

Aberdeen, Grampian & Northern Isles CAMRA AGM Minutes
Zoom – Wednesday 25th November 2020 at 7.30pm

1) **Attendance**

Ian Chapman (IC), George Howie (GH), Richard Jones (RAJ), Ian Stewart (IS), Bob Frost (BF), Euan Fraser (EF), Jim Strachan (JStr), Scott Wilson (SW), Dave Lee (DL), Nick Marshall (NM), John White (JW), Joe Crawford (SNID)

2) **Apologies**

Mike Burton (MB), Lesley Thompson (LT)

3) **Minutes from 2019 AGM on 18th November 2019 at Grammar FP Club**

a) **Accuracy of 2019 Minutes**

No comments

4) **Committee Reports**

a) **Chairman**

1) Virtually no activity during year due to Covid/lockdown/restrictions

2) Various presentations still outstanding

b) Beer Of The Year (Mainland) - Cromarty Happy Chappy

c) Beer Of The Year (Islands) - Swannay Orkney Best. IC will post certificate to JW who will present to Rob Hill

d) Pub Of The Year (City/Overall) - Queen Vic

e) Pub Of The Year (Country) - Redgarth

f) Pub Of The Year (Northern Isles) - ScallowayHotel, Shetland.

Unfortunately now permanently closed so no presentation possible

b) **Treasurer** (Report covers financial period 18/10/19 to 20/10/20 – 12 months)

1) Once again my thanks go to Lesley & Mike for their sterling efforts (same treasurer so same play on words) for auditing the accounts. It must have taken them longer to boil a kettle than cover the 14 line items (35 last year) however having to work individually to comply with Covid social distancing recommendations didn't help. Let's hope things get back to normal soon and that there is a festival and then they'll have a lot more work to do next time. Lesley & Mike can comment &/or summarise their observations at the end of this report if they so wish

2) **Beer festival** - There have been no net transactions in this account since August 2016 and the balance, £187-14, remains unchanged since the last audit. However Bank of Scotland issued a requirement for a transaction to take place or the account would be "frozen" as such £60 was transferred to the branch account and five months later it was transferred back into the festival account. Estimated total historical branch donation remains at £216,500

3) **Branch** - Our annual activity cost the campaign just under £66 with costs coming from website domain rental, GBG licensee pack postage and cost of ink & paper for minutes agendas back when we could have meetings in pubs

4) **Magazine** - Only a single issue but it did better than break-even so well done to all involved given the burden of postage costs to the Northern Isles and other far flung places within the branch area

5) **GBG** - With no old stocks remaining and the decision not to risk buying any GBG2021, we only have the burden of licensee pack postage

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- 6) The rest of the costs over the year, £36, are associated with purchase of ink/paper for agenda/minutes and certificate frames for the many pub/club/beer/brewery awards we dish out; including some unframed certificates that other branches post to us from their festivals etc.
 - 7) The account closed at £724.62. Unsurprisingly we are nowhere near the VAT threshold.
 - 8) Following the court ruling on small businesses and charities regarding the Government initiative (an oxymoron if ever there was one) “Making Tax Digital” currently there is no requirement for the branch to adopt the online reporting finance tool COBAS as we are below the VAT threshold
 - 9) **Post Branch Audit** - The annual submission of our financial position to HQ was required using data to 31/10/20 - so almost aligned with our financial year. The submission deadline of November 15th was met
 - 10) HQ Finance has determined that the outstanding loan of £1,000 from 2016 has now been written off
- c) **Membership Secretary**
- 1) Current membership 387
 - 2) BF gave presentation of new report showing all statistics including a handy total for every Post Code in the branch area
 - 3) The Power Point file will be distributed with these minutes
- d) **Secretary/Contact**
- 1) Nothing really of note to report
 - 2) Weekly mail-outs are usually reported at branch meetings
 - 3) WhatPub feedback which is acted upon and database updated as required
- e) **Magazine Editor**
- 1) As already reported in Finance report, only 1 edition of North Sea Ale was produced in the year
 - 2) It was suggested that we should attempt to publish an online Issue 66 and make available via the website
 - 3) All members requested to submit articles etc. for publication
- f) **Pubs Officer**

New Outlets

- 1) **Cairn Grill, Braemar** - Opened July 2020 by Grant Mason, owner of Moorfield House Hotel. Selling at least two ales

Closed Outlets

- 1) **Under The Hammer, Aberdeen** - Colin Watson, the owner, has decided that the pub will not open again. Since he felt it was not possible to meet the conditions and restrictions required to be Covid safe. Very sad loss as was in the GBG 1991 and 24 consecutive years from 1998 (including 2021 Issue). Perhaps the branch could consider some sort of award to Colin to thank him for all those great pints we all had over the years?
- 2) **Shore, Kirkwall** - Currently only operating as a B&B meantime due to no being able to comply with social distancing and Covid regulations. Going by their website it looks as though they will reopen again once able to - cross your fingers!

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- 3) **Copper Dog (Craigellachie Hotel)** - Has announced it will be closed till at least the end of 2020 - presumably due to lack of business with downturn in tourism due to Covid?
- 4) **Aitchies Ale House, Aberdeen** - Seems to be closed at the moment, possibly due to being in Tier 2?
- 5) **Queen Vic, Aberdeen** - Currently closed as has limited capacity for outside drinking and does not serve food. Hopefully, if Aberdeen goes down to Tier 1 it will re-open. It is currently the branch Pub Of The Year!
- 6) **Stag/McGintys, Aberdeen** - Both of these pubs do food but have no outside drinking areas. Presumably owners (McGintys Group) have decided it is not viable without 'wet' only customers! Will reopen if Aberdeen gets down to Tier 1
- 7) **Krakatoa, Aberdeen** - Has been closed since before March 23rd first lockdown. New, state of the art air conditioning has been installed. No recent word on situation so will need feedback if anybody knows anything.
- 8) **Stuart Arms, Dufftown** - Closed and currently up for sale and currently under offer according to the property website
- 9) **Mash Tun, Aberlour** - Currently closed till April 2021
- 10) **Station Hotel, Rothes** - Currently closed
- 11) **Seafield Arms, Rothes** - Reported as being closed but this was before Moray moved to Tier 1, so may be open again
- 12) **Burnett Arms, Banchory** - Closed indefinitely and future unknown
- 13) **Alexandra Hotel, Ballater** - Closed until next year
- 14) **Lairhillock, Netherley** - Ceased trading and was due to closed at end of March 2020, just after compulsory Covid closure

Real Ale Losses/Changes

- 1) **Illicit Still, Aberdeen** - Was serving Stewarts 80/- as Illicit Ale for a while but not sure if it still selling ale as pumps were missing on a visit a few months ago
- 2) **Old Mill Inn, Brodie** - Pumps were removed a while ago as the owner wanted the pub to be regarded more as a restaurant. However, key-kegs are on sale from Cairngorm and Spey Valley so may still be classified as real ale. Needs a survey to confirm. However, our local member in Forres (guess who) was so disgusted by the decision so will probably never frequent it again!
- 3) **Moorfield House Hotel, Braemar** - No longer selling real ale and is now operating as a B&B. However owner, Grant Mason, has opened up the Cairn Grill in the village selling ale
- 4) **Crown Bar, Huntly** - Apparently Harry Halkett is no longer running this pub but still owns the building. However, just looked up Facebook and it says (dated 13th November) Aberdeenshire Council will not allow them to open and serve alcohol in the beer garden? That doesn't seem right!
- 5) **Tor-Na-Coille Hotel, Banchory** - Reported as not selling real ale at the moment but should resume in a better future
- 6) **Ravenswood British Legion** - Reported by IS as not selling real ale presently but will resume again in the future

IC said that different local authorities were interpreting restrictions differently, hence the situation at the Crown in Huntly. (It was later published in the Evening Express about the situation with 'wet' pubs and Aberdeen Council said that all pubs currently still open were complying with the food requirements)

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- g) **Social Secretary**
 - 1) Current Social Secretary, Rigg Robertson, was not present and had not submitted a report
 - 2) A very successful social had been held with members from Tayside branch on Saturday 25th January starting at the Newton Arms, fortunately paying what would be our final visit to the Lairhillock and then terminating at Stonehaven. Thanks to Rigg for organising the transport between pubs
- h) **Tasting Panel**
 - 1) An event was held in Archibald Simpsons on 14th March and Eric Mills gave a precis of the new styles
 - 2) No other events have been held due to Covid restrictions
- 5) **Presentation/Acceptance of Annual Accounts**
 - 1) The accounts were passed round for comment
 - 2) The accounts were accepted unanimously
 - 3) Minutes approval - Proposed RAJ, Seconded IC
- 6) **Brewery News**
- 7) **Election of Office Bearers**
 - a) Chairman - Ian Chapman P/RAJ, S/JStr
 - b) Secretary/Contact - George Howie P/IC, S/NM
 - c) Treasurer - Richard Jones P/IC, S/GH
 - d) Membership - Bob Frost P.RAJ, S/GH
 - e) Vice Chair - As current post holder, Rigg Robertson, was not present and had not indicated an interest, GH said he could take on the role as it is not often required to substitute for chairman. P/IC, S/BF
 - f) Social Secretary - similar situation as above. SW said he would take on this post as it would probably not require any work until we are able to visit pubs physically P/GH, S/RAJ
 - g) Webmaster - Scott Wilson P/IC, S/RAJ
 - h) Pubs Officer - George Howie P/IC, S/JW
 - i) Young Person/Students - Euan Fraser P/IC, S/DL
 - j) Public Affairs Officer - Nobody in post and still no nominations - vacant
- 8) **Suggestions for Campaigning**
 - a) During current Covid crisis and restrictions, we should be encouraging our local breweries. Many already are by buying beer online from them
 - b) On Saturday 5th December at 2pm, there will be a Zoom session with tasting of Burnside beers by Steven Lewis of Burnside Brewery
 - c) Investigate apparent differential in policy with 'wet' pubs not doing food not able to serve alcohol in outside drinking areas
 - d) Fairer treatment for pubs and support bill re easing the burden of the tie with PubCos
- 9) **Constitution**
 - a) No suggested alteration
- 10) **Website**
 - a) Thanks were given to SW for his work in creating new version of website
 - b) A decision was made to change over to the new version within a week or so
 - c) Volunteers required to process updating of meetings, pubs etc.

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d) A training session to be held on Zoom at 7pm on Wednesday 2nd December

12) **GBG Matters**

- a) It was decided to keep the existing voting system supplemented by relevant NBSS scores from local members who did not submit a voting form or be CAMRA members outwith the branch
- b) Due to the limited chance for members to pay visits to pubs at the moment, the eligibilty to vote ranges from February 2019 to the cut off date in 20221
- c) The usual list of outlets will be compiled by GH and distributed for checking and subsequently posting to the website. It will be difficult as many pubs may still be closed and many may re-open without stocking ale again

13) **Motions/Discussion Points**

- a) None submitted

15) **A.O.C.B.**

- a) A vote of thanks was given to IS for allowing Zoom meetings to take place using his personal Zoom account

Meeting closed at 21.03