

## **Bristol & District Branch Good Beer Guide Selection Process**

The annual process of deciding the branch entries for the Good Beer Guide follows this timetable:

May: Survey/Explorer trips start

December: Long list of GBG contenders finalised

Late December to January: Branch volunteer surveyors are allocated

February: Survey trips end. Surveyors update changes directly to whatpub.com (or complete manual survey forms and return to GBG co-ordinator if this is not possible)

Late February / Early March: Selection meeting takes place to decide the entries and the results are submitted.

April – May: Proof reading phase

June: Early June is the final opportunity to remove a pub from the GBG

September: Publication

### **Survey/Explorer trips**

From May to February the branch runs survey trips to try to cover the branch area. These are either monthly minibus trips to rural areas difficult to access by public transport, pub walks in the city centre and surrounding areas or trips by public transport where this is feasible. Pubs visited include current GBG entries, new nominations, those that narrowly missed out and any former entries not visited recently. National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) scores will also be looked at to see if any pubs that are receiving consistently high scores are included on survey trips. Current entries and reserves are “Survey visits” and others are “Explorer” visits. Time and geographical constraints mean that most trips are a mix of the two types. A Survey visit may also be used to gather data to help with updating Whatpub.

### **The “Long List”**

Members can nominate a pub, club or bar at any time to the branch GBG co-ordinator via email, face to face or at branch meetings. For consideration for the next GBG these need to be received by the end of November. This allows time to include them on survey trips and/or seek feedback from the branch. The contact details of the branch GBG coordinator and invitation to suggest additions / deletions appears in every Pints West and on our website.

Anyone can suggest deleting pubs, via the same means, at any time up to and including the selection meeting. The only normal reasons that pubs will be deleted are poor beer quality, persistent short measures, pub closure or the change of licensee late in the process. There is no National or Branch rule on change of landlord or cellar staff, so this needs to be debated for each individual case. Occasionally there may be an overriding reason agreed by Committee or branch e.g. non-payment of debts to CAMRA.

The Long List is finalised in December and made available upon request to any branch member. This document is highly sensitive and cannot be published anywhere that could be easily accessed by others. Members must respect its confidentiality. The Long List will include every pub deemed to stand a reasonable chance of entry into the next GBG. It is important to remember that volunteers

will be expected to use valuable time and money surveying the pubs so the list has to be kept to a manageable length. If anyone feels strongly that any pub is wrongly included or excluded they can say so and if there are conflicting views then the branch will decide at a committee or branch meeting. Deletions from the long list are possible at any time but additions will only be made after December in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Branch. The remaining list of pubs that are voted on at the selection meeting are sometimes referred to as the “short” list.

### **Survey Forms**

A Survey Form is the official national CAMRA document which is used to write a GBG entry, although in most cases the data required on the Survey Form is actually submitted directly to Whatpub. The Survey forms are normally made available by national CAMRA. After the pub has been surveyed the surveyor should add any updates / changes via the “Fill in the feedback form” option on the pub’s entry on the Whatpub website ([whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com)). If a surveyor is unable to do this the completed survey form(s) need to be returned to the branch GBG coordinator asap and no later than the February branch meeting (if there is a branch meeting in February, or by hand at a branch event before the end of February).

### **Selection Meeting**

The all important selection meeting takes place around late February / early March and the date and venue are published in Pints West and on our website. Those genuinely not able to attend can email the branch GBG coordinator and ask for a voting form, which is the same form issued at the meeting. They can vote for and against any pubs that they have visited in the last 12 months but not any others. All “No” votes must state the reason why to eliminate votes cast for inappropriate reasons. Membership numbers must be supplied and all votes sent to the branch GBG coordinator no later than 2 days prior to the meeting. People can also supply votes in writing rather than email.

All postal and email votes are added up prior to the meeting. A full list of pubs to be voted on is supplied at the meeting allowing all to “keep score”. The WSM sub branch hold a separate meeting.

The branch is currently allocated 63 GBG slots – 39 must be in Gloucestershire and Bristol and 24 in Somerset (6 of which are currently allocated to WSM to select). The meeting is therefore divided into two sections to match that. At the start of the meeting the branch GBG coordinator announces any late suggested deletions with reasons and seeks agreement from the meeting. Licensees or anyone with a vested interest in any pub must leave the room whilst that pub is debated and voted on. In order to assist in the selection process, prior to a vote on each pub, the GBG co-ordinator will read out the average NBSS scores for that pub that have been recorded over the last year on [whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com) as well as the “confidence rating” (\* see below) for the scores. Any advance votes are announced followed by a show of hands for and against. Anyone who cannot produce a current CAMRA membership card may be excluded from voting.

The top 50% of pubs in Bristol / S Glos (19 or 20 pubs) and the top 50% of pubs in Somerset (9 pubs excluding WSM) are not voted on unless anyone has a serious objection. These pubs are automatically included as entries for the GBG. If there are any serious objections (as determined by the GBG co-ordinator) to a pub it will be debated and voted on.

A “formula” is then applied which results in a final score for each pub (the formula is at the end of this document). This formula was devised within the branch and is intended to create a fair chance for those pubs receiving a low total number of votes but mostly or all Yes votes. Country and suburban pubs are the most likely beneficiaries of this as central pubs naturally get more visits from

members and thus more votes. Without this formula the branch GBG would consist almost exclusively of central pubs. The formula makes no distinction between "Town and Country" pubs. Rather it promotes pubs that receive a smaller number of total votes that are mostly "Yes" with few "No" votes. A single no vote is disregarded to eliminate "maverick votes" possibly cast for inappropriate reasons. All other No votes are doubled and subtracted from yes votes to produce the score. Thus a 12-3 vote would score 8 and lose to a 9-0 vote. In the event of a tie the pub with the least no votes wins. Any pub with a final score of plus 1 or more can be considered for GBG, any with 0 or a minus score cannot.

For Bristol / S Glos the top 37 scores are taken as GBG entries, and the top 16 in Somerset also. The pubs finishing 38-41 in Bristol / S Glos and 17-21 in Somerset enter the "play offs". Those present are invited to speak for and against each of these followed and a vote is taken. The whole meeting is invited to vote for two pubs in each county and the top two become entries. Those coming 3rd and 4th become 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> reserves.

The results are announced and the meeting closes. All present are sworn to keep results confidential until the book is published in September. The decisions taken at the Selection Meeting are subject to the approval of the Branch Committee. (This is in order to cover attempts at vote rigging etc.)

### **Proof Reading / Final Amendments**

All entries and reserves are submitted electronically by the branch GBG coordinator to the Regional Director within 2 weeks of the meeting. Proof reading takes place in April / May. Up until early June it is normally possible to delete entries and promote reserves, but only with Committee approval.

### **Publishing**

The GBG is normally published in September and the branch holds a launch event in a GBG pub.

**AMENDMENTS TO THIS PROCEDURE/DOCUMENT** All requests to change the above procedure should be submitted in writing/email to the GBG Coordinator and Branch Chairman. The branch committee will discuss the request and add it to the next branch meeting agenda for discussion or action. If the Branch agrees to the change, then the above document will be amended, and made available to Branch members.

- **Explanation of Confidence Ratings:**

You can be more confident that a pub's score (on a future visit) will exceed a minimum acceptable average:

- 1) The higher the average of the scores previously recorded.
- 2) The greater the number of previous scores recorded.
- 3) The more constant the set of scores. i.e. mainly 3s, 3½s & 4s, rather than a great variation that also includes lots of 1s, 2s and 5s.

The confidence rating is a measure of the probability that this ideal average is greater than the minimum criterion. The bigger the confidence rating the better!

So if the minimum criterion is 3 (defined as "good" on NBSS scoring system) then:

- For a pub with a rating of **zero** there will be a 50% (**1 in 2**) chance that the ideal average will be below 3.
- For a rating of **1**, a 16% chance (**1 in 6**) of it being below 3.
- For a rating of **1.5**, a 6.7% chance (**1 in 15**) of it being below 3.
- For a rating of **2**, a 2.3% chance (**1 in 43**) of it being below 3.
- For a rating of **2.5**, a 0.6% chance (**1 in 167**) of it being below 3.

So a confidence rating over 3 or over is really good as, statistically, there is only a very small chance that you will be served a beer that is less than in good condition.

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