



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019
25 June 2018, 6.30pm, The George, Borough High Street, London

Attending
Board directors

Pete Brown
Frances Brace
Joanna Dring
Neil Walker
Annabel Smith

Paul Nunny
Natalya Watson
Robert Humphreys
Susanna Forbes

Members

Mitch Adams
Elaine Beckett
James Beeson
Christine Cryne
Martyn Cornell
Mark Dorber
Anthony Gladman
Tim Hampson
Peter Haydon
Paul Hegarty
Gillian Hough
Jacopo Mazzeo
Larry Nelson
Fran Nowak
Lotte Peplow
Miles Pinfold
Roger Protz
Bill Simmons
Guy Thornton
Roger Warhurst
Ed Wray

Paul Bailey
Bryan Betts
Mike Clarke
John Cryne
Richard Dakin
Jonny Garrett
Mike Hampshire
Helen Hartley
Becky Haywood
Tim Holt
Rod Jones
Phil Mellows
Sue Nowak
Rebecca Pate
Jane Peyton
John Porter
Ros Shiel
Nigel Tarn
Dale Tomlinson
Steve Williams

Apologies

Melissa Cole
Jeff Evans
Kate Hemsall
Tim Webb

Matt Curtis
Alex Hall
Adrian Tierney-Jones

1.Minutes of AGM 2018

Minutes proposed by Bill Simmonds, seconded by Bryan Betts

2.Matters arising

There were no matters arising

3.Chair's report

Awards

- Pete Brown reported the Awards will be launched in July, with Emma Inch chairing the judging panel as Beer Writer of the Year. The dinner is being held at One George Street on Tuesday 3rd December.
- The Best Beer Broadcaster category is being reintroduced due to demand from members. PB made the point that it was dropped in 2018 due to low number of entries, so members were urged to enter this year with radio/TV broadcasts or podcasts.
- Other Awards are largely unchanged, though the London Pride award is now renamed as Fuller Smith & Turner award.
- PB reported that more categories could be introduced with more sponsorship and asked members to forward any suggestions on sponsors to him.

Code of Conduct: this was introduced at the 2018 Awards dinner and expanded to cover members' behaviour at events. PB reported that there has not yet been any need to refer to the code.

European chapter: this is in the process of being set up by a group of Guild members in Europe. PB said this was a testament to the strength of the Guild.

Website: a member only section will be ready over the summer, with minutes from Board meetings and resources available only to members. PB urged members to register on the website to ensure they can access these documents.

Guild Secretary: PB reported the vacancy had attracted applications, which close on 30 June.

Questions and requests

C Cryne suggested a lapel badge for Guild members.

G Thornton: requested the Guild membership card be reintroduced. PB reported these will be available to members on request.

4. Finance director's report

- Corporate membership receipts in 2019/20 will increase from £19,000 from 9K in 18/19
- The Guild is spending more money to deliver more activity and value to members.
- This year's dinner is predicted to lose around £5,000 (compared to £7,000 in 2018), and if more sponsors come on board, the loss will be reduced.
- Chair honorarium: this has been increased from £1,000 to £2,000
- Marketing costs of £3,000 to raise the Guild's profile and recruit new members
- Website costs were lower than in 2018/19 as major costs were incurred in previous year
- Predicted deficit for 2019/20 will be c. £10,000, compared to £24,000 in 18/19. The aim is to break even in 2020/21.
- Reserves currently stand at £43,000 and the Board has agreed £40,000, which would cover the costs of the dinner and Awards.

Other points:

Tax charge: to avoid this, all transactions need to be related to the Guild as a membership organisation, not any commercial activity such as the dinner

VAT: may register Guild for VAT to reclaim on dinner and Secretary payment

Questions/comments:

B Betts: asked if the Guild could become a charity. C Cryne said this had been looked at but wouldn't be possible, though the educational element could become a charity.

S Williams: noted that the predicted deficit for 2018/19 was £14,000 and the actual was 24K. Treasurer explained that the main reason for difference was that income fell from Awards sponsorship, not that expenditure was excessive, and that the Board had invested where they felt it appropriate.

M Hampshire: suggested the Guild could become a community interest company. C Cryne said this could only be done by splitting the education into a separate unit and currently writing is not classed as a key characteristic for a CIO. She also added that being governed by the Charity Commission would be onerous.

5. Accounts for 2018/19

Acceptance of the accounts for 2018/19: proposed by J Porter, seconded by G Thornton and passed unanimously. .

Membership subscriptions rising from £55 to £57.50. Proposed by S Forbes, seconded by R Jones. Passed with three abstentions.

6. Director elections

Susanna Forbes was thanked for her hard work as a Board director before standing down.

Frances Brace: proposed by B Simmons and seconded by P Haydon

Neil Walker: proposed by G Thornton, seconded by M Adams

Chair reported that the Board will co-opt two more directors to share the work, looking particularly for help on marketing/social media and events. This will be done at the next Board meeting, any members interested in joining the Board should contact the Chair.

7. Reports from Directors

Annabel Smith: individual membership/training

- 304 Full and Associate members
- 40 new members since last AGM – 28 Full, 12 Associate
- New recruitment brochure has been produced and will be used to recruit new members soon
- Seminars and training courses have attracted non-members, some of whom have subsequently joined.
- A Smith made point that recruitment of new members will not dilute quality; applications are checked by sub-committee. Looking to widen recruitment beyond writers to include communicators more broadly.

Questions/comments:

G Thornton: should name change to Guild of writers and communicators. To be discussed at next Board meeting.

P Hegarty: what are other similar organisations offering? Also suggested targeting academics working in the beer/pubs sector.

C Cryne: beer trainers should be included in recruitment drive

J Garrett: noted that not many of the Guild's benefits are relevant to YouTubers. Suggested that he and other podcasters could make recommendation on this to the Board.

Robert Humphreys: Corporate membership

- Reported that he and F Brace had done a lot of work to reassure existing members they are valued and getting them more engaged with the Guild to deliver more value.
- 10 new corporate members since 2018 AGM.
- Corporate subscriptions have increased from £200 flat fee to tiered system between £250 and £500.
- Request made to members to think about corporate membership for companies they may have dealings with. R Humphreys/F Brace can follow up leads.

Questions

B Betts: asked what opportunities were for corporate members to engage with individual members. RH said this is being looked at.

B Simmons: asked about recruitment of craft brewers. RH reported Lacons and Magic Rock have joined recently. B Simmons suggested recruitment evenings in Manchester and Leeds and inviting craft brewers.

Natalya Watson: events and training

Events

- Events held in 2018/9 were listed, aim is to hold one per quarter, with one full day event usually out of London and others held during day/evening .
- Members were asked to let N Watson know of any suggested subjects for a seminar. Current topics under consideration include: wild fermentation, sustainability, yeast
- Forthcoming events:
- Summer Party at London Fields Brewery, 5 August
- Homebrewing: date TBC, in autumn in London

Questions/comments:

P Hegarty: events are a good way of engaging with corporate members, such as the insights seminar delivered by Heineken.

R Protz: reported that the recent Malt Seminar in Norfolk was one of the best ever Guild events. P Brown added that a report of the event is being written and will be available on the website.

J Beeson: suggested an event around hop growing next year

Training

Aiming for five courses per year.

B Simmonds: noted that training events are well run and very valuable.

N Watson: added that it is helpful that Guild members who deliver training are happy to do this at a reduced rate, enabling a low charge to Guild members.

8. Chair's presentation on Guild's strategic direction

Chair explained that there was a need to review the Guild's aims and objectives. At last year's AGM, the Board had been instructed to spend down the reserves, which it has been doing.

The Guild is helping members in a number of areas:

- Helping members to improve skills: training and Code of Conduct, which includes guidance on professional ethics, conflict of interest etc
- Access to stories: daily briefings and events

- Facilitating social interactions: networking events, including some out of London. The benefits of holding events out of London attended by Board members need to be balanced against expense of travel –
- Influence in beer world – Beer Dinner, Summer Party
- Raising profile in the wider world: needs more time and investment to do this, using social media in particular. J Dring as director with marketing remit is looking at this.

Aim for 2020/21 is a break even budget while still delivering value to members. The deficit equates to the cost of the Secretary, but without this role the current level of activity would not be possible. More corporate membership and sponsorship of awards would mean increase revenue and less need to cut expenditure.

Questions

B Betts: what happened to mentoring scheme for associate members? A Smith to look at within recruitment/ training remit.

P Mellows: reported he had volunteered as a mentor and would appreciate more explanation of the role

M Cornell: how can we reach wider beer writing world and promote the benefits of membership? PB reported this is being considered.

R Protz: reported that the Guild had held a one-day conference on beer, attended by journalists on national press. This could be considered again.

F Nowak: CAMRA newsletter editors/contributors could be targeted as recruits

T Hampson: offered support and applause for what the Guild has done over the last 12 months.

S Williams: confirmation of the Guild's financial records is overdue, due to timing of the AGM.

J Cryne: suggested the Guild should document its reserves policy and publish it to members.

L Nelson: Guild's Yearbook is set to be published shortly, thanks to members for updating profiles. Brewery Manual to members at 19.95 instead of 39.95

The AGM ended. Thanks were given to Greene King for their hospitality at the George.