



Dear Member

Normally at this time in our year, we are able to look back on a series of successful meetings and events, where members met and enjoyed presentations and discovered new wines.

But this year has been very different. The programme of tastings I presented to you at the AGM last year ground to a halt in March, by which time we had enjoyed just five presentations, including a pre-Christmas meeting in the Old Barn Hall when Heather Dougherty entertained us with a selection of excellent Christmas wines from Laithwaites. This was accompanied by a first-class meal prepared and served by Dave Squires and his team. It all now seems a long time ago!

Meetings continued in January, February and March, but suddenly our future looked pretty bleak and our meetings were put on hold until July, when the relaxation of restrictions enabled your committee to keep members 'connected' with a series of garden meetings during the summer months. A number of volunteers invited up to five other members to enjoy three carefully selected wines in their gardens. Approximately half the membership was comfortable meeting in this way. The weather behaved for the most part and we tasted wines from ExCellar, Guildford Wine Company and Laithwaite's. The feedback was very good indeed and I would like to thank Ian Robinson for his hard work putting these events together, and also to the members who hosted the events, and all those that attended.

Please remember that the details of all our meetings can be viewed on our website, and I am pleased to report that all the presenters and contributors to our full programme are fully prepared to get us back on track when we are able to do so.

During the early days of September, we were told that larger indoor gatherings would be permissible, albeit with safety restrictions, and the prospect of a limited return to some kind of normality could be considered. Unfortunately, the Harrison Room would not provide the flexibility the new circumstances required, but a move to the main Barn Hall would. Members were invited to 'vote' on a change of evening from our long-held tradition of the second Monday in the month. While Tuesday was a clear preference, Government guidelines changed again thereby preventing any further progress and this continues to be the case at the time of writing. A number of members have since identified their willingness to meet indoors during the Autumn, and your committee is currently considering how this may proceed.

With respect to membership; we commenced the year with sixty-seven members, and whilst several resignations occurred during the year, our local publicity and the good work of our Membership Secretary has built this back to the same number. Publicity and recruitment will continue when circumstances allow.



While the country continues to struggle with controlling Covid 19, and the future continues to be difficult to predict, we, as a club are determined to keep at least some activity going, and to stay close to any sensible opportunities we can benefit from. We must remain optimistic.

For the moment, you will see the Committee are proposing to change our membership and financial year to operate in tandem, January to December. This simplifies our administration and also means we will not be requesting renewals or membership fees until January 2021.

Finally, you will be aware changes are taking place at committee level; Frances, while remaining on committee is handing over the role of Secretary to David Mendus, and it is proposed that David's role of Treasurer will pass to Kevin Forder. Frances has really been a great help in her role as Secretary, and David too as Treasurer. Neil Briffett also decided to resign from the Committee. Jean is retiring, and we will certainly miss her unstinting catering service that has served us so well for several years. My thanks to the committee for their help and support during a difficult year.

And last, but not least a big 'thank you' to Kate and Claudio Ramponi for their help and support with our website, member communication and IT requirements!

Let us all hope for better times - and until they arrive, be sure to keep enjoying your wine.

Best wishes,

David Fulton
Chairman, Bookham Wine Club