



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021**

### **Chair's Report to the Meeting**

#### **Introduction**

It's safe to say that with the hard work of the Board, and the support of our members, corporate members and sponsors, the Guild is in a better position than any of us could have hoped for a year ago.

It's understandable that both individuals and companies might want to cut back in these straitened times. A Guild membership fee may seem an unaffordable luxury. We therefore had to budget for the likelihood of a significantly reduced income, at the same time as remaining active enough to demonstrate the real value of supporting the Guild.

Happily, our income didn't drop by as much as we feared, and with no awards dinner this year and reduced expenses across the board, we've managed to make a small financial surplus, leaving the Guild in healthy shape as things slowly return to normal.

This was only possible thanks to all our Board members and Nat, our secretary, all going above and beyond what anyone could reasonably expect from them in terms of time and effort. I'd particularly like to thank Robert Humphreys, Frances Brace and Annabel Smith, who have decided to step down as of this AGM. Robert and Frances on the corporate membership side, and Annabel on individual membership and training for members, have played fundamental roles in keeping the Guild afloat, and leave very big shoes to fill.

Finally, writing this at a time when our industry is facing up to widespread reporting of sexual discrimination, harassment and assault, can I remind members that in 2018 we instituted a Code of Conduct which makes it clear that any such behaviour by Guild members or at Guild events is completely unacceptable, and we have a process in place to deal with any allegations made. Members can approach the Chair in confidence if they wish to report any contravention of the Code. The Code can be found in the "About" section on the Guild's website.



## **Revised objectives**

At the 2020 AGM we proposed an amendment to the objectives of the Guild. Such an amendment must be passed by the AGM. This amendment was not passed at the 2020 AGM and it was agreed we would consult more widely and revise it. The revised proposal has been circulated to members and is attached again here, along with notes explaining the reasoning behind the rewording.

## **Dinner and Awards**

We had no awards dinner event in December 2020 but we did go ahead with our awards and held a virtual ceremony, at which Lily Waite was crowned Beer Writer of the Year. We had a slimmed down range of a categories, but thanks to the hard work of Robert Humphreys we were able to get most awards sponsored at a reduced rate and still hand out cash prizes to our winners. Thank you to Ros Shiel and to our 2019 Beer Writer of the Year, Jonny Garrett, for pushing Zoom to its limits and ensuring we still had a memorable evening.

This year we plan to return to One Great George Street for a real-world dinner! We hope to offer prizes in our full suite of awards categories, but this is dependent upon sponsorship.

Board member Matt Curtis is currently leading a full-scale review of awards categories to reflect the changing nature of how we communicate about beer, so expect a different-looking set of awards in 2022.