



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

Chair's Report to the Meeting

Emma Inch

Introduction

As we continue to live through a time of uncertainty, I am very pleased to report that the Guild has had another positive year. The Board has worked hard on your behalf to create an interesting programme of events, facilitate useful training sessions, and to encourage new members. We're ending the year in a good financial position, and thanks are due to our Treasurer, Paul Nunny, who has provided details in his report. We also have a number of exciting plans for the future, some of which individual Directors will say more about in their reports.

The Board of Directors

The Board has seen some changes over the past twelve months.

David Jesudason and I joined the Board at the last AGM in June 2021, and I was elected as Chair.

In December 2021, Matthew Curtis decided to step down from the Board – I would like to thank him on behalf of the Guild for all his hard work over the past few years, particularly around individual membership, and the mentorship scheme pilot.

In January 2022, Katie Wiles returned from maternity leave and continued her work with the Board. Thanks are due to Chris Claxton for supporting the Guild with social media output in Katie's absence, and to Katie for returning with such creativity and enthusiasm to the role.

In February 2022, the decision was made to co-opt Jonny Garrett to the Board. I'd like to thank Jonny for stepping in and supporting the Board so enthusiastically.

At the AGM, the following directors are retiring by rotation: Jacopo Mazzeo, Kate Oppenheim and Neil Walker. Jonny Garrett, as a co-opted director, must also retire. This leaves us with four vacancies on the Board. Kate, Neil and Jonny are standing for re-election; Jacopo has chosen to step down. I would like to thank him for the vital contribution he has made to the Board over the years, particularly around organising events, and writing the beer pairing notes for our annual dinner.

The Board have met regularly in person (as opposed to online via Zoom) since December 2021, mostly in London and once in Liverpool at SIBA's BeerX conference.

Since taking over as Chair I have been hugely impressed at the lengths to which Board members go, and the amount of time they devote, to working on behalf of the Guild. The ideas they bring, and the commitment they have to progress them, is truly admirable.

Guild Secretary

As was announced in May 2022, Natalya Watson will soon be stepping down from her role as Secretary of the Guild in order to concentrate on her successful beer education business. Anyone who has worked with Natalya over the years will vouch for her organised, considered, and calm approach. Here at the Guild, we owe her a lot; her hard work has played a vital role in making the past couple of years such a success, and I'd like to thank her on behalf of everyone.

The post of Guild Secretary has been advertised and we have received a number of strong applications. We will announce the new Secretary as soon as the recruitment process is complete.

Events and Training

The Guild has facilitated a number of events and training sessions over the past year, and the relevant Directors will go into more detail about this in their reports. It has been good to see a return to some face-to-face events, coupled with the continued ability to employ the flexibility that online sessions can bring.

Diversity and Inclusion

Issues of diversity are discussed at each Board meeting, and we are working on several ideas about how to move towards increased inclusion in the future. Commitment to progressing in these areas requires hard work and we still have a long way to go, but it is vital if we are to fulfil our obligations in terms of promoting excellence in beer and pub communications, supporting beer communicators in their professional and skills development, and educating, informing and inspiring people about beer and pubs.

I would like to extend particular thanks to David Jesudason for progressing this work in a number of areas.

Dinner and Awards

It was really good to see so many Guild members in person at our Annual Dinner and Awards back in December 2021. We presented more awards than ever before, and it was great to see so many people who had not previously been shortlisted in the awards, walking away with prizes. I would like to extend my thanks to all those Board members who worked so hard to make this a success including Pete Brown, Neil Walker and Kate Oppenheim who works tirelessly with our generous sponsors. I would also like to thank Ros Shiel, for her continued commitment to making the dinner and awards run smoothly.

This year's dinner and awards will take place at the same venue, One Great George Street, on Wednesday 23 November 2022.

The awards categories have been reviewed in a process originally begun by Matthew Curtis, and concluded by Pete Brown and me with the support of other Board members. Hopefully the categories now more accurately reflect the contemporary world of beer communication in which we all work. There will be more categories and – thanks to our generous sponsors – more prize money than ever before. The categories will be announced very soon.

Special Resolution

The Board has tabled a Special Resolution at the AGM proposing that the Guild's Articles of Association be amended to include cider as well as beer. The name of the Guild will not change but, in much the same way as we include pubs in our remit, it is proposed that we include cider too. We believe it will benefit our members – both individual and corporate – to broaden our focus in this way. For this Special Resolution to pass, it needs to win 75% or more of votes cast at the AGM (in-person or by proxy).

Thank you

Finally, thank you to all our members, both individual and corporate. As a Board, our primary aim is to work on your behalf. Thank you for your support.

Emma Inch

Guild Chair