

**South Devon CAMRA AGM**  
**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 8.00 pm**  
**Paignton Conservative Club, 34 Palace Avenue, Paignton TQ3 3HB**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting started at 8.00 pm

Present were : Bob Southwell, Ian Packham, Lawrence Stringer, Alan Cooke, Kate Halton, Edgar Halton, Philip German, Peter Bridle, Alison Bridle, Andrew Thomson, Ian Thompson, Dave Buckler, David Wheeler, Billy Kidd, Ray and David Faulkner.

Apologies for absence had been received from: Eddy Pyle, Colin and Sue Staines, Grizzly Adams, Duncan Moss, Paul and Elizabeth Hulme, Peter Lister, Phil Stevens.

Bob opened the meeting with the Chairmans address. Although things were getting back to normal, there was always an amount of confusion with pub opening hours being shortened and some not opening in the day at all. The year had been a good one for the branch with increased attendance at social events, but not so good for the hospitality industry. We lost 5 breweries during the year which is an example of the challenges.

Following this the election of committee members took place. Apart from Edgar Halton who has resigned his membership secretary's role, the rest of the committee agreed to continue in post and there were no nominees or objections for any post.

David Wheeler asked Edgar to explain the role of the membership secretary and Edgar advised that the role dealt with statistics, reporting back to the membership on increases and decreases in numbers. Also communicating with the branch and dealing with new members. Another part of the role is to attract new members with a proactive role at beer festivals. The role can be as big or small as required but does require a time commitment at beer festivals

Lawrence asked if the various roles could be shared among the active members of the branch if no replacement could be found and Edgar thought this possible.

The meeting then concentrated on the three motions proposed by members. The first was from Alan Cooke who proposed that branch meetings started earlier so some members could get back by public transport which is getting more difficult with bus timetable changes. The motion was seconded by Edgar and agreed unanimously so motion carried.

The second motion was from Lawrence who proposed that the POTY/COTY procedure and votes are scrutinised by the committee as a whole to ensure transparency and avoid potential conflicts of interest. Lawrence explained that although there was a feeling among some members that the POTY/COTY competition was kept to two committee members, the real issue was that there weren't enough pubs and clubs nominated and the limited number of annual nominees led to the feeling the POTY/COTY was some form of Black Art.

The general feeling was that more pubs and more judges were needed to make it into a larger annual event but part of the problem is the branch area being too big with lack of public transport. Philip German asked what Cornwall do as they have a large branch area and Peter Bridle has asked for best practice from other SW region branches. Ian Packham suggested the procedure started a month earlier to give more time. On this basis the motion was carried.

The third motion from Billy was that revisions be made to the GBG selection process to focus more on the rural pubs, who often miss out by reason of lack of quarterly scores. Billy had produced a document highlighting the proposed changes. There was some discussion on the pros and cons of insisting on a Q4 score for rural pubs and the motion was carried with an allowance for rural pubs of scores in any three quarters, combined with 10 visits and 4 scorers.

At this point, Alan began the raffle ticket sales with two prizes on offer, One a 5L minikeg from Purity brewery, and the other a bottle of beer with associated literature. While this was going on a beer break was started and one members had returned, Peter Bridle – our SW Regional Director spoke and having been to a lot of regional meetings thanked all members who do so much. Each branch relies on a minority of active volunteers. CAMRA is still focussing on Cask Ales, Cider and Pubs/Breweries. The national membership is still down on Pre Covid levels and currently stands around 151,000. The rate of decline in membership is slowing but pubs still struggle to keep market share with a lot of people no returning to pubs after the Pandemic. Financially, CAMRA had a rocky two years but made a £ 391,000 surplus last year. The overall turnover pre Covid was £11.5m, and this reduced TO £5m but now stands at £7-8M.

CAMRA is still campaigning locally and Nationally with Draught Duty rate discounts to be announced. However there has been no support for energy costs or business rates so win some, lose some with lobbying still being successful. There is now more information for branches available and Ray Dwan is heading up the process across the SW region. Our region is big with some boundary changes but not in South Devon.

Cask Ale has had a bad three years with more keg and bottle sales, Levels of cask production is increasing but the market is still challenging. Pubs losing market share locally, look to keg beers etc. to attract customers and increase shelf life.

Other changes in CAMRA after the annual members' weekend. From 2025 GBG pub opening times will be shown again and a monthly newsletter with events and news will be produced, both in print and online.

Peter praised the branch for its good magazine, News and Brews and the National award winning website together with the GBG and POTY work done on time. He asked all attendees to look on CAMRA's website and the High St rental business scheme and to lobby the local MPs.

Peter then presented Alan Cooke with the certificate for winning the National Website contest with Andrew Thomson taking the required photo.

Next the branch accounts were presented by Ian and accepted by the members present.. Roger Adams was reappointed as Independent Examiner. Ian reminded the members present of the CAMRA members' weekend taking place in Torquay in 2025.

Lawrence then continued with the secretary and social secretary years report. Socially it had been a good year with more members attending social and meetings and the use of more frequent Comms messages has hopefully assisted. Hopefully the next year will prove as popular and Lawrence thanked all those for their appreciative comment and also constructive comments. Lawrence asked for more of the latter so socials can be tailored to what the membership wants.

Andrew stated he was pleased to continue and Magazine Editor. The magazine covers the printing costs so advertisers are not penalised unduly. Thanks to Lawrence for copy checking and to the named delivery persons who carried out the 'final mile' of the magazine every quarter. Billy had an idea that the magazine could be used to manage pubs expectations if they were about to come out of the GBG and new pubs about to enter the GBG encouraged to advertise. Edgar pointed out that there were several pubs that continued to advertise despite not being in the GBG.

Next was Alan's turn for the Whatpub, website and social media report. Whatpub has 447 licenced premises. There has been an increase in long term closed to 48 vs 30 last year, but there have been four newly licenced. Of the 447, 314 are noted as selling real ale, down from 333 last year. Whatpub has fewer surveyors but Alan gave thanks to those who do.

The website had 14300 unique visitors last year and approx. 44,000 pages were viewed, with the Home Page, Beer festival, Pub guide, Diary and Breweries and News being most popular in order. July 21<sup>st</sup> 2022 was the busiest day which then coincided with the beer festival.

The Facebook pages are still active and the SDC Sunshine page now has 330 members. Help is still needed with Beer Festival staffing and the staffing forms are on the branch website.

Dave Buckler spoke about progress with the beer festival with the biggest turnout at last week's planning meeting. CBOB tasting and voting will take place at the festival. Unfortunately the loss of five local breweries has meant a search out of area to secure enough beer. Booking for the camper vans at the site are coming in and it is important to get lots of posters out to various outlets. Andrew Thomson has arranged coverage in Devon Matters

The meeting now moved on to AOB. Ian Packham has secured a 4.3M x 3.0M Gazebo suitable for festivals for £50. After our festival it can be put in store and used by other branches. This was agreed by a majority of the attendees.

Billy advised the New Lion Brewery had been mothballed for 8 weeks. Meetings are being held in The Bay Horse, Totnes to decide its future. The Taproom at the Meadowbrook Community Centre is still open as a separate business.

Philip German advised that Hunters has been taken over by The Walker Brewing Company.

David Wheeler proposed a vote of thanks to the committee and the meeting was closed at 9.55 pm.