

THAMES AND CHILTERN VINEYARDS ASSOCIATION
Annual General Meeting 2017

Agenda

1. Attendees & Apologies received
2. Approval of Minutes & actions from 2016 AGM
3. Chairman's Report: Bob Nielsen
4. Vice-Chairman's report: Patricia Stefanowicz MW
5. Financial Report 2015-16 & Membership update: Sian Liwicki
6. Secretary's Report: Denise Santilli
7. Election of Officers & Committee for 2017-2018
8. Motions to be passed
9. Any other business

This AGM is conducted by e-mail since we were unable to reach a quorum for the AGM planned on April 23rd 2017. Those who had accepted to attend on 23rd April were as follows. Since 16 members were required to reach quorum, the meeting was cancelled and a communique by e-mail was agreed by the committee members instead at a meeting held on May 4th 2017

1. Acceptances (9):

Denise Santilli: Hon sec T&CVA, Linch Hill Vineyard
Sian Liwicki: Hon Treasurer and Membership secretary, Bothy Vineyard
Bob Nielsen; Chairman, Brightwell Vineyard
Patricia Stefanowicz: Vice Chair & Technical Advisor, MW
Christopher & Leonie Cooke: Winding Wood Vineyard
Robert Louth: Winding wood Vineyard
Jan Mirkowski: Fairmile Vineyard

Declines (18)

18 of 47 members declined to attend.

2. Minutes and Actions from 2016 AGM - summary below (full minutes attached)

- AGM held 10th April 2016 , Cherwell Boathouse, Oxford
- 4 new members joined in 2016
- The accounts were approved: net assets were £2404.97
- The following Officers & Members were elected to the committee for 2016-2017
 - **Chair & UKVA Representative:** Bob Nielsen, Brightwell Vineyard
 - **Vice-Chair & Technical Advisor:** Patricia Stefanowicz
 - **Hon Treasurer:** Sian Liwicki, Bothy Vineyard
 - **Hon Secretary:** Denise Santilli, Linch Hill Vineyard
 - **Ordinary Members:** Margaret McVey Dymond; Phil Rossi, Oaken Grove Vineyard; Kaye Laithwaite, Harrow & Hope Vineyard;
- T&CVA Wine Challenge held 4th Sept 2016, Harrow & Hope Vineyard: 46 wines entered from 14 vineyards
- High resolution photos of trophies now available to download / use from website
- Engraving of trophies: costs to be borne by T&CVA
- T&CVA subscription fees: decreased from £20 to £15 per annum

3. Chairman's Report (Bob Nielsen)

Dear fellow Vintners, Vignerons and discerning drinkers,

While it has been a fairly quiet year within the T&CVA, which reflects how busy we all are, as when running tours and tastings and sales all weekend one doesn't have time for yet another weekend event. However, it has been a very active year in the realm of UKVA politics.

Just over a year ago a Chief Executive post was introduced (paid for 2 days per week, but then increased to 3 and now reduced to 2 again). Then a 'Management committee' was formed by the Chairman and it subdivided to run subject matter committees (largely unpaid). Whilst we are allowing time for these changes to 'bed down' it is for the members to judge resulting outputs as they emerge. A further move, that I objected to, has been to lease a room in Vintners Hall as an Office. This will cost roughly £10,000 per year. However, our Chief Exec lives in Derbyshire and can do most work from home, and the Gen Secretary lives in Kent and can do most work from home, without the cost in time of commuting to an office in central London to answer emails. So, while a prestige address in London is nice to have, 'Will it get enough use to justify the expense?!' I have asked that a log of its use be kept as I cannot see this is currently money being well spent!

My main concern has been that, as these new structures were introduced, so too was oversight by the Council (your watchdog) being reduced. The previous Chairman reduced Council meetings from 4 per annum to 2 and they were made shorter in duration (now reinstated to 4 plus), hence many important matters were being pushed through with little or no time to debate. The Chief Executive started publishing political and policy papers in the name of the UKVA that the UKVA Council had not seen, nor debated and not approved. Some of which contradicted the widely expressed views of members. Also, the sub-committees started making statements that were not approved and agreed by Council, further adding to an image of an organisation with no control. My objections to this loss of control led to my statement emailed to you all last November when I challenged the UKVA Chairman over publishing a letter to the Secretary of State that the members had not been consulted on, and was not only rambling and pointless, but also misrepresented the UKVAs views on several subjects, notably wine duty and our opposition to 'so-called British' wine. A further confrontation happened when I discovered that a sub-committee had written to DEFRA asking in the name of the UKVA for the labelling privileges on 'Varietal' wine to be scrapped (you would have been banned from putting England or English on a bottle unless it had passed PDO or PGI schemes). Their action had been motivated to eliminate an anomaly in the rules about sourcing of grapes for Sparkling wines, but no thought had been given to the impact on Still wine producers. This letter had been sent without the knowledge, let alone approval of Council. That it had happened was only discovered by the Welsh Regional Chair being informed by the Welsh Office when DEFRA asked them if they should agree to it! Through Council I stopped this action and I drafted a revised proposal for the Chairman to send to DEFRA so changes will only affect the anomaly in Sparkling grapes and no changes will be made to Still wine labelling.

However, you will have gathered that I am not happy with the UKVA's drift away from being a membership organisation with membership oversight to an executive organisation that does not debate or consult.

This leads on to the hot topic of the moment: uniting UKVA and EWP into one organisation. Much work has been done to pursue this aim, with everyone agreeing it's a desirable objective. However, the detail is far from simple! The baseline is that UKVA becomes a new structure (UK Wine Producers) with 2 groups of members. Group A will pay a hectare levy and receive essentially the services UKVA provides today. Group B will pay the hectare levy plus a marketing levy (£1,000s) which will give those members additional marketing services – essentially what EWP provides today. With the 2 group structure comes a Board of

Directors where 3 are elected from Group A and 3 from Group B, each group having various reserved powers of veto to prevent either Group dominating. While several regional chairmen have objected to this 2 group structure, adopting it is a 'red-line' for EWP to agree the merger.

If this structure is agreed then the next sticking point is the powers of the Directors versus the voting rights of members. What is proposed in the latest debate is a Board of Directors which will be initially appointed from within. Not until 2020 will members have a chance to vote for directors and then only one A and one B director will be required to submit to election every year, so some 'appointees' will not be voted on for 5 yrs! Whilst the Board may nominate at pleasure candidates for the election, members wishing to stand without the Boards nomination will need to jump through difficult hoops. The Board do not want financial statements, meeting minutes or decision processes to be visible to members. The regions will remain but will have no power to influence the Board, nor demand consultation, debate or membership ability to over-rule Board decisions.

The 'limited' consultation that is being had on the Unity issue is still subject to confidentiality. The T&CVA Committee have discussed the issue and indicated that we support the idea of unity and that T&CVA can accept the two-tier structure. However we have objected to the lack of membership involvement, the lack of democracy, and the excessive powers of the Directors. Under the current draft agreement the Directors (unelected for several years) could become a self-selecting clique that would be unaccountable to members. At the moment I have said this is unacceptable to the T&CVA. We want the power for the membership at a General Meeting to over-rule the directors and to vote them out if needs be. I see no good reason why, in a membership organisation, the Directors should not be fully accountable for their decisions and actions to the members. At any moment the 'unity committee' could decide to send their proposed new Articles of Association out to you, the UKVA membership, and call for a vote. At this vote you will not be given an opportunity to debate or consult just vote yes to merge under the proposed new Articles or No. I have continually protested that the full membership should be engaged in a wide-ranging consultation on Unity plans, and a symposium should be held to allow debate and decision making. My pleas have been over-ruled so you will not be consulted on the detail.

Personally, as a member of both EWP and UKVA, I want to see merger. However I would vote NO to the Articles of Association proposed at the moment. I remain engaged in arguing for democracy in the new structure and have sent my latest objections to the unity group this morning. They have adopted a few changes, though not many, but I remain hopeful that they will embrace an open membership driven organisation, and not just a club run by a few friends.

Cheers

Bob Nielsen

Chairman 29 May 2017

4. Vice-Chairman's Report (Patricia Stefanowicz MW)

Thames & Chiltern Valley Vineyards Annual Wine Challenge 2016, 4th September 2016
Harrow and Hope Vineyard, Marlow, Berkshire

Review from the Chairman of the Judges, Patricia Stefanowicz MW

The judges, I and the T&CVA Committee would like to extend thanks to **Harrow and Hope Vineyards** for hosting our T&CVA Annual Wine Challenge. Thank you, Kaye and Henry Laithwaite for lending us your winery, and **dog**. Our judging day was so easy, and the delicious buffet following our work was precisely what we needed to revive.

Thank you, especially, to Denise, our splendid Secretary, for keeping everything, including judges, under control.

Thanks also to Bob Nielsen, our Chairman, and the Committee for keeping us 'in the game' as our own local Association. Every year we in T&CVA are becoming more professional in our wine production, not just within the UKVA, but also in Europe and around the world. The results here, nationally and globally show that we smaller regions can produce results equal to larger UKVA regions and the international wine industry.

I'd like to thank my fellow judges: Yannick Joseph, Head Butler and Sommelier at St Johns College, Oxford, and Lindsay Oram, Food and Wine Technologist, expert International Wine Judge and MW student. A cracking team!

Judging and results

Under bright sunshine and blue skies, if a bit of autumn chill in the air, we judged 46 wines-a record, I believe.

So, onto the Awards: 81% of wines received awards, which is an excellent result. The wines were simply very, very good, a tribute to our producers. Thank you, everyone.

Although Sparkling wines are the 'head-liners' in the UK, I'm still a huge supporter of our dry-or almost dry-white wines and rosés. And, let's be realists; having a range of wines for our Cellar-Door Sales, including red wines, is a draw for consumers. At least, we hope so?

The Classes

Reds

Interestingly, the red still wines were a small but successful class. Our reds did quite well this year, with a silver, a bronze and a commended. Dornfelder and Rondo are fairly easy to grow and take on moderate oak., making rather delightful wines. This lot was a group of very good wines. And we know how difficult red wines are to grow, make and sell in our fickle climate (*double-entendre* intended). Speaking more theoretically and ideally: in a good year, such as 1996, there's nothing like Pinot Noir, the Holy Grail, which seems to perform quite well in Thames & Chiltern Valley, as sparkling, as rosé and even as red.

*Congratulations to Bob and Carole Nielsen on the **Emmbrook Cup** for the **Brightwell Oxford Regatta Red 2013**, made from Dornfelder and Rondo.*

Rosés

Whether dry, nearly dry or even medium-dry, the wines performed well. We were delighted to find silver, bronze, and highly commended. Lovely wines generally. A caution: balance between sweetness and acidity is crucial; winemakers beware!

*Congratulations to Daniel Goss-Custard and winemaker Vince Gower on the **Stefanowicz Salver** for the **Stanlake Park Pinot Blush 2014**.*

Dry and off-dry Whites

Generally, a super pair of classes: both the most recent vintage (2015) and earlier years. Some 2015 wines might benefit from just a bit more age in bottle. That said, the refreshing acidity and elegant English flower garden flavours were dainty and delectable.

*Congratulations to Bob and Carol Nielsen on the **Mac Mackinnon Trophy** for the **Brightwell Crispin 2014**.*

Other Whites

Interestingly there were no wines entered in the **medium-dry-to-medium-sweet** classes. And not a single wine in the sweet (45g/l+) class. Fair enough; if a style does not work here in Thames & Chiltern Valley, do not waste too much time and effort.

Personally, I agree that the dry and off-dry classes are strengths in Thames & Chiltern Valley Vineyards. We certainly succeed with drier white styles.

Oaked Whites

In Thames & Chiltern Valley Vineyards, we appear rightly to be careful with the use of oak. Possibly for Chardonnay or other neutral varieties, oak can, and often does, work by adding texture, and breadth across the mid-palate. We had a couple of gently oaked whites, which were genuine and balanced.

Sparkling Wines

Sparkling wines, like no other style, divide judging panels across the globe in local, regional, national and international competitions. As many much-esteemed fizz-expert colleagues lament, "It is so difficult a category to judge without letting one's own prejudices and pre-conceptions get in the way."

Some of our favourite wines in 2016 Challenge were Sparklings and they were spectacular. Bright acidity, plenty of yeasty, brioche character and lovely elegant fruit. "Yummy," that highly technical tasting term!

*Congratulations to Tim and Stephanie Chafor on winning the **T&CVA Sparkling Wine Trophy** for **2013 Chafor Vintage Sparkling Wine**.*

...and so we come to the end of our Challenge Awards: the **T&CVA Decanter** for the Best Wine Overall to Tim and Stephanie Chafor's **2013 Chafor Vintage Sparkling Wine**. Please raise a glass in their honour!

In summary, my colleagues and I think this year again was a successful T&CVA Challenge. Our region produces lovely wines and the awards reflect our professionalism and quality. Well done, all!

We wish you a good vintage and, of course, positive sales and distribution of our nearly impeccable wines.

Thank you,
Patricia Stefanowicz MW
Vice-Chairman, Thames & Chiltern Valley Vineyards Association
Chairman, Thames and Chiltern Valley Vineyards Association Regional Challenge 2016

Post-script:

How do we compare?

It is worth noting that T&CVA are on a par with (or even better than) other regional competitions in terms of how our wines stack up in winning awards. The panel of judges T&CVA assembles each year is exceptional and I, as the Chairman of the Challenge Panel, rely on the judges' integrity and reliability.

5. Treasurer's Report

There were no surprises in the 2015/16 TCVA accounts which were relatively straightforward. This is the first time that the accounting period has run from August to July, and having transitioned from January to December. Membership numbers were roughly stable and there were no expensive or unplanned activities.

Outgoings like the maintenance of our website continue to be covered by the TCVA element of the subs – so please do make use of this excellent resource!

We had spent money on printing wine award labels in the previous financial year and in this reporting year, some of that cost was recouped from selling them on to members. It should be noted that due to the relatively small quantities printed and the erratic nature of demand, the cost of the labels to the members will fluctuate. The TCVA does not make a profit from this activity.

The slow response from a significant proportion of members to requests for subscriptions continues to test the patience of the Treasurer, who had to send out numerous reminders. It is always helpful if members contact the Treasurer with details of changes in hectareage, preferred contact details or arrangements with tenant/landlord before the annual subscription invoice is generated.

THAMES AND CHILTERN VINEYARDS ASSOCIATION Income & Expenditure Account for the Period 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2016

Income		2015/16 £	2014/15 £	Expenditure	2015/16 £	2014/15 £
Membership Subscriptions	Total receipts retained by TCVA	5546.85	1495.61			
	Remitted to UKVA	4051.24				
	Underpayment to UKVA	0.00		Overpayment to the UKVA	385.5	
AGM Catering receipts		0.00	195.00	Catering, speakers, expenses for AGM	100	486.78
Wine Festival Receipts		0.00	1476.83	Wine Festival	0	1582.01
Wine Competition Entries plus sticker sales		281.00	108.00	Wine Challenge Judges expenses, etc	174.60	192.19
Donations		0.00	0.00	Other meetings	0.00	137.57
Adverts		0.00	0.00	Website Fees and management	376.06	183.59
				Secretarial (include postage)	6.22	28.33
				Hon Treasurer's postage	0.00	0
				Msic Award Labels	0.00	380.40
				TCVA banner	0	72.00
Total Income		1776.61	2164.25	Total Expenditure	1042.38	3062.87
Surplus/Deficit for the period		734.23				

Balance Sheet for the Period 1 August 2015 to 31 Jul 2016

	2015/16 £	2014/15 £	2014 £
Fixed Assests		0,00	0
Current Assets			
Stocks	160.00	1	380.40
Debtors	381.75		180.00
Cash at Bank - Promotional Fund	336.20		336.30
Cash at Bank - General Fund	2283.19		1508.37
	<u>3161.14</u>		<u>4280.15</u>
Current Liabilities			
Trade creditors	385.50		39.59
underpayment to UKVA	361.75		1361.96
	<u>747.25</u>		<u>1401.55</u>
Net current assets		2413.89	2878.60

Note 1: stocks of labels

6. Secretary's Report (Denise Santilli): 2016 Activities

Date	Event Name	Venue	Times	Hosted by / Contact details	More about this event
10/4/16	AGM, Lunch, Awards	Cherwell Boathouse	11-3pm	TCVA Denise Santilli	AGM, Lunch, Trophies and Certificates awarded. Presentation by Barry Lewis CEO UKVA
9/5/16	EWP Trade & Press tasting day	One Great George St, London	10.30-4.30pm	EWP Julia Trustram-Eve	TCVA participation
28/5/16-5/6/16	English Wine Week	All vineyards	Local events	EWP	Local activities at TCVA vineyards
4/9/16	TCVA Wine Challenge	Harrow & Hope Vineyard	10-2pm	TCVA Denise Santilli	46 wines entered from 14 vineyards Briefing with results sent to members

7. Election of Officers and Committee for 2017-2018

The following are proposed as officials and committee members for 2017-18:

Chairman & UKVA Rep	Bob Nielsen
Vice Chairman & T&CVA Technical Advisor	Patricia Stefanowicz
Hon Secretary	Denise Santilli
Hon Treasurer & Mem Sec	Sian Liwicki
Ordinary Members:	Margaret McVey-Dymond, Phil Rossi, Kaye Laithwaite, Christopher Cooke

8. Motions to be voted on:

T&CVA subscription fee for 2017-2018: this will remain at £15 per year from August 1st 2017, since we have not spent any reserves since last year which currently stand at £2413. Proposals for activities upon which we could wisely spend TCVA reserves are invited.

It is agreed that the T&CVA committee have the authority to approve the UKVA subscriptions and hectare levy for 2018 (£42.00 individual fee + £7.50 per 0.1ha up to 7 ha) or to be calculated pro rata, depending upon any organisational changes resulting from the UKVA / EWP merger planned for July 4th 2017.

9. Any Other business

There was no other business.