

Salisbury Wine Interest Group

Minutes of the SWIG Annual General Meeting

HELD at the White Hart Hotel, Salisbury on Thursday, March 10, 2022 following the Côte de Nuits Tasting

The treasurer, Kerry Attwell Thomas, welcomed everyone to SWIG's second AGM after a gap of two years due to the COVID pandemic. KAT explained that our chairman, Nick Hodgson, was unable to attend as he was awaiting an operation and, very sadly, on the wagon.

KAT also introduced and thanked Paul Tyler, the membership secretary, and Frank Smith, the Tasting Advisory Group coordinator. Frank has played a leading role in SWIG's re-boot, not only coordinating TAG's activity, but liaising with The White Hart and leading five tastings including tonight's. We also need to thank our President, Mark Brandon, for his continued role in tastings, particularly in researching and preparing the presentations. Thanks too to Cecilia Miskelly for organising the bread and to our other presenters, Nick Beard and our Chairman Nick Hodgson - who also organised the dinner events.

KAT then proceeded to work through the agenda which had already been distributed to members together with supporting papers. A copy of all the papers was also available for inspection at the meeting.

Agenda Point 2. Minutes of our first AGM on March 12, 2020. Approved unanimously.

Agenda Point 3. Accounts for the 24 Months to December 31, 2021. KAT presented three slides (attached hereto).

- The first slide shows the surplus or deficit from each of the six tastings and two dinners we have run since January 2020. We monitor our financial position after each tasting as the Committee cannot ensure that each tasting or event will break even since attendance is difficult to predict. Moreover, since re-starting in July after the COVID lockdown, we have carried forward fees whenever a member has been unable to attend, which has had a detrimental effect on our results.
- The second slide shows the amount we have added to Reserves during the 24 months. This comprises the £751.04 from tastings and dinners plus £319.48, being membership income which was not used to cover our fixed costs, such as insurance and website costs, and equipment costs, chiefly glasses & crates. In total we added £1,070.52 to Reserves.
- The third slide shows the Free Reserves position at the end of December, 2021. Free Reserves are those reserves which have not yet been committed to cover future expenditure. The Committee is aiming to hold Free Reserves of £1,500. This enables us to weather tasting deficits, leaving the Committee time to take corrective action, and to buy parcels of wine as they become available for future tastings. Free Reserves totalled £1,458.53 at the end of the year, although the current estimated level is around £820. This reduction is principally due to equipment expenditure of almost £400 – glasses, crates, decanters and tasting mats - and deficits on tastings in 2022, estimated at £265, largely due to lower attendance for premium tastings than we had hoped for.

The account were accepted & approved unanimously.

Salisbury Wine Interest Group

Agenda Point 4. Membership Fees. KAT explained that these were unchanged at £24 for single & £21/head for joint. The only change of note is that the membership year now runs from July 1st to June 30th, although fees are payable on April 1st. Approved unanimously.

Agenda Point 5. TAG. KAT explained that TAG is responsible for deciding what members will be tasting at future events, ie the important bits! He thanked its members and those who had contributed. KAT reiterated the importance of members getting involved, either by joining the next TAG (probably one or two meetings) or submitting ideas and suggestions. Frank Smith then presented the programme of events to Christmas 2022 (see attached slide). The events calendar for 2023 to the Summer Dinner is a work-in-progress.

Agenda Point 6. Member Feedback. KAT explained that there were a few issues where TAG did not feel comfortable making decisions without consulting members more widely. It was recognised that less than half of SWIG's membership was present at the AGM, so some items will be followed up with all members. Nevertheless the AGM still represented a good opportunity to canvass opinion.

- a) Tasting events. Are members happy? Generally it seems that they are. Members liked the mix of merchant and member presenters. KAT explained that we need members to volunteer as we cannot continue to rely on one or two members. Nick Beard expressed concern that merchants might expect members to buy their wines after a tasting and that members might feel under an obligation to do so. KAT explained that the merchant could take their expenses from the allocated wine budget (as in the case of Nicolas Corfe from Go Brazil) so they should not be out-of-pocket. Frank Smith thought that merchants were set up to showcase their lists and sales on the night were a bonus. Moreover orders were often attractively priced. A number of members thought we should ask Artisan, our local merchant, to present again. Sample Size – see d) below. With regard to quality of wines, members thought we could accommodate all tastes – from good value, everyday wines through to wines which most members would not ordinarily buy. Members want pointers on what to buy themselves, but they also want to know what they are aspiring to.
- b) Dinners. TAG recognised that SWIG was primarily a wine tasting club and wanted to know if members wanted two dining events every year. Those present indicated that the dinners are very popular, although there was concern expressed about the suitability of Coombe Bissett Village Hall for winter dinners. There was also a strong view that the Christmas event should become a New Year event. [Post AGM Note. The Committee are now scouting venues with the view to have a dinner in February. This has the benefit of distance from Christmas; is after dry-January; and means that SWIG's dining events will be 6 months apart in future.] KAT explained that we hadn't put enough money in the heating meter last December, but the consensus was that it was a great venue in the summer, but not for a winter event. KAT also explained that we had considered tasting events away from Salisbury. Peter & Helena Ewing had suggested a tasting at Bluestone Vineyards at Amesbury, but the cost of transport was regarded as prohibitive by the majority of TAG members.
- c) Is the second Thursday in every month the best time to meet? Mark Brandon said that this was the date the membership originally agreed upon when SWIG was first established. The general view was that certain nights would suit some members and not others.
- d) Membership Numbers & Sample Sizes. The Committee favours 40ml tasting samples as this allows members to taste each wine and reserve some for comparative purposes. Nick Beard thought too much wine was wasted and would prefer 30ml samples with the surplus

Salisbury Wine Interest Group

used after the main tasting. Ann Beard and Cecilia Miskelly agreed that 40ml was too much. Cecilia suggested that she would be happy to ask the pourer for a smaller sample. To some extent, sample size is determined by numbers. A single bottle will provide 24 x 30ml samples; 21 x 35ml samples and only 18 x 40ml samples. KAT pointed out that we were averaging 28 at each tasting in recent months and so we were always in two-bottle territory. The economics were much better because the most significant fixed cost (room hire at £105) was spread amongst more members. At the moment however, we sometimes did not have sufficient numbers to warrant two-bottles. With a membership of 40, the highest member attendance since Lockdown has been 25 members. Fortunately guests have boosted the numbers. Nick Beard suggested that we could operate a first-come, first-served approach with a waiting-list. Then, if there was sufficient demand, we could move to a two-bottle tasting. Frank Smith thought we should always be aiming for two-bottle tastings. Not only would some members be disgruntled at being excluded from a single-bottle tasting, but the waiting list approach produces problems of its own in sourcing wine at short notice. KAT suggested that we needed more members to boost the average member turnout to 30 or more. Ian Peberdy (a guest of Frank Smith and prominent member of wine societies in Hereford and King's Lynn) had some interesting insights and suggested that the number of bottles and sample size was a problem with which every society wrestled. Some suggestions were made regarding boosting numbers by advertising, eg with the Wine Society (although most of its communications were now electronic); Artisan Wines; by word of mouth at Majestic tastings.

Agenda Point 7. Election of Officers. KAT explained that all Officers were willing to continue in post. He also explained that Paul Tyler (who had left the AGM earlier) was happy to step aside if someone wished to take on the role of Membership Secretary. No-one put themselves forward and the current Officers were re-elected unopposed.

Agenda Point 8. AOB. No items raised.

Close.

Certified as a true copy of proceedings:

Kerry Attwell Thomas

Treasurer

Frank Smith

TAG Co-ordinator