



Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Guild of Food Writers

The meeting was held at on Tuesday 28 April 2015 at Lumen Church & Café, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS. There were 47 members present, 16 fewer than in 2014. There were 31 apologies.

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last AGM were approved.

Welcome by the President

Xanthe Clay welcomed members and thanked the committee and chair for their work. She mentioned that there had been some discussion on the Forum on Yahoo about the Guild's lack of campaigning work. She pointed out that the already over-worked committee does not have time to get involved in campaigning work, but that if anybody would like to take on any of this work, they should contact the committee.

Report by the Secretary

Angela Clutton read the report prepared by the Secretary Jane Hughes, who was unable to attend the meeting. Angela reported a successful year for the Guild. The three Committee members who were standing down: Philip Dundas, Heather Grant and Jane Hughes were thanked for all their hard work. Membership continues to increase, and there had been some very good workshops.

Report by Treasurer

Jane Gifford reported a financially successful year for the Guild, with healthy sponsorship for the Awards and buoyant membership subscriptions. Workshops are priced as modestly as possible and run at a small profit. The issue of the Directory was raised – it costs in the region of £10K to print and post hard copies of the Directory to our members. The Directory is available online on our website and it was generally agreed that this was satisfactory for most users. Print-to-order costs were being investigated.

Chair's Address

Kate Hawkings thanked Committee members who were standing down or had come to the end of their tenure, and introduced the new committee members. She also thanked Wines of Spain for their kind donation of wines for the AGM, and 86 Food for providing the catering.

Results of the Election

It was announced that Felicity Cloake, Silvija Davidson and Hattie Ellis had been elected to the committee and that Genevieve Taylor and Ramona Andrews had been appointed Special Officers.

AOB

Sue Barnard expressed concern that attendance at workshops is sometimes poor, despite some very good events with impressive speakers. Sue Wolk suggested there should be a call out to members if numbers are looking low, although it was pointed out that Jonathan does send out reminder emails a week or so before the workshops. Vanessa Kimbell suggested a place on the website where members could suggest subjects they would like to see covered in future workshops.

Kerstin Rodgers suggested that twitter is a good way of advertising workshops, and she also wondered if there was any way of avoiding diary clashes with other food-related events. Sue Wolk asked if they could be held on varying days of the week.

Thane Prince agreed that diary clashes were sometimes a problem and asked if there could be a shared calendar that could be set up – Doodle was mentioned as a platform.

Vanessa suggested using Facebook as a resource for workshops and other communication, and Felicity Cloake agreed to look into this. Felicity also agreed to look in to a different Forum platform as the Yahoo one seems very clunky and difficult to use.

John Whiting reminded people that he has recorded most of the workshops and they are available for members to view on YouTube. Genevieve Taylor said members should be reminded of this resource – she didn't know about the videos.

Vanessa Kimbell said that Facebook would be good to use to advertise workshops – closed groups can be set up so one can see who else is attending particular workshops, and this networking can be a very useful aspect of workshops.

Kerstin Rodgers reminded people that Burroughs Day solicitors in Bristol offer half an hour of free legal advice to GFW members, and Angela reported that it has been confirmed recently that this offer continues.

John Whiting reported people tend now to use Twitter and Facebook more than websites to promote their own work.

Shirley Booth wondered if Senior Membership age could be reduced to 75, and she wondered if it was possible to keep a record of members' birthdays and send them a card from GFW. She also wondered if it was possible to organise members to visit elderly members who might appreciate a visit. Jane Suthering was arranging a visit to Margueritte Patten with Rosemary Moon.

Vanessa praised the salt workshop.

Josephine Bacon brought up two matters arising from the 2014 AGM:

Bloggers – have many applied to be members?

Kate Hawkings reported that there had been no applications from amateur writers who blog. Many of our current and new members blog alongside their paid written work, but people who write sponsored blogs are not generally accepted for membership. It was confirmed that publication of academic papers is generally considered eligible for membership.

Benevolent fund: was it being effectively used?

Jane Gifford reported there was approximately £40K in the fund and that the committee were working on ideas as to how best to use it in a way that would really benefit our members but not deplete the capital.

Close

The evening continued with tapas and wines kindly provided by Wines of Spain, and doors were opened to paying guests.