

## AGM Minutes for 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Minutes of the meeting held on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2025 at Restaurante La Senia, Denia

At the first call there were no members present so at the second call the meeting was deemed quorate therefore was called to order at 18.34 with 40 members attending.

The AGM was chaired by Paul Smithard, CBWS Secretary

### AGENDA

1. Apologies:  
Vicky Wyatt & Neil Robertson  
Lorraine and Andrew Giddings  
Caryl & Gordon Sellars  
Joan & Fergus Fitzpatrick  
Sue & Elwyn Blewett  
Jean & Edward Halse  
Nicole Chandler
2. **The approval of the Minutes of last year's AGM** on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024 was proposed by John Sloggie, seconded by Hugh Epsom. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.
3. As the reports overlap, the following 3 reports (Membership report from Helen, Financial report from Mike, and President's report from Neville) were presented and questions then taken.

#### a. **Membership Report 2024** Helen Granville

Last year was a good year for membership

At the beginning of 2024, our membership was down at 90, which was slightly concerning for the committee. The committee decided to introduce a €10 discount on the first-year subscription for guests who attended tastings during the first half of the year and subsequently chose to join. This to be proved highly successful with a 68% conversion rate – I sent out 19 emails and 13 people joined as a result.

Attendance has also continued to rise steadily. In 2023, our average attendance per tasting was 50, and in 2024, we saw that number rise to 56 and hopefully will continue to do so this year/

Sara & John have looked after our new social media presence with our Facebook activity and website respectively.

Sara's local Costa Blanca sites and of course our own FB page have enabled Sara to post not only highlights of our Society's activities but also to share insights into the Spanish wine trade and also global wine trends. Thanks to this, our Facebook group has grown to 280 members. John has ensured that our website consistently ranks in the top five of Google search results, which requires ongoing effort to update tags and content.

We welcomed 59 new members in 2024, with 62% joining through personal recommendations from fellow members—the most effective way to grow our membership. 24% came from Facebook, 10% from our website, and 3% from a collaboration with the Arts Society Marina Alta.

By the end of 2024, we had 151 members—though some had already indicated they would not be renewing due to reasons such as returning to the UK or health concerns. As a result, we also had a waiting list of six prospective members. As is typical at the end of the year, we have had several resignations, but this opened the door for new members.

We start this year with a healthy 148 members and no one on the waiting list. Please remember that your subs are due by the end of February.

#### **b. Financial Report 2024      Mike Granville**

Treasurer Mike Granville handed out copies of the Society's financial position as at the end of 2024. It was explained that this would not be included in the AGM Minutes on the open web pages but any Member can request a copy by contacting Mike Granville.

Mike Granville presented his financial report saying that the Society was in a strong financial position, with free assets of €2723. He explained that the profit of €999 for the year was higher than anticipated because of our success in attracting new members and our success in securing discounts on the wine we bought.

We had bought a new inter-connected pa system in the year but the cost was offset by the sale of the old system to the Costa Blanca Mountain Walkers, so the net cost to the Society was €718. Subsequent to the meeting, it was clarified that the old system was broken down and the best parts amalgamated to make one "good" speaker and microphone set and this was sold to the Costa Blanca Walkers. From the remaining kit, the good parts were amalgamated to make one other "reasonable" set which was sold on Facebook Market place.

We had also made a €200 donation to the Valencia DANA appeal."

#### **c. President's Report 2024      Neville**

I am delighted to see so many of you here for the AGM and want to start by thanking your very hard working committee members who contribute many hours to the functioning of the Society and have assisted me greatly in my year as your President.

- Mike Granville, our treasurer - keeps our finances under constant control
- Helen Granville, membership secretary - much work in 2024 analysing our membership enabling a platform for the tremendous growth
- Paul Smithard, secretary - recording meetings and communicating with the members promptly from (it seems) anywhere in the world
- Sue Blewett, venues and menus - negotiating and booking our events with incredible efficiency
- John Sloggie, ex officio member and web master.

The Web site is in great shape and John also, in 2024, was responsible for researching, purchasing and commissioning our fantastic new sound system

Also thanks to

- Patrick Harild for transporting and setting up our sound system at all of our events
- Sara Richardson for seating plans and wine scoring as well as our Facebook admin (together with Hugh Epsom) and communication with multiple organisations throughout the Costa Blanca
- Our Tasting Team who shoulder a significant amount of the burden of organising events
- Our Away Trip team (John and Shirley, Tim and Sandy) for their research and organisation of these tremendous trips.

2024 was a record year in recent times (certainly since Covid).

Our finances are in a really strong position (stronger than anticipated - so we have plans for using the surplus!)

Membership numbers capped at 150 are a recent record (up from 90 at the start of the year), with increased diversity of nationality, age and home location in Spain  
Highest average & total attendance + number of guests since 2018.

Facebook profile expanded massively from under 50 members of a closed page at the start of the year to nearly 300 members now on an open platform. Thanks to all who contribute.

Every year we sadly have a number of leavers for different reasons, usually relocation or health related. Four in particular to mention;

Rod and Mary Anderton - past President and long standing members. I received a lovely letter from Rod thanking us and wishing us all the best. He resigned for deteriorating health reasons - we wish them all the best

Andrew and Kathy Johnson (here tonight) - past President and very active contributors to the Society - we wish you all the best in New Chapter of your lives based in England

Review of 2024 in summary, not month by month as that's all on the website

We tasted nearly 100 different wines, predominantly Spanish, though great variety  
Events held across the North Costa Blanca (Denia 3, Javea 3, Teulada Moraira 2, Benissa 1, Calpe 1). 5 opportunities to buy wines at highly discounted prices.

We're always looking for new venues - let us have your ideas please

Two fantastic Away Trips

Different types of event - (3 Bodega presentations, 1 visit to a bodega, 2 quiz/test of knowledge events, 3 restaurant dinners accompanied by wine (including the AGM and President's Evening), the unforgettable evening of music and wine organised by Patrick Harild

We also held our first Wine Education Workshop enjoyed by 20 members

Later I will talk about plans for 2025. We have had great successes in 2024 and previous years and need to build on that and move forward. The history of the Society (although it may not seem like it) has involved development, change and evolution. (The website, Facebook page, booking and paying online, etc.) Ted Barnett as our longest standing member here will tell you that, when he joined this was not a Society of diverse nationalities. It was German speaking and the names of the Presidents in the first 10 or so years demonstrate that. Although now English speaking, we have many nationalities represented in the membership and we have an opportunity to develop our Society further by embracing the different cultures, styles and approaches of the membership as a whole.

## Questions:

- i. Alfie Zidan McLeod asked what insurance the CBWS had, and Neville explained that we had liability cover for our events
  - ii. Tim Fawle highlighted the benefits of our significantly improved technology
  - iii. Alan Linger thought that the €2723 surplus was an acceptable sum to keep as CBWS reserves and Neville advised that there were no real risks for the Society and that this sum would be reduced somewhat during 2025
4. **The approval of the 2024 accounts** was proposed by Barbara Priest, seconded by Patrick Harild. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

## 5. Election of Committee

The President, Vice President & all the other Committee Members are willing to continue in the roles, but our statutes state that anyone continuing past 4 years must stand for re-election.

Paul Smithard advised that no-one had applied to join the Committee and therefore votes were taken for:

**Treasurer: Mike Granville.** Proposed by Paul Nicholls, seconded by Patrick Harild. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

**Secretary: Paul Smithard.** Proposed by Helen Nicholls, seconded by Pat Ingram. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

**Venues & Menus: Sue Blewett.** Proposed by Tim Fawle, seconded by Sara Richardson There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

**Webmaster: John Sloggie** is an ex-officio member of the Committee and he was proposed by Veronica Dunkley, seconded by Carolynn Smithard. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

## 6. Future Plans for 2025:

**Neville Richardson**

Here is a quick summary of your Committee's plans for 2025

- Firstly, our tasting plans and away trip details for 2025 are set out on the website so no need for me to go through them all with you tonight. I'll give a quick summary and point out a small number of items which may be of interest.

As you have seen, our financial position is better than budgeted, we intend to invest that surplus in better quality wines in 2025

Our venues will be 3 in Denia, 3 in Javea, 1 in Moraira, 1 in Benissa, 1 in Calpe and 1 to be decided. The first away trip is to Rioja and looks excellent. We could still fit in a couple more attendees.

We don't currently have plans to rerun the Wine Education workshop (unless sufficient numbers express interest), however in February the theme of the Tasting will be 'The Art of Wine Tasting' presented by a talented and enthusiastic member of the Bodega Leopoldo team in Ondara.

Later in the year we will have a Tasting dedicated to one of Spain's most popular (and perhaps least understood wines). We will be enjoying the full range of sherries.

In September, we have the 'Who do you think you are?' evening.

We sit next to other members each month, but how often do we realise that we don't know anything about their past experiences or interests. In our membership we have successful business people, authors, musicians, sailors, sportspeople. So during the year I suggest that you ask the person next to you what they have done in the past that is of interest. (Not of interest to the police or tax authorities.) As we get closer to September I will ask for nominations of who they found most interesting and that person would then advise their favourite wine, which Sara and I will present the profile and that favourite wine.

#### Other plans

- early in the New Year we will launch an updated (and hopefully clearer) version of our Score Sheet
- we are carrying out a Members' survey to receive what you like about our activities, what you dislike and what your recommendations are for change
- we will continue our recruitment of new members (within our maximum number)
- we will seek to co-opt some new members onto the Committee, again aiming to increase our diversity and produce fresh ideas to take your Society forwards.

### **7. Budget for 2025**

#### **Mike Granville**

Mike Granville presented the budget for the year 2025 in two parts, one dealing just with the tastings, on which we make a loss, and then one dealing with the Society as a whole, bringing in the loss on the tastings as one line. He said that the Committee were aware of the need not to allow the bank balance to grow unnecessarily large.”

The approval of the Budget was proposed by Bill Ingram, seconded by Richard Harris. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

### **8. Any Other Business**

Paul Smithard explained that he had received no notifications from Members and therefore there were just 2 points that need AGM approval to comply with our Constitution:

- i. Maximum number of 150 Members with Committee discretion to increase this to 151 (e.g. to allow a couple to join as numbers 150 & 151).

This was proposed by Richard Harris and seconded by Pat Ingram. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

- ii. Article 9 of our Constitution places a requirement for members to be 'resident' but no-one can explain what 'resident' means. We have taken legal advice that this can be deleted and therefore it is proposed that this requirement will be deleted.

This was proposed by Penny Floodgate and seconded by Hugh Epsom. There followed a unanimous vote in favour by the members.

There being no other AOB points, the AGM was brought to a close at 19.24