

# Salisbury Wine Interest Group

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## Minutes of the SWIG Annual General Meeting

**HELD** at the White Hart Hotel Salisbury on Thursday June 13 2024 following the L'Occitane Tasting

The Treasurer, Kerry Attwell Thomas welcomed everyone to SWIG's fourth AGM.

KAT thanked his fellow Committee members: the Committee Chairman Nick Hodgson; Membership Secretary, Paul Tyler; and Frank Smith, Chairman of the Tasting Advisory Group. Without their hard work, the club would not exist.

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 the AGM on February 9, 2023.

Approved unanimously.

Agenda Point 3. Accounts for the 12 Months to December 31, 2023.

The accounts were accepted & approved unanimously.

Agenda Point 4. Minimum Reserves Level of £1,500.

KAT explained that the club's Financial position remained strong with reserves estimated to be around £3,300 after this evening's tasting, much the same as at the year-end.

The Committee proposed to keep the Minimum Reserves Level at £1,500.

Approved unanimously.

Agenda Point 5. Membership Fees.

Because of the club's strong financial position and with reserves significantly above the minimum level, the Committee proposed to reduce annual membership to £15 per head. The Committee had discussed the option of a Joining Fee to reflect the level of reserves built up by the existing and past membership, but decided this might be a barrier to new membership.

Some members voiced caution. Cecilia Miskelly pointed out that bread costs had increased significantly over the last year. KAT also noted that The White Hart Hotel was increasing its room hire fee. That said, the Committee believes it remains a good value venue and the mood of the meeting was in strong agreement. Rob Robson and Fergus Jamieson thought a higher fee would still represent good value – and this was clearly a view supported by several members.

KAT explained that the Committee had been trying to stop the level of reserves from getting too high, but had been singularly unsuccessful to date. The position would be re-visited next year.

Approved unanimously.

# Salisbury Wine Interest Group

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## Agenda Point 6. Constitution.

KAT explained that the key changes were to formalise changes that the Committee had introduced since the last AGM and were now being put before the membership for approval required under the Constitution. The main change recognised Frank Smith's contribution in organising the tasting programme with the creation of a new committee position of Tasting Advisory Group Chairman.

Approved unanimously.

## Agenda Point 7. Tasting Advisory Group (TAG)

KAT commented that half of the 10 tastings in the last membership year had been merchant tastings, a higher proportion than normal. Merchant tastings are popular with members, possibly because there is usually an opportunity to buy the wines being presented at attractive prices.

Nick Beard voiced concerns that there might be an obligation on members to buy wines. Some other members agreed although there was a misunderstanding that merchant presenters did not charge for the wines they presented. KAT explained that all merchant presenters charge for the wines they present (most charge list price), so there is no obligation for members to buy wines. Frank was confident that merchants were happy with the arrangement.

KAT explained that the Committee is proposing to continue with the current arrangement of 10 tastings and two dinners. There was strong support for this when the membership was canvassed last year and, although some members would prefer a single dining event, the Committee are proposing to continue with the current arrangement for the foreseeable future while Kenny Jelfs, our chef, is willing to cook. Peter Ewing commented that it was primarily a social event. The intention is to continue to use the Coombe Bissett venue in August and the Cricket Club in February. [Post-meeting note: Following this year's winter dinner, Nick Hodgson explored the use of the Salisbury Rugby Club, an alternative venue suggested by Martin Plimsoll. However, the rugby club has an exclusive arrangement with another chef. It is very difficult to find venues with a professional kitchen for use by a third party chef.] KAT also noted that we hope to continue providing slightly better wines at the dinners as we had this February. This proposal was well received at the meeting.

KAT then handed over to Frank Smith, Chairman of TAG. Frank briefly explained the role of TAG, explaining that it met once or twice a year to decide the programme of tasting events. Frank proposed to circulate members in due course inviting interested members to contribute.

Frank highlighted the current programme to April 2025:

July – KAT will be presenting a dozen 'Off the Beaten Track' wines from the Wine Society.

September – Bob Male will be seeking value from wines from Western Australia.

October – John Muggleton will be presenting a range of better Beaujolais wines – life beyond Nouveau.

November – Robert Boutflower of Tanners of Shrewsbury will return for his third visit to introduce a range of South American wines.

December – KAT and Chairman Nick Hodgson will present reds from the Rhone Valley concentrating on appellations not previously visited by the club.

# Salisbury Wine Interest Group

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January – Artisan return for the third time, but with Tom replacing George to showcase their current favourites and new discoveries.

March – Nick Beard is back again to tempt us with Alpine wines, reminiscent of skiing and walking holidays.

April – Helena & Peter Ewing will share their Aldi favourites which they think perform well above their price level.

## Agenda Point 8. Membership.

KAT explained that we currently have 49 paid up members with one of tonight's guests planning to join, taking us up to 50. Our active membership (attending an event within the last 3 months) is 47.

Ann Beard cautioned that we shouldn't be complacent regarding membership numbers. KAT noted that we were growing organically and that the St. John Suite can only accommodate 40 plus presenter(s). This is a limit imposed by The White Hart. We have used the Dining Room on two occasions which can accommodate more people, but this has been at the request of the White Hart. If we need a bigger venue, we will probably have to look elsewhere. Do we want to do this?

Fergus Jamieson said he was only aware of SWIG because he had bumped into Bob Male at Majestic and questioned if we should be more proactive. KAT noted that in the past Mark Brandon had produced flyers and had advertised in the Wine Society's magazine. Suggestions from members included advertising in the Salisbury Journal and asking Majestic and Artisan if we could promote SWIG in their premises. It was also suggested that we inform the Salisbury Journal of our programme and perhaps even invite a journalist to one of our events.

The Meeting recognised that the White Hart is a great venue and that bigger is not necessarily better without reaching any firm conclusions.

## Agenda Point 9. Election of Officers.

KAT explained that all Officers are required to stand down at the AGM under the Constitution. All committee members, including the recently confirmed TAG Chairman, had indicated they were willing to continue in post if no other members wished to put themselves forwards. No members put themselves forward and so the current Officers were re-elected unopposed.

## Agenda Point 10. AOB.

No items had been raised ahead of the meeting.

Melissa Hodgson asked if we owned our glassware which KAT confirmed. She thought the L'Occitane tasting would have benefitted from more glasses for comparative purposes. KAT confirmed that we already have a large stock of glasses in storage, having acquired the glasses of the defunct Nadder Valley Wine Circle. We also have tasting mats and decanters for presenters to use. The format for each tasting is decided by the presenter.

Close.

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Certified as a true copy of proceedings:

Nicholas Hodgson

Committee Chairman

Kerry Attwell Thomas

Treasurer