



# Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting of the Guild of Food Writers

The meeting was held at on Thursday 19 April 2018 in The Nave at St Ethelburga's, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. There were 46 members present, 1 more than in 2017. There were 25 apologies.

## ***President's Welcome***

Xanthe Clay welcomed everyone to the AGM.

Xanthe described the Guild as a 'vital part of our existence' stating that food writers would find it hard to exist without out it.

## ***Minutes of 2017 AGM***

The minutes of the last AGM were proposed, seconded and approved by the meeting.

## ***Secretary's Report***

Sam Bilton reported that membership has increased to 527 this year which is an increase of 25 from the previous year. 34 people have joined or rejoined the Guild. It was encouraging to see many of these 'new' members at a special lunch held last year in order for these people to meet other food writers in the Guild (30 people attended this compared to 12 at the last new members' lunch held in 2013/14). Another successful event worth noting was the Ivan Day Lecture held at the Guild Hall Library on 3 October 2017. Many people brought along a dish for the members to sample after Ivan's talk and this format was welcomed by the 41 attendees. There have also been several regional events during the past year such as a Pepper and Spice Workshop in Yorkshire (later repeated in London due to its success) and a visit to the Gloucestershire Services Producers.

## ***Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts***

Unfortunately Laura Hutton was unable to attend the AGM so Charlotte Pike, Vice Chair reported that the deficit for the year was just in excess of £4,000 due to the costs of the website redesign. Charlotte explained that every year there are costs associated with having a website; in 2016, these were £6,000 and in 2017 they were £17,000 so we can attribute £11,000 of that to the new website. The new website is an asset for the Guild; it was time for an update and this new interactive version brings more benefits to members and gives us a more modern appearance. In addition, this website will be more efficient to manage and, going forward, it will save money on running costs. In any case, the deficit is not a problem because the Guild runs a healthy balance at the bank.

Charlotte reported that sponsorship was up on 2016 and income from ticket sales was slightly up as well. This was accompanied by another year of steadily increasing membership.

Operating costs remain higher across the board and the Awards party cost more but with only a very slight increase of just under £2,000.

Overall, website costs excluded, there was a steady level of expenditure and balance of accounts both of which are maintained skilfully by our Administrator.

Similar to last year's report, we are experiencing an increase in the cost of venue hire and, whilst we make nominal charges for attendance, we merely seek to cover costs. Workshops never run at a profit and we continue to subsidize these events which are an important area of membership engagement.

We are hopeful the coming year will bring the same positive financial outcomes.

## ***Chairs' Report***

Angela Clutton and Genevieve Taylor thanked all the members who had provided food and drink for AGM saying that this format 'It's great to share food as it brings us all together.'

The new website has recently gone live and the Chairs concluded that 'it will be a great benefit to us all'. All members can update their own profile. Genevieve Taylor asked members attending the AGM to have a look at the new website and feedback to Jonathan Woods if there are any glitches.

The Annual Awards will take place on 18th June at Opera Holland Park. The short lists for each category will be announced in early May.

A Fellowship Fund has been set up as branch of benevolent fund. Up to £2000 can be awarded to members for research etc. Applications are open to the end of May.

Some valued members of the Committee are stepping down after their four year tenure: Laura Hutton, Christopher Trotter, Mike Warner, Christine Smallwood and Orlando Murrin. The chairs welcomed new committee members Samuel Goldsmith, Sumayya Usmani, Josh Sutton, Polly Robinson and Justine Pattison. They also said a big thank you to Jonathan Woods who keeps the Guild running.

## ***Any Other Business***

Susan Wolk welcomed the fellowship fund but asked if the amount available could be increased to £10k to give more opportunity for people to apply. Concerns were expressed that this may be abused. However, Angela Clutton assured the meeting that a sub-committee would assess all of the applications when they come through. The sum was settled on as this reflects the contribution of each year's membership subscriptions which equates to £2k.

The meeting was followed by a brief talk from Guild member Jenny Linford on the importance of time when it comes to food.