



Minutes for the Guild of Food Writers' AGM  
6.00 pm on Wednesday, 2 November 2022 (Zoom)

Notice of the AGM was circulated by email and also flagged up in the Newsletter and on the Facebook Forum. 59 members actually attended with 18 apologies.

Members were advised that the proceedings were being recorded and to turn off their cameras if they did not want to appear. They were also asked to mute their microphones until question time at the end. [In future, I believe this needs to be repeated after five minutes as the sound was very distorted until the Chat box threw up the problem and full compliance was established.]

**Brief notes of the President's, Chair's and Treasurer's reports follow. Full transcripts can be found at the foot of this document.**

### **President's welcome**

Orlando Murrin welcomed all the attending members and thanked the Committee and Administrators for their work this year. The main thrust of his speech was to thank our Chair, Charlotte Pike, who is standing down after her statutory two years in the role. He listed the twelve remarkable improvements to the Guild's organisation that have occurred during her Chair-ship. It was obvious from the visual response that members thoroughly agreed that she has been a most effective and charming Chair.

In addition, OM asked Charlotte to open the GFW's leaving presents that had been secretly delivered to her house. They comprised a 40 cm black Le Creuset casserole and the original Elisabeth Luard watercolour of the Guild's website home page. He asked her to show them to the members [which she did, and with obviously great delight].

### **2021 AGM Minutes**

Charlotte Pike, Chair, advised that the 2021 minutes had been circulated by email and they could also be seen on the GFW website. She asked if there were any objections and, in their absence, considered them approved.

Continued over/

### **Secretary's report**

There was no Secretary's report this year as it had been agreed that the President's, Chair's and Treasurer's reports cover all pertinent matters.

### **Treasurer's report and presentation of accounts**

Sam Goldsmith reported the Guild's current financial state was favourable and delivered the Treasurer's report. Previously it had been agreed that subscriptions would go up in line with inflation. SGo told the AGM that the Committee had felt that in view of the current circumstances this would be unfair so it was decided subscriptions would only go up by £2, i.e. from £90 to £92 per annum. In addition, members could now pay quarterly, without any interest penalties.

SGo particularly wanted to thank the new Administrator, Kim Furnell, and the Finance Administrator, Nicki Taylor, for both having brought a new professionalism to the way the back office operates.

### **The Chair's report**

Charlotte Pike thanked the members and the Committee for all their support and help during her tenure.

In brief, her particular points were: the new Administration team had effected a huge improvement in how things were run; the GFV's considerable archive material was now stored securely in the Guildhall Library where it could at last be accessed; properly paid membership had increased; the procedure for membership of the Guild was less prescriptive and more welcoming; efforts were being made to strike a balance between Zoom and in-person events; the 2022 live 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Awards had been a very special and successful evening; improvements had been made to the website; social media continued to grow in engagement; professional advice continued to be available; more discounts were offered; the mentorship scheme continued to be a success; the Futures Fund had supported members' projects; and the FAQs on the GFV website were there to help members gain as much from their subscriptions as possible.

She ended by repeating how much she had enjoyed her tenure and how grateful she was for the support from the Committee, its officers and the membership at large.

### **Resolutions**

There were no resolutions for consideration.

### **Results of committee election**

The committee should comprise between 12 – 15 members. This year there were four candidates for the four vacancies and no election was required.

Continued over/

### **Any other business (AOB)**

The Chair invited anyone to speak.

**Humayun Hussain** said he wanted to extend his thanks to the kind Chair who had done a fantastic job. He thought she was brilliant and had made the Guild a far better place than it had ever been. He continued that on the subject of the Diversity team he had noticed it comprised three people, all female. He said he had been a member of the GFW for many years, held editorial posts, etc., and how did one get on the team? Charlotte Pike said that emails had gone out to the membership asking if anyone wanted to join the committee. Anyone could always approach the Administrator if they were interested in becoming more involved. This is logged and shared. [It is worth pointing out that many emails were going astray or ending up in junk folders during the earlier months of 2022. It may well be that HH was one such casualty of electronic waywardness.]

**Mallika Basu** added there was now a Diversity calendar and that she was continually asking members to get in touch with ideas.

**Geoff Tansey** asked what was happening, if anything, around Food Policy. Charlotte Pike explained we had had representation but that Covid had interfered and there was currently no one prepared to take on the role. She thought he was absolutely right to highlight it and while the GFW does not campaign if anyone was interested to please contact the Administrator.

**Clare Gordon Smith** asking who was taking over the Chair. It was explained that it could not be announced until the vote was taken by the Committee in the meeting that followed the AGM but would be announced very soon. [For members' awareness, it was decided in this meeting that in future, and in line with the updated Constitution, the vote will be taken *before* the AGM so any new positions *can* be announced at the AGM.]

The AGM concluded after c.40 minutes with Charlotte Pike thanking everyone for coming, and for their support and engagement in the GFW. She again urged anyone with ideas or thoughts to contact the Administrator.

Chair, Secretary and Treasurer's reports follow:

Thank you everyone for coming.

Thank the Committee and administrator.

## 12 Things Done By Charlotte during her historic 27 months of Chair-ship

1. Don't let's forget: she saw the Guild through Covid when we weren't sure we'd have a Guild at the end of it.
2. Restructured the committee, administration and financial administration
3. Oversaw initiatives such as Mentorship Scheme, Futures Fund, Regional Coordination, Diversity Policy
4. Boosted membership benefits such as enhanced Discount Scheme, GFWBnB scheme, Recipe Testing Network
5. Found a home for the Guild's archive within the Guildhall Library
6. Ensured more events than ever, including our first virtual events, making them open to members nationwide and worldwide. The highest event attendance figures we have recorded.
7. Personally organised awards sponsorship – a full-time job in itself – bringing it back from nothing after Covid *and* putting on a historical event (Delia and Jamie). Our first brush with royalty, too HRH too.
8. Revamped website with a much larger number of useful resources
9. Updated Pay Survey in 2020
10. Significantly improved engagement on social media, from members and non-member followers
11. Raised the profile of Guild within the industry, and making it a welcoming place for newcomers
12. Helped transform the Guild from a members' club into a modern, relevant, outward-facing organisation

Guild of Food Writers  
Treasurer's Report  
2022

Good evening everyone. This is the Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 2021.

This year, we have ended with a financial surplus of £3,000. Our membership fees were back to £85 having offered support during the first Covid-19 year. This meant that income from membership was up 41%, a great help which meant we didn't have to rely on our reserves. Our expenditure did increase somewhat as our activity levels increased.

Income was in-line with 2020 though still dramatically lower than 2019 as we still lived with the uncertainty surrounding Covid-19 and kept the Awards online. The Sponsorship team, yet again, managed to exceed all expectations and raise £7,500 in sponsorship. This allowed us to pay a professional production company to organize the online ceremony.

Income was also spent on making improvements to the back-end of the website and generally keeping the Guild functioning.

Ticket sales for events and workshops were up 83% on 2020, though again, much lower than our 2019 figures. It was great that so many of you engaged with the Guild no doubt the company of others was a big draw.

We kept most meetings online, allowing us to keep costs down, though operating costs did remain similar. I would also like to thank our new Administrator, Kim, and Finance Administrator, Nicki, who have both worked incredibly hard as we improve our operating methods and venture into a post-Covid world.

Moving forward, having mentioned direct debits for several years, we have now moved to an online invoicing system which allows you to pay using a number of ways. Many thanks to Nicki, our Finance Administrator for organizing this. Please can I ask you to keep an eye out

**Chair's Report**  
**The Guild of Food Writers AGM – 2nd November 2022**  
**Charlotte Pike**

Good evening. I'm delighted to see you all here this evening for our third virtual AGM.

The last year has been one of more change and disruption for many of us. For some, it's been business as usual, and for others, it's been a question of finding a new normal.

The Guild has continued to work hard over the last year for our members, and I'd like to start by thanking everyone involved in the running of the Guild - the committee, special officers, President, Vice President and our Administration team for the hundreds of hours they put into the Guild every month.

The last year has been busy for the Guild on all fronts. Since I reported last year, we have a new Administration team in place. Many of you will have corresponded with our new Administrator, Kim Furnell, who has settled into the job well and, I know, enjoys getting to know you all. We have also created a new role, and we have all money matters looked after by our Finance Administrator, Nicki Taylor, who has been with us for nearly a year now. Nicki looks after our membership payments and accounts.

The Committee and I are pleased to have a strong and efficient new team in place to look after our Administration. We have also taken the opportunity over the last year to overhaul our procedures, to ensure we work efficiently and economically. We have also invested in new technology to enhance our security, which we take very seriously.

We have no business premises, and have very recently transferred all of our Guild archive material to the Guildhall Library in London, where it will be held indefinitely and is available to view by members and the public at any time. I urge anyone who is interested to take a look at the fascinating wealth of material held, gathered since the Guild's inception in 1984.

In the last year, we have seen our membership numbers increase to 559 from 540 last year. We reported a large number of members on our books who had not paid their subscription and have been in contact with everyone to follow up on this. 42 did not renew and 2 are sadly deceased. Membership fees were slightly increased last year for the first time in 12 years, to ensure the Guild is adequately funded for the future.

We see a consistent number of applications each month, which is very positive. I feel it is important here to mention that we have made adjustments to our membership application process. You will find full details on this and how to apply on our website, so if you are recommending membership to a non-member, that should be your first port of call. We request examples of paid work from prospective members, as we have done before, but we no longer ask for proposals from other members as part of the membership process. We hope this will make it easier for professionally active food writers to join.