 4–5.30pm

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### Attending in person:

Ian Bettles	Sir John Hayes' Office
Daniel Carpenter	Heritage Crafts
Judith Cobham-Lowe OBE	Worshipful Co of Goldsmiths
Baroness Garden	House of Lords
Sir John Hayes MP CBE	Chair
Patricia Lovett MBE	APPG Secretariat
David Mortlock	Worshipful Co of Wheelwrights
Jeremy Nichols	Art Workers' Guild
Michael Osbaldeston	City & Guilds
Paul Playford	Benefact
Wendy Shorter-Blake	WC Upholders & AMUSF

### and on Teams:

Juliet Baillie	Historic England
Susan Coles	Art Teaching Consultant
Dr Kelly Cordes	Independent Researcher
Dr Harriet Deacon	Coventry University
Gil Dye	Lace Maker
Phil Foxwood	DCMS
Dr Chrissie Freeth	Tapestry Weaver
Fleur Gordon	National Trust
Carole Milner MBE	Heritage & Craft Funders Network
Ann Packard	RSA MCICH Network
Derek Stimpson	WC Gunmakers

1. *Welcome and Introductions:* Sir John Hayes welcomed the group.
2. *Apologies for absence:* Apologies for absence had been received from: Lord Cormack, the Earl of Clancarty, Greta Bertram, Roselind Sinclair, Sharon Hodgson MP, Dr Rebecca Struthers, Brian Crossley MBE, Lisa Hammond MBE.
3. *Daniel Carpenter, Executive Director: Heritage Crafts*

Daniel outlined the start of the Heritage Crafts Association, as it was called then, in 2009, and that they had taken part in the research for 'Mapping Heritage Craft' set up by Sir John Hayes in 2012 when Minister at BIS. This revealed that in England alone heritage crafts contributed £4.4 billion GVApa, with 210,000 people involved, and 80% were sole traders or micro businesses who had no provision for passing on their skills due to lack of support. In 2021 the Red List of Endangered Crafts revealed 56 crafts were critically endangered and 74 endangered. These crafts are not only an economic asset but also a cultural asset. Traditional craft skills are one of the five identified domains in the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage, and HC was the first nationwide NGO to be recognised for ICH by UNESCO. Both Jay Blades MBE, Co-Chair of Heritage Crafts, and The King considered the lack of vocational training on a recent TV programme. £2 billion in unspent funds for apprenticeships was returned to the Treasury, which suggests that the current set up isn't working as well as it should. Only 25% of crafts have an

approved apprenticeship, and of those not all are active because of the problem of the external training element mainly delivered by FE Colleges, whose focus is on more lucrative courses with greater numbers. In 2020 HC set up the Endangered Crafts Fund with grants of up to £2,000 to ensure crafts survive and craft skills are passed on. They also ran a Pre-Apprenticeship programme in the West Country to fund makers for young people to gain experience of crafts, and, as an example, Zoe Collis joined Two Rivers Paper, one of only three handmade paper making companies in the UK; she is now a journeyman and another apprentice has been taken on. A similar project is now being run in Cornwall with a focus on basket making and Cornish hedging.

The first generic Crafts Apprenticeship has now been approved with a core and options set up, the first one will be ceramics; other niche crafts are in progress such as millwrighting. Plans are also in hand to create a Craft Academy, and this will include front loading the generic apprenticeship so that after 6–8 weeks of core subjects (marketing, business planning etc) the rest of the training can be done benchside. A meeting will be held with DCMS next week to look at training facilities, scholarship funds and so on.

Recently the Royal Mint have supported HC through sponsoring the Heritage Crafts Awards reception, a symposium in June, and are also funding four bursaries for those working in precious metals. The City and Guilds Foundation sponsor an award for black and ethnic minorities working in craft and the ABF Soldiers Charity is working on funding twelve bursaries for the ex-military to work in crafts. The Radcliffe Trust awarded funds for over fifty crafts. The 2023 edition of the Red List of Endangered Crafts will be launched at The Prince's Foundation on Shoreditch, and includes new methodology separating crafts and including a relationship to locality or specificity. A project funded by the Dulverton Trust reached out to over 250 pupils in December and included Will Kirk, Sonnaz Nooranvary and Dominic Chinaea from 'The Repair Shop' programme.

***Points and questions:***

JH: What do we need to do to achieve the new Craft Academy and what is the cultural context for craft?

DC: The Craft Academy will happen as there are private funders; it is difficult to judge that one craft is more important than another – eg gansey knitting is very important and of cultural importance to certain communities but it is also done throughout the world by those who learn elsewhere.

BG: A new 11–16 education committee has just been set up, and there is hope that practical skills in schools will be part of that; the problem is that so many specialist rooms don't exist anymore.

W S-B: T-levels are a problem because there is no practical element in the first year and yet work experience is scheduled at that time.

PL: Craft skills are for life, not just for makers.

JN: Art Workers' Guild is working with a primary school in Newham to meet makers and learn more about making.

DM: Craft skills also include problem solving and innovation.

W S-B: Plus maths and english applied in practical situations are so often more relevant than wehn taught academically.

JH: Accomplishments are not just academic; practical skills are of a higher order than academic.

#### 4. *Patrick Whyte, Head of Skills: Institute for Conservation (ICON):*

Patrick introduced ICON, which was set up in 2005, is an independent charity, a membership organisation with 2,300 conservators, and a professional body raising standards. It champions cultural heritage and the value of conservation, and that this is an inclusive and rewarding career.

There are twenty-four volunteer specialist groups and networks which maintain professional standards and research. Recent research in 2022 revealed that those with responsibility for looking after our cultural heritage often don't have the appropriate skills to do so. Masters' level training has become the norm, and ICON is working on developing apprenticeships and end-point assessment. They have just submitted an application for four apprenticeships, however, much of the training is done in higher education and they are reluctant to deliver this with another organisation.

There are now 1,200 accredited members of ICON. There is, though, a need to ensure that individuals are developing the right skills for the best possible outcomes for heritage.

Some key issues are that there is a need to stimulate demands for heritage skills and that the value of the conservator is restored, otherwise we may lose some of the heritage that we have.

##### *Points and questions:*

JH: Demand needs to be stimulated but also supply, persuading young people to do craft so that they can eventually conserve. Is ICON working in schools?

GD: Conservation should start in schools with every child taught to sew on a button and turn up a hem – then the conservation process would have been started.

PW: Icon is working in Greenwich with school groups.

(Due to technical issues the next presentation on the agenda was delayed and meanwhile Phil Foxwood from DCMS was asked about the progress being made on ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage)

JH said that he had been working hard to ensure that ICH was being raised with Ministers and Secretaries of State.

PF: At the moment DCMS is waiting for departmental budgets to be signed off in April when ICH can be picked up again. The changes in Secretaries of State have also delayed progress. The cost is \$150,000 pa but there are other costs for resources etc. It is particularly complex because the Convention will be UK-wide which therefore involves the devolved nations. It requires a lot of consideration to get it right and is not worth doing unless it is done well.

*Points and questions:*

BG: Had contacted Lord Parkinson about this, the minister with this responsibility in the Lords and he seemed quite receptive.

AP: it is important to regard this as a national investment and should not be seen only as a cost.

5. *Carol Sinclair, Potter and Advisor: Applied Arts Scotland*

Carol started by explaining that she had been a ceramic artist for over thirty years, and is now also an advisor for Applied Arts Scotland. This is an organisation run by makers for makers. Those in craft need many different skills as 90% are self-employed and have to juggle their making, which they love, with running a business, which they often don't! It is important to see creativity as a driver of business, and in AAS is there as an exchange of knowledge and skills. It has been run for over thirty years and is shaped by the membership. Networking is really important and they are working on developing a project that will help with day-to-day activities by sharing an App with makers.

AAS, with the British Council, developed projects with makers in countries such as Chile, Afghanistan, Mexico, Nepal and Thailand; makers may not speak each others' language but they share the language of making.

It is very important to connect online nowadays and AAS have developed a Craft Toolkit which gives training remotely. The Toolkit was first translated into Thai and is now in twelve other languages. Creativity into business is an important part of this toolkit, and one exercise includes 'creating customers' whereby makers are asked to picture their customers, and once they have a clearer idea then they can connect with them better.

Apprentices are also shared between different businesses which gives them a range of experiences; some have even stayed on in the businesses; however this is hugely resource intensive, and takes a great deal of time to organise and administrate.

AAS now have developed separate professional development awards which are online; these include Innovation, Business Planning and Marketing, International Trade, Project Management, and Sustainability. They now also have workplace learning awards.

Caitlin, a specialist in hand-made gold and silver jeweller, one of the participants on the course, wanted to reassess her business and business planning as an element of creativity. She experimented with digital reality, and found the

opportunity to play really important, giving a whole new perspective to her designs which were then taken back to the real world.

*Points and questions:*

JH: This is very interesting and important that AAS is helping smaller businesses cope with all the bureaucracy.

BG: This is very exciting for the future!

6. *AOB*

There was no AOB and the meeting was closed with many thanks to the speakers.