Chairmans report 2024/2025.

It only seems like 5 mins ago that we had last year's AGM

As always, a lot has happened over the last 12 months. This report is for the period March 2024 to 2 February 2025. The biggest change of course was Simon Cowap handing his notice just before Christmas. He remained in post till the end of January at a reduced service to fulfil bookings that had already been planned. We thank Simon for all his hard work over the last 5 years and for putting food back on at the Duke. especially the pies.

With Simon leaving we were without food for a few weeks, this of course affected our turnover slightly. We still made profit but at a lower level as you have seen from the financial reports.

The Duke is still a great asset and hub for the village, we employ between 12 and 14 local people with the ebb and flow of some of the staff returning to and from university The staff have worked well under the leadership of Katie, and I thank all of them for their hard work and dedication in serving the customers of the Duke of Wellington.

The weekly quiz is going as strong as ever, some weeks we are having to be creative with tables chairs etc to fit in all the quiz teams.

Quizzical Lunch every 1st Thursday is also going well with quizzers enjoying a bite to eat while using their brain cells. There are regularly 9/10 teams enjoying a great quiz and good banter.

Many local groups continue to support the pub: the village gardening group, WI, and Ladies Group etc hold their annual meal plus Ruskington Living Alone group meet most months for lunch.

In the true spirit of a community pub, we are a venue for many small meetings, friends and family get togethers and villagers to socialise.

The pub pool team is still going strong and playing well in the local Grantham league.

The Duke of Wellington Golf Society play monthly at local golf clubs returning for a meal with partners at the pub.

It has always been and always will be an honour to hold funeral wakes for villagers and local people, and a pleasure for us to be a chosen venue for christening parties, weddings and birthdays. Thank you to you all.

The Duke Jingle event is now our biggest event. The garden light display gets bigger and better every year, plus a mini-Christmas market supporting local charitable organisations and local businesses. Not forgetting carols being performed by St Andrews School's school choir.

The Duke never stops still; this year we have had new windows fitted at the pub and in the flat. It still amazes some customers that we can open the windows for the first time in about 15 years.

The planned refurbishment went ahead with new table and chairs, and carpet plus improved lighting. The entrance to the restaurant from the lower seating area has improved the flow of customers to and from the restaurant.

Thank you to all the volunteers who help with looking after the garden and hanging baskets.

Thanks to the maintenance team that do all the little jobs that always need doing, as well as some of the major jobs, thanks for your time and effort.

Looking forward, over the next few weeks, the Boot bar will start a major refit to relieve some pressure off the main bar and to enhance the look of the boot bar with extra seating and space.

Finally thanks to my fellow directors for the hours of work behind the scenes.

People ask what do they actually do??

The Directors are legally responsible for the Duke of Wellington and its staff they must act in accordance to the 2014 Act and our Rules under the scrutiny of the FCA to make sure all decisions are in the best interest of our shareholders. They decide on affordability of any expenditure, pay the bills, wages, and HMRC, plus all the different Licences we need to comply with and all the regulations. We are of course, employers complying with employment law and responsible for Health & Safety. The Directors are landlords for the tenant in the flat and responsible for maintenance of the building and grounds, obtaining quotes for major refurbishment of different parts of the building.

They do all the above for free.

See you down the Duke later with our tokens for a free drink.