



**CAMRA West Central Regional Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** 12.30pm, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Venue:** The Fountain Inn, Gloucester, GL1 2NW

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| <b>1</b>  | <b>Welcome, introductions, and outline of the day</b>    | <b>Regional Director</b> |
| <p><u>Apologies:</u> White Horse; Press officer – Mark Haslam; Brewery Liaison Co-ordinator (BLO) – Stuart Campbell ; White Horse branch ; Graham Hards.</p> <p><u>Present</u> (representatives from): Herefordshire, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Droitwich; Worcester; Wyre Forest; Cheltenham; Mid Gloucestershire; North Cotswolds; Tewkesbury; North Oxfordshire; Oxford; South Oxfordshire.</p> <p>Welcome from Brett Laniosh (BL), Regional Director. Area Co-ordinators – Peter Bennetts (PB) (Gloucestershire); Mark Griffiths (MG) (Herefordshire &amp; Worcestershire); John Winney deputising for Graham Hards (Oxfordshire).</p> <p>49 people present.</p>   |  |                          |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Regional Director Election</b>                        | <b>Peter Bennetts</b>    |
| <p>Proxy vote – White Horse.</p> <p>Outline of process. One voting slip one issued to a representative for each Branch; as only one nomination, the slip gave two options Yes = for election of candidate, No = against election of candidate. Completed slips returned to PB counted and verified.</p> <p>Result – 10 for, 2 against. Brett Laniosh re-elected for a three year period. However, expressed a wish to hand over during that 3 year period.</p>  |  |                          |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>West Central CAMRA Regional Update and Priorities</b> | <b>Regional Director</b> |
| <p>Key points about Region – contains 12 branches grouped into Counties each with an Area Co-ordinator (AC)who meet monthly online. At monthly meetings issues raised by Branches requiring referral to National level are discussed and referrals made if necessary to the Branches Committee and onwards to National Executive.</p> <p>The AC’s are the first point of contact for Branches. All information on the structure is on the regional website. All encouraged to point out any missing or incorrect information. Reminded to note the annual timetable for events and awards e.g. POTY timetable.</p> <p>Press and Pub support – Mark Haslam. Make contact if any support required to promote or publicise events and campaigns.</p> <p>Regional Financial Officer (RFO) – Ben Smith. All Branches urged to move to COBAS.</p> |  |                          |

Pub Data Co-ordinator – Nick Yarwood. Analysis of ‘traffic’ on the CAMRA website evidences that most relate to searching for a ‘pub near me’; therefore its important this is kept up to date. Handed out awards for those who facilitate this:

- Highly Commended Responses to Pub Updates - White Horse; Bromsgrove, Redditch and Droitwich
- Best Responses to Pub and Club Updates – Herefordshire.
- Most Improved Pub and Club information – Mid Gloucestershire Branch (credited to Tony Hill and team).
- Best Pub and Club information – Wyre Forest (credited to Chris Clouston).

To qualify for these awards Branches urged to ensure information on national website is as up to date as it can be. Carry out pub surveys e.g. preferably every 12 months and certainly within three years; check accuracy of pub online presence (website and Facebook) and use as a source of useful information.

Regional Cider Co-ordinator – Andrea Bennett [cider@westcentral.camra.org.uk](mailto:cider@westcentral.camra.org.uk). Promoted working to increase Branches support. Cider Pub of the Year in Region – Carpenters Arms. Pomona award for Perry Heritage – Hartpury Heritage Trust.

No Regional Club Co-ordinator – expressions of interest invited.

CBOB / POTY co-ordinator– Rob Budworth. Same timescales for Club OTY and Cider POTY (national timescales for entries shorter for the latter). CBOB – run by area so includes West Midlands who in 2025 only had 3 festivals where judging occurred. Appealed for those running festivals to consider including judging. £200 allowance from CAMRA per category. Discussed how beers are nominated per category with 6 being chosen externally. Most judging in 2025 occurred in West Midlands so urged more inclusion in West Central Region festivals. Choice on category is first come first served.

GBG – Paul Richards. Thanked attendees for entry’s received so far, entries for 2027 deadline on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March. First proof read by Paul and John, opportunity to review on final version being shared by head office with end of July being the cut off point, publication will be in September. Limit of 60 words is flexible, but not excessively.

Regional Priorities:

1. Attendance at AGM’s by representative of the regional team to include review of accounts
2. GBG
3. POTY
4. CBOB
5. Supporting branches and sharing best practice.

Top tips – running events e.g. monthly social, having speakers at ‘gatherings’ instead of just meetings, having meetings online, managing as much business by email as is possible. Monthly updates – using ‘comms tool’. Beer scoring and keeping pub data up to date. Using the Beer Quality Assessment (BQA) tool.

**Action** – BL to check status of the ‘opt in’ or ‘opt out’ data security requirement for using email addresses so that coms can be sent to members.

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| <b>4</b> | <b>CAMRA Magazines and industry update</b> | <b>Tim Webb</b> |
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Author of CAMRA Annual Beer Report – due to be published in May 2026, previously wrote many books on beer, chairs the CAMRA Beer and Cider Campaigns Committee and judges beer internationally curating EBCU’s ‘Beer Styles of Europe & Beyond’ publication.

Industry update on status of Brewing industry, impact on pubs and cask ale **attached**.

Branch Magazines – read all magazines produced across the region and applauded the improvement in quality of content and layout, the latter of which has increased the impact. Last years review highlighted many areas for improvement.

Campaigns and communications committee – better campaigning chosen as issue to address. Believes CAMRA should campaign on two levels, the first being ‘local’, the second ‘national’. The former focusing on pubs, beer, events etc. The latter must focus on breweries, PubCo’s and the ‘neo prohibitionism’ movement that is gaining momentum in public health circles. Coverage of local issues in magazines is good, pubs are trending, beer is getting sexy! Urged branches to capitalise on this and use the resources that national CAMRA make available.

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| <b>5</b> | <b>Discussion and AOB</b> | <b>All</b> |
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Beer Scoring – use of QR codes, which can be at a pub level. This initiative has not yet been rolled out nationally as the beer scoring system is under review, then the marketing team will issue instructions on how to utilise the QR system.

Venue for next years Regional – either Herefordshire or Oxfordshire, members invited to recommend locations.

Visits to local pubs hosted by local members.

## Tim Webb - Industry update - What is happening in UK beer in 2026

### The big picture stuff:

- 1974 to 2024:
  - Growth of independent breweries: 94 up to 1650
  - Large breweries: 6 national companies - 4 multinationals
    - AB-InBev, Heineken, Carlsberg & Molson Coors
  - Large brewery domination unchanged: 75+% of market to 70-75%
  - Foreign ownership: 5% (Guinness) up to 80+%
  - Production & consumption of beer halved – alcohol consumption the same
  - Beer's share of alcoholic beverage market: two-thirds up to one-third
  - On-license to off-license share of beer market: 90:10 up to 40:60
  - Pub share of beer market: 80% down to 35%
  - AB-InBev and Heineken have phased out cask altogether
- Changes in the last year:
  - 1650 independent breweries down to 1580
  - BrewDog – only UK's only 21<sup>st</sup> C success – has accidentally collapsed
  - Molson Coors will stop making cask
  - Carlsberg has centralised and shrunk its cask range
  - Newly published data: 19% fall in beer production Jan-Sep 2025 vs 2024
    - If it is a statistical glitch, the nature of the glitch is unclear

### Large brewers:

- The four corporations control the on-trade
  - Making deals with PubCos that limit their ability to stock other beers
  - Making deals with independent wholesalers that limit their ranges
  - Making draught line maintenance ties that limit the beers sold on draught
- The four corporations control the off-trade
  - On-trade inflation 2020-24 was 118%; off trade was 27%
  - Sweetheart deals are made with supermarket chains
  - Lack of expertise in supermarket buyers leads to limited choice
- The independent sector has grown its volumes
  - Despite being disadvantaged in many parts of the market
  - People actually like independent brewery beers and seek them out
- The big brewers are bad for beer and bad for the economy
  - Halving beer production / consumption halves the Excise and VAT take
  - Poor profitability – ABI UK has lost £200m 2021 – drops Corporation Tax take
  - Most exports internal swaps of stock within multinational companies
    - Compared to Belgium, where small firms export globally

### What this means for CAMRA

Beer is having an existential crisis, which is an important part of what is dragging pubs down

- For those concerned for the future of cask ale
  - Cask will fail if the pub sector fails
  - Cask will fail if beer continues to fail
  - SO .... campaigning for cask in isolation makes little sense

- The future of better-quality beer lies with independent brewers – ONLY
  - They produce most of the beers of different styles
  - They produce most of the tasty beers

The planned closure of Sharps (Molson-Coors) may create more gains than losses.