

# THE NATIONAL GUILD OF WINE AND BEER JUDGES



## 62nd AGM at Peterborough, Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025

The Chair, Elaine Robinson, invited the President, Pauline Pearce to open the meeting at 15.30.

### **President's Opening Address**

NGWBJ President, Pauline Pearce, said it gave her great pleasure to open the 62<sup>nd</sup> AGM and thanked the committee for their work throughout the year and for organising our conference. She then handed over to the Chair, Elaine Robinson.

### **Attendance**

There were 16 members present, and the Honorary Secretary had received 15 apologies by email. Members present were Geoff Fryer, Pauline Pearce, Richard Brooksbank, Peter Robinson, Colin Hotham, Elaine Robinson, Mike Davey, Charles Hill, Chris Evans, Kate Edge, Peter Coombs, Ron Williams, John Scottow, Geoff Cooper, Bernard Lamb and Richard Baldwin. The apologies were as follows: Roger Down, Phill Turner, Phil Hardy, John Gorton, Lesley Cooper, Alison Teal, Paul Matthewman, Barbara Dawes, Mike Carter, Kevin Martin, Alan Hinch, Terry Ford, Arthur Hills, Bruce Graham and Nigel Rapley.

### **Minutes of the 2024 AGM**

The minutes were taken as read and agreed unanimously by all members present at the meeting.

Proposed: Peter Coombs

Seconded: Chris Evans

### **Matters Arising**

None

### **Chairman's Report**

Elaine said that there were 25 attendees this year; it would have 28 but Lesley has just had a hip operation, and 2 other judges had a better offer!

My plea for aperitifs for our Friday tasting produced little response. I usually ask those judges who won places at the NAWB show, but not many did! There were wines from Charles, Bernard, Peter and myself, and an old, spiced saison beer from Richard Baldwin. A smaller number of bottles compared with last year, which made it easier for everyone to taste all the wines and beer and all were enjoyed.

The beer tasting was organised by Richard Baldwin with assistance from Mike Davey and was a comparison between commercial beers and home-made beers. An interesting comparison, with the homemade beers being voted as the better beers.

The wine tasting was presented by myself, – with help from Peter - and was entitled 'The Versatility of Grenache,' comparing old world and new world wines. The old world wines were preferred to the new world wines.

I had several problems with the hotel in getting the menus for Friday and Saturday agreed. They came up with strange and unbalanced suggestions, particularly for Saturday. I eventually suggested that we have the same choices as last year for the main course, which they agreed to do. There have also been issues with the corkage charge this year. At one point they wanted to charge £10 per bottle! I pointed out to them that this would be very difficult for them to administer, that most of the wine bottles, particularly, would not be completely finished and that each bottle cost the winemaker considerably less than £10 to make. We eventually settled on the same charge as last year, which was £150. They have said that all costs would be reviewed for next year.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Colin said that firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to Peter Robinson for conducting the audit. His efforts in reviewing our accounts are much appreciated.

However, we are currently experiencing ongoing issues with some members not paying their subscriptions. Also, there are a few members that as of yet, have not paid this year's supplement for the conference.

This remains an area of concern.

I have also processed reimbursements for members who overpaid their subscriptions, both for last year and for part of this year.

As of 30/10/2025, our balance in the Metro Bank stands at £2,610.56.

Recommendations regarding the members' fees for the forthcoming year will be addressed and discussed under Any Other Business (AOB).

Bernard Lamb queried what the stock was, and Colin explained it covered ties, badges scarves handbooks, etc.

Geoff Cooper queried the values shown for stock and stock sold which did not look right even though small amounts. Colin would come back on that.

That the report be accepted:

Proposed: Peter Coombs

Seconded Bernard Lamb

### **Propositions:**

There were none.

### **Election of Committee:**

Elaine advised the meeting that the Committee were prepared to stand again en-bloc but asked if anyone would like to stand for one of the positions. There were no volunteers.

Proposed: Pauline Pearce

Seconded: Kate Edge

### **Any Other Business:**

Peter Coombs thanked the committee for putting on a great conference as both he and Carol had had a great time.

Elaine then led with her thoughts regarding the future of the Guild.

The accounts for the year ending 2024-2025 show a balance of £2385.26. As of 30th October 2025, there is £2610.56 in the bank after the majority of this year's subscriptions have been paid, and the conference has been paid for; there are some expenses for the beer and wine tasting to be paid, and possibly some income from the raffle.

There are obviously insufficient funds to continue holding further conferences. There is very little interest in new candidates taking the judges exams. The current paid up membership is 37 active members, and 6 non-active members. According to the Judges Register there are 72 active members, 18 non-active members, 2 overseas members, and 3 associate members. These figures do not tally with the number of members that have actually paid up to date. Of the 72 'active members', only 24 are really active, i.e. have been seen judging at the NAWB show, the Wales & West show, and the South West Counties show during the last one or two years. 4 other members are possibly active.

Therefore, I have some proposals to make on the options open to the Guild as I see them.

1. Close the Guild with effect from the end of the current financial year.
2. Continue to keep the Guild in existence in its current state, holding the conference with members paying the full cost of the conference meals (this would mean an expensive weekend).
3. Continue to keep the Guild in existence in its current state, holding the AGM via Zoom, with the same membership, although any judge who has not paid membership for 2 years or more would be removed from the register.
4. Continue to keep the Guild in existence, holding the AGM via Zoom, but reducing the active membership to the judges who are really active; judges who wish to retain some involvement in the guild would be deemed 'associate members'; any judge who has not paid membership for 2 years or more would be removed from the register; subscriptions would be reduced for both active and associate members as the only expenses for the Guild would be for the Zoom licence and maintaining the web site.

This generated a lot of immediate discussion which led to the meeting dismissing option 1.

They were unanimous in wanting to keep the Guild running by whatever it took so favoured option 2.

Option 3 which was holding an AGM via Zoom was considered an absolute last resort.

Option 4 was not thought worthwhile.

It was unanimously thought that the meeting of friends, discussing and drinking homemade wines and beers was a very worthwhile weekend. Peter Coombs proposed that the committee did everything possible to run an actual weekend like the one we were on at the moment as it provided a lot of enjoyment to people.

So how to make it achievable to get maybe 2 more years!

First suggestion: reduce the size of the mid-day meal and pay £6 per plate instead of current £12. That was agreed by everyone, so Elaine is talking to the hotel about this for next year.

Second suggestion: John Scottow said how about reducing the conference to Saturday afternoon to Sunday morning to reduce costs to both attendees and the Guild. This was not thought viable for people travelling long distances.

Third suggestion: Look at subs. We need to establish the actual paid up membership and remove any who have not paid in last 2 years. Give them a final chance to pay knowing what was going to happen if they did not. The problem is that we only have about 40 members paying through MetroBank while others are either still trying to pay through HSBC which is no longer possible as our account is closed, or not responding at all.

Colin advised that currently we have 72 active members  
18 non-active members  
2 overseas members

To date, 43 paid subs this year and 49 still unpaid.

We need to set a new subs rate and the meeting suggested raising them back to what they were (£17) or even to £20 or £25 and instructed the committee to deal with this with the new rate commencing 1<sup>st</sup> August next year.

Fourth suggestion: Geoff Cooper said he supported Peter's proposal to keep the AGM running and suggested that the committee re look at the subsidies the Guild has recently been paying to delegates over the Friday and Saturday night meals which had been approved in the past. This is where a lot of money can be saved. The idea had been to try and encourage more attendees. It was agreed that it had not made any difference to attendance and Mike Davey said he did not think it would make any difference in the future either.

The meeting unanimously agreed that they wanted the committee to look at stopping the subsidies on the meals as a positive step to keep the AGM weekend operational. This naturally would mean a substantial increase to the amount paid by each attendee but is then in line with the current 3 Shows and Festivals.

Fifth suggestion: Chris Evans asked whether other places may rent out smaller rooms at cheaper prices than these at Peterborough. Enquiries will be made but it is probably not going to be viable due to the number of bedrooms required and the good central location for most of us.

Elaine pointed out that currently we had no idea of what the hotel costs for next year were likely to be and if they were put up by too much, we most likely could not afford it. That is usually around April.

There being no other business, Elaine closed the AGM at 16.18.

Richard Baldwin. (Honorary Secretary)