



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

25 August 2020, 7pm – Online via Zoom

Attending

Board directors

Pete Brown
Paul Nunny
Frances Brace
Joanna Dring
Robert Humphreys

Neil Walker
Annabel Smith
Katie Wiles
Jacopo Mazzeo

Members

Adrian Tierney-Jones
Anthony Gladman
Barry Watts
Bill Simmons
Brett Laniosh
Christine Cryne
Emma Inch
Fran Nowak
Francesca Slattery
Gillian Hough
Guy Thornton
Helen Hartley
Iain Loe
Jane Peyton
Jeff Evans
Joan Villar-i-Martí
John Cryne
John Porter
John Read
Jules Gray
Kate Hempsall
Kate Oppenheim
Kathryn Tye
Lana Svitankova

Larry Nelson
Lotte Peplow
Maria Markus
Mark Dredge
Martyn Cornell
Matt Curtis
Mike Clarke
Mitchel Adams
Natalya Watson
Nick Law
Nigel Tarn
Phil Mellows
Rick Kempen
Ros Shiel
Robin Parker
Stephen Beaumont
Steve Lamond
Steve Williams
Sue Nowak
Susanna Forbes
Tim Hampson
Tim Skelton
Will Hawkes

Apologies

Georgina Wald
Mick O'Hare
Richard Dakin

Martin Oates
Roger Protz

1.Minutes of AGM 2019

Minutes proposed by Bill Simmons, seconded by Guy Thornton.

2.Matters arising

J Read asked for an update on the European Chapter. P Brown replied that he will provide an update during his Chair's report.

3.Chair's report

P Brown summarized his prepared report:

- Prior to March 2020, the Guild was having one of its most successful years including very positive feedback on the 2019 Dinner & Awards, increased membership and improved finances
- When lockdown came into place in March 2020, we carried on providing services for our members, including weekly online seminars and providing information for members regarding financial support
- The European Chapter was launched after a meeting in Brussels in September 2019; it is a subset of the Guild and operates independently. The goal is for international events to take place in the future between the chapter and the broader Guild.
- Natalya Watson was appointed as Secretary in October 2019 and is doing well in the role
- The Guild's Strategic Plan, which was presented at AGM 2019, is now on hold due to the Coronavirus uncertainty
- Given the pandemic, the industry, and therefore the Guild, has taken a financial hit, including reduced membership (individual, corporate) and sponsorship for the Guild awards. PB asked for members to encourage others to re-subscribe and continue supporting the Guild
- The Guild Awards will go ahead for 2020, but there will not be a physical dinner this year. We currently cannot guarantee any prize money, but that may change if we can improve our sponsorship position. Trophies will be awarded at an online event and we will give winners as much exposure as possible on social and on the website

Questions/comments:

- Regarding the Awards, M Curtis asked why the national category is print only this year; why can online pieces not be entered in this category and only be entered in the online category? P Brown firstly noted that the goal is for these changes to be in place for 2020 only. He reported that categories were reduced because of lack of sponsorship and to decrease workload for our judges.
- A Gladman asked about entering 2 pieces vs. 4 pieces per category in the Awards. P Brown noted it should be 4 and we will update/clarify on the website accordingly.

4. Treasurer's report

P Nunny talked through the accounts he circulated:

- He noted that our objective, as minuted last year, was to move towards break even and we are moving in that direction

- The accounts have been audited by a chartered accountant; there was nothing material from that audit
- He noted there are concerns around the 20/21 budget, as subs are our main driver for income, so income may be reduced
- Guild Secretary is an expense we would like to continue to fund, but the rest of the expenditure is severely curbed
- We're still trying to break even this year while providing members with support
- There is no increase in subs this year

Questions/comments:

None

5. Accounts for 2019/ 2020

Acceptance of the accounts: proposed by John Porter, seconded by Frances Brace. Passed unanimously with 2 abstentions.

6. Proposed changes to the Guild's objectives

P Brown noted that while we are a Guild of beer writers, our strategic focus has broadened to include photography, podcasts, etc. This is a revision to reflect the diversity of communication about beer and to show that the Guild is about more than just writing.

Questions/comments:

- J Read welcomes the opportunity to refresh the objectives of the Guild, but as this is an update to the Articles of Association, he feels this is relatively short notice to the broader membership for such a change as the current objectives were only adopted a couple of years ago. He is also concerned about the dropping of the last line - that the Guild is non-political - from the Articles. He'd like for that to return to keep the impartiality and non-political nature of the Guild. He feels the proposed objectives are overly wordy and that less is more. He noted that the remit of the Guild should include more than just the promotion of beer and pubs to include bars, taprooms, restaurants, etc. He suggested that we should take this to a consultation of Guild members and address it at an EGM in the future.
- J Porter agreed that a consultation makes sense
- F Brace noted that removal of the non-political line does not mean that it should not be included somewhere in the Articles, just that it is not an objective
- C Cryne noted that she is also concerned about dropping the line about the Guild being non-political from the Articles
- M Curtis is happy with the Articles and changes to the objectives as proposed, as he feels that having a broad remit to the Guild is crucial, so he suggested we take the vote and if the changes are voted down, we then take the proposed changes to consultation
- M Adams, K Wiles, J Gray, S Beaumont agree with M Curtis
- J Cryne suggested that all members should get an opportunity to vote. P Brown noted that any proposed change to the Articles has to be approved at an AGM or EGM, that these proposed changes have been visible for all members for two weeks on the website and that all members have an opportunity to vote, either by proxy or by attending the AGM.

- F Slattery asked to confirm if the line about the Guild being a non-political body can be found elsewhere in the Articles if it is removed from the objectives. P Brown replied that it is not currently mentioned anywhere else in the Articles.

A vote was taken on the acceptance of the proposed changes to the Guild's objectives: the vote failed to reach a simple majority.

P Brown proposed that we will move to a broader consultation and welcome comments from all members.

7. Election of Directors

- Jo Dring was thanked by P Brown for her hard work before stepping down. J Dring noted that she enjoyed her time as a Director. She was thanked by J Read, E Inch, J Porter, M Adams, S Forbes and M Clarke.
- P Brown announced that Robert Humphreys was not re-elected. P Brown thanked Robert for his many contributions to the Guild on sponsorship, corporate membership and turning around the finances of the Guild. R Humphreys wished the new board success. He was thanked by E Inch, M Curtis, S Forbes, K Wiles, N Walker, P Nunny, B Simmons, and A Tierney-Jones.
- Paul Nunny, Katie Wiles and Jacopo Mazzeo have been re-elected to the board, alongside Matthew Curtis and Kate Oppenheim. New Directors were welcomed and congratulated.

8. Reports from Directors

Annabel Smith: Individual Members

- As of August 10th, 2020 there were 258 members in good standing
- The Board delayed collection of subs for 3 months because of Coronavirus
- In 19/20, there were 32 new Full members and 9 Associate members
- J Porter and B Betts were thanked for their assistance on the membership sub committee
- Annual subs have remained at £57.50
- At the AGM 2019, new pin badges were approved and the first lot have been shipped out to members. Members were asked to send their current postal addresses to the Secretary.
- A Smith thanked all existing members who proposed new members and asked members to keep their thinking caps on for new bloggers, broadcasters, trainers, etc. would could be potential new members.

Questions/comments:

J Read asked if there were verifiable digital versions of the badges. A Smith reported that she will investigate.

Robert Humphreys: Corporate Members

- In the 19/20 year, the Guild reached 70 corporate members
- So far for the 20/21 year, only 2 corporate members have resigned, but half have not yet renewed

- Malin Norman and Jaine Organ were thanked for their contribution to the Yearbook which is now on hold

Questions/comments:

None

Annabel Smith: Events/ Training

- A Smith reported on the trainings and events in the 19/20 year, including seminars, trainings, the summer party and annual Awards
- With Coronavirus, in-person trainings became impossible
- All Guild members that volunteered their services for the free online seminars were thanked
- We will offer our next 2 training courses online – Sept 14th, Building a Personal Brand with Nick Law and Oct 29th, Advanced Photography with Matt Curtis
- All members were asked to get in touch with their specialist expertise or knowledge if they'd like to offer a training course
- Our postponed 2020 trainings will be re-offered next year

Questions/comments:

- J Read asked if online courses / trainings could be recorded and offered to re-watch in the future, if people can't attend, as we once hit the maximum for an online seminar. He is happy to pay an attendance fee.
- E Inch commented that she felt there wasn't value in sharing her slides as she makes money from them and needs to protect her IP. B Simmons, M Adams, W Hawkes, M Curtis, H Hartley and N Law seconded.
- P Brown noted that recording events/seminars/courses will be assessed on a case by case basis. In some cases, write ups of events are being shared on the Members Area of the website.
- A Smith noted that some courses can be re-offered if over-subscribed.
- S Lamond asked for future events to be made accessible to remote attendees, as he is in Northern Ireland. P Brown noted that we will share as much we can.

Katie Wiles: Social Media

- K Wiles reported that her goal has been to make the Guild's Twitter, Facebook page and Facebook group more dynamic
- On Twitter, member profiles are being shared nearly daily
- The Awards were a main focus late last year/early this year, promoting the beer and food pairings, our winners, etc.
- Attention and focus has been on Twitter, tweeting 20-30x per month (up from 2-3x before)
- Launched a member-only Facebook group, but has not grown as quickly as Twitter
- Coronavirus has made it harder to keep things visually interesting, but she is mindful of that challenge

Questions/comments:

- K Hemsall thanked K Wiles for her efforts on social. She asked how we get specific items shared on social, is it just eNews items or anything that members tweet or share? K Wiles suggested to mention the Guild account on Twitter if you'd like something shared.

9. AOB

G Thornton asked about member cards. N Watson reported that pin badges were prioritized and member cards are now on hold, but will be produced in the future.

F Brace noted her recognition and gratitude to R Humphreys for his effort in doubling the corporate membership of the Guild and his sponsorship efforts. B Betts, R Kempen, G Hough seconded.

J Read asked for a note of thanks to be minuted to last year's directors for their hard work and to wish this year's Board the best for the coming year. S Forbes, L Peplow, J Evans seconded.

P Brown thanked all members for attending.

The AGM ended.