

CONSERVATIVE CLUBS MAGAZINE



February 2023 75p



The Waterloo Warriors

Preparing for an Annual General Meeting

Workforce Crises

Brislington St Annes Refurbishment



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Message From The Chief Executive

February marks the start of Annual General Meeting season for many clubs. Whilst, occasionally, clubs will hold their meetings later in the year, for most clubs March to May are the key months when the Committee prepare for the AGM; finalise the previous year's accounts and ensure the Committee election process can be held smoothly.

The last point of particular importance – holding elections. AGM season is when members can choose to become more involved in their clubs by choosing to stand for election themselves or to propose candidates to vote for. The process however only works when a sufficient number of members are willing to stand for election. The Committee is elected to manage the club and this essentially means that the Committee are elected to run a business, with

all the responsibilities which that involves. Dealing with finances, employment issues, administration and if there is time left after all of that, then perhaps they can devote a few minutes to the really important tasks – the future of the club, membership recruitment and of course, the inevitable small minority of members who are unhappy with the way the club is being run, however it is run!

The ACC have no problem with any member who occasionally disagrees with Committee decisions but members who do not stand for election to the Committee cannot grumble too much from the side-lines about decisions that those members who have chosen to stand have taken. So we ask members to use these coming months wisely – if you want to assist the running of your club, then this is the time to put yourself forward.

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CLUB LAW AND MANAGEMENT

Preparing for an Annual General Meeting

An AGM is held to transact certain business: the report on the ballot for officers and committee (unless they are elected at the AGM itself); the report on the accounts; the adoption of the accounts, as audited; and other reports as required by a club's own rules.

Firstly it is essential for the AGM to be properly summoned. This usually involves a notice being placed on the club notice board announcing the date and time of the meeting and requesting motions to be submitted to the Secretary by a certain date.

The rules of most clubs provide that a notice of the AGM shall be exhibited at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting; and the notice of any motion must be submitted within ten days following the posting of the notice. Rules can also say that the agenda must be posted for a specified number of days before the date of the meeting.

Before the meeting it is essential for whoever is taking the Chair—Club President or Chairman depending on the club's rules—to undertake a careful study of the agenda. This will mean he can conduct the business effectively and also spot any difficult matters that might arise. Preparation is crucial to the success of the meeting.

When the meeting starts, the Chairman should satisfy himself that the requisite quorum is present. Most club rules require

a quorum. This is to prevent a small, poorly attended meeting making decisions which affect the whole club.

The meeting must proceed with each item of business taken in the order in which it appears on the agenda. A normal agenda begins with confirmation of the minutes of the previous AGM, any business arising from them, then the Treasurer's report on the accounts, the election of officers, and so on.

The presiding officer, mindful of the need for a well-ordered, good tempered and constructive meeting, must see that the agenda is followed strictly. Speakers should stand when called by the chairman and, to preserve order, only one person should be on their feet at the same time. When the Chairman rises any other speaker should sit down and this should be insisted upon. Unless this is done, a meeting can degenerate into disarray and chaos.

A proposal for discussion is a 'motion' and when it is accepted it becomes a 'resolution'. Before discussion begins, a motion must be proposed and seconded. A motion that is proposed, but finds no seconder, lapses and the meeting proceeds to next business. When a motion is proposed and seconded it is open for discussion. No speaker should be allowed to address the meeting more than once on each motion, except for the proposer, who may reply to the debate. A motion may

be ultra vires—that is, outside the scope of the meeting—and should immediately be ruled out of order by the chairman.

An amendment is a proposal to alter the wording of a motion and may be moved at any time during the discussion of the original motion. Special care must be taken over this if the meeting is not to be allowed to become confused. The proposal requires a proposer and seconder before it can be considered by the meeting. The chairman should present an amendment to the meeting, once it has been properly proposed and seconded, in terms such as: 'To the motion before the meeting the following amendment has been duly proposed and seconded, that...' The wording of the amendment then follows and the immediate discussion must be confined to the subject of the amendment. Some bodies permit amendments to be moved to amendments but it is NOT recommended for clubs. If it is allowed it can prolong discussion and make for a complicated passage of business. In practice the proposer of the main amendment may incorporate in it what he considers best in suggestions for further amendments, if he accepts they will improve his proposal. No amendment may be a direct negative to the main motion for this would merely duplicate the need to vote on a particular proposition. An amendment must be disposed of before the meeting can proceed to a further amendment. If an amendment is accepted it becomes part of the original motion; it is then called the substantive motion. Further amendments may be considered in turn until all have been dealt with. Then, discussions may continue on the substantive motion until it is put to the vote. Before the vote on each amendment the chairman should repeat its wording so that there is a clear understanding of the matter on which a vote is being taken.

Similarly the substantive motion should be read out again before the vote. When those 'for' and 'against' in each vote have been counted, the chairman should announce the result. If a

large number of people are voting, the President should appoint two 'tellers' to count the votes. The tellers should both count the 'yes' and 'no' votes. If there is any disagreement the vote MUST be taken again. When an issue is controversial a close vote may be disputed so it is useful to be prepared for a written vote.

One further possible motion is 'That this meeting do now adjourn.' This takes precedence over all other business and may be moved at any time during a meeting. The Chairman should not accept such a motion if he thinks it is being moved with the intention of disrupting the meeting. The decision is made on the vote of the meeting, on a motion proposed and seconded, and without lengthy discussion. Amendments are possible but only to set, limit or extend the period of the adjournment.

The correct conduct of a meeting is not an easy skill to master, but many difficulties can be avoided if the presiding officer follows the procedures set out here. However, even this will not guarantee that meetings are without problems. Some issues will so divide the membership that heated, and sometimes irresolvable, exchanges are inevitable. Nevertheless, a basic knowledge of tried, and accepted, procedures will help ensure that most meetings are managed efficiently.

Election of Club Officials

The rules of a club should provide the method whereby its officers and committee are elected. Such rules must be strictly adhered to, otherwise the election may be rendered invalid and a fresh ballot has to be taken. What follows should be read and applied subject to anything appearing to the contrary in the club rules—

Nominations

It is the duty of Secretary to post a nomination sheet on the notice board, which records the names of candidates for the committee or other offices. The nomination sheet must remain displayed

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for whole period stipulated in club's rules. Day and time when nominations close should be stated on the sheet, even if not definitely fixed by club rules. The proposer and the seconder of any candidate should personally sign their names against the candidate they put forward, having previously ascertained that their nominee is willing to stand and serve if elected. A member may be nominated for any number of offices in the club unless the rules provide otherwise; if elected to more than one office, he can select the one he desires to hold. If the rules say that no candidate shall be nominated for more than one office, it is in order for an officer or committee member who is not due to retire to be nominated for another office without first resigning. If unsuccessful, he would retain his present office.

Qualifications

Candidates for office, nominators and seconds must be either honorary members, life members, or subscribing members who are not in arrears with payment of their subscription before nomination sheet is due to be taken down. Otherwise nominations may be objected. Where a rule provides that a certain period of membership is an essential qualification for office, this must be calculated from the date when the candidate was elected to membership to the last day of nominations. For example, should six months be specified, a person elected to membership on 6 July would first become eligible on 6 January the following year.

List of Voters

Unless the rules provide otherwise, every member of the

club is entitled to vote. It is the duty of the Secretary to prepare a special list of members for this purpose. The list should be handed to scrutineers, together with the precise number of requisite ballot papers if all such members voted.

Ballot Paper

The ballot paper is compiled from the nomination sheet. In preparing the ballot paper, names of candidates for presidency and other offices are usually typed or printed in separate sections on the same sheet as names of candidates for committee. The different sections are nevertheless distinct, and if one section is spoiled by the voter, it does not invalidate other sections.

Names of all candidates should be set out alphabetically on the ballot paper and in uniform type. The 'starring' of ballot papers i.e. putting an asterisk (*) against the names of retiring members seeking re-election or distinguishing them by printing their names in larger or thicker type is irregular.

Marking the Ballot Paper

If a voter makes some mark other than the customary 'X' against the name of the candidate for whom he wishes to vote, it does not necessarily spoil his paper. The vote is good, if the intention of the voter is clear. Practically the only grounds for the rejection of the paper are—

- Because too many votes have been recorded
- Uncertainty of the voter's intention
- Writing sufficient to identify the voter

If a member spoils a paper he should, on request, be supplied with another, having previously handed back the one spoiled. A

member may vote for a fewer number of candidates than there are vacancies—he cannot be compelled to use all his votes—but if he votes for more candidates than there are vacancies, the paper, so far as the particular section is concerned, must be regarded as spoiled.

Taking the Ballot

Unless the rules contain specific instructions on the matter, committees decide how ballot papers are to be distributed—whether sent to members by post or handed to them on request. Where the former method is adopted and the member returns the paper by post or hand, the envelope containing it should be sealed and marked 'ballot.' It should be addressed to the scrutineers, who must deposit it unopened in the ballot box. Where ballot papers are handed to members, the scrutineers should first make sure from the list received from the Secretary that the member is entitled to vote. When this is done, the member's name should be scored off, thus preventing anyone voting twice.

Close of Ballot

The ballot must remain open the full time stated in the rules. When it is closed, the scrutineers count the votes recorded. The results, signed by them, together with the marked list of members to whom they have handed ballot papers, and also all unused ballot papers, must be handed by them to the Chairman at the Annual General Meeting.

Demand for a Scrutiny

If a majority of the meeting demands a scrutiny, the box containing all the ballot papers should be sealed by the Chairman and arrangements made for a recount in the presence of the scrutineers. Once it has been declared and accepted, a ballot stands no matter what discrepancies a subsequent examination of the papers may reveal. Prior to the signed statement being handed to the Chairman by the scrutineers, a system of checking and double checking should be carried out to ensure absolute accuracy in the matter of the votes recorded.

Duties of Club Officials

After the AGM there may well be Members who are holding new positions or have been elected to the Committee for the first time. We hope the following guide will help new and existing Committee Members and Officers with their role.

Only those prepared to carry out the duties of any club, faithfully and fully, should accept nominations. Elected officers, who include members of the committee, are individually and collectively responsible for seeing that the law of the land and rules of the club are observed. Their position is one of trust and authority and should be regarded as such. The rules of a club should specify the duties attached to each office.

The President

He should identify himself actively with the club and its affairs and be more than a figure-head. He should also preside ex officio over all meetings (other than committee meetings).

The Chairman

Clubs can be very successful when they have a body of enthusiastic and dedicated members, for the

membership is the heart of a club and at the head of a club, the Chairman often holds the key to success.

The importance of a hard working Chairman, together with the Secretary, is paramount. If such a duo also has the support of a hard-working and harmonious committee, then the club will be doubly blessed.

The records of clubs show that many have enjoyed the benefits of devoted Chairmen and Secretaries, without whom the facilities enjoyed by their members would not exist. Therefore, it may be recognised that an important duty of the members is to choose an able and reliable man or woman to represent the club as Chairman.

The Chairman presides ex officio over all committee meetings and, in the absence of the President, those of the club. He should be thoroughly familiar with the rules of the club and the procedures which govern club meetings. He must, at all times, endeavour to maintain the dignity of his office and, by precept and example, the reputation of the club. The Chairman should not be afraid to exercise his authority, quietly and tactfully, when

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occasion arises. He should work in the closest co-operation with the Secretary in assuring that all legal and other club obligations are carried out.

Chairmen may be elected directly i.e. by the members in a general meeting or, if the rules provide, indirectly by the committee from among their own number. In the latter case, as the members will have elected all the members of the committee, they will have already signified their confidence in the person who becomes Chairman.

On assuming the responsibilities of the post, the first obligation of a new Chairman is to become familiar with the duties it entails. It would be impossible to describe every situation and problem that might confront a Chairman, which is why the Chairman needs to maintain a cheerful and dignified presence, and to act with tact and fairness at all times.

The Chairman presides over committee meetings and, consequently, will be instrumental in securing the smooth running of the club and the competent conduct of business. Committee meetings have to be held at least once a month in order to settle club policy, and to make decisions affecting the operations of the club and its development. The Chairman's handling of these meetings will determine, above all, how committee members retain their commitment and interest in serving their club.

The Chairman is the vital link in creating an atmosphere that is indispensable to a successful club. If the Chairman fails, it is possible that one of two trends, or both, will become apparent. There may be a lack of interest among members generally, or difficulties may be experienced in obtaining nominations to fill vacancies occurring on the committee.

Most members learn the art of conducting meetings and running the club, and also develop the confidence to address a wide audience at general meetings, by working within the committee. An efficient Chairman, who holds the trust of colleagues, will do much to secure the continued success and development of the club. It is up to the Chairman to weld the diverse characters that form a committee into a working unit.

The Chairman will be assisted in his duties if there is a code of standing orders which the

committee members themselves have accepted and agreed upon for the proper conduct of their affairs. In conjunction with the Secretary, the Chairman is responsible for arranging the agenda and the priorities of the committee. A carefully prepared agenda will help to ensure that business may be dealt with quickly. As long as all essential business is catered for and all correspondence considered, their choice of priorities is unlikely to cause dissension within the committee.

If an agenda cannot be completed in time, it is better that the committee should agree to adjourn to a later date to conclude the outstanding business. The Chairman and Secretary should not take it upon themselves to omit items from the agenda in order to shorten the meeting. It is for the committee to decide what they will consider for the business is theirs and needs to be dealt with. The authority of the committee should never be usurped. However, a good Chairman will be able to influence them towards wise decisions.

Patience and the avoidance of argument are the best instruments for the smooth conduct of meetings. It should go without saying that the Chairman must conduct meetings in accordance with club rules, standing orders and recognised rules of procedure. This may not guarantee totally trouble-free meetings in all circumstances, but it will prevent most problems from occurring. If the occasion does occur when disorderliness develops, and the Chairman believes business cannot be satisfactorily concluded, the meeting may be adjourned to another date.

In addition, a Chairman should remember that a committee never performs the tasks which are specifically allotted to individual officers or the steward. Not only is this likely to be both confusing and a waste of the committee's time, it can be irritating and frustrating for an intelligent body of people who have given their time to committee work to find they are also engaged in trying to perform duties specifically allocated elsewhere. Similarly, neither the officers nor employees should be allowed to take decisions that are the prerogative of the committee collectively.

The Chairman will fulfil the duties of chairmanship by adopting

a conciliatory attitude and try to avoid riding roughshod over even the most awkward participant from the floor. A cheerful, firm, tactful and judicious person will avoid most of the possible pitfalls of chairmanship and earn grateful thanks from the membership.

Trustees

The dictionary definition of the word 'trustee' sums up what is expected of such an office holder. The definition says, simply, 'one who is trusted or to whom something is entrusted.' It adds that the definition in law is 'one to whom property is entrusted for the benefit of another; one of a number of persons appointed to manage the affairs of an institution.' Even on that basis it is clearly not a task that should be undertaken lightly. It is not an office held just for the honour itself, although many justifiably regard it as an honour bestowed by the club.

Trustees must be eighteen years of age or over and elected by members of the club at a General Meeting. They are usually ex officio members of the club committee by virtue of their office. Trustees attend meetings and are subject to the decisions of the committee. Neither the Secretary nor Treasurer of a club should hold the office of trustee.

Generally speaking, trustees are appointed 'at the pleasure of the club' which, in ordinary language, means until resignation, removal or death. It is possible for the club rules to provide for a fixed term of years. Rules should state the method of election or appointment of trustees and how the tenure of office is terminable subject to any separate deeds. On the election of a new trustee, a Deed of Appointment must always be made and conveyances up-dated. The committee must see to it that the club's lawyers are involved in the appointment of the elected trustee to his office so that the essential legal formalities are carried out. The lawyers, too, must be involved when a trustee is 'discharged' at the end of his or her term, or when death, in office, occurs.

It is very important that club trustees gain an understanding of their position. It is essential for trustees to appreciate fully, what they are called upon to do, what they do and why they are doing it so that they do not, through inadvertence, become personally

liable. They must remember at all times that they are acting on behalf of the club.

Legal proceedings are taken in the name of the trustees on behalf of or against the club, unless its rules specify some other person. Orders obtained against trustees do not lie against the property and possessions owned personally by the trustees but against the assets of the club. This is the case providing they are suitably indemnified, which should be in the club's rules, and they have been appointed properly by Deed of Appointment. In other words, trustees' personal effects are not at risk if they are involved in legal proceedings on behalf of the club so long as they have acted strictly within the club rules. If they have knowingly allowed the club funds to be used for objects not authorised by the rules, they become personally liable.

All leases and agreements of the club should be in the names of the trustees and no documents should be signed by them until they are satisfied they are acting on behalf of the club. Clubs must seek advice when any documents are to be signed that involve the future of the club, its property, or its finances no matter who is the other party involved. It is vital that such documents and anything similar should be examined and approved by the club's legal advisers before signature. The club might well have to pay a fee for expert advice, but the peace of mind which it can bring will be well worth the expenditure.

Trustees must pay particular attention to the use of club funds, and must always ensure that no moneys of the club are spent contrary to law or the club rules, or for purposes not connected with the club or its objects. Proceedings against any person or persons, for fraud or misappropriation, are instituted in the names of the trustees. Two of the duties of trustees which are generally well known are that they are the people, when things have gone badly wrong, who sue on behalf of the club and those who are sued as representatives of the club.

For generations in the club movement, the appointment to the position of trustee has been seen as the very peak of achievement. Trustees are chosen from members who have served their club well and faithfully and sometimes the

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appointment is seen as a 'reward' for their fidelity and long service. That however must not be the sole consideration.

It goes without saying that anyone being considered for the position of trustee must be a person of integrity, held in high regard and be ready to play a full part in the life of the club. Older members will bring the benefit of a lifetime of experience in the club and the outside world to the office. However, the case for the appointment of a younger person who can build up the knowledge required while working alongside an older trustee should not be dismissed. Whatever the age of the trustee, clubs should bear in mind, and have faith in, his or her judgement, integrity, and continuing devotion to the interests of club members. At all times trustees have to ensure that whatever they do is in strict accordance with the rules of the club and, in accordance with the law of the land.

Another very important point is to ensure that a club is never left with only one trustee. The number of trustees set out in the club's rules should be maintained at all times. This is necessary because if the one remaining trustee dies, then the 'statutory vesting' of the club's property passes to his executors or administrators. It is important to remember this procedure, as failure to follow it could lead to difficulties which, in turn, could lead to a costly legal process to resolve.

If the need arises to remove a trustee from office, a Special General Meeting should be summoned in the manner laid down in the club rules. The rules should also state by what majority such action can be taken. Remember, a vacancy created in this way must be filled—and the appointment made in the correct manner—without delay.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for seeing that all moneys, whether received by himself, the Secretary, the steward or any other official or employee are duly banked. He is to ensure that all debts of the club are paid as directed by the committee and that cheques are signed by himself and one, or more, members of the Finance Committee, then countersigned by the Secretary. It is his duty to produce the Paying-in Book,

Bank Statement, Daily Takings Book etc. at every meeting of the committee, or whenever required.

The Secretary

It is the duty of the Secretary to keep the books, documents and papers of the club in proper order and carefully filed. He must summon and attend all meetings and take Minutes of the proceedings. Other responsibilities may be summarised—

- Keep the register of members up to date, with record of last payment of subscriptions
- See that the names, addresses and occupations of candidates for membership are duly displayed on the club notice board for the period stipulated in the rules
- Issue notices of default to members in arrears and see that names are removed from the register if subscriptions are not paid within the period stated in the rules
- Post all notices in connection with General or Special General Meetings
- Check nominations of candidates for office and allow none to go forward which are not in order
- Comply with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003
- Comply with the requirements of the National Insurance Acts, Statutory Sick Pay and see that all paid employees are insured
- See that the club is insured against liability at Common Law, for accidents occurring to club employees, and also against fire and burglary

The duties imposed on a club's Secretary make the person undertaking this office the linchpin in the conduct of club affairs. Unless the Secretary is truly competent, a club will find that it is unable to operate effectively and in accordance with the increasingly complex legislation affecting clubs. The Secretary acts under the superintendence, control and direction of the committee of management and is responsible for seeing that the decisions of the committee are conveyed to the proper quarter.

The position of Secretary requires not only considerable administrative skills, but must also fulfil the vital role of providing liaison between the membership and the committee. The Secretary's basic functions

are to ensure that the club's clerical and organising activities are carried out, to see that all subscriptions are collected and that correspondence is dealt with.

A competent Secretary should be thoroughly familiar with the rules of his club, so that he can advise authoritatively when necessary. He should possess an intimate knowledge of the Licensing Act in so far as it applies to clubs. He is the official primarily held responsible in law for seeing that its provisions are complied with. The Secretary might be made a party to any proceedings instigated against the club for any breach of the requirements of the Licensing Act. Therefore, the Secretary must be conversant with the demands of licensing and gaming laws and of registration and other statutory duties under the Licensing, Friendly Societies, and Industrial and Provident Societies Acts. Failure to meet some of these requirements will cause the Secretary to be held personally liable. A plea that it was committed without his knowledge and connivance would be a good defence to any proceedings taken against him personally, if it could be established.

Before considering the possibilities surrounding the choice of Secretary, it must be reiterated that the Secretary, like the Chairman, requires qualities of integrity and impartiality and must be capable of commanding the respect of members. He should be a good mixer who does not yield to the influences of pressure groups or factions within the club, and is not suspected of favouritism. Again, he must always be aware that he is responsible to the committee and the members for his actions, and that his decisions must reflect the policies of the committee.

The choice of Secretary is governed by the rules and the period of tenure is determined by them. They should be sufficiently flexible to enable members either to elect or to appoint a Secretary, depending on their view of the post's requirements. Rules should include a provision for clubs to choose between electing a member from their own ranks, or to appoint some other person. Among the many reasons for members preferring an elected Secretary is that they may feel it possible for him to cope with the work entailed on

a part-time basis. Certainly, the volume of work falling to the Secretary will be a fundamental pointer in deciding whether the post should be filled by election or appointment.

If the club chooses to elect a secretary, then the election takes place in exactly the same way as for any other officer. If elected, the Secretary remains a member of the club. He will be entitled to propose or second motions, and to speak and vote both in committee and in General Meetings just like any other officer or club member.

Larger clubs may consider that the demands placed on their Secretary are beyond the capacity of a voluntary officer. The appointment of a Secretary is not normally made by members in general. The committee makes such appointments just as they appoint other employees of the club. Applicants may come from within the membership or from outside. Therefore, the rules customarily provide that where an appointed Secretary is to be preferred, the committee will carry out the appointment. In this position he is an officer without power, except as delegated by the committee.

Committee

It is the duty of the committee to attend their meetings regularly. The committee conduct the general business of the club; are responsible for its management and control, and for seeing that the rules are duly observed. Acting in a quasi-judicial capacity they are empowered—subject to what the rules say—to suspend or expel offending members, having first given them an opportunity of being heard in self-defence. The appointment, control and dismissal of all club employees rest solely in the hands of the committee.

The committee is responsible for checking books kept by the Treasurer or Secretary and seeing that all takings have been duly paid into the bank. They should examine the Order Book and be satisfied that only goods authorised by them have been purchased and that accounts submitted for payment have been duly checked and verified with the Goods Received Book kept by the Steward. The committee, realising their position of trust and authority, should rigidly observe the rules of the club, thus setting an example to the members.

SOLVING THE HOSPITALITY WORKFORCE CRISIS

Recent statistics from the ONS show Hospitality has 174,000 vacancies. These staff shortages are growing, and hospitality businesses face rising input costs, as operators compete for staff, as well as causing one in three hospitality businesses to reduce their hours of trading. The resulting £21 billion loss of trade to the sector, and over £5 billion in foregone tax revenue for the Treasury, urgently needs addressing.

Two separate but related approaches might help to solve this crisis. The first is about how we attract more school and university leavers to the sector, and the second is how to attract economically inactive over-fifties into hospitality; perhaps for the first time.

In relation to school leavers, I feel we are often our own worst enemy. The constant litany of doom and gloom about our prospects is hardly calculated to persuade young people, or their parents, that hospitality can offer them a rewarding, long term future. We need to work much harder to pass the 'mum/dad test'. Convincing parents that working in pubs, bars or restaurants is anything more than a stopgap, part-time earning opportunity for when you are at university but

when you leave you should seek a 'proper job' is an unfinished task.

There are fantastic career paths available at venue level and at operator level. In what other sector could a young worker start as a glass collector and end up Chairman of the Board? Where else could a woman or man in their mid-twenties be managing a venue with an annual turnover in excess of a million pounds? The excitement and challenge of running a large, city centre pub, bar, restaurant, or nightclub is tailor-made for ambitious, aspirational young people. Yet we have a tendency to talk ourselves down and give the impression that we are only a tax break away from disaster.

Hospitality is a sector in which training opportunities have been revolutionised over the past 30 years, with apprenticeships offering routes of entry to high paid, high skilled occupations. You don't need to have gone to university to climb the ladder of success, but you do need to demonstrate practical skills and people skills.

I know things are tough at the moment and all sectors are having to adjust to coping with the aftershocks of two major crises – the hangover from the global banking liquidity crisis,

post-covid supply problems and high inflation. I genuinely believe our sector can lead the way out of these crises and help our national recovery. I am pleased therefore that the government has continued with business rates relief, and indeed increased it from 50% to 75%.

In relation to attracting the over-fifties to our sector, I refer you to Paul Chase's recent, thoughtful article, in which he pointed out the demographic dilemma - that those aged over 65 make up 45% of the population aged over 18 and 18.9% of the total population. That statistic points to why we have a problem with those of working age diminishing as a percentage of the total population. Since the pandemic we have seen a marked increase in the number of people in their fifties becoming economically inactive. There is a large potential pool of labour here. There are 4.6 million 50-54-year-olds in the UK, with 3.7 million of them living in England.

I believe there are many advantages to employing people in this age group. There are some 800 Conservative Clubs affiliated to the Conservative Clubs Association, of which I am chief executive. We simply don't have a significant problem with

recruitment of staff. The reason is that most of our clubs often recruit people who are more mature in age and who live locally. Many are looking for part-time employment and these 'older' workers have many advantages; life experience, a good work ethic and reliability.

Also let us face it, Hospitality is not always family friendly in terms of the hours staff are asked to work. Older workers whose children have grown up are often more flexible in the hours they will work and more likely to stick with the job. The government is very keen to explore ways in which economically inactive older workers, some but by no means all on long-term benefits, can be returned to the workforce. Perhaps this is something trade bodies should explore with government.

If we attack our workforce problems from both ends of the age spectrum, I believe we can go a long way to solving it. New patterns of work are emerging post-pandemic and we must be prepared to adapt to the changing world of work in order to attract young talent, as well as the well-honed skills of an older generation.

*Lord Smith of Hindhead CBE,
ACC Chief Executive*

Financial Conduct Authority Issues Reminder

The Financial Conduct Authority has issued Clubs registered as either Co-Operative Societies, Friendly Societies or Industry and Provident Societies the following reminder. Clubs with elected Trustees are unaffected.

Statement from FCA follows:

FCA Statement: Annual Returns

In April 2021 we explained that for annual returns due by 31 October 2021, we will not act to follow-up on delayed submission

where that delay is 3 months or less. This remains the case. Though we are not extending this general forbearance further, we are mindful that some societies will still be experiencing delays in producing accounts and intend to engage supportively to bring about submission.

General Meetings

Societies can hold meetings virtually where this is not prevented by legislation or their rules. We welcome that we have seen lots of societies taking the opportunity to update their rules over the last year to better facilitate virtual meetings where possible. It remains the case that societies are expected to comply with any legislative requirement, or requirements under their own rules, for holding meetings. It may be in the public interest for us to act if we see non-compliance. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Statutory declarations

From 13 December 2021, we will no longer offer forbearance for statutory declarations required by either mutuals legislation or our application forms. They will need to be fully completed on submission to us.

Electronic submission

We continue to accept and encourage electronic submission of applications and annual returns, including the use of electronic signatures where that is possible.

Mutuals Society Portal

The Mutuals Society Portal remains an easy way to submit annual returns and some applications electronically: <https://societyportal.fca.org.uk/>

ACC comment: Any Clubs which have questions or concerns over the above information please contact us for assistance.

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Industry Insights

Industry Insights aims to provide a whirlwind tour of who's doing what in the club sector, from latest launches and new products to business acquisitions and market research into the hospitality sector at large.

Global Beverage Trends 2023 report shows cause for optimism

Finlays' 2023 report reveals that while the industry can expect to see consumers exercising spending caution, it is also witnessing the return of beverages as an 'affordable indulgence', creating opportunities for innovation and value creation.

Announcing the results of Finlays' Global Beverage Trends research, **Group Insight Manager Siân Edwards**, said: "Despite the macro-economic scenario, the outlook for the beverage industry is positive, with consumers making good choices for the planet, and for themselves, and it's with a renewed sense of optimism that we look forward to 2023."

The desire of consumers to treat themselves, coupled with concern for their health as well as that of the planet, is driving the trend toward conscious consumerism, according to Edwards.

"We're seeing how each purchasing decision is carefully evaluated in terms of financial, health and environmental cost.

"Throughout this report we've sought to encapsulate this broad sentiment under the banner of 'mindfulness', as people mindfully allow themselves indulgences, choose healthy products, and opt for brands with a lower environmental impact," she said.

Key drivers identified include:

Selective Spending – While value for money has always been a major driver of consumer behaviour, consumers are still looking to try new products and



experiences. While discretionary spend might reduce, 'affordable indulgence' – i.e. the trend for small, relatively inexpensive treats that consumers are still able to afford – is likely to make a comeback.

Mindful Drinking – Millennials and Gen Z are drinking alcohol less – and more mindfully – than previous generations, spurring the development of new niche and hybrid categories. The beverage industry has been highly responsive, with innovations spanning the alcohol-alternative, no/low-alcohol and RTD alcohol categories.

Mood Boosting Beverages – Consumers are increasingly looking to ease their stress with products that support mental wellbeing. These range from

products that create a sense of treat and relaxation, to those that promise consumers with functionality.

Crunch-time for Carbon – For 2023, expect a focus on carbon emissions, as government legislation, consumer awareness and rising energy costs intersect to bring this trend to the fore.

Ones to watch for 2023 and beyond

'90s Nostalgia – Linking with the 'Good Mood Food' trend, consumers have often turned to happier times with products that allow them to relive childhood memories through flavour and product innovation.

Inclusive Consumption – Consumers with a diverse range of needs and preferences are looking for brands that address these requirements and create a sense of inclusivity.

Ingestible Beauty – Following China's 2021 approval of hyaluronic acid (typically found in beauty products) for use in food and beverage products, beverage launches containing this ingredient have increased 130%.

• finlays.net

Pavement fees abolished by West Oxfordshire District Council

West Oxfordshire District Council is to abolish the charge for pavement seating and displaying material on the public highway with the aim to help make town centres thriving places to eat and socialise, reports the BBC.

Duncan Enright, Deputy Council Leader responsible for economic development, explained that the council was trying to encourage businesses to use outdoor spaces 'to extend what they do and also bring life to the high street'.

The pandemic had led to more companies trading outside and outdoor drinking and dining areas had become hugely popular, he explained.



"We want to allow businesses the opportunity to grow without unnecessary fees," said Enright.

"We hope that by abolishing the payment it will encourage more on-street facilities, making our towns attractive and thriving places to eat and socialise."

It previously cost £100 to apply for a pavement licence. Payments for all licences issued in 2022 are also to be refunded.

Businesses will need a consent licence, with applications to be made at westoxon.gov.uk.

• oxfordshire.gov.uk



Cyber security guidance for small businesses

Last year Action Fraud received over 1,700 reports of cyber incidents from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This figure only includes the reported incidents where the size of the business was recorded – the real number of SMEs affected by cyber incidents is believed to be much higher.

To help combat this, the Information Commissioner's Office and the National Cyber Security Centre have produced a webinar to help small businesses with their cyber security.

• [Cyber security guidance for small businesses – YouTube](#)

Celebrating St Patrick's Day

Guinness is offering clubs free downloadable posters and invitations to boost business for St Patrick's Day on March 31.

"With this simple to use tool you can create personalised posters and invitations. Let your guests know about all the exciting parties, sports occasions, events and other activities going on," says the company.

• guinnesscelebrate.com/seasonal-and-generic/st-patricks-day



Over 25% of UK finds on-trade visits tough when not drinking



Research from Budweiser Brewing Group (BBG) UK&I has revealed that over 1 in 4 UK adults find visits to clubs, pubs and bars tough when not drinking alcohol.

However, 13% say they're more likely to go to a social event while not drinking alcohol if there are non-alcoholic alternatives available besides soft drinks, with 21% saying that they would drink non-alcoholic beer as an alcohol alternative. Overall, non-alcoholic beer comes in second behind mocktails (34%) as the top alcohol alternative people would choose at a social gathering.

Against this backdrop, BBG reported continued volume and market share growth in the no and low alcohol beverage (NABLAB) category, as Corona Cero became the 5th biggest NABLAB brand in volume last quarter. The brewer's portfolio of no-and-low alcohol beer includes Stella Artois Alcohol-Free, Budweiser Zero, Beck's Blue, Leffe 0.0 and Corona Cero.

Marie Fukuura, Future Growth Brands Director at BBG said: "There is a clear interest in no-and-low alternatives, and as the category continues to grow, we are seeing more and more beer-drinkers looking to moderate their alcohol consumption without giving up beer entirely. As the world's leading brewer, we are proud to bring people together over their favourite beers and want them to enjoy non-alcohol versions in a similar way – for a future with more cheers."

• budweiserbrewinggroup.co.uk



New partnership

Food and drink manufacturer Aimia Foods has become the exclusive OOH Vending and Wholesale partner for Koko, the first UK company to make a coconut-based alternative to dairy milk.

The range of coconut milks now includes Original, Unsweetened and Barista.

As well as being free from major allergens, Koko vegan-approved milk alternatives are free from artificial flavours, colours, GMOS and preservatives and are fortified with calcium and vitamins.

The company's product portfolio covers varieties of milk, soft drinks, hot beverages, and food.

• aimiafoods.com





Hourly pay for chefs jumps by up to 20%

Data released by online staffing platform for temporary work Indeed Flex, has revealed that analysis of tens of thousands of chef shifts posted on its platform show that hourly pay for temporary chefs has risen by 11% across the UK on average and up to 20% in some cases.

According to the company, such is the demand for professional cooks, chef job postings on its site are up 97% on average across the UK compared to last year and not all chefs are working the long, unsociable hours commonly associated with the job.

Novo Constare, CEO and Co-founder of Indeed Flex, said: "Intense competition among employers for skilled staff has driven up hourly pay rates for temp workers across the board. Chefs are especially sought after, and can reap big rewards with their expertise.

"Meanwhile for businesses that are struggling to recruit full-time staff, being able to turn to temporary workers has proved a lifeline as it enables them to fill shifts as and when required. They can also scale their workforce up and down, depending on when they are busiest.

"For the chefs themselves, flexible work offers a chance to do something not everyone in their profession can work sociable hours and choose exactly when they want to work."

Data from the ONS shows that the hospitality industry currently has 146,000 vacancies, though this is down on the record-high 173,000 vacancies seen last Summer.

• indeedflex.co.uk



No/low-alcohol showing growth of +7%, says report

No- and low-alcohol beer/cider, wine, spirits and ready-to-drink (RTD) products grew by more than +7% in volume across 10 key global markets in 2022, according to a study published by IWSR Drinks Market Analysis.



IWSR's new report examined 10 focus markets in December 2022 – the UK, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa, Spain and the USA – and the results showed that the market value of no/low alcohol products in 2022 surpassed £9 billion, up from £6.5 billion in 2018.

The pace of growth of this category is expected to surpass that of the last four years, with forecast volumes of +7%, 2022-26, compared to +5%, 2018-22 (figures reflect the compound annual growth rate). No-alcohol will spearhead this growth, expected to account for over 90% of the forecast total category volume growth.

"The dynamic no/low-alcohol category presents opportunities for incremental sales growth as consumers are recruited from drinks categories such as soft drinks and water. Brand owners have an opportunity to recruit non-drinkers of alcohol," said **Susie Goldspink, Head of No-and Low-Alcohol, IWSR Drinks Market Analysis**. "As more people opt to avoid alcohol on certain occasions – or abstain from it altogether – no-alcohol is steadily increasing its share of the no/low category. No-alcohol is growing faster than low-alcohol in most markets."

Improved taste, production techniques and a diversification of consumption occasions, are driving no-alcohol's dominance over low-alcohol in many markets, and IWSR expects no-alcohol volumes to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of +9% between 2022 and 2026.

The maturity of the no/low-alcohol category varies widely by market, with the world's most valuable no/low-alcohol markets being the UK, Germany, Japan, Spain and the USA.

No-alcohol beer/cider is expected to contribute nearly 70% of the overall no/low-alcohol growth

between 2022 and 2026, with low-alcohol expected to grow at 2% over the same period.

A maturing consumer base

No/low consumers are maturing at a global level, with Millennials the largest age group, according to the report.

Switching between alcohol and no/low is common, both in the same occasion and between different ones, with 78% of consumers of no/low products also drinking full-strength alcohol. The largest subset (41% of no/low consumers) are classified as 'substituters', who choose no/low products when avoiding alcohol on certain occasions.

However, 'abstainers', who refrain from drinking alcohol altogether, account for 18% of no/low consumers, and their numbers are rising in most markets, with younger legal-drinking-aged consumers at the fore. The 'abstainers' group has changed most in size in the past year, with nine out of 10 markets seeing an increase.

Driving growth

With people motivated to drink no/low by lifestyle, rather than necessity, growth is now being driven both by recruitment of new consumers and by greater participation. Daytime consumption of both no- and low-alcohol has increased, signalling potential for the category to expand beyond alcohol-replacement occasions.

"This pattern of avoiding alcohol on certain occasions or altogether is driving no- over low- alcohol growth," said **IWSR's Goldspink**. "Pair this with the rise of functional beverages – often containing 'mood-enhancing' adaptogens or nootropics – and the result is a strong outlook for no-alcohol."

• theiwsr.com

Ale falls foul of Code of Practice

A complaint by Aberdeenshire Alcohol & Drug Partnership against Piggin' Drunk Ale was upheld by the alcohol industry's Independent Complaints Panel (ICP).

The Panel considered that the name 'Piggin' Drunk Ale', as well as use of the phrase on the side of the bottle which read "this little piggy is hogging all the beer", created an association with immoderate consumption and binge-drinking. The Panel expressed significant concern regarding an alcoholic product that incorporated the word 'drunk' in its name, which created a link to excessive consumption of alcohol.

Cottage Delight was invited to comment and said: "We can confirm that we have taken swift action to discontinue the product. Furthermore, we have given our assurances to the Portman Group that we will work closely with them and check the compliance of any future product designs."

• portmangroup.org.uk



Double-date for WKD and TV's Love Island



With sales at a 10-year high and now leading the field as the no.1 RTD (Ready to Drink) in both the on-trade and take home, WKD is building on its successful two-year association as the Official Alcohol Partner of Love Island by announcing a deal to expand the collaboration for a further two series in 2023 (Series 9, January-March and Series 10, Summer).

Alison Gray, head of brand-WKD at SHS Drinks, said: "To be teaming up with Love Island for a third year is testimony to just how successful the association has been and how well it has gone down with both customers and consumers. As the pro-

gramme itself so clearly demonstrates, finding the perfect partner is tricky, but when you know, you know – and we believe there's no better match for WKD than Love Island!

"The success of the partnership is a key reason behind WKD's impressive recent performance. Consumers and stockists can look forward to another year of fun, innovative Love Island-related activity from WKD and, with two Love Island series in a year for the first time ever, we're doubly happy and doubly confident that this really is a win: win, win: win scenario."

• shs-drinks.co.uk



Ellers Farm Distillery launches new gin

A new Sloe Gin has been released by Ellers Farm Distillery. Sloe berries are macerated for six months to create a deep, natural colour with a balanced jammy sweetness. Complex flavours include piney juniper, cardamom and ginger, finished with notes of plums, raisins and an acidic tang.

Distilled on the company's farm in North Yorkshire in batches of 500, serving suggestions include a glass of fizz or warmed in a hot toddy.

• ellersfarmdistillery.com

Funnybones expands plant-based range



Funnybones has expanded its plant-based range with three new vegan products - spicy chick*n fillets, a beef-free burger and Italian (not) meatballs.

The spicy chick*n fillets comes coated in a crispy, spicy, corn flake crunch and arrive frozen. They can be oven-baked, deep fried, air fried or pan fried and can be ready in as little as four minutes.

The vegan and gluten-free beef-free burger is made from pea protein and has a juicy, meaty texture, says the company. It boasts 91% less saturated fat than the average beef burger, has high protein levels and is a good source of iron and vitamin B12.

Finally, the Italian (not) meatballs are made using plant protein derived from soya beans and a blend of herbs and spices, designed to create the authentic taste of Italian-style meatballs.

• funnybones.co.uk



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Brislington & St Annes Skittle Alley Refurbishment

Brislington & St Annes Conservative Club recently refurbished their Skittle Alley creating arguably the best furnished Alley in the South West of England.

The very successful Bristol Club already had an extremely well-appointed Lounge Bar, Members Bar and Snooker Room, together with a Garden,

incorporating a large external television. The Committee decided that the Skittle Alley should be of the same quality as the rest of the Club and asked K and M Club Refurbishment Limited, the sole ACC recommended Club Refurbishment Contractor, to design and undertake the works.

Banquette Seating incorporating integral drink shelves was installed

along the side of the alley, with high stools and poseur tables introduced to the rear of the room. The room was completed by the installation of top-quality Axminster carpet to all seating areas.

It was a particularly pleasing project for Kelly Woodward and Mike Godfrey, Directors of K and M, as they had been involved in the refurbishment of the other areas of

the Club and they were extremely grateful to the Committee, to be given the opportunity to complete the total refurbishment of the Club.

The refurbished Skittle Alley, which is in operation seven days a week, met with good comments from the Members, and will hopefully continue to provide excellent enjoyment and revenue for the Club.



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Waterloo and Taunton Presents Football Cheque

Waterloo and Taunton Conservative Club, Ashton-under-Lyne, has presented a local football club, Waterloo AFC, a cheque for £1000.00

Presented by the club Chairman Leon Tamcken, and club Secretary Lyndon Watkin, on behalf of club members fundraising efforts from Saturday night raffles.

Waterloo Warriors, under 8's Assistant Manager - Stuart

Biddle said "Our newly formed team has been going from strength to strength. This money will be put to good use, allowing us to buy a new pop-up goal and footballs for the youngsters. Much appreciated.

A big thank you to everyone at Waterloo and Taunton Conservative Club for supporting this fantastic junior grassroots football for local boys and girls.



Fairwater Presents ACC Badge of Honour

The Fairwater Conservative Club, Cardiff, have presented ACC Badges of Honour to Pat and Roland Davies.

The presentation event took place in December at the Club's Christmas Dinner. Pat and Roland were

commended for their many decades of service to the well-being and enjoyment to generation of members and to the Club as a whole. They were especially thrilled to receive the congratulations

and thanks of the A.C.C. for services to Club, Cause and support for the A.C.C.

The ACC thank both Pat and Roland for their extremely long service to their Club.



Pages From The Past

In this month's Pages From The Past we go back exactly 100 years to February 1923.

The leading article was how to fight Socialism which included an eye catching proposal of house to house distribution by Clubmen. The article asks Clubmen to put aside their condemnation of the policy of Socialists delivering political literature and to understand the benefits that such distribution methods can bring. The article event suggests that during the delivery of political leaflets that a conversation could be struck up with the occupants of the house, perhaps even about a matter of direct concern to the occupants themselves.

The article takes the rather charitable view that once said political literature

is deposited at a house that it will remain there to be carefully read and thought over. And whether intentionally or not, the article seems to take the view that such political material should be described as propaganda and therefore it is extremely important that said promotion of propaganda should not be left exclusively to 'Socialists, Communists and Bolsheviks'. Therefore, in order to assist the promotion of more suitable 'propaganda' reading material to be delivered to homes the ACC charitably offered a free supply of pamphlets and leaflets for this purpose. If anyone wants us to restart our propaganda leafletting efforts please let us know!

SOCIALISM AND HOW TO FIGHT IT. Proposed House-to-House Distribution of Political Leaflets by Clubmen.

A Call for Volunteers! Offer by the A.C.C.

In the matter of propaganda work the Socialist Party is an easy first. Its members are enthusiasts: they cheerfully make sacrifices to spread their political gospel: they are tireless, insistent and persistent. Knowing that virtually the whole of the Press of the country is ranged against their policy, they rely on their "own right arm": on individual, *personal* service. What they have already accomplished by these means, let the Opposition benches of the House of Commons bear witness: what they *will* accomplish, if nothing is done to counteract their propaganda, is self-evident to every politician.

Take the relatively small, but highly important, matter of political literature. The Socialists are fully alive to its value, and the educational results which accrue from a house-to-house distribution. Accordingly they distribute it, frequently after a long day's toil. You may condemn their policy, but must applaud their enthusiasm and sacrifice for their Cause. The pamphlets are thrust into letter-boxes or pushed under doors: where possible, the occupant of the house is seen and a friendly chat ensues on some political matter of direct concern to himself, his wife, or family. Suitable literature is left to be read, and thought over, at leisure. Thus are the seeds of Socialism sown.

Is the propagandist field to be left exclusively to the Socialists, Communists and Bolsheviks! Are Conservatives going to do nothing to counteract it! If so, as sure as the sun will rise to-morrow, the next general election will see a Socialist Government in power.

Now, and without a moment's delay, something must be done to meet this danger, and it is suggested that a properly-organised campaign be initiated to expose the fallacies of the Socialist creed. There are many ways by which this can be accomplished. At the moment, let us concentrate on the matter of political literature.

The Publication Department of the Conservative Party is preparing pamphlets which will deal, in simple and direct language, with topical political questions. **The thing is to get these leaflets into the homes of the people.** In such work members of our Clubs can render most useful aid and in so doing can save their country from ruin and help their Party at one and the same time.

Proposed Plan of Campaign.

It is suggested that each Club should, without delay, summon a meeting of its members and call for volunteers to undertake the systematic distribution of political literature at houses throughout the neighbourhood served by the Club. Members could well be asked to devote certain evenings to this "labour of love," working, if possible, in co-operation with local Ward Committees and under the direction of the Party Agent.

Now with regard to obtaining the necessary literature for distribution. Here the A.C.C. is ready, and anxious, to help.

To any Club making application the A.C.C. will send specimens of the latest leaflets published by the National Unionist Association, and of any other organisation that issues literature which will help electors to acquire reliable information on current political problems.

This the A.C.C. will willingly do, **free of cost.** From such specimens the Club Committee can make a selection of those leaflets which, in their opinion, are most suitable for local distribution. In addition, the "C.C.G." will publish each month particulars of the latest literature, so that Clubs can know what is being issued from Party Headquarters.

A Political Literature Fund.

It is suggested that each Club should start a Fund, the proceeds to be devoted to purchasing political literature for local distribution—£10 per annum would amply suffice. The

raising of such a sum for such an object should present little or no difficulty. Twopence or threepence from every annual subscription; the proceeds of a couple of concerts, whist-drives, or dances; a billiard or cardroom levy; a personal appeal to leaders of the Party; a collecting box on the bar counter, are a few suggestions for the creation of the nucleus of such a fund to be expended solely on purchasing the requisite literature for distribution.

In a few cases it may not be found possible to do even this, and here again the A.C.C. is prepared to help. On being assured by such Clubs that the desired literature will be effectually distributed by their members, **the A.C.C. will make a free gift of a supply of pamphlets and leaflets for this purpose** and so help to counteract the Socialist propaganda now being so assiduously carried on in industrial areas.

The Proposals in Brief.

- (1) Clubs in industrial areas to form a Political Literature Committee, and arrange for the systematic distribution of same by members at houses in the locality.
- (2) Clubs to take steps to start a fund to pay for such literature.

As above stated, specimens of current political literature will be sent to any affiliated Club by the A.C.C. free of cost, and in such cases where the Club is unable to defray cost of the leaflets the A.C.C. will provide them gratuitously on the necessary assurance being given that they will be properly distributed by the members. Here, then, are eminently practical suggestions which every Conservative Club worthy of its name should put into operation.

In thus helping to ward off the advent of a Socialist Government, our Clubmen should remember that not only are they assisting to save the country from irretrievable ruin, but are exercising the first law of Nature—**self-preservation.** Although seeking in every way possible to hide the fact, the Socialist Party, behind the scenes, is controlled by dangerous extremists who would stop at nothing and who would not hesitate to promote a bloody revolution to accomplish their ends, thereby following the direction of their leaders in Russia. Should such miscreants seize the reins of Government, no man's life, no man's home, no man's possessions would be safe. **This danger is a very real one and it is growing.** Are Conservatives, who are pledged to support the Constitution and to uphold law and order, going to leave the propagandist field to those whose gospel is pure and unadulterated anarchy? That is the question: it is for our Clubmen to make fitting reply.

Specimen leaflets, from which a selection can be made for local distribution, will be sent to any Club free of cost. Applications should be addressed to the Secretary, A.C.C., Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

Devotees of the "weed" will be interested to know that the revenue from tobacco last year amounted to £55,208,446, duty having been paid on over 136 million pounds.



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