

Minutes of the 2013 Annual General Meeting of the Guild of Food Writers

The meeting was held at Portcullis House, London SW1A 2LW, at 6.30pm on Thursday 21 March 2013. There were 48 members present. There were 67 apologies.

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last AGM were approved.

Report from the Secretary

Secretary Jane Hughes reported that the Guild had 444 members. Longstanding members Hugh Dunn-Meynell and Katie Stewart had died during the year and the Guild has sent condolences to their families. Since the last AGM, the Committee had organized the annual Awards Party, a new members' lunch, a regional members' lunch and the 2012 Autumn Event. Twelve workshops had taken place, attended by 203 members.

- ♣ In April 2012, a Social Media Workshop, and a visit to the East India Company for a tea tasting
- ♣ In May, a visit to a pop-up restaurant
- ♣ In June, a talk about food provision during the Olympics
- ♣ In July, a talk about living herbs at Cucina Caldesi
- ♣ In September, a workshop on Protected Food Names
- ♣ In October, a tour of the Guildhall Library
- ♣ In November, workshops and tasting sessions on Swiss cheese and beef
- ♣ In December, a visit to the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising
- ♣ In January 2013, Richard Ehrlich presented his Martini Monologues
- ♣ In February, a workshop about the Great Taste Awards

The committee members who had worked on all these events were thanked and members were encouraged to submit further ideas for events.

The redesigned website had been launched and Lewis Esson, Andrew Webb and Jonathan Woods were thanked for their work on this. The site had attracted 38,915 visitors in the past year.

Committee members standing down were Lewis Esson, Tracey Barker and Joan Ransley. They were thanked for the time they had put in to working for the Guild.

Report from the Treasurer

A copy of the audited accounts was given to members attending. Treasurer Jane Gifford reported that the year had ended with the accounts showing a slight loss but this was likely to rectify itself in the coming months.

Report from Co-Chair Lewis Esson

Lewis Esson confirmed his intention to stand down at the meeting and thanked the Committee and his co-chair Richard Ehrlich for making his time on the Committee so enjoyable. He was presented with a selection of artists' materials.

Report from Co-Chair Richard Ehrlich

Richard Ehrlich explained to members the reason for the Guild having had co-chairs over the past year. He reflected upon the success of the year's events, the continuing increase in membership and the profile of the Guild, and the launch of the new website. He thanked the Committee for their work and members for their support. He drew special attention to the exceptional work of the new Sponsorship team which had already secured sponsorship for many of the Guild's Awards, and encouraged members to alert the team to any potential sponsorship leads and to attend the Awards Party.

Results of Committee Election

There were three vacancies on the Committee and five members standing. The three members duly elected were Kate Hawkings (proposed by Lewis Esson and seconded by Tim Hayward), Jayne Cross (proposed by Jane Sutherland and seconded by Richard Ehrlich) and Philip Dundas (proposed by Kate Hawkings and seconded by Lewis Esson).

Resolutions

No resolutions were proposed.

Any Other Business

Member Sally Cox offered to run a workshop on good grammar. A show of hands indicated that this would be well attended.

Member Katherine Blakemore asked for guidelines for potential sponsors. Andrew Webb offered to provide details after the meeting.

Member Judy Jackson asked whether the Benevolent Fund could be used to pay for the membership of an anonymous member who was no longer in a position to work and could no longer afford to remain a Guild member. This led to some discussion over whether the anonymous member could be offered honorary membership. Richard Ehrlich replied that this must be approached within the rules of the constitution although potentially the constitution could be changed.