

The Future Income and Expenditure of Gauge O Guild Events Plans for 2023

Background

On 26th May 2022, I wrote to all members and traders in my capacity as Chairman of Events explaining the financial challenges ahead for Gauge O Guild Shows in 2022.

The Management Committee made a conscious decision at the end of 2021 that when shows resumed, we would not change anything regarding venues, ticket prices or trade stand fees. We had no idea how things would develop post-Covid, nor could we have foreseen the war in Ukraine and the huge impact on the worldwide economy. Costs are rising rapidly but income is declining slightly. We have been hit by significant price increases for hotel rooms, furniture hire, catering, security, first aiders, van hire, insurance cover and printing. In addition, income from traders has declined since the Spring of 2022. This was partly due to the date change at Doncaster but also because some traders are reducing their stand size; they too are facing huge financial pressures.

Financial Outcomes for 2022

Event	Reported outcome after the show	Actual outcome as of end of quarter 3
Spring Show Kettering		
Outcome for just Direct costs	- £713	- £1,453
Outcome inc. Indirect costs	- £1,886	- £2,627
Summer Show Doncaster		
Outcome for just Direct costs	- £263	- £339
Outcome inc. Indirect costs	- £1,234	- £1,270
Guildex Stafford		
Outcome for just Direct costs	- £4,968	- £5,348
Outcome inc. Indirect costs	- £6,679	- £7,059

Differences between the end of quarter 3 report and the report published after an event are due to late transactions, often associated with late invoices, late travel claims or B & B payment cheques being cashed quite a while after the event.

What have we been doing so far in 2022 to increase income and reduce expenditure?

- Traders have sponsored the flyers published in 2022
- Digitrains credit paid for the show guide for Kettering & Doncaster and contributed towards the Guildex guide
- Advertising was sold to help cover the cost of printing the Guildex guide
- All committees have been examining who attends shows and what the added value is of those attending
- Local stewards have been used where possible
- A new venue for the summer show in 2023 has been secured
- We are shopping around for all additional items required for events such as furniture hire, security, first responders, food and hotels
- A logistics company has been found so that we can trial a new process in 2023 for storing and transfer of equipment to and from the venues.

- We have started to review layout and demonstrator costs
- New workshops were introduced at Guildex at no cost by getting consumables supplied by a trader
- Increased marketing in the national magazines, websites and social media plus editorial in the national magazines has been done, to try to increase the awareness about our shows and increase footfall.

Ideas and feedback about the financial challenges we are facing

Since the email to members and traders in May 2022 there has been comment by direct email to me, comment on the Forum, suggestions to members of the Events Committee in person and after the outcome of each show, more ideas came forward.

A summary of the key themes in the feedback from members and traders is included in Appendix One. The Events Committee met to discuss these on Monday 17th October 2022 which resulted in recommendations to the Management Committee. The Management Committee met on Saturday 29th October and the following are now changes agreed for 2023

Changes to income streams

- **Increase ticket prices** as suggested by many members
 - One day shows will be £8.00 for members & £12.00 to non-members
 - Guildex – introduce one day tickets
 - One day will be £10 for members & £15.00 to non-members
 - Both days will be £15.00 for members & £20 to non-members
 - These prices will be for advanced tickets
 - Prices on the door will be £1.00 extra each
 - All ticket holders can enter from 09:30am
 - We will review ticket prices each year
 - The fact that tickets cover purchaser, partner and their children under 16 years might need to be reviewed in the future. Perhaps make “Kids a Quid” like Warley

Having done detailed forecasting for Kettering, Barnsley & Guildex 2023 using expenditure in 2022 and planning for Kempton Park 2023 we know these ticket prices will move us towards break even.

However, expenditure in 2023 is likely to increase with food, table hire, hotel rooms and other items required at events increasing. Increasing income cannot just be picked up by members & other visitors so we have also looked at trader income.

- **Trader Stand Prices**

Currently traders pay £70 for a ‘unit’ of space on an aisle and £100 for a ‘unit’ of space against the wall at a one-day show. (The difference being the depth of the stand space. 6ft deep on the aisle and 8 feet deep against the wall).

At Guildex they pay double that, in keeping with it being a two-day show Each ‘unit’ includes one six feet long table, two chairs and two badges.

The trader discount scheme then gives the following:

- 50% discount for all three shows which obviously includes Guildex
- 33% discount for either the spring or summer show one day show plus Guildex
- 10% discount for just the spring and summer shows (no Guildex)

If they attend just one show, they pay full price

We also aim to add a one day show in the south at Kempton Park (date TBC)

In 2023, we will increase 'unit' prices across the board by £5.00. This is justified because of the increases in table hire prices and increasing power prices where these are charged.

Therefore:

Stand rent will be £75 or £105 for a one-day show depending on aisle or wall location

Stand rent at Guildex will be £150 or £210 depending on aisle or wall location.

We will maintain the discount scheme in the knowledge that this is the main incentive for traders continuing to support Guild Shows.

In future, the discount scheme will be:

50% discount for four or three shows including Guildex

33% discount for Guildex plus one of the one day shows

20% if they attend all three one-day shows but not Guildex

10% for two one days shows but not Guildex

Full price if they only attend one show

▪ **Bring & Buy Commission**

We have agreed that Bring & Buy commission stays at 10% - this is a members' service and there is a possibility that B & B will be used for more, pre-planned, estate sales in the future

▪ **Sponsorship**

As you can imagine, traders are facing the same financial pressures that we are. They need to see something in return for any sponsorship they provide.

We are very grateful to traders who already support the printing of the Event flyers, advertising in the Guildex Show Guide and make donations towards the printing of the show guides. In 2022 Digitrains decided to cut back on shows but still had credit with us. This was used towards the show guide production and in each show guide in 2022, their donations and support were acknowledged so, if you like, even though they were not there, they 'were seen'.

Similarly, Squires provided all the consumables for the workshops at Guildex so several posters were put up in public places to acknowledge this.

Suggestions have been made that we approach the larger traders to see if they will sponsor a layout or pay for a specific aspect of an event.

We will explore all avenues for sponsorship going forward.

▪ **Other Income Streams**

Suggestions were made by members that events form a major part of why they join the Guild and a contribution from the subs should be ring-fenced for event funding. We then get into the situation of trying to apportion subscription fees to events, publications, the website etc... and there are arguments that not all members can attend an event or use the website. So, we recommend that subscriptions should be used to fund the Guild as necessary each year and they should not be increased because events have turned a deficit in 2022.

There have also been discussions about using donations to support the attendance of large layouts at Guildex. Donations are often made by honorary members who do not have to pay subs but choose to contribute to the running of the Guild. They do not amount to a huge sum and if we were to specify we want to use that for a layout, then they would need to be asked if they agree for their donation to be used in this way. In 2023, with ticket and trader prices increasing, we will endeavour to break even by continuing to reduce any non-essential expenditure and we will identify at least one large continuous running layout for Guildex without using donations.

There has been another idea about modular layout sections being built using specific standards and baseboards that are then brought together to form a large continuous running layout for Guildex. Charles Oldroyd will be sharing more about this with members and clubs in due course.

▪ **Reclaiming VAT**

We will all ensure that the Guild can reclaim the maximum amount of VAT. Ensuring that we get appropriate receipts for expenditure.

Limiting non-essential expenditure

1. Accommodation

Hotel room prices are increasing at a dramatic rate.

We must ensure that only those who absolutely require accommodation are allocated rooms. All committees are asked to review who needs to attend shows and what their added value is. This includes the Events Committee. We do not need all committee members to attend all of the shows.

If layout teams, demonstrators and Guild officials live within one hour driving of a venue, they will not be allocated accommodation.

Single room allocation has also been discussed by members.

Layout owners usually know each other well and are used to sharing rooms and travelling together to shows. We therefore expect them to have twin rooms unless there are health reasons which require single room occupancy.

If single rooms are a preference rather than a necessity, layout operators are asked to pay the difference of costs incurred by the Guild.

Guild officials are volunteers who, in general do not know each other. They provide their time and hard work free of charge, in many cases starting at 7am and not leaving a show until 7pm. The least we can offer is a good night's sleep in privacy. Some do still choose to share a room to reduce costs and thank you for that. All committees should include hotel needs, for events in 2023, when they are putting together their budget plans. We must finalise hotel bookings before the deposit is paid (28 days before an event) so that we do not lose money due to last minute changes. If committee members have accommodation paid by the Guild they should ensure they are there to help with build-up and breakdown please

2. Food at venues, mileage & subsistence

Lunchtime meals at venues are proving to be very expensive. Feedback suggests that if exhibitors and organisers have a good breakfast they will be happy with a sandwich at lunchtime so, alternative provisions will be explored. A voucher system will also be explored whereby the monetary value of the voucher can be exchanged for whatever the exhibitor or official prefers.

For travel, the maximum allowance is 35p per mile or fuel used whichever is the lower figure. (VAT receipts are required for fuel claims). The same rate is used for layouts, demonstrations and Guild officials

There has been discussion about why Guild officials get an evening meal and layouts and demonstrators do not. Most layout operators go to shows on a fairly regular basis by choice and no shows that we are aware of pay for evening meals. Guild officials are staying away from home on a voluntary basis because it is necessary to do so. Many choose to pay for their own meals but we cannot assume that all of our volunteers have the means to do so. Reimbursement of travel expenses and subsistence is therefore done for those who wish to claim.

However, as noted in item 1, we must review the number of people travelling to and from shows, what value they add and ask that car sharing is considered where possible.

3. Furniture hire and other show requirements for shows

Show Managers and the Chairman of Events will continue to shop around and use negotiation skills to get the best prices for hire of equipment or personnel to support each show. In some cases, booking a service for all three shows from one supplier will prove beneficial. Local suppliers are also better to reduce delivery and collection charges. When negotiating new venue contracts, we try to get as much equipment as possible included in a fixed term, fixed price contract.

4. A new logistics process for Events

The current system required several volunteers to go to Warley Club rooms to collect all of the equipment necessary for shows such as cables, tablecloths, high-vis vests etc... Personnel attending the Club rooms and using scissor lifts etc need to be Warley Members to ensure they are insured on the premises.

The logistics team had to hire a van, take it to the store at Warley, load everything and then have it at the venue the night before the set-up day, ready for an early start. After, the show, they sometimes have to stay an extra night before driving back to the store and then find enough volunteers to drive over, help unload and put everything away again.

The risk to the health of this ageing group of volunteers was also of serious concern and despite advertising no new volunteers stepped forward.

In 2023, we are trialling a new system.

We have hired a storage unit in the West Midlands for one year.

A national logistics company will arrive the day before set up and collect everything that a key holder identifies. They will deliver it to the venue ready for the early start on set up day. They will then collect the equipment after the show and return it to the storage unit as guided by the key holder.

We have three key holders in the area and they will take it in turns to give the logistics company access and direct the collection and return of goods.

The aim is that the cost of the logistics company will be less than the van hire and extra nights of accommodation incurred by the existing logistics team. More importantly the health and safety of the logistics team is no longer at risk because the logistics team do the heavy lifting work.

We still need Guild personnel early on set up day to distribute the equipment and set up the venue and, we need personnel after a show to stay back and re-pack all the equipment ready for collection.

The new system will be monitored during the first year and evaluated before continuing with the process.

5. What have we not recommended and why?

a) Suggestions that we drop the one day shows and just support Club shows.

The Guild is seen as a flagship organisation and as such we should be organising large events for our members to enjoy and to promote O gauge / 7mm modelling to non-members.

b) Suggestions that Guildex should be one day not two.

When we decided to leave Telford and look for a new venue, members of the Events Team asked traders and members about possible locations and whether Guildex should be one or two days. The majority want two days. Many members make a weekend of the trip to Guildex. Overseas members, in the main, come to the UK for a two day show and combine it with holiday. A lot of members staying for two days, view the layouts and traders on day one and then, following contemplation, they decide what to purchase on day two. A common view is that there is just not enough time to do it all in one day and any showcase convention should last two days. Traders likewise acknowledge that whilst it is busier on Saturday, they still sell on Sundays and they also get time themselves for chatting to customers and networking. It has also been noted that large layouts will not attend one day shows. It is also hoped that the introduction of single day tickets as well as a slightly cheaper two-day ticket for Guildex will increase footfall.

c) Holding joint events with other associations.

Whilst we wish to build good relationships with the 7mm NG Association, Scale7 Group, G1MRA, the Gauge 3 society, ALSRM and others such as the EMGS and, ensure their presence at Guild shows, when you hold joint events there are inherent

issues. This includes decisions about responsibility and accountability. Who does what? Who pays for what ? The desire for sharing any surplus does not necessarily equate to equal effort or equal funding. Therefore, the Guild will continue to maintain a clear identity and organise its own shows rather hold joint events.

Other societies and associations are already invited to promote their organisations and in 2022, we had a reciprocal arrangement with the Gauge 1 Model Railway Association which meant they brought a layout to Guildex and an O gauge layout attended their annual show. We will explore this idea with other organisations including EMGS and Scale 4.

6. Virtual Events

Finally, we wish to confirm that the monthly 'Evening With' seminars by Zoom and the annual Virtual Show will continue so that we can always include members in events despite the fact they cannot travel to face to face shows.

These events also include speakers and exhibitors from across the world and we get to see layouts via video that can never be seen at exhibitions because they are fixed into a house, a garden or a shed.

In addition, we started filming 'highlights videos' of the face to face events for those who could not attend. This will continue and we will also do some live streaming where possible.

If you have questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact jackiegogevents@gmail.com

Jackie Kneeshaw
Chairman of the Events
4th November 2022

See Appendix One for key themes gathered from the feedback given to us by members and traders since the may paper and during or after 2022 events.