



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018
27 June 2016, 6.30pm, Bishop's Finger, London

Attending

Board directors

Tim Hampson	Paul Nunny
Frances Brace	Matt Curtis
Joanna Dring	Susanna Forbes
Robert Humphreys	Neil Walker
Apologies: Paul Hegarty	

Members

Adrian Tierney-Jones	Christine Cryne
John Porter	John Cryne
Bill Simmons	Jane Peyton
Jess Mason	Nigel Tarn
Tim Holt	Martyn Cornell
Guy Thornton	Richard Dakin
Roger Warhurst	Allan McLean
Bryan Betts	Annabel Smith
Larry Nelson	Natalya Watson
Peter Haydon	Katie Wiles
Mitchel Adams	Kate Hemsall
Pete Brown	Rod Jones
Paul Bailey	Ros Shiel
Lotte Peplow	

Apologies

Stephen Beaumont	Csaba Babk
Joan Birraire	Jeff Evans
Michael Clarke	Jan Lichota
Paul Davies	Roger Protz
Will Hawkes	Emma Victory
John Holl	Lisa Harlow
Rick Kempen	James McCrorie
Rodney Challis	

Minutes of AGM 2017

Minutes proposed by Rod Jones, seconded by Pete Brown

Matters arising

There were no matters arising

Chairman's report

Tim Hampson felt that the year 2017/18 had been a successful one for the Guild.

The Board was committed to adding value for members with events and training, but would need to increase revenue to support this. An increase in individual and corporate subscriptions would be part of this plan.

Membership had grown during the year with 60 new individual members and Tim thanked Matt Curtis for his excellent work as membership secretary.

Tim observed that corporate members were important in enabling dialogue between the industry and individual members who write about beer and pubs. A new structure for corporate membership subs is being developed, with fees varying by company size.

Annual Awards and dinner: attendance at the dinner dipped slightly in 2017.

Tim highlighted other events including the recent Beer Meets Food in Bristol seminar and Market Insights presentation by Heineken.

The Guild's Yearbook is set to be published shortly. Going forward, the Board is developing plans with publisher Larry Nelson to ensure it delivers value to advertisers.

A Code of Conduct is being developed, with the intention not of stifling comment, but ensuring responsible journalism.

Finally, Tim reflected on the changes in the Guild during his 12 year tenure as Chair. It has transferred from being a club to a more professional organisation, with more formal structures and a more stable financial footing. Tim thanked the Treasurer for his help on this.

Thanks came from the floor for all Tim's excellent work as Chair.

Treasurer's report

Accounts to 31 March 2018 attached.

Paul Nunny explained that the losses incurred were budgeted, as the Guild seeks to reduce reserves by investing in services of value to members.

Reserves currently stand at c.£68,000 and the target is £50,000 to cover liabilities (mainly the annual dinner).

Paul explained that expenditure this year is likely to be around the same as last year (c. £14,000), but this would be offset by the proposed increase in membership subs.

Christine Cryne suggested there should be some third party scrutiny of the accounts. Board to consider.

Peter Haydon observed that the interest earned on the Guild's bank account was very low. Paul Nunny agreed to research a more favourable rate.

Rod Jones proposed acceptance of the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Guy Thornton.

Membership secretary's report

Matt Curtis reported that 60 new members had joined the Guild in 2017/18, many of them young writers. Of these, 42 were Full members and 18 Associates, 44 men and 16 women.

The same period saw 16 resignations. Matt explained that these were for a variety of reasons: moving out of the industry, changes in personal circumstances, and as such did not indicate any trend.

The membership secretary's report was proposed by John Porter and seconded by Jane Peyton.

Motion to increase membership subscriptions.

Paul Nunny proposed that the annual membership subscription to the Guild of Beer Writers be increased from £40 to £55, effective 1 April 2018. This increase is necessary to maintain the level of expenditure and investment to deliver greater value to Guild members.

The Guild's subscription has been held at £40 for at least a decade, and at £55 per annum is still modest compared to many similar organisations (Guild of Food Writers, £85; Guild of Travel Writers, £160).

We are also restructuring the fees charged to our corporate members, introducing a new fee structure based on organisation size which will result in a number of members paying a higher fee than they do currently.

John Cryne asked how easy it would be to increase the subs as many members pay by standing orders. PN replied that it would need some work, and that the plan to introduce e-commerce to the Guild website would help to make payment easier for members.

Free membership for members aged 65+ with seniority of Guild membership is staying.

The motion was seconded by Katie Wiles, and passed.

Secretary's report

Ros Shiel reported on the events/training since last AGM.

Events

Beer & Food Masterclass with Guild of Food Writers, July 2017

Pre-GBBF party and Michael Jackson celebration, August 2017

Ingredients in Brewing Seminar, Thornbridge Brewery, September 2017

Off trade seminar with Drinks Retailing News, October 2017

Drinkers Voice briefing, January 2018

Market Insights presentation by Heineken, April 2018

Beer Meets Food in Bristol, June 2018

Training

Digital Grounding: November 2017

Mobile Storytelling: June 2018

Forthcoming events:

Summer Party, Brixton Brewery, 6 August

The Pub, Evolving Not Dying, seminar. Birmingham, 18 September

Annual Awards Dinner, Chelsea Harbour Hotel, 29 November.

RS reported that a mentorship scheme was being developed, all associate members have now been contacted to ask if they would like a mentor.

Election of board directors

Elections were held for four vacancies on the board. Six candidates stood for election and the following were elected:

Pete Brown, Jo Dring, Annabel Smith and Natalya Watson.

Any other business

Broadcasting Award: this has been removed for this year due to lack of sponsorship. TH stated that the award could be restored if sponsors are found in future years. Matt Curtis explained that broadcast work could also be entered to other categories, depending on its reach (eg national/regional) or topic (beer + travel) or age of submitter (young writer), as well as online category.

New Award for Best Writer About Pubs: Neil Walker reported that the award descriptor would be changed, and the category was open to all comms about pubs, not just positive pieces.

Award sponsors: all members were asked to consider whether brewers or other organisations might be interested in sponsoring an award. Robert Humphreys expressed view that we needed to look beyond our corporate membership for sponsors. Frances Brace added that awards sponsorship would be included within the new corporate membership offer currently being developed and that a brochure or similar would be made available to individual members in due course, to ensure potential new corporate members are offered a consistent set of benefits.

Member newsletter: Guy Thornton requested return of Guild members newsletter, helped distinguish news about members from other news. TH said the new board would consider this.

The meeting closed.