



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Basketmakers' Association Ltd

held via zoom on Saturday 1 Nov 2025

Attendance: Members attended via Zoom.

Apologies: Several received via email, queries re postal voting and asking if it would be recorded.

1. Welcome to our guest. Reply by the Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers, Mark Cooper.

Louise Brown (current Chair). Meeting recorded, chat open.

- o Introduced Mark Cooper, WCoB Prime Warden.
- o Thanks to Autumn Day speakers – Adrian and Ruth Charlton.
- o Running order – AGM, then Autumn Day – Big Weave showcase, Spring School, 10 min break, Speakers, Presentation of Prizes/Awards, Results of Autumn Day competition.
- o New Prime Warden invited to say a few words: Mark Cooper– thank you for invite. Installed 8 days ago. 1 of 115 livery companies, established 1569 (?), 1937 Royal Charter. Became more of a dining club – started to change this through association with the BA and Yeoman members, supporting the trade and charities with a basketmaking aspect. 250 Members, from all walks of life, but with an interest in basketmaking – provide basketmaking days to the livery and others.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Previous AGM held on 19 Oct 2024

Poll result. Minutes approved.

3. Reports by the officers of the company

Chair's Report – Louise Brown

- o Conclusion of Louise's term of office. 50 yr celebrations – opportunity for members to join in with online talks, the Big Weave, anniversary journal, online exhibition, plus new online resource British Basketry.
- o Board restructuring based on members survey, feedback at events, outside business advice, with the aim of being more efficient, dynamic and increase offers to membership. Reducing number of board members from 9 – 5 will be put to the vote. Information has been sent regarding the candidates. We will still be supporting the board.
- o Also recruited 2 part time members of staff – Sally Raey (admin), Katrina Green (finance). Membership currently 1,176.
- o Summer meeting this year after years pause. 70 members attended – final day of traditional basketry exhibition and display of Big Weave. Appreciation of in person events. Traditional Basketry exhibition first at Tear Up, Ruthin, Welsh Crafts in the Bay, and finally Harley Gallery. Helen Voice, project officer, reported 188 associated basketry events with 500 plus attendees, and 38,205 visitors throughout the tour. Autumn School at Waterperry Gardens last weekend, Spring School with increased number of tutors being planned, and BA had a presence again at Lewes Basketry exhibition.

- o Relationship with WCoB - financial support £60/70,000 per year (bursaries to schools, Walmsely bursary, prize money to basket of the year, funds Cockpit art places, Tear Up and Lewes Basketry festivals, and contributions to events such as the Big Weave and this years Prize (forgotten the name of it). Thanks to be given by Rae
- o Louise had no intention of joining the board but has appreciated contacts and meeting people. Benefits of volunteering.

Secretary's Report – Fiona Arnold

- o Full report on website.
- o Memorable 50th year, with the Big Weave – local participation and photographs to provide a lasting record. Thanks to Rae for leading on this and WCoB for financial support.
- o Membership growing steadily. Online talks and business talks – joined by people all over the world. These will continue as an additional membership benefit and we welcome suggestions of topics/speakers.
- o 4 Board meetings this year and strategic review at Waterperry, which has enabled us to recruit paid support staff. New board selected which will need members vote.
- o Thanks to Angela and the Bursary team for their dogged determination to overhaul and make fit for purpose. 2 stepping down and 2 new (can you add names?). Thanks to current Board, Volunteers, members, and TBP

Treasurer's Report – Pru Todd

- o Pru has served 3 years, also recruited by Rae. Busy and fun year forging friendships.
- o Financially better off by £35,000, partly through increased giving from WCoB - £5,000 Roy McCloud Award to be spent this year (need ideas from membership), Big Weave and exhibition, matched funded Professional Development course which will also be next year through Cockpit, and funded Helen Voce for the TBP.
- o Also extra funding from membership fees, online talks and book sales. Cheaper journal costs through new printers and distribution. Bursaries also more efficient.
- o New board will still be volunteers and assisted by new paid staff. British Basketry website.
- o Full report on website.

4. Election of Examiner of Accounts

Andrew Donaldson reappointed. Online vote.

5. Presentation on the proposed new structure of the Board and proposal to reduce minimum number of Board members to five.

Pru Todd

- o Position Statement re strategic review. Derived from membership questionnaire, feedback at events, and away day which involved a skills audit of current board. Findings will be given to new board.
- o Map showing spread of membership - 150 are international.
- o Current Board structure diagram shows how all areas are fed into the board which leads to overload and reactive responses.
- o New framework is more streamlined. Feeding to a specific person who is on the board to be more efficient. 5 roles with relevant knowledge and skills.
- o New mission statement for next 50 years – again will be passed onto new board – and our vision: valued, living wage, career pathway, strong connections, health and wellbeing, traditional and contemporary baskets valued, sustainability of materials, organisation fit for purpose.
- o Key developments – communication with members, volunteer strategy, leadership, basketmakers training and mapping, access and inclusion, regional shift, finance, health and wellbeing. We've identified these, but for a new board to pick up and lead on.

Louise Brown

- o New board recruited for specific skillset needed to run the organisation. No pressure to make up the numbers but scope remains to recruit more if needed.
- o Vote on reducing the minimum number of board members from 9 – 5. Agreed 94% for, No disagree, 6% abstained.
- o All 10 current members resigned, 5 new to be voted on.
 - Angela Coates – Chair and Business Development Director – excited to promote growth of BA, enthusiastic basketmaker, business background in development and arts and cultural
 - Lynda Clark – Finance - Qualified accountant 30 years, City and Guilds course.
 - Milda Manomaityte - Company Sec and IT – crochet, professional trade association for railways. Clear goals.
 - Jill Percy – Marketing – excited to be nominated, professional marketing background and creative interests.
 - Evie Stretch – excited to be getting more involved in BA, professional background charity sector, volunteer and engagement.

6. Election of new Strategic Board Members

Online poll: 92% in favour, 8 % abstained

7. Any Other Business

Tim Johnson, Polly Pollack, Sue Kirk – concerns re WCoB support of RAF Tristars

- o Tim Johnson Statement – uncomfortable. WCoB's list of affiliations runs to 3 pages. 2021 RAF Istar – unmanned surveillance vehicles, operate from Cyprus, flying over Gaza. WCoB is not political or military. Are we happy to be associated with this? Is WCoB able to make a clear statement? Is WCoB willing to abandon its military affiliation and support arts and crafts, education, health etc?
- o Prime Warden, Mark – thanked Louise and Tim. Predecessor responded to initial queries raised at board meeting in September, Shared letter in chat as no-one including board had seen this response (physical letter sent to registered office not emailed to info @ and Tim as agreed.
- o It is how the Association works, and is proud to support the military and their long associations. Reconnaissance and surveillance but no influence about how the military work. WCoB charities support families in the military, award prizes for cadet of the year etc, and run workshops teaching cadets how to make baskets. They support the work of the Lord mayor of London but understand people's individual concerns.
- o Question – Louise Jones – what does affiliation mean? Financial support?
- o Mark - Charity organisation, no financial support to forces, except prizes at dinners. And no money from forces. It is open days, dinners – a ceremonial affiliation.
- o Tim – ask members to consider both points of view.
- o Helen Leaf - would support of humanitarian projects be a conflict of interest?
- o Mark – hopefully not, they are a charity and provide £200,000 of support each year, 1/3rd of which goes to basketmaking projects.

(Tim provided a copy of his statement in the chat during the break. This provoked some questions and discussions in the chat throughout Adrian's autumn day chat).

Meeting moved onto Autumn Day