

Gauge O Guild 2021 Events Survey Report

Background

The Events team of the Gauge O Guild wanted to know what members think of the content we include in face to face and virtual shows, and hear their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions on how we might improve this still further in the future. We also wanted thoughts on how to attract new audiences and, with Guildex moving to Stafford County Showground, we had some suggestions for new content to seek opinions on.

The questionnaire was sent out with the May 2021 Gazette & Guild News with a total of seven questions covering face to face shows, virtual shows and 'An Evening With' Sessions.

Members were asked to rank the content included at our Guild events on a scale of 1 - 4
Where 1 is not important and 4 is very important

5249 Gazettes were sent out with questionnaires enclosed in the bag
720 questionnaires were returned
The return rate was therefore 13.7%

The majority of questionnaires, were received as paper copies, and I am very grateful to the members of the Events Committee who helped to enter the data into the electronic database.

The number of responses and the detailed comments included by many have meant that analysis has taken much longer than anticipated.

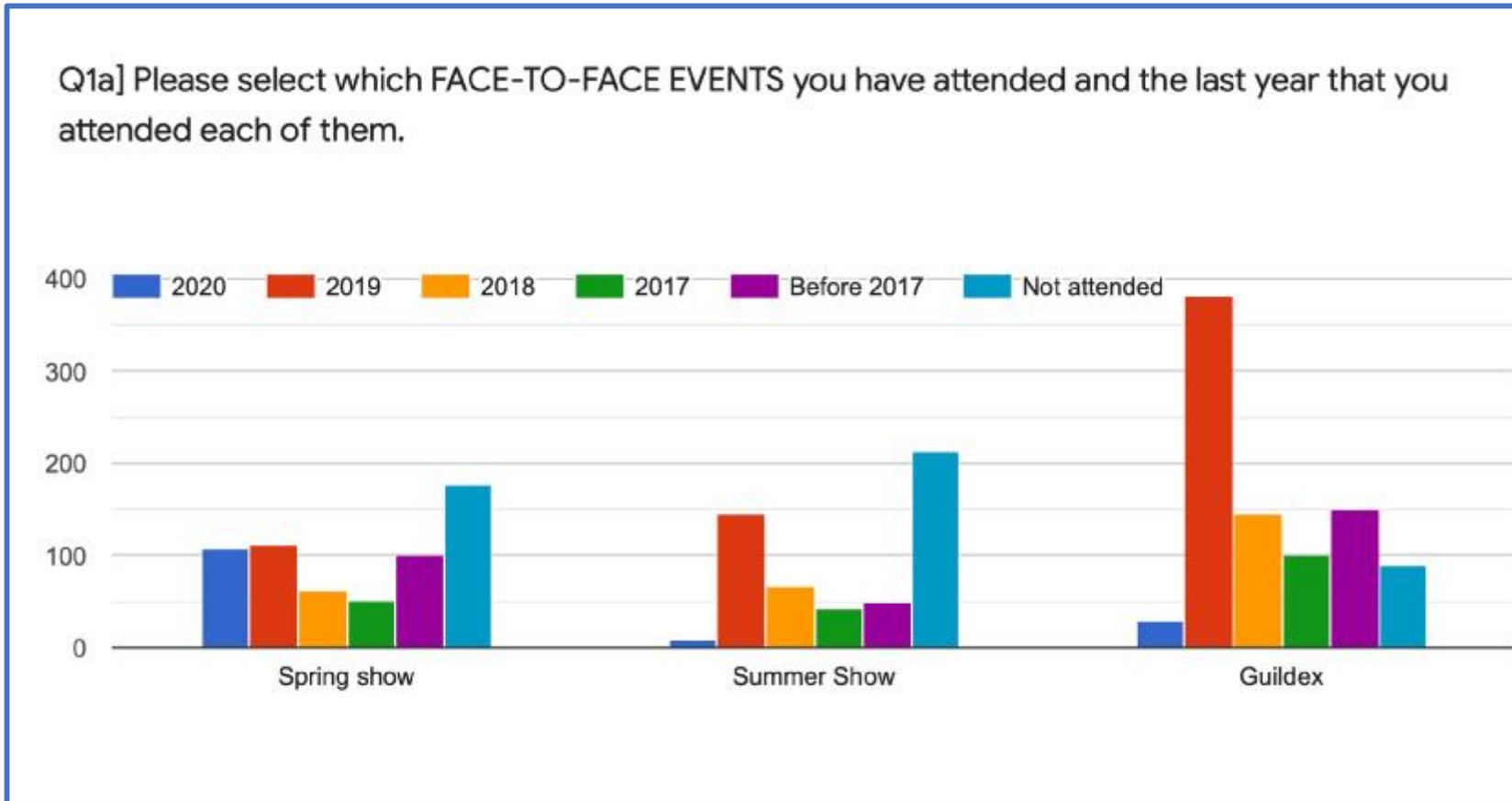
Following detailed analysis, presenting the data has also proved difficult because it is easy to try to include too much.
After various iterations, I have included key points but maintained all of the written comments for your scrutiny

This report was shared with the Events Committee, Virtual Events Team and Management Committee in March 2022 and an Executive Summary was published in the May 2022 Guild News .

Jackie Kneeshaw
Chairman of Events

Question One: General Information

Q1a] Please select which FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS you have attended and the last year that you attended each of them.



Year	2020	2019	2018	2017	Pre-2017	Not attended
Spring	107	113	64	51	102	177
Summer	8	146	67	42	50	214
Guildex	29	381	145	101	150	89

It can be assumed that those choosing Doncaster & Guildex 2020 meant 2019

Free text

If you have not attended any of these events – please tell us why you chose not to or, were unable to attend?

(326 responses)

Common themes:

Time & distance

The most common theme about why respondents have not attended one or more shows is distance from home, especially for one day shows. Distance can mean that accommodation is required which adds expense. The journey especially on public transport may not be easy and takes too long. Some people prefer more local shows especially if they have funding issues.

Living overseas.

Several respondents live overseas which is the reason they have not attended one or more of the Guild shows.

Inability to attend

Others have medical reasons or feel they are too old to travel. Some respondents state that they cannot attend due to work or family commitments.

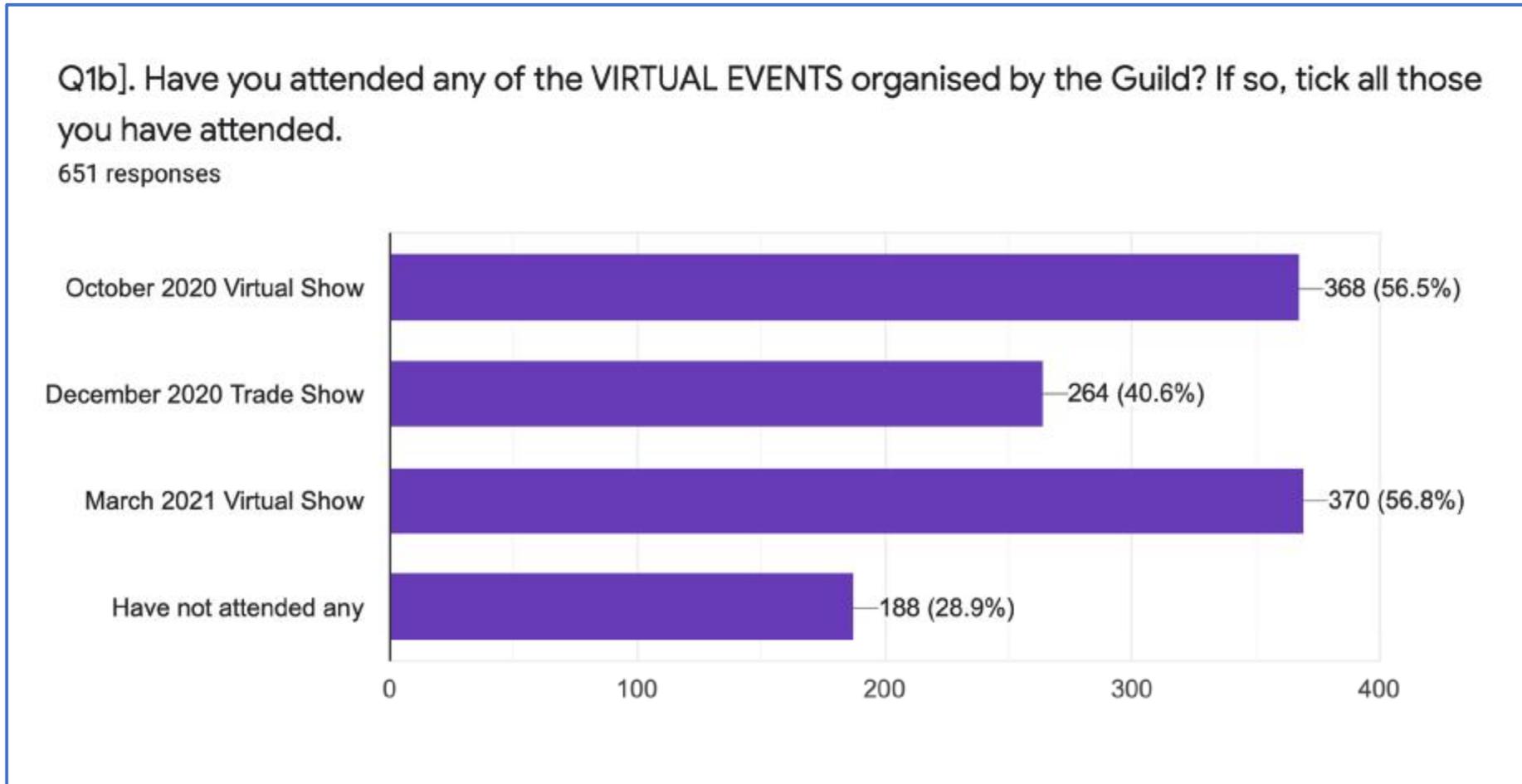
Preference

Some do not find the shows add anything to their modelling. Some say one show a year is enough.

Several are new to O gauge and new to the Guild and have not had a chance to attend yet.

There are a few individual responses which do not fit into a particular theme.

Q1b] have you attended any of the virtual events organised by the Guild? If so, tick all of those you have attended



Free text

If you have not attended any of these virtual events – please tell us why you chose not to or, were unable to attend?

(302 responses)

Common themes:

There were three key themes.

Lack of technology

No computer,
No internet,
Lack of ability,
Do not understand Zoom,
Not enough broadband width
Could not make the link work
Not comfortable with technology
No microphone on my PC
No camera on my PC

Lack of interest

Much prefer to attend face to face shows and interact with traders, layout operators, demonstrators
Didn't like the topic
Didn't need to buy anything
Not appealing
Impersonal

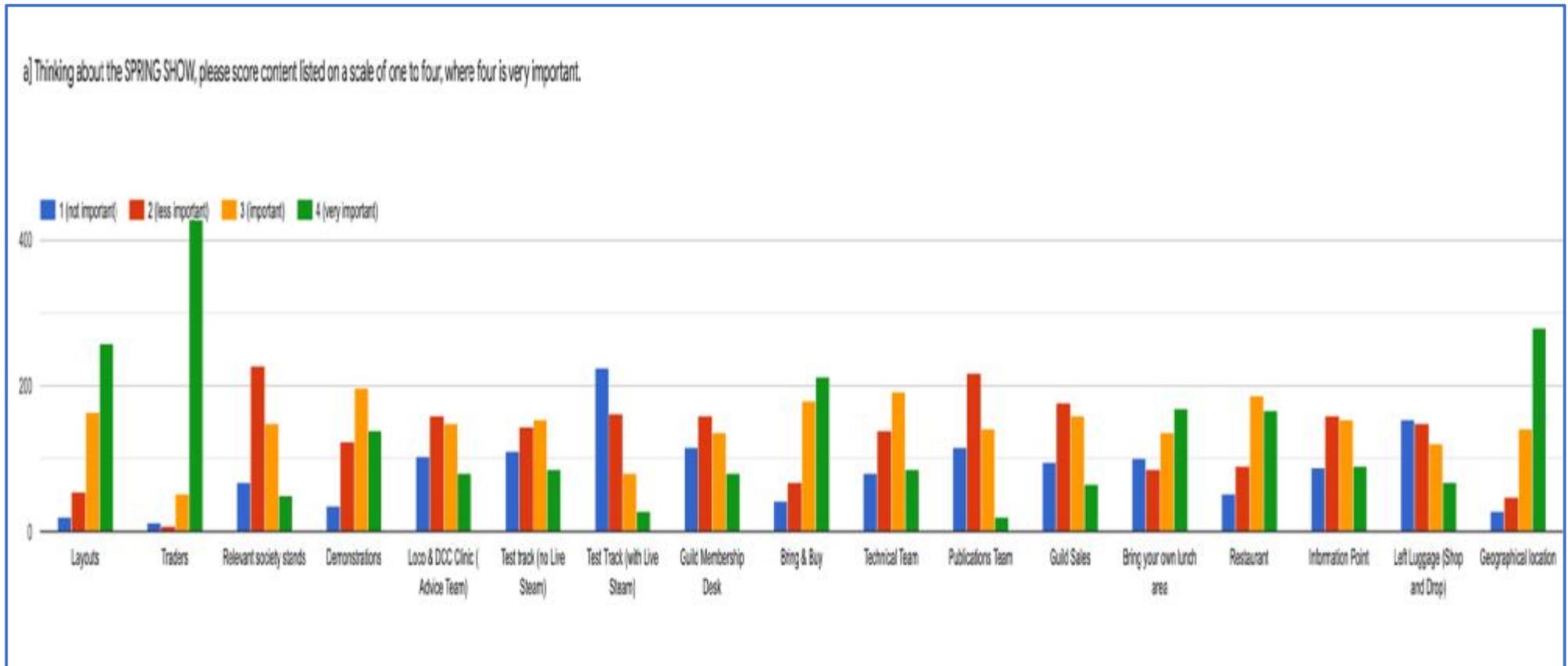
Could not attend

Did not realise they were happening
Lack of time / other commitments

Not organised / missed that they were on or forgot
Too many zooms
Prefer to watch the videos at a time I choose

Question Two: Face-to-Face Events - Existing Content

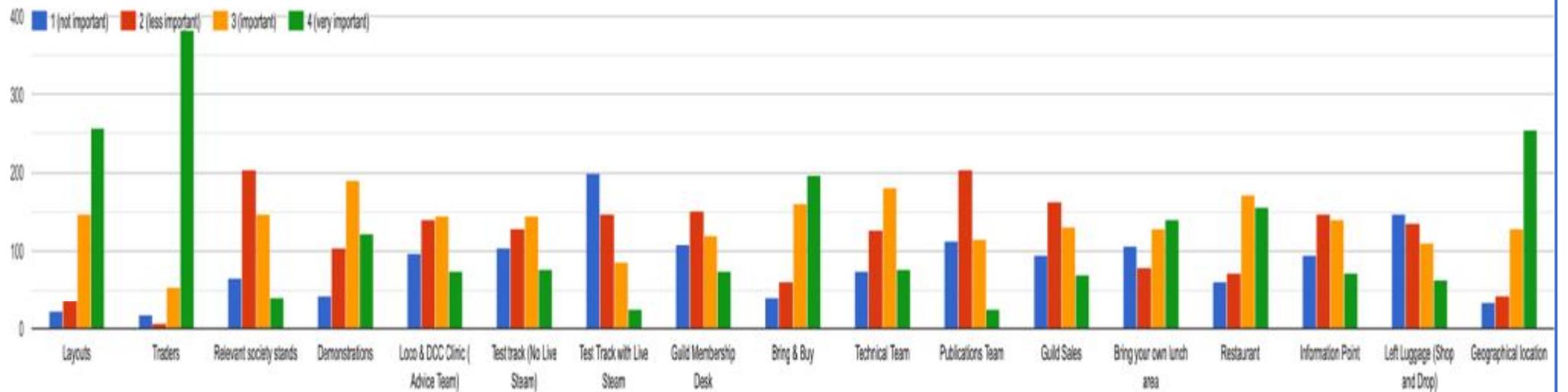
Spring show



Top six most important: traders; layouts; geographical location; bring & buy; bring your own lunch area; restaurant

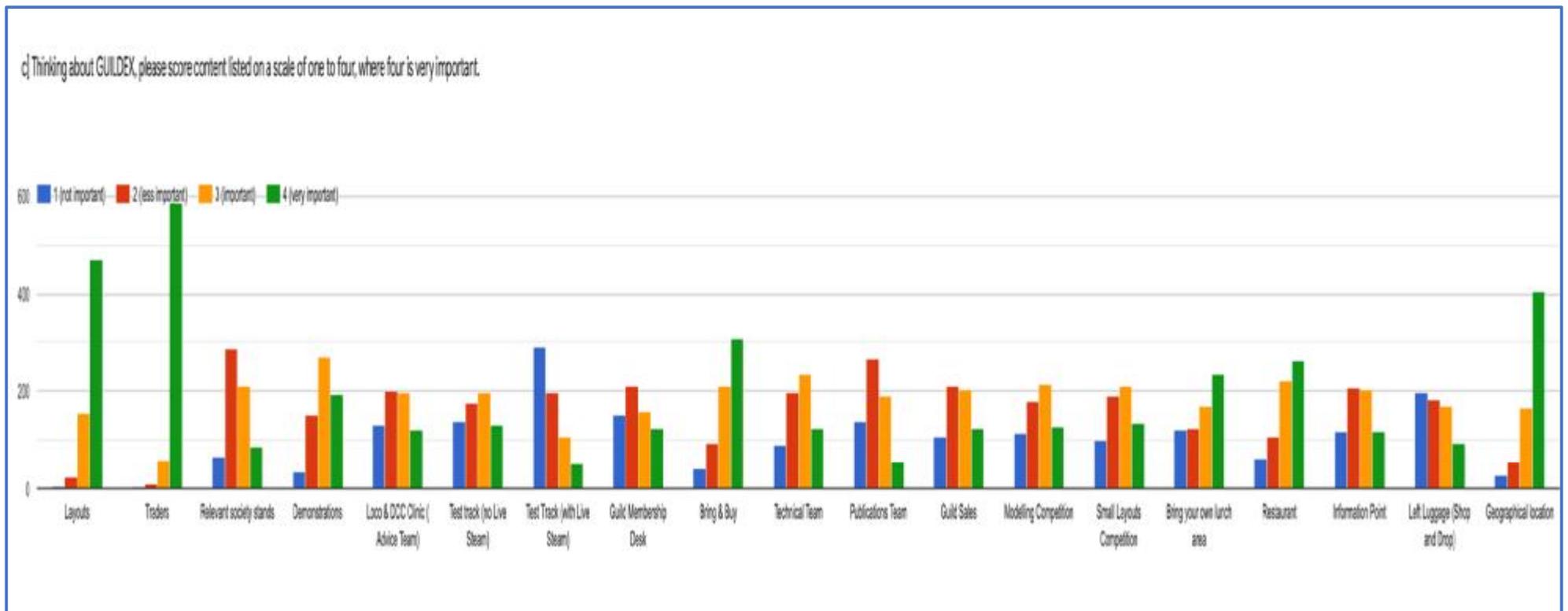
Summer show

b) Thinking about the SUMMER SHOW, please score content listed on a scale of one to four, where four is very important.



Top six most important: traders; layouts; geographical location; bring & buy; restaurant; bring your own lunch area

Guidex



Top six most important: traders; layouts; geographical location; bring & buy; restaurant; bring your own lunch area

Free text

Please use this space for any comments about existing content at face-to-face events:

(200 responses)

Common themes:

Similar themes arise as those stated in previous free text about why members do not attend shows – these include distance, health issues and only wanting to attend one or two shows a year

Guildex is definitely seen as the major showcase event, some schedule holiday in the area so that they can take in both days and visit local attractions, therefore information about accommodation and a lot of variety at the event is important. It should showcase all aspects of O gauge and should be two days

Public transport and shuttle buses from the railway station to each venue are important as is adequate parking

Several respondents talk about the enjoyment of meeting like-minded people, chatting and seeing friends

There are also several requests for ample seating scattered around the event for people to rest a while

There are several requests for more layouts at the spring and summer venues although it is noted that these are smaller venues and can become crowded

More varied demonstrations are mentioned and this has been taken on board. Also, more topical demonstration subjects

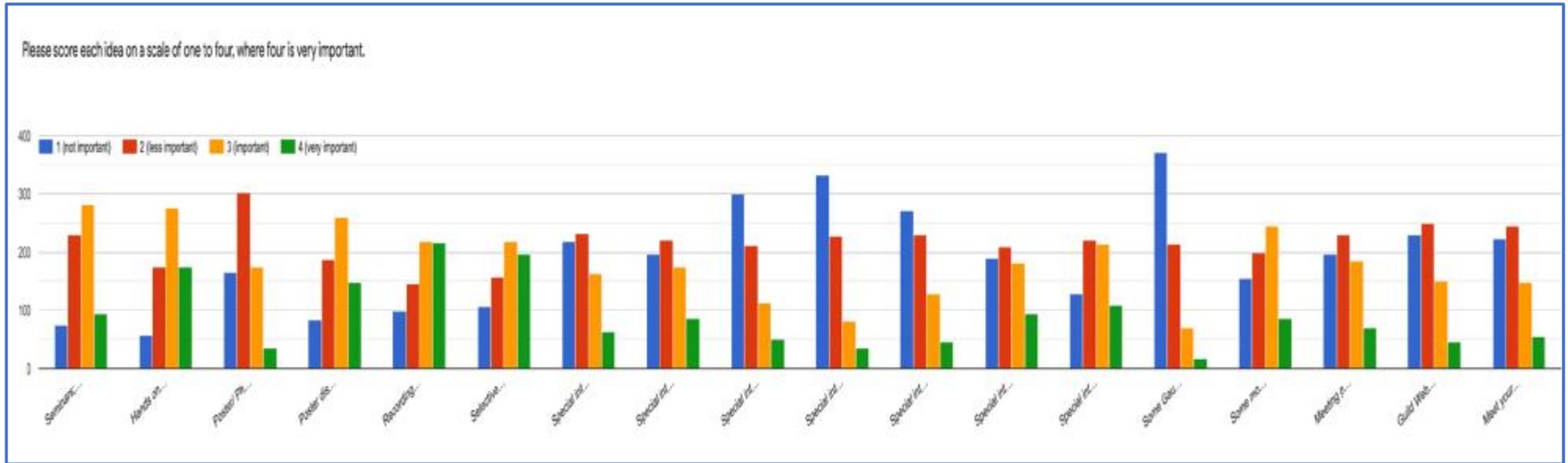
Inspirational layouts of a high standard, more workshops, seminars and demonstrations are noted but it is important for those demonstrating or providing technical support to be at their stations and not just talking to friends.

The loss of E & T is noted and there are several requests for a show nearer to Scotland and a show in the south. There are a few requests to have the regional shows moving around the country

Better food and better prices for refreshments are noted.

Several respondents mention that they are very happy with the current content and some have specifically said they are looking forward to Stafford

Question Three: Face-to-Face Events - New Ideas



Seminars - Speaker gives a talk about a modelling topic
Hands on Workshop. Visitor learns a modelling technique
Poster / photo displays of modelling completed by members
Poster displays of new products which traders have in manufacture or are newly available available
Recording of a live event so that highlights can be seen afterwards
Live streaming from events so that non- attendees can see a few key activities
Special interest area for 7mm Narrow Gauge
Special interest area for Scaef7
Special interest area for coarse scale modelling
Special interest area for tin plate
Special interest area for live steam
Special interest area for modern image
Special interest area for off the shelf modelling
Some Gauge 1 stands
Some model engineering trade stands
Meeting point
Guild Website Rep
Meet your Con Rep Area

Top four most important new ideas: recording aspects of the live events for a highlights video afterwards (217); selective live streaming of a few key aspects for those who cannot attend (197); hands on workshops for learning a modelling technique (175); a poster display of traders' new products (148)

Least important of the new ideas: some gauge 1 stands (371); tin plate area (332); coarse scale area (300); live steam area (272).

Free text

Please share any comments about the ideas listed above and share any other ideas you have for inclusion at Guild Shows.

(165 responses)

Common Themes:

The responses vary greatly...

Special Interest Areas

It is good to have a mix for all, we need to be more inclusive. Narrow gauge may bring in the USA scene. A continental area would also be welcomed. Grouping special interest areas may make navigation easier. Other members said we cannot please everyone so do not get too fragmented. In some cases, the special interest areas are noted as good to have something for everyone but only without detriment to the 'core' O gauge activities. Some respondents go so far as to say We are the Gauge O Guild – why include anything else?

Seminars & Workshops

There are a lot of comments about the fact that having seminars and workshops would be excellent and they could be recorded and streamed later. Have a booking system for the live seminars and workshops. Face to face instruction is key. Perhaps run a workshop over the two days so attendees can achieve something with raw materials being supplied by a trader. Or, four x one-hour sessions, over the two days about building your own kit. Have basic sessions and workshop practices included like at model engineering shows. Cater for intermediate skills too. Ask members what they want. Whatever the project, it needs to be led by someone with proven ability and reasonable communication skills. Some say that they would not have time to visit seminars and workshops as well as see the traders and layouts

Other

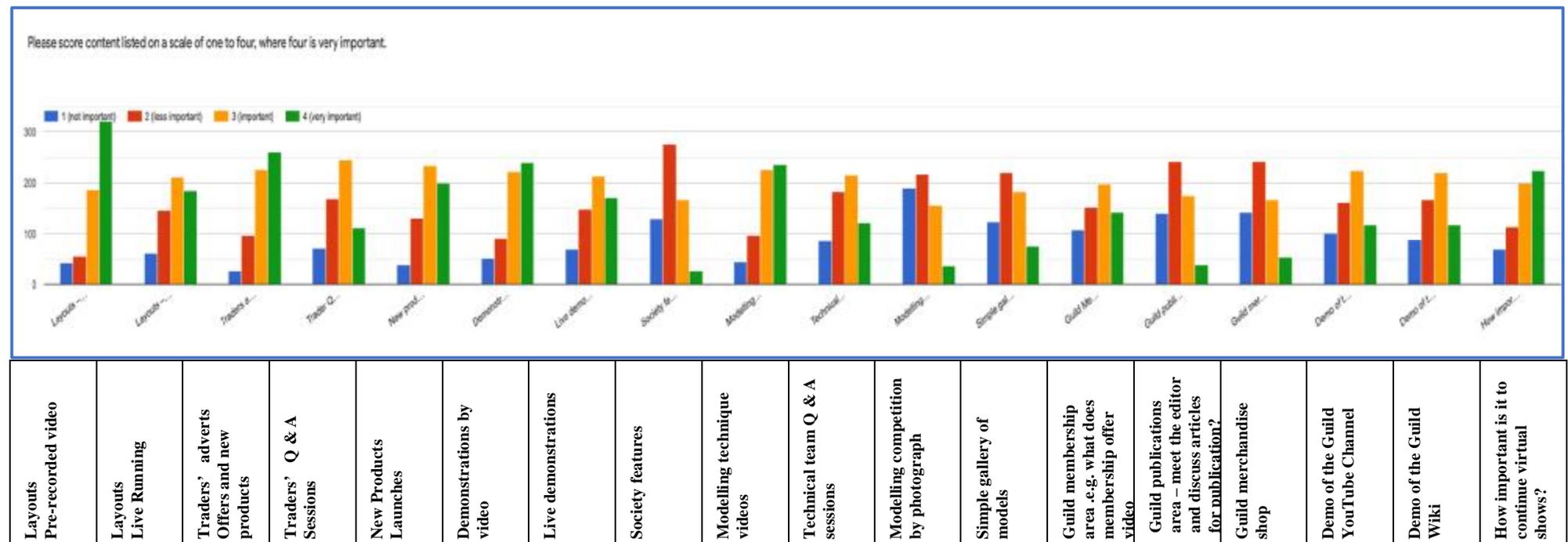
Whilst gauge 1 is not that popular, EM gauge is mentioned as a possible area for inclusion. Garden railway information would be welcomed by some and the introduction of model engineering supplies works well for scratch builders and machinery techniques such as wheel castings. "It might encourage people to have a go at building their own". Another idea is to have a place for scrap metal collection as revenue for a charity perhaps.

Meet the Con Reps Area gets varied responses from – ‘what is a con rep?’ to also include the board members and president.

The location of venues - travel, proximity to road, rail and bus services and car parking gets mentioned again several times as does having more local shows.

Layouts, traders, meeting friends and bring and buy get a lot of support. A replacement for E & T is mentioned. More seating and wheelchair loan are suggested

Question Four: Virtual Shows



Most popular are layouts (pre-recorded); traders advertising; demonstrations by video and modelling techniques by video

It is important to continue with a virtual show

Free text

Please share your comments about or ideas for future virtual shows.

(233 responses)

Common Themes:

There are three common themes...

1. Many respondents do not do virtual shows, are not interested in them, do not have a computer, do not do Zoom or do not do IT
2. Many appreciate them and enjoy them but comment that they are no substitute for the real 'Face to Face shows'
3. Many who cannot attend face to face shows really appreciate that they now get much more from their Guild membership

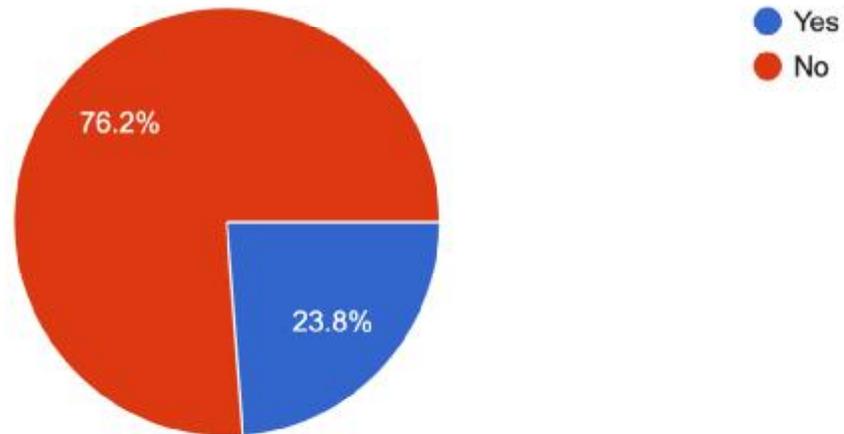
The fact the show is 'open' for a month after the date it was live, is very much appreciated.

There are some specific suggestions to continue featuring members layouts especially those which cannot be brought to exhibitions. Video recording of running is preferred to live running due to technical issues that can occur when live and there is more opportunity to add various other photographs or scenes about the layout.

Question Five: 'An Evening With' Zoom sessions

Have you attended any of the 'An Evening With' Zoom sessions?

697 responses



Free text

If you answered No to the above question – please tell us why you have chosen not to or, have been unable to join any of the Zoom sessions so far.

(457 responses)

Common Themes:

Without doubt the key reasons for not attending the Evening With sessions are about:

Lack of technical / IT ability

Lack of technical / IT equipment

Not interested

Zoom overload

Not seeing them advertised

Time difference (New Zealand)

Physical / hearing impairment

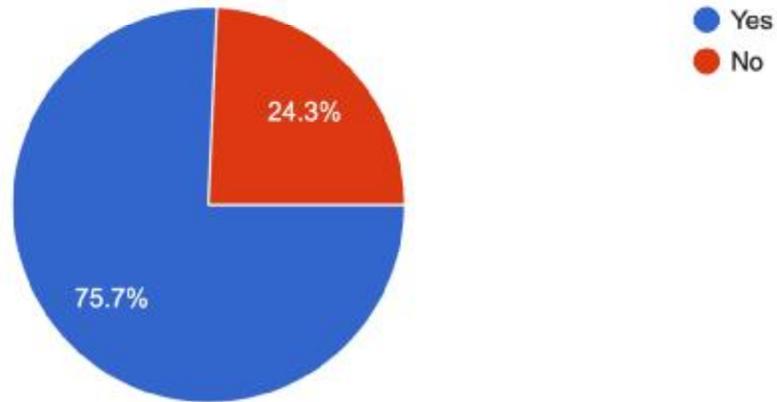
Forgetting to 'attend'

Work or other commitments

Timing not being suitable – some suggest An Afternoon With?

Would you like the 'An evening with sessions' to continue?

596 responses



Free text

Please share any comments about or ideas for 'An evening with' sessions?

(236 responses)

Common Themes:

Many of those who do not attend recognise the benefits to those who enjoy the sessions and think they should continue.

Some respondents talk about sessions they have enjoyed

Benefits include – hearing personal perspectives, being able to ask questions and get advice

Ideas are varied:

A guide to DCC

DCC Problem solving clinic

DCC decoder speed stabilisation

Chip fitting

Pre-grouping

Coupling systems

A series following a layout build

Loco clinic evenings

Workshop practice

Scratch building

Live steam

Machine tools

Scenery

Planning a layout

Track building

Weathering

Lining

Electronics

Converting wagons and coaches

More manufacturers talking about the development of their products

RTR manufacturers talking about the future

Question Six: A new audience for Guild events

Free text

How would you suggest the Guild attracts new audiences to our events and who might they be?

(456 responses)

There are several ideas and opinions shared so I would absolutely recommend reading all the comments as it is very hard to collate them into themes without losing the detail of some ideas. (See pages 54 – 69 of the comments by questions document)

Common Themes:

Several respondents talk about the need for increasing Guild information in the national model railway press, on social media and the use of video material.

Showcasing small layouts, time-lapsed video footage of building O gauge layouts, showing the RTR stock available, changing the competition entry categories, busting the myths especially the perceived need to be an 'engineer'

More local and regional meetings, more live shows, more O gauge layouts at multigauge shows,
Increasing the number of layouts at Kettering and Doncaster

Involving and welcoming younger members
Modular projects / More present-day stock

Increased website engagement

Fewer rules. Show case 30 – 40 year old modellers of either sex and any background via national TV and newspaper advertising .
More collaboration with other modelling societies / scale associations

Liaison with schools and colleges

Question Seven: General comments on Gauge O Guild events

Free text

Please share any other general comments about Gauge O Guild events?

(449 responses)

There are an overwhelming number of very positive comments provided by respondents and the current and previous events teams should be proud to receive such feedback

There is a desire for both live and virtual events to continue and without doubt, the desire for some more 'local' shows is evident. In terms of local shows this would involve supporting local clubs or O gauge groups to hold events like BOGG and NEWGOG. Another suggestion is changing the location of the one day shows but there is acknowledgement that it is almost impossible to find a location that suits everyone.

Again, there are some comments about the Guild in general which are well worth reading. Nice comments about the Gazette, the YouTube Channel, the Wiki and the Forum. **(see pages 70 – 85 of the comments by question document)**

Main conclusions

Members really value live events and have appreciated the virtual events
Both should continue

Having more layouts at the one-day shows would require additional space.

This is feasible at Kettering if, the first-floor facilities are used.

Additional space at The Dome in Doncaster is unlikely although Societies could be relocated into the atrium.

More layouts require more expenses and the additional space at the venues will increase hire charges.

Increased income from traders and visitors cannot be guaranteed.

One suggestion has been to subsidise events using a % of member subscriptions e.g. £1.00 per member but not all members attend events.

It is therefore difficult to identify how we can increase the size of the one day shows.

Increasing the number of shows around the country is possible, IF, clubs or O gauge groups step forward to work with us.

It is not feasible nor financially sound to have a central team organising local shows

The South Tyneside O Gauge group have scheduled a Northern Show in October. They have not applied for any financial support as yet

Discussions with Guildford O Gauge Group about collaborating on a Southern Show did not progress so we are starting discussions with some other members in the south.

However, traders report that they are doing fewer shows and picking those which are successful. We know that the ALSRM event in May 2022 has been cancelled and anecdotally, we hear that this is because they lacked trader support.

We are fortunate that our spring show in Kettering attracted a good number of traders and some new ones who replaced those who have withdrawn. We cannot be sure that traders will support more local shows even if the Guild are involved in their organisation. However, we do know that traders definitely want an event in the south and at the moment the resumption of the Guildford O Gauge Group Trade Show does not seem to be progressing.

We also need to make sure that the events, we are involved with, are spread evenly across the year

January - Bristol O Gauge Group are hopeful that they may have found a venue for January 2023 (It may be a one-day show)

March – Our Spring Show in Kettering

April – The Newport O Gauge Group Show

June – Our Summer show in Doncaster

September – Our Guildex Convention in Stafford

October – The new Northern O Gauge Show

November – Our Virtual show

December – A new southern show??

The continued success of face to face shows does require a good mix of layouts and demonstrators. All suggestions for layouts are welcome. The Con Reps visit local clubs and shows so please let the events team know if you see a good layout or ask the owner to send us details. We should also all encourage members to register their layouts with Tony Kell so they appear on the layout register.

The events team are making a conscious effort to change the demonstrators from show to show and year on year but this requires recommendations from the membership and from other committees.

We have promoted the support which can be gained from the Technical Committee representatives and the Loco and DCC Advice Centre at face to face shows and this seems to have been taken up at Kettering 2022. We are also discussing locating these two teams and the demonstrators, together, in a walk-in horseshoe style area called 'Here to help you' at Guildex.

Seminars and workshops will be included at Guildex 2022 but again suggestions and volunteers are required. Special interest area will also be available to see what the uptake is like.

We have also discussed, in the past, whether Publications, Membership, Overseas and IT could be located together on one stand and cover for each other. Working together to show members and non-members what they offer would appear more united rather than having separate stands? Bring and Buy and Guild Sales are very popular and are stand-alone attractions. The new merchandise offered by the shop at shows and on line has proved very beneficial.

The Events Team is grateful for the additional support of other committees during set up and breakdown; this made a big difference at Kettering. Thank you.

The success of virtual shows and the 'Evening With' seminars, like face to face events, require good layouts and demonstrators.

The virtual events have certainly facilitated an increase in member engagement, both as video providers and audience members.

The virtual events team has also brought together representatives from events, technical, membership, publications, IT and management. This rich mix of skills and knowledge has proved extremely successful and is much appreciated and I also want to acknowledge the huge support provided by Artytpe with administration and creative design work.

Finally, we also need to value the trader input at shows - both face-to-face and virtual.

If we do not have traders, we do not have enough income for the shows to survive and the visitors will not come if they do not have products to see, feel and buy.

Feedback from the first face to face show, post Covid, will be ready for the March events and management meetings and it is therefore timely to consider 'what went well', 'what can be even better' and how successful or otherwise the show was financially.

Any thoughts and feedback are welcome via jackiegogevents@gmail.com