



Chairman's report 01 September 2023 to 31 August 2024

Introduction

It has been another very successful year for Bookham Wine Club. Our membership is full, meetings are well attended, and we have a waiting list of people wanting to join the club. During the year we tasted and enjoyed over 75 different wines selected from various wine making regions across the World. We were introduced to lesser known grape varieties and learnt about special wine makers and different wine making techniques. Also, the club's annual social events, at Christmas and in July, were well supported and thoroughly enjoyed by members and their guests.

To continue to be successful, the club relies on members to fill committee positions and to volunteer for other tasks, as and when required. When everyone is playing their part, continuing success is more certain, and the club is stronger.

Committee Matters

There were some significant changes to the Committee at the start of the year when, after many years of service, David Fulton, Ian Robinson and Vivienne Varley decided to step down. A reshuffle of roles took place and at the same time David Read and Derek Buck were recruited as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. In the New Year, we welcomed Liz Albon on to the Committee. Liz has a flexible role, covering for the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary when required on club nights and, at this year's summer event, helping with organising the catering and decorating the tables.

Another experienced committee member, Eric Martin, will be stepping down at this year's AGM. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Eric for all his hard work and dedication to the club, both for his most recent role and for previous roles on previous Committees. I hope to have found a replacement for Eric before the AGM, in which case the Committee will be back to 8 members. The rest of the Committee will be standing for re-election at the AGM.

All committee members are involved in the overall running of the club, and everyone helps when others are on holiday or otherwise absent. Committee meetings are held monthly and are both constructive and enjoyable.

Membership

Sandra Holland is the club's Membership Secretary and does a great job taking care of membership renewals, managing the waiting list, and organising seating plans for meetings and events. Membership is capped at 85 due to space limitations – if attendance is above 70, it is difficult to give everyone a clear view of the presentation screen. The Committee has decided to close the waiting list for the time being (it currently stands at 14) as it can take over three years to progress from

waiting list to full membership. Due to the popularity of the club, and the number of people wanting to go on the waiting list, there is no need currently to advertise the club's activities.

We have continued with the practice of inviting people from the waiting list to at least 2 meetings per year; this keeps them involved with the club as well as helping the club financially.

Fees

I am pleased to say that the annual membership fee will remain unchanged at £20 in 2025. Monthly meeting fees are expected to continue be £10 per person on average but may vary a little depending on the actual costs of each meeting.

Financial Performance

Derek Buck is the club's Treasurer and has been a great addition to the Committee. His main responsibilities are financial controls, accounting records, managing the HSBC bank account, and managing cash. Derek and his wife, Sandra, also manage the sale of raffle tickets at monthly meetings.

The club has a solid financial base. As at 31 August 2024, the club's financial reserves stood at £2,320 and last year the club made a net surplus of £240 after donations of £150 to the BCA and £48 to The Grange. More details can be found in Derek's financial report.

Also, I would like to thank Paul Sanders for, once again, acting as "Examiner to the Account" and for approving this year's accounts.

Meetings

Roger Stafford is the club's Programme Secretary and does a great job organising presenters and agreeing wine selections ahead of each monthly meeting. On the night, Roger briefs the presenters and Eric Martin takes charge of the wine. Eric also organises the volunteers who pour the wine and the volunteers who take glasses home to wash up. Between Roger and Eric, it is a well-oiled operation, made easier with the help of our volunteers.

The 2024 programme covered a wide range of topics including for example Biodynamic Winemaking, Celebrating Women in Wine, and Where in the World. Over the course of the year we were introduced to many different wines, most of which we had not tried before. Some were more liked than others, but the overall quality and variety has been of a very high standard.

Attendance at monthly meetings averaged 62 and most people paid in advance by bank transfer.

Roger is currently preparing the programme for 2025 and is in contact with all our regular presenters, as well as being on the lookout for new presenters and new topics. In this regard, Roger also gets valuable input and advice from our President, Heather Dougherty.

Events

Although Ian Robinson stepped down at last year's AGM, he continued to plan and organise the club's social event in December 2023. As always, Ian did a fantastic job, and the evening was a great success. We enjoyed a delicious meal accompanied by a selection of enjoyable wines presented by "Six Wise Members". The wines were chosen by David Fulton. There was a presentation at the end of the evening to thank Ian and David for continuing to organise the event despite having resigned at the AGM.

Planning and organising our social events are significant tasks, and therefore we were very pleased when the club's Secretary, David Read, volunteered to take the lead for the 2024 summer event. The theme was an Eastern Mediterranean BBQ with a selection of wines from the region. The caterer had not been used by the club before and neither had the suppliers for starters and desserts. It was a very successful evening, and everybody appeared to have a great time.

I would like to congratulate David on organising the event and I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the evening – all the Committee, all the volunteers who helped with the food preparation, setting up the hall and clearing up at the end. Also, our thanks to Ruth Blood for designing and printing the menu cards.

IT

I would also like to thank Kate and Claudio Ramponi who support the Committee with communications with members and by updating our website. Also, Claudio is normally on hand to sort out any IT issues on club nights and to help presenters connect to the projector.

Phil Spooner provides Kate and Claudio with updates for the website, as well purchasing raffle prizes for our monthly meeting. Phil also captained the BWC quiz team during Village Week.....we came a very respectable sixth!

Programme 2025

The 2025 programme is being finalised by Roger and again includes a variety of interesting and entertaining topics to be presented by many of our favourite wine educators. At the AGM, we will present a preview of what you can expect to enjoy in 2025.

Finally, I hope you have enjoyed the last 12 months and that you will attend the AGM on 14 October 2024. As always, the Committee would like to receive your suggestions and ideas for future presentations and events, either at the AGM or by email to myself or another committee member.

Thank you and best wishes,
Kevin Forder
Chairman
15 September 2024

Email: chairman@bookhamwineclub.org.com