



THAMES AND CHILTERN VINEYARDS ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 2024

11.00-12.30

Thursday 21st November 2024 at Oaken Grove Vineyard

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome & Attendees**
- 2. 2023 AGM Minutes Sign Off**
- 3. 2024 Review**
 - a. Chairmans report
 - b. Membership report
 - c. Treasurers report
 - d. Wine Challenge
- 4. Election of Committee**
- 5. 2025 Matters & Plans**
 - a. Membership Fee
 - b. Constitutional Changes
 - c. Quarterly Committee Meetings
 - d. Regional Map
 - e. Vineyard Tours
 - f. Website
 - g. TCVA Wine Challenge
 - h. Other events
- 6. AOB**

Minutes of the meeting

1 – Welcome

Members Present:

- Ian Beecher-Jones – JoJo's
- Phil Walker – Vyn Dene
- Jan Mirkowski- Fairmile
- Stephen Kendall - Kidmore
- Niamh & Stephen Kendall– Kidmore
- Paul - Kidmore
- Bob Nielsen – Brightwell
- Phil Rossi – Oaken Grove
- Elieen Bell – Hendred
- David Bell – Hendred
- Emily Carr – Stonor Valley
- Kay Smitham – All Angels
- Mark Darley – All Angels

Apologies

- Holly Morgan
- Kaye & Henry Laithwaite
- Anne Linder
- Will Croxford
- Patricia Stefanowicz
- Mike Dean
- Matt Robson
- Christopher Cooke
- Denise Richards

2 – Minutes of the last meeting

Matters arising

No matters arising and minutes will be signed after the meeting as a true account of the meeting.

VOTE – all in attendance in favour

3 a) 2024 Chairmans report

IBJ gave Chairmans report for 2024

WineGB regional roadshow – April 2024 – Nicola Bates from WineGB came to ask questions on the direction of WineGB over the next 3 years. Great discussion around that from members. Frost mitigation measure demonstrations from Frolight and Frost foam for members to see. A great data had by all

Vineyard managers meeting – Sheep in vineyards. Sophie from CW Farm Vets gave an interesting insight in to managing sheep in a vineyard and what to look for from a health point of view

Under vine mower demo – RT Machinery provided a demonstration machine of an under vine mower at JoJo's a 3 members came to view it with the aim of showing it's use/benefit in the vineyard

WineGB strategy day – report later, but great be involved with the day to set the strategy for WineGB moving forward. Cellar Door Relief is going to be the main focus of Nicola over the next 3 years

WineGB tourism training – Visit England training was good, but relies on LVEPs to support. Training will take place across the country, but in our region I'm not sure of the value at this stage

Chilterns Society tour – very happy at the visit

Oxfordshire Wine book – great coverage of wines in the region from Marcus Rees, now to work out how to maximise the content to opportunity of his work on websites etc.

Wine Challenge 2024 – has not taken place – Apologies

IBJ work at WineGB – Tourism working – fascinating and becoming more active.

R&D Group – technology in vineyards. Haven't had a full meeting yet

Viticulture group – indirect contribution, but not on the Committee

Regional Chairs group – Face to face meeting at NIAB on Tuesday 20th Nov 4 online meetings. Very useful to hear what is going on in other regions

3 b) 2024 Membership report – on screen

During 2024 WineGB have improved the processes around circulating membership data. We now receive automated monthly updates, more timely, with greater level of accuracy and richer information about our membership.

2024 Membership Summary:

2024 Membership Summary	Region Status			Notes	2023		New	
	Home	Other	Total		Home	Movement	Home	Other
Producer	26	2	28		30	-4	2	
Individual Associate	8	1	9		9	-1	1	
Grower	8	2	10		8	0	3	
Student Associate	2	1	3		2	0		1
Trade Associate	0	1	1	Marrons	0	0		1
Honorary Associate	0	1	1	Julia T-E	0	0		1
Total	44	8	52		49	-5	6	3

Bob Nielsen highlighted historically nominated honorary members (naming Oliver Richardson specifically) as missing from the data.

Action PW will follow up in the historic membership data and add any missing to the records as needed.

Non members Locally:

26 Vineyards/Producers identified from other sources, believed to be located in the Region and not to be members:

Trading Name	Postcode
Amersham Vineyard	HP7 0LU
Arrewig Vineyard	HP5 2UA
Bridewell Organic Gardens	OX7 3EB
Claydon Vineyard	MK18 2NG
Corner House Vineyard	OX12 8JR
Bampton Vineyard	OX18 2EG
Dinton Vineyard	HP17 8UF
Gold Hill Vineyard	RG17 7HE
Great Kimble Wines	HP17 OXS
Hughenden Vineyard	HP15 6LH
King's Ransom Vineyard	SL6 9UB
Kingwood Estate	RG4 9HY
Moorbridge Estate	RG20 8DA
North Court Farm Vineyard	RG40 3SN
Orpwoods Farm Vineyard	OX44 7JD
Stanlake Park Wine Estate	RG10 0BN
Sunnyhill Vineyard	OX33 1JD
Tyringham Hall Vineyard	MK16 9ES
Upper Nuttalls Farm Vineyard	RG9 6HP
Walnut Cottage Vineyard	HP8 4NT
Witheridge Wines	HP9 2LS
Wolf Oak Vineyard	RG10 9YJ
Woodside Park Vineyard	SL4 2DP
Stonepit Vineyard	MK46 5DN
Freedom of the Press	OX29 0ND

Vineyards to be added to the list:

Rowles farm

Shared to encourage existing membership to enthuse these members to join/re-join.

3 c) Treasurers report

Progress updates:

- NatWest Banking transfer completed from Christopher, Leonie and Denise.
- Bank Mandate updated to have Ian (Chair) and Phil (Treasurer) as authorised signatories.
- Accounting moved from Excel manual record keeping, 'into the cloud' using the FreeAgent accounting software which is free with our NatWest bank account.

TCVA have a significant bank balance. We could be earning interest on this?

PW request for the permission of the membership to add a NatWest savings account, or similar product, to the financials.

VOTE – all in favour

Away from banking:

Ticket Tailor account successfully transferred to Phil's name.

TCVA have a significant number of 'credits' in this account.

Action: future association event bookings should be done via the account as it helps with the admin of payments / attendees etc.

Other members can be added as users to help setup events on behalf of TCVA. If required.

Stripe & Zettle have not been transferred (but had no balances). If an account is needed PW will attempt to create new ones rather than battle with the admin & identify verification teams of these organisations. Phil Rossi shared experience of having just setup a secondary account and re-used the same hardware & bank connections.

Action: PW to set up new Zettle and or Stripe accounts in time for future event needs

2024 Accounts:

- 2024 running a £776 surplus (to date).
- Collecting £1,117 in membership fees and £140 in Event attendance sales.
- Spending £102 on website hosting and £379 on event & meeting costs.
- Overall, this increases the funds available from £5,672 at the start of the year, to £6,448 at the end.
- Stock of Wine Challenge Medal stickers remains intact and significant due to no 2024 challenge.

Current Accounts Position:

	Debit	Credit
Turnover		1,257
Sales		140
Membership Fees		1,117
Gross Profit		1,257
<i>less Administration Expenses</i>	481	
Web Hosting	102	
Meeting Expenses	379	
Operating Profit		£776
<i>less Drawings</i>		-£5,672
<i>less Profit & Loss journal entries</i>		£0
Retained Profit this period:		£6,448
Retained Profit brought forward:		£0
Distributable Reserves / Retained Profit carried forward:		£6,448

Accounts will be kept to run in calendar years, therefore the final accounts for the year will need to be circulated in the new year for member approval

Action: PW to finalise accounts in Q1 2025 and circulate for approval electronically.

3 d) 2024 Wine Challenge

IBJ apologised for it not taking place in 2024.

IBJ refresh of the Wine Challenge was suggested due to no event taking place in 2024, zero attendees at the event at Stanlake Park in 2023 and a handful in 2022. However good the previous events had been in the past, the recent members attending suggested a change of style.

IBJ reported he'd had a conversation with contacts at Blenheim Palace and Le Manoir both who were planting vineyards in 2025, about the possibility of hosting the regional wine challenge in 2025. Kaye Laithwaite had offered to help organise the event. Bob Neilson was happy that Kaye Laithwaite had industry knowledge to put an event together with the help of committee members. IBJ would report back on which venue would be happy / suitable to host the event.

4) Election of officers – on screen

A mistake was made in 2023's AGM and 1 too many committee members were elected according to the constitution (9 were elected, when only 8 are allowed).

We need to elect / re-elect committee members in line with the constitution here today.

VOTE - The following were nominated/re-nominated (either in the room, or prior to the meeting verbally to the chairman) and were elected by the members at the AGM:

- **Chair** – Ian Beecher-Jones, JoJo's Vineyard
- **Vice Chair** – Will Croxford, Croxford Wine Estate
- **Treasurer** – Phil Walker, Vyn Dene
- **Secretary** – Holly Morgan, Dawes Hill Vineyard
- Up to Four other committee members
 - A – Emily Carr, Stonor Valley Vineyard
 - B – Jan Mirkowski, Fairmile Vineyard
 - C – Bob Nielsen, Brightwell Vineyard
 - D – Anne Linder, Direct Wines

During other discussions Jan also agreed to site on the WineGB Tourism group.

Two sub-committees were suggested to be created by the AGM

- **Technical Advice** – Patricia Stefanowicz MW
- **2025 Wine Challenge** (see item 3d)

5 a) 2025 Membership Fee

The 2025 Membership renewal process will commence through WineGB's systems in the last week of November, members should start receiving emails soon.

The oversight on confirming membership fees far enough in advance to support the renewals process was repeated in 2024, from 2023.

The WineGB renewal process needs the subsequent year's regional membership fee structure to be confirmed by mid-November.

Therefore, the Treasurer confirmed with WineGB that the membership fee for 2025 would remain unchanged at £25, and asks for the AGM to retrospectively vote on supporting that decision.

VOTE – all in favour. Keep the regional membership fee at £25 for the coming year

WineGB membership brochure:

WineGB are preparing a brochure on membership benefits to use for potential members and for current members. It will be available in 2025.

Action: IBJ to share it with members when it is available.

Membership fees for 2026 and beyond:

During 2025, the Treasurer, support by the committee would like to commit to a review of the membership fee structure with the following aims:

- To confirm the 2026 fee structure well in advance of the WineGB administration deadline
- To align membership fees with funding the activity planned by the region for future years

Action: Treasurer recommends to either move the AGM, or hold an extraordinary general meeting, during 2025 that allows the membership to approve the fee structure the committee recommends in time for the 2026 WineGB renewal process.

5 b) Constitutional Changes – on screen

The following proposed changes to the constitution were run through and prompted a great deal of discussion regarding many aspects of the purpose & goals of the association, as well as the ongoing relationship with WineGB.

In summary, constitutional changes can only be passed by a two-thirds majority on a vote taken from the whole membership. So whilst the room agreed that the AGM could make a *recommendation* whether to adopt any of these changes, they could not be passed without putting out to a wider vote given the attendance.

The summary result of the discussion is outline underneath each proposed change:

1 Title and Purpose

- A) The Association shall be known as the Thames and Chilterns Vineyards Association (T&CVA)

To be replaced by

- A) The Association shall be known interchangeably as the “Thames and Chilterns Vineyards Association” (T&CVA) and the “WineGB Thames and Chilterns” region.

AGM Discussion result: Whilst initially considered to be acceptable by the majority of the room, later discussions returned to this point following the discussion regarding membership and this was rejected to put forward to wider membership.

2 Membership

- A) Full Members who subscribe to join the Association in accordance with the membership rules in force at the time.

To be replaced by

- A) Full Members who subscribe to join the WineGB national association and nominate Thames and Chilterns as their home region, or as an additional regional membership, in accordance with the membership rules of WineGB in force at the time.

AGM Discussion result: rejected by the AGM. Vineyards in the region are able to join a local region without having to join WineGB nationally

5 Meetings

- E) The quorum at General Meetings at which motions are to be put shall be 30% of the subscribing membership.

To be replaced by

- E) The quorum at General Meetings at which motions are to be put shall be 20% of the subscribing membership.

AGM Discussion result: Acceptable to proceed

Action: The committee to consider whether organising a formal vote to change the constitution was administratively sensible given the AGM only recommended one of the proposed changes.

5 c) Quarterly Committee Meetings

The existing committee would like to commit to quarterly meetings during 2025 in order to better organise and further the objectives of the association.

These meetings will be to receive updates from sub-committees appointed to manage particular projects – e.g. ‘Wine Challenge’ sub committee (see below)- and for input from members via the elected committee members.

Suggested timing & topics:

- January
- April
- July
- November

Action: IBJ to confirm dates for meetings as soon as possible and share with committee members in good time.

5 d) Regional map

An example map from Jodie Newman

Regional map as part of The Chilterns Society website?

Action: Key feature for future regional website updates. See below.

Action: To create an Excel spreadsheet that contains all the information about members that can be shared with organisations like Experience Oxfordshire, Experience Henley, Wine Cellar Door. The region can share information on behalf of it’s members quickly and efficiently.

IBJ to create the spreadsheet headings using the WineGB membership list to avoid duplicate data entry. It will be shared with members to ensure it is up to date

Suggested columns include items such as:

- What3Words location
- Dog Friendly details
- Opening Hours
- Tour provision
- Open to visitors
- Disability & accessibility details
- All usual contact details (public facing ones)

5 e) Tractor / trailer vineyard tour trial in Henley

To run a trial tractor / trailer tour around Henley Vineyards in 2025 using a local tractor and trailer.
More details at the meeting

Outcome: This has failed to materialise and will not be taking place in 2025

Walk works tour –

A vineyard walk taking place between JoJo's, Stonor valley, Oakengrove and Fairmile Vineyards in May 2025 organised by the Walk Works team.

Action: Membership to be kept informed of progress of the walks

5 f) Regional Website

Handed over from Carol Nielsen during 2024.

Annual hosting fee and bi-annual domain registration transferred to TCVA bank account/payment methods.

Initial investigation on site traffic saw very low visitor numbers (29 reported by one analysis website, assume this was 'monthly', hoping not annually).

The 'top' searches which led visitors to the site were:

- "Oaken Grove Vineyard" (Phil – you need to get your website SEO sorted, as they are coming to the wrong place! At least it's relevant)
- "Chiltern Winery/Wines"
- "Henley vineyard" (and various derivations of...)

Google Analytics has been added to the site recently in order to facilitate much more detailed monitoring of traffic in the future.

Rather than put significant work into website updates now, the intent is to develop the site in parallel with the regional map and tours in order to provide a 'hub' for this information and add additional enhancements to the physical map produced.

Action: update the regional map, add it to the website and get members involved with it.

Who: IBJ to work The Chilterns Society, Experience Henley and others to see if a web page can be created for the regional website. Once a web host can be found then hard copy designs and costs to be shared with members

5g) Wine competition 2025

Discussions have started on having the regional wine competition in 2025 hosted at either Blenheim Palace, Windsor Castle or Le Manoir restaurant to raise the profile of the event.

Conversations are ongoing at the moment for venues and judges. A range of judges to bring a consumer and sales focus to the event are vital. A wine competition has to help entrants to sell wine and raise the profile of the region. A new venue with a new approach may help this.

A sub-committee to organise the 2025 event will be suggested to the Committee (those present at the AGM) to be led by Kaye Laithwaite to help make the 2025 a success

See item 3d for more details

5 h) Events for 2025

- English wine week –
 - o 22-29th June 2025
- Pavilion foods English wine week event in Henley –
 - o Sunday 29th June
- English food and wine festival 2025 – 21/22nd June 2025
- Vineyard Managers Meetings
 - o Topics & speakers to be arranged & event dates shared
- Three Wine Men tour
 - o PW in talks with the organisers to secure a table. Several sizes available
 - o Dates:
 - Manchester – Sat 25th Oct-25
 - London – Sat 22nd Nov 25
 - PW cannot attend the Bristol one in April, but other members would be welcome to.
 - o Would any members contribute to a shared table?

6) AOB

Email Distribution:

Action: Distribution list to be checked (PW and IBJ) for all members as some reported not having received communications during the year.