**Minutes of the Wigan CAMRA Branch Meeting
Thursday 14th March 2024 at 8pm – Standish Unity Club**

**Present:** Philip Healey, Andy Southworth, Carol Worthington, Ken Worthington, Karen Mears, Stephen Mears, Brian Gleave, George Valentine, Dave Flanagan, Dave O’Hara, A. Wright, Martin Blau, Nick Clarke, Mike Fergie, Beth Farrimond, Donald Appleton, Oliver Read.

**Apologies:** Sandra Cottam, Barry Seale, Ann Murtha, John Murtha, Pete Marsh, Alan Robinson, Jim Naylor, Peter Grimshaw, Sandy Motteram, Ian Prior.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record.

Chair’s report

The beer festival went very well with good feedback from customers and sponsors. Attendance and beer sales were down – the train strike on the Friday was very unhelpful. Fortunately, Jo was able to take the untouched casks and left over keg beer to Wigan Central, so hopefully the festival will still make a profit, but it will be a small one. The number of CAMRA members visiting this year was well down at 723 compared to 1153 last year. The wash-up meeting is scheduled for Monday 8th April at Wigan Central. It may be necessary to cut back on the thankyou trip – a decision will be made once the figures are available.

There had to be a committee meeting due to having to ask a member to leave the festival due to his use of inappropriate language and leaving his dog tied up outside for a long period. An email was received from him disputing the allegations. The committee meeting was held the following Wednesday, where it turned out that the member in question had also used inappropriate language to another member and to a volunteer’s wife. The committee decided that he should be banned from working at future festivals. The matter was also escalated to CAMRA HQ to see if it would be possible to have his membership rescinded.

Treasurer’s report

Still not got access to online banking but making some progress. There is currently a lot of money in the account but we owe CAMRA HK £20000, and there may still be other festival related bills to pay. We may want to consider making a donation to Ian Walsh’s scout group in recognition of the enormous amount of work he puts in on set up and take down at the festival, as well as working on the door, bearing in mind he is a non-drinker.

Membership secretary’s report

The National CAMRA membership totalled 148,536 members at the end of February 2024 which is a decrease of 372 (1,069) from the previous month and included 991 (1192) new members and 1582 (2162) lapsed memberships. In Jan/Feb 2020 there were 16 festivals compared to 9 this year and recruitment was over 300, to date in 2024 it was just over 100.

The total membership numbers for the Greater Manchester area at the end of February is 7235 a decrease of 36 (49) from the previous month and includes 48 (50) new members and 79 (88) lapsed memberships.

The Wigan branch total at the end of February is 796 members, an increase of 5 (-13) from the previous month and includes 10 (3) new members and 10 (12) lapsed memberships. We are still a predominately male membership with a ratio of 80:20 split and just 2 young members – under 26 years of age. February numbers do not include Wigan festival recruitment.

\* Numbers in brackets indicate the previous months values

22 new members were recruited at the festival, including 10 Wigan branch members.

Cider report

The Regional Cider Pub of the Year nominations for Greater Manchester have been announced –

Beer School

Marble Arch

Trackside Bar

The Grocer’s

Petersgate Tap

The Apple Barn

Real Crafty

Judges are required, and judging needs to take place by 10th May. Any branch that doesn’t judge all the cider pubs will have the pub from their area disqualified, so it is very important that we get some volunteers to do the judging.

May will be the month dedicated to perry.

LocAle report

Beth is currently awaiting the 2024 certificates to hand out. The cellar at the Raven has been cleaned out and the pub is awaiting a new manager.

It was suggested that following recent brewery closures the LocAle boundary doesn’t include very many breweries for Ashton. It was decided to discuss this further at the next meeting.

Magazine

Brian is to approach the man who used to produce Swiggin and deal with all the advertisers to see if he would be able to do it again on the same basis.

Social secretary’s report

Coach hire is still proving to be prohibitively expensive, so most trips are likely to be by public transport. Merseyside Transport Trust are running an event on 13th April using vintage buses to link pubs in West Lancashire, starting from Burscough, so easy access from Wigan by train.

Pubs Officer’s report

Boathouse, Appley Bridge – new people have taken over and are hoping to introduce real ale.

The Viking, Skelmersdale – no real ale

Lady Mabel – not on the database, no real ale

The Viewer, Spring View – no real ale

The White Crow, Worthington – 2 or 3 ales on in the week and 4 at weekends

The Ball & Boot, Wigan – no real ale

The Wiend Bar, Wigan – no real ale

H-Taphouse, Ashton – now called Plato’s – no real ale

Miller & Carter, Parbold Hill – no real ale

The Red Lion, Newburgh – 3 real ales

The Victoria, Upholland – no real ale

The Plough & Harrow, Shevington – 1 real ale

The Britannia, Upholland – no real ale

Pub @ Holland Hall – no real ale in Jan/Feb/Mar but putting one on later in March

Dog & Partridge, Hindley – closed at time of visit but still open at other times

Sacred Heart Club – closed – now also closed down on the database

The Banner, Hindley – no real ale

The Brickmakers, Frog Lane – no real ale

The Ukelele (formerly Hartley’s), Wigan – no real ale

The Forrester’s, Shevington Moor – still serving real ale but on Thwaites now.

Formby’s, Hindley – 1 real ale and would also like to get more involved.

Clubs report

Garswood Bowling Club, Ashton – 1 changing real ale. This club is still in our area following the branch boundary changes, despite its name.

Volunteers are needed to judge the regional Club of the Year competition. 5 clubs need to be judged by at least two judges from Wigan branch, otherwise Standish Unity Club won’t be included.

Daisy Hill Cricket Club is currently closed for refurbishment and is expected to re-open on Good Friday. They have been selling beers from Escape Brewery. They will also be holding their St Georges Day beer festival in April.

BLO reports

Problem Child

The brewery was pleased with how their beers went down at Wigan Beer Festival.

Wigan Brewhouse

There has been an increased social media presence recently. A new beer, called Indeed I do, is now available, and it was on at Wigan Beer Festival. The last of this winter’s Mad Monk is being sold. Johnny and Beccy seem to be settling in well as new owners, and Martin is still supporting them. Dave Mayall still owns the building and the equipment and Johhny & Beccy are renting it from him.

Pub of the Season Voting – Spring 2024

Round 1

Hingemakers – 2 votes plus 1 proxy vote

Albion Ale House – 5 votes

Delph Tavern – 6 votes

Eddington Arms – 2 votes

The top two go through to the second round under the new system

Albion Ale House – 8 votes

Delph Tavern 8 votes plus the casting vote from the Chair

Therefore, the Delph Tavern is Pub of the Season for Spring 2024

Any Other Business

The branch sends their best wished to Zoe Pearson and Paul Mercer who are currently both in hospital

Branch social media posts for pubs – the White Crow is the next one due out, thanks to Dave. The Vineyard in Ashton is nearly ready thanks to Ken & Carol, and Patrick is to do one for a pub in the Aspull area.

Oliver is available with his camera for awards presentations etc.

Dates/times of next meetings & events

Sunday 7th April 4pm – Pub of the Year presentation to Wigan Central plus presentation of Brewed in Wigan awards to Clay Brow Brewery (at Wigan Central)

Monday 8th April – Beer Festival Wash Up meeting at Wigan Central

Saturday 13th April from 12 noon – Merseyside Transport Trust vintage bus services around West Lancs pubs

Tuesday 16th April 8pm – Branch meeting and presentation of Cider Pub of the Year award to Real Crafty

Saturday 11th May – Beer Festival Thankyou trip – details TBC