

Towcester U3A Wine & Food Appreciation Group

Briefing Note for prospective members

This note sets out the main features of the Group, its purpose and how it works. Meetings are managed by the coordinator who seeks to reflect the consensus view of the group as to what form meetings should take.

The main purpose of the meeting is social and to learn from each other about wine. Meeting numbers vary between 12 and 20. The maximum number of members and welcomed guests to a meeting is 24.

Meetings are usually held every 2nd Tuesday evening monthly at 7.00pm at the Chantry House on the Square in Towcester. Meetings typically last 2 hours and are focussed on tasting 6 wines introduced to us by one of the group. None of us are experts and we all recognise that everyone's tastes in wine differ, so we set out to learn from each other by talking about that evening's selection and what we can each learn from them. As most of us have to drive home we use a measure to taste and throw away wine we do not like so we do not expect to drink more than about 125ml (a small glass) each during a meeting. Wine left over in the bottles at the end of the evening is raffled off for free amongst all present to take home.

The monthly contribution is £6 which covers the cost of the wine and room + any food the evening's presenter may choose to bring along to help set off the taste of the wine. The coordinator manages the funds and will reimburse all these costs from the evening's contributions. Since the Group's inception all new members, after a couple of introductory meetings, have also been asked to contribute a one-off £5 joining fee. The coordinator also manages a float to cover variations in incomes and expenses between meetings.

The format of meetings varies. All members are encouraged to contribute to the annual programme of meetings in the sharing of roles as is the spirit of U3A. Whilst most meetings involve a volunteer presenting some wines of their choice (between £6 and £12 a bottle approx.) based around a theme, not all meetings follow this format. Sometimes 6 members may bring a bottle each with a common theme. 2 meetings of the year (usually July and December) are grander with a meal being brought together by the members to compliment the wines and thereby make more of an occasion of the evening. Also occasional meetings may take us to another venue, e.g. a vineyard or wine merchant. In 2016 the group organised a 5 day food and wine tasting trip to the Piedmont in Italy which was enjoyed by all who took part. The group is considering a similar trip in 2018 to Bulgaria. These trips are not part of the formal programme of the group and there is no obligation for members to take part in them.

Whilst there is no attendance requirement for the group it is hoped that members will attend at least 9 meetings a year as this helps keep the monthly meeting contributions to the current level. There is no summer break to the sequence of meetings.

All new members will be very warmly welcomed and will only be invited to make any presentations to a meeting once they feel comfortable so to do.

For more information contact the Group Coordinator, Andrew Bailey:

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