

CONSERVATIVE CLUBS MAGAZINE



January 2026 75p



Message From Chief Executive



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Happy New Years to all our readers. No doubt many clubs will have had a Christmas season that will have been one of the most rewarding times of the year – both financially from a business perspective or simply because it is a time when bonds between members can be renewed and strengthened.

At the ACC we are looking forward to the year ahead and it gives me great pleasure to be able to announce that clubs with financial deposits with the ACC will benefit from a new rate of 2.75% for all deposits, no matter what size, which will be in place for the entirety of 2026. That means, irrespective of what happens with the base rate, we are committed to maintaining the interest we pay our clubs for the entire calendar year. For a deposit savings scheme which is easy to access and where withdrawals can be made at any time, we are very proud that we can maintain an interest rate at this level.

Whether it is maintaining the deposit rate we provide clubs or continuing to offer clubs our popular Sale and Leaseback service, our free of charge Trusteeship Service or providing loans to those clubs which need some additional support, I am certain that as an organisation we can once again work to ensure our Member Clubs can carry on trading, even though these difficult times which are affecting the entirety of the hospitality sector. We recognise that it has never been more important for the ACC to assist our Member Clubs and also for clubs to assist each other – by promoting the IA Ticket scheme, and working together locally to exchange help and advice.

By working together, I believe we can again ensure that the coming year is a time we can all be proud of and that all our Member Clubs can feel supported by the significant safety net that the ACC has long provided.

Published by The Association of Conservative Clubs, Ltd
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London SE1 7JP
Tel: 020 7222 0843
Sales: 020 7222 0868
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Printed by: Snell Print Ltd,
8 Buckland Road, Yeovil,
Somerset BA21 5EA

All editorial and advertising enquiries should be addressed to the ACC. When replying to advertisers please mention Conservative Clubs Magazine

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2025 Budget Update

Headline measures include:

- **PAYE and National Insurance thresholds frozen until 2031**
This brings more individuals into tax or higher-rate bands over time.
- **Increases to the National Minimum Wage / National Living Wage from April 2026**
For employees aged 21 and over, the rate will rise by 4.1% to £12.71 per hour. Clubs employing bar staff, stewards, or part-time employees should factor these changes into staffing budgets.
- **Alcohol duty increases**
All alcohol duties will rise in line with the Retail Price Index, forecast at 3.66%, from 1 February 2026. Unlike previous Budgets, draught products receive no preferential rate, meaning increases will apply across all categories. The Budget estimates an approximate 6p rise on a four pack of lager, with proportionate increases for spirits and cider.
- **Machine Games Duty (MGD)**
The anticipated increase in gaming machine taxation did not materialise. Machine Games Duty therefore remains unchanged at 5% and 20% for most club premises. This will be welcome news for clubs operating AWP's and other taxable gaming machines.
- **Corporation tax rates remain unchanged**
At 19% for the majority of Clubs which have non-mutual trading income such as interest and

property rents.

- **Late filing penalties for corporation tax returns will double from April 2026**
A penalty of £400 will apply where a return is more than three months late rising to £2,000 if more than three months late.
- **No changes to VAT rates or thresholds,**
These remain at £90,000 for registration and £88,000 for deregistration. This is relevant for clubs approaching the threshold due to bar turnover, gaming income or room hire.

Our thanks to Robert Thomas and R H Jeffs and Rowe Accountants for this information.

Budget 2025: Business Rates

How the recent Budget has affected business rates for Clubs

The changes announced in the recent Budget have a mixed effect on Clubs. Some measures are designed to provide relief, but others may result in higher costs depending on each venue's size and rateable value.

Key changes

- From April 2026, the government plans to introduce permanently lower business-rates multipliers specifically for retail, hospitality and leisure premises.
- There will be separate "small business" and "standard" multipliers for properties with a rateable value below £500,000.
- The temporary retail, hospitality and leisure discount, originally

introduced during COVID-19, is being phased out as the new system is introduced.

What's working against the sector

- Rateable values have been reassessed recently, and many pubs and clubs have seen large increases.
- In some cases, these increases may outweigh the benefit of lower multipliers.
- Hospitality bodies warn that many venues could still see sizeable rises in their rates bills despite the Budget measures.

Who could potentially benefit?

- Smaller pubs and clubs in lower-value buildings
- Sites outside major city centres
- Venues already operating on a leaner cost base

For these businesses, the lower multipliers may result in lower or manageable business-rates bills.

Who is likely to be worse off?

- Larger venues with higher rateable values
- City-centre clubs with strong underlying land values
- Clubs already under pressure from high energy and wage costs

Some may experience sharp increases when the new valuations take full effect.

What clubs should be doing now

- Review your current and future rateable value and check whether it looks fair
- Update budget forecasts to reflect new business-rates costs
- Monitor staffing and opening-hours efficiencies
- Consider generating more income through events, room hire or membership initiatives

Summary

The Budget introduces a more favourable structure for hospitality businesses in theory, but many Clubs could still see higher bills because of increased valuations. The impact will vary widely between venues. Clubs should review their figures early and plan ahead, as 2026 could be a financially challenging year for those facing significant rises.

ACC Comment:

We have tried to provide a fair handed analysis of the announced

measures but we have serious concerns. Despite government messaging claiming the new system will deliver "permanently lower rates," real-world examples tell a very different story: hundreds of pubs, bars, nightclubs, grassroots music venues, and late-night restaurants will see steep increases in their annual bills. This is not reform - it is a stealth tax designed to systematically close down the late-night economy.

We therefore need to carefully monitor the real world repercussions of the changes and how they affect typical clubs - it already seems that there may be some winners and some losers so at this stage it is difficult to take an overall view but we are concerned. We only have generalised examples to consider so far. Under the current system, venues benefit from 40% relief on their business rates. From April 2026, that relief disappears, replaced by new reduced multipliers. A small bar with a rateable value of £25,000 currently pays £7,200 per year; under the new system, its bill will rise to £9,550. A mid-sized late-night restaurant or bar (£60,000) will see its bill jump from £17,280 to £25,800. Grassroots music venues or nightclubs (£100,000) will face bills rising from £28,800 to £43,000. Large city-centre nightclubs (£300,000) will see £86,400 leap to £129,000, while flagship venues (£650,000) will experience an eye-watering increase from £187,200 to £330,200.

We are joining calls on the Government to extend or replace the 40% RHL relief beyond 2026 for affected venues.

UK Hospitality Budget Concerns:

There is considerable misunderstanding regarding the Budget's effect on business rates for hospitality in England. Many parliamentarians understood from the Chancellor's statement that the Budget would ease pressures on high street businesses, funded in part by increased taxation on online giants. Subsequent commentary, including social media posts and an article by the Exchequer Secretary, has reinforced this perception by focusing on the first-



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CLUB LAW AND MANAGEMENT

year tax position, when increases are partially masked by transitional relief.

However, by year three, when this relief falls away, businesses face substantial and unprecedented rises in their rates bills. Even the “capped” increases in year one will be unaffordable for many.

It is clear that these concerns are well-founded. Far from delivering a tax cut for hospitality, the measures announced amount to one of the most significant tax increases the sector has ever faced, while online giants and large supermarkets experience comparatively modest changes. Without corrective action, we risk widespread business closures, reduced investment, and a contraction in youth employment.

Hospitality is a foundation sector of the UK economy, employing 3.5 million people and serving as the largest employer of 16–24-year-olds. Decisions taken in the Budget, particularly relating to business rates, place this sector at a serious and disproportionate disadvantage.

The Problem

The Budget introduced a 5p business rates discount for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses, far below the 20p relief already permitted in legislation, while simultaneously announcing steep increases in rateable values. As a consequence, businesses will pay a marginally lower percentage on a substantially higher base.

The Government has focused on the first year of the revaluation cycle, when increases are capped by transitional relief (30% for most businesses, 15% for an average pub). But by year three, this protection has nearly disappeared.

Three-year real rates bill impact:

- Average pub: +15% in year one; +76% over three years

Additional cost over three years: £12,900

- 4-star hotel: +30% in year one; +115% over three years

Additional cost over three years: £205,200

- Large distribution warehouses (online giants): +9% in year one; +16% over three years

- Large supermarkets: -2% in year one; +4% by year three

This outcome is fundamentally at odds with the Government’s manifesto commitment to “level the playing field between the high street and online giants.” The scale of these increases will force venues to cut jobs, raise prices, or close entirely. Youth employment,

already fragile, will be particularly affected.

Allen Simpson, chief executive of UKHospitality, Budget Comment:

“We are now in a position where we are shipping jobs, we are stopping investment and we are reducing the contribution we can make to growth because of tax policy. Before the budget last year, we were growing at 6% year on year, the fastest in the economy. This is a story of socially regressive policy and anti-growth policy.

We are going to be asking members and non-members to write to their MP to make the case. We will be briefing MPs in advance of the Finance Bill. We’re going to see if we can get a debate in the House. We’re working with Labour and opposition MPs to make sure that people who understand this impact have the data that they need to be effective.

Equally, we need to give the government a way out. We need to give them solutions which are affordable and can solve this. In my view the solution is to delay the business rates revaluations until the end of this revaluation term for the hospitality sector only, as this has a unique impact on this sector.

We were lumped in with retail, but retail’s bills are going up 4% for supermarkets, and hotels, which are, if you like, the equivalent to supermarkets, are going up 115%. So, this is a uniquely hospitality problem, and what should be affordable is a specific easement for hospitality. We will be working hard to have a conversation with the chancellor about how she can fix it, because it has to be fixed.”

ACC HELP AND SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING CLUBS

ACC Sale and Leaseback Service

This service continues to be popular with around 150 ACC Clubs having entered into such agreements. Primarily, it is a way for Clubs to raise funds to carry on trading and to undertake longer-term projects, such as refurbishments, which can be key to increasing membership recruitment, retention, and regular use by Members. Any interested Clubs should contact the ACC for further information.

ACC Loans

For over a decade now we have been providing loans to our Member Clubs and 2025 was no different, with over 80 Clubs

entering into new loan agreements and existing loans supporting many more.

We currently have over £6m out on loan to our Member Clubs and, along with our Sale and Leaseback programme, we believe these financial assistance packages are a key reason why hundreds of ACC Clubs can continue opening their doors each day and serving their local communities. The ACC is unique among private members’ club organisations in providing this level of financial support to our Clubs.

ACC Trusteeship Service

We are currently elected to serve as Club Trustees for around 200 ACC Clubs. This service remains popular as it is free of charge, solves the common problem of finding appropriate local Trustees, and is completely reversible should Members wish to change arrangements in the future.

Transfers of Trusteeship have become increasingly common amongst unincorporated clubs for several reasons. First, the ACC will pay all legal expenses involved in the transfer process and, once appointed, will act as the Club’s Trustees on a permanent and continuous basis, removing

the need for future Trustee re-appointments and related costs. Second, the Association’s financial and legal resources significantly strengthen the Club’s position when negotiating loans or defending legal action. The Association will not be involved in the day-to-day running of the Club and will act only upon the lawful instructions of the Committee, in the same way as existing Trustees.

Any Clubs wishing to consider utilising the ACC Trusteeship Service should contact us for further information.

ACC Deposit Scheme

For many years, the ACC has offered a deposit scheme for Member Clubs, and we hold a significant amount of money on behalf of Clubs, with deposits ranging from £1,000 to over £300,000.

We review and set the deposit interest rate annually and I am pleased to confirm that, for the duration of 2026, the interest rate will be 2.75%, regardless of any Bank of England reductions during the year.

Funds can be withdrawn in full or in part at any time without notice or penalty.

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CLUB LAW AND MANAGEMENT

DATES FOR YOUR 2026 DIARY AND GENERAL REMINDERS

Club Committees will have in their minds – and hopefully in their diaries – the dates by which certain returns and applications have to be made. I hope the following check list will assist Clubs in carrying out this useful exercise.

Club Premises Certificate

Whilst there is no specific renewal date of a Club Premises Certificate it is necessary for an annual fee to be paid to the local Licensing Authority in order for the Club Premises Certificate to remain in force. Therefore, look out for any renewal invoice received from your local Licensing Authority and ensure that it is paid promptly.

Fees for a CPC

Rateable Value	Band	Annual Fee
No rateable value to £4,300	A	£70
£4,300 to £33,000	B	£180
£33,001 to £87,000	C	£295
£87,001 to £125,000	D	£320
£125,001 and above	E	£350

Performing Rights Society & Phonographic Performances Ltd

PPL PRS Ltd is a joint venture between the UK's two music licensing societies - PPL and PRS for Music.

Previously Clubs may have had to purchase two separate music licences, one for PRS and one for PPL whereas now invoices for both will be combined.

Typically, in January, fees are payable to the PRS and PPL. These payments are fixed under an Agreement with the PRS PPL and the appropriate fee for a Club is calculated according to the type of music used. It is important to check the invoice and ensure the Club is only paying for music it actually uses.

Audits

Clubs registered under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act, the Friendly Societies Acts or the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act must submit an Annual Return to the Financial Conduct Authority no later than the date required under the terms of the Club's particular Rules. Failure to comply may result in prosecution. Such Clubs must also ensure the annual fee is paid, the amount of which depends upon the Club's assets.

Clubs which are incorporated as companies must ensure that their company returns are made to Companies House by the agreed submission date in order to avoid fines and must also ensure that their Accounts are filed.

Unincorporated Members' Clubs are not required to submit annual returns or to file Accounts with any outside body.

In addition to the above, please make a note of the date for VAT returns, insurance renewal and the Club's TV licence.

Temporary Event Notices

Clubs are able to apply for up to 15 Temporary Event Notices per calendar year. A Temporary Event Notice allows Clubs to hold events which are open to the public such as Open Days and Beer Festivals or simply private events which are not held by Members. A Member holding a private event and inviting their guests will not normally require a TEN to be obtained.

NEW YEAR BUSINESS HEALTH CHECK—MAKE SURE YOU ARE MAXIMISING THE CLUB'S REVENUE

1. Update all the images on your Club's website – and delete any out of date content.
2. Check the last six months of your P&L and highlight your worst selling drinks and menu items. Change them.
3. Search for your Club online on Google. Look for any out of date information and email the relevant site to get it changed/removed.
4. Draw up a list of your top 5 suppliers – call a competitor for each one and check you are getting the best deal.
5. Dig out your utilities bills and note the end of all the contract terms in your calendar and make a note a month before to shop around for the best price before each contract ends.
6. Do a deep clean of the exterior of your Club and car park. It will be noticed.
7. Create a group on WhatsApp for the Club's Members to join. Use it to engage them and post about topics they are interested in, not just as a promotional tool. You'll then have a willing audience when you ask for feedback on any changes you make, or invite them to exclusive events, or to try new menus. Designate a Committee Member to manage the group and provide feedback from the group to your Committee Meetings.
8. Come up with a plan to promote a specific drink or menu item to the Club's Members. Call the supplier of that product and ask them to sponsor your promotion/provide prizes, merchandise or extra stock. If you think you have a great selection of local Ales or some niche gins then make sure you properly promote them.
9. Create your own mystery customer feedback form including any areas that are new, or that you have had negative feedback on, and ask someone outside the Club to give you an honest view.
10. Talk to your employees – do they have any ideas of where the Club could be improved? Would they like to introduce a new product to trial? The bar staff have constant contact with the Club's Members – this is valuable feedback.
11. Write to your local MP and invite them to come to an event or pull a pint behind your bar – if they say yes then contact your local media and get a photographer to attend too.
12. Remind your Members that ultimately they need to recruit new Members. No Club will survive without constantly recruiting new Members and your existing Members are your best form of advertisement and word of mouth. Ensure you provide a generous bar voucher both to new Members and the Member who recruited them.

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- Totton Conservative Club



Meet Adam Lister, our ACC Club Specialist:

For almost 15 years, Adam has been supporting ACC clubs through their renewal process helping to make the process as simple as possible.

Talk to him to find out more about how we can support your club.

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Romsey Raises Funds For Local Charity with Southampton FC Legends

Romsey Conservative Club has helped raise thousands of pounds for a much-loved local charity, thanks to a star-studded event that brought together former Southampton FC legends, club members, and the wider community.

The Club proudly presented a cheque for £3,685 to Romsey Young Carers on Friday, 7 November, following a hugely successful charity day held in October.

Romsey Young Carers provides vital support to young people who care for a parent or sibling with long-term illness or disability. Earlier this year, the charity approached the Club for help after facing funding cuts and a rising demand for its services.

Club Chairman Dave Maslen said: "We were absolutely delighted to support such an inspiring local charity. Romsey Young Carers do extraordinary work supporting young people who take on caring responsibilities far beyond their years. The generosity of our members, local businesses, and the ex-Saints legends made this an unforgettable event, and we're proud to know the funds raised will make a real difference."

The October fundraiser proved to be a highlight of the Club's calendar, featuring appearances from a host of former Southampton

favourites, including Matt Le Tissier, Andy Cook, Mark Dennis, Leroy Whale, Manny Andruszewski, Nicky Banger, Martin Thomas, Reuben Agboola, Dave Puckett and James Beattie.

Throughout the afternoon, the football stars chatted with guests, signed memorabilia, and even joined members for friendly games of snooker and darts.

Chris Hall, Manager of Romsey Young Carers, praised the Club's efforts: "We are so grateful to everyone at Romsey Conservative Club for their incredible support. The charity day was such a special event, and the funds raised will go directly towards providing respite activities and tailored support for young carers across the area."

During the presentation ceremony, Mr Maslen welcomed four young carers to the Club, along with Mr Hall and volunteer support worker Matt Hodges. The visit allowed the charity to thank members in person and share more about the impact the donation will have.

The funds raised will help Romsey Young Carers continue providing essential services for young people who shoulder responsibilities far beyond their years, ensuring they receive the support, respite and opportunities they deserve.



Kinson Conservative Club Raises £2,080 at Macmillan Coffee Morning

Kinson Conservative Club hosted its annual Macmillan Coffee Morning in October, raising an impressive £2,080 for Macmillan Caring Locally.

Members pulled together to create a warm and welcoming event, with every cake on offer lovingly homemade - joined by a tempting selection of freshly baked sausage rolls. Alongside the refreshments, members donated a wide range of prizes, helping to create a lively fundraising atmosphere bolstered further by a popular bric-a-brac stall.

One standout item was a remarkable 3.5-litre bottle of Martell brandy, signed many years ago by Margaret Thatcher. When the prize went unclaimed, it was auctioned at the Club, adding a significant contribution to the final total.

Thanks to the generosity, baking skills and community spirit of members and supporters, the Club proudly donated £2,080 to Macmillan Caring Locally.

A wonderful achievement for a very important cause.

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.

Planning ahead – club menu matters and making a difference in 2026

Clubs must brave up to pro-active menu-manoeuvring, according to Lynx Purchasing. The company offers up the following advice.

The good news is that many comforting winter dishes, such as sausage and mash, can be made using better value cuts and seasonal produce.



Post December 2025 trading, the challenge has been for businesses to take whatever profit they could from December trading and make a clear plan for attracting customers during the first three months of 2026, according to **Lynx Purchasing managing director Rachel Dobson**.

"It's likely to feel like a long haul through to Easter, which is the first weekend in April," she said.

Areas flagged up in the Winter 2025 Lynx Purchasing Market Forecast include:

- **Beef:** Lower production in the UK, driven by beef farmers' concerns about the cost of rearing animals, is keeping beef availability behind market demand. Supplies are tight, and the situation is unlikely to ease for at least the first half of 2026.

- **Fish:** Supplies of cod and haddock are under severe pressure, with demand significantly ahead of supply, and prices increasing sharply. This situation is expected to continue through the winter. Operators who keep menu descriptions flexible to take advantage of changing availability of a broad range of white fish, such as hake and coley, will be in a stronger position, but prices are expected to be high across the board.

- **Veg:** Brassicas such as broccoli and cabbage recovered well from the summer heatwave, with quality and availability good and prices stable. Root vegetables such as carrots, parsnips and swedes were more negatively affected, and are generally smaller than usual.

- **Coffee and cocoa:** Coffee commodity prices have

more than doubled since the start of last year, as major producers such as Brazil and Viet Nam struggle with the impact of extreme weather and climate change. With cocoa crops facing similar challenges, the higher prices being asked by suppliers are likely to continue.

Dobson said: "Consumer confidence is likely to remain low in the new year, with any substantial fall in inflation unlikely to have an impact until the Spring at the earliest.

"The good news is that many comforting winter dishes, from stews and pies to sausage and mash, can be made using better value cuts and seasonal produce. As ever, the best advice is to work with suppliers to make the most of produce when it's at its best in terms of availability, quality and value."

- lynxpurchasing.co.uk

Hospitality is entering a golden age – let's empower those who deliver it

Charlie Mitchell, Head of Insights and Consumer Research, calls for greater focus on bartender and hospitality training to unlock a five-way win for individuals, venues, suppliers, guests, and the entire On Premise sector.

By most measures, the On Premise is having a tough time. Bars are closing, margins are threadbare and global drinks companies are posting, at best, sluggish figures. But there is one area, albeit unquantifiable, that bucks this trend, the art of – and the need for – hospitality.

Yes, both the execution of, and the demand for, hospitality experiences across the globe has arguably never been as high.

Walk in to any bar, in any city, in any country and chances are that you will be served a good drink and you will be served by a good bartender. You'll have a good range of options of products to choose from and, if you so wish, your server will transform said products into a delicious concoction that you could only dream of making. If you want to chat, the bar-keep will oblige, and if you don't, that's fine too. You will likely be well looked after and you will likely have a good time. It's the basics of hospitality, but it's those basics that get us hooked and it's those basics that have never been more ubiquitous. We don't know how good we've got it.

Demand too is growing. Amidst a backdrop of financial pressures easing for the masses, a revival of in-person connections and a renewed desire to disconnect from the outside world or the world on our devices, hospitality is perfectly placed to ride a wave into what may be an epoch of greatness.

Indeed, CGA by NIQ's latest global research highlights a clear correlation between consumers' financial positivity and their intention to increase visitation to the On Premise sector.

The biggest factor in that intention to revisit isn't the quality of food or drinks, it is the quality of experience. Yes, it is the fundamentals of hospitality that both stimulate demand and go on to fulfil that demand. Therefore, if, as a sector, we are to execute the fundamentals with consistent excellence, a virtuous cycle will form to deliver the golden age of hospitality.

Nevertheless, no matter how well the macro trends align to fuel demand, it takes a skilled workforce to deliver, and it is the hospitality professionals; the stars



of this particular show, who are critical to its success and who, in my opinion, remain overlooked and under-invested in, given the vital role that they play.

An investment in hospitality staff is more than just an investment in the individual, it is an investment that pays off in a myriad of manners, unlocking a five-way win.

Firstly, of course, the individual benefits. The bartender, waiter, maître d' or sommelier gains valuable knowledge and skills that help them fulfil their role more proficiently. This in turn means that the venue itself wins, gaining a more proficient and effective workforce who are more engaged with their role and, by extension, less likely to take up offers of employment elsewhere. The third win comes to the suppliers (usually drinks brands) who invest to provide exceptional training and are rewarded with staff serving their products perfectly, recommending their brands and, ultimately delivering a return on investment in the form of sales. The guests themselves on the receiving end of the fourth win, enjoying their perfectly served drinks and expertly serviced hospitality, which unlocks the fifth and final win, that of the On Premise channel itself. The sector benefits from a workforce of better skilled employees, who want to build careers in the sector,

alongside a more engaged consumer base.

It seems like a no-brainer then. Invest in bartender training and wider hospitality training and reap the rewards. However, the data suggests that this is not occurring as efficiently, or as widely as possible. In our recent report with industry community, Celebrate Her and hospitality training platform Allara Global showed that just 29% of professionals felt that they receive adequate training for all necessary aspects of their roles. In other words, we are failing 71% of the workforce that we task with delivering the drinks, experiences and memories that keep people coming back. The five-way win is being turned into a five-way own goal, the virtuous cycle is cycling in reverse and, rather than a golden age, we are living through a period of mass closures and poor sales performance.

It is the frontline who will turn that performance around, yet we are failing them. We need to understand their requirements better and we need to offer solutions. If we do that, we will empower a high-potential workforce to deliver great hospitality experiences over-and-above their already high standards. Hospitality professionals are hospitality's greatest asset – let's unleash it.

• cgastratetgy.com

Champagne on the rise, says global report

Changing social trends and the growing culture of celebration, are major contributors to the Champagne market's expansion, according to a report from Allied Market Research.

The economy segment of the Champagne market is experiencing high demand due to its ability to cater to price-conscious yet aspirational consumers. Economy Champagne provides an entry point for those who want the prestige of Champagne without the premium price tag. This segment is especially popular for social events like weddings and holidays, where celebratory beverages are in high demand, but consumers need to stay within budget.

Champagne producers have responded by diversifying their portfolios with more affordable offerings,



such as non-vintage blends and smaller bottle sizes, to capture a wider audience.

• alliedmarketresearch.com

Pernod Ricard UK serves up top tips

Pernod Ricard UK is supporting customers by inspiring them with creative, premium cocktails.

Prioritising premium serves and showcasing brands like Altos, Kahlúa, Jameson, Lillet, Bumbu and Champagne will drive profitability and elevate consumer experiences, says the company.

Cocktails remain the fastest-growing category in the On-Trade spirits market, with consumers looking to treat themselves and trade up according to Pernod-Ricard.

• pernod-ricard.com



Jim Beam goes tropical with Pineapple flavour



The newest flavour in Jim Beam's stable, Pineapple, is a fine balance of sweet pineapple that pairs with rich bourbon notes of vanilla, caramel, and oak for a warm, smooth finish. This is the brand's first flavoured release in the UK in two years.

In addition, Jim Beam Black has returned to the UK market with a new 7-year-aged spirit and updated packaging.

• jimbeam.com

Kingsbarns 10-year-old whisky released



The St Andrews-based distillery's first age-statement marks a milestone for Kingsbarns with its first 10-year-old single malt.

Distilled from local barley, the light, fruity spirit has been matured in 90% ex-Bourbon barrels and 10% STR red wine barriques.

The barrels impart soft vanilla and tropical sweetness, while the STR barriques contribute depth and subtle spice, resulting in an elegant Lowland single malt with aromas of summer blossom, ripe stone fruit and toasted oak, says the distiller.

• kingsbarnsdistillery.com

Kopparberg Sweet Vintage addition to range

Kopparberg is introducing Sweet Vintage Strawberry & Lime and Sweet Vintage Mixed Fruit, as an addition to its 7% ABV range.

A Kopparberg spokesperson said: "Expect the unmistakable Kopparberg taste you know and love, now with a fuller body and a higher ABV, perfect for high-tempo moments."

"As the UK's No.1 fruit cider brand, we know our

Three new expressions from Chichibu whiskies

Premium spirits distributor Speciality Brands is introducing three new expressions from Japanese whisky producer Chichibu – Ichiro's Malt Chichibu 10-Year-Old, Ichiro's Malt Chichibu Distillery II, and Ichiro's Malt Chichibu The London Edition 2025 (pictured).

Ichiro's Malt Chichibu 10-Year-Old is matured for a minimum of 10 years and aged predominantly in ex-bourbon barrels. It highlights Chichibu's signature fruit-forward style, with notes of orange peel, peach and redcurrant, finishing with a touch of white pepper and roasted malt.

Ichiro's Malt Chichibu Distillery II is the debut release from the new Chichibu Distillery II. Aged between four and five years in a variety of cask types, this vibrant single malt offers a 'honeyed texture layered with custard, cinnamon, and nutmeg, before a long, smoky barley-driven finish'.

Ichiro's Malt Chichibu The London Edition 2025 is the eighth edition of this series, created exclusively



for the UK. This year's release is a blend of 10 casks of Japanese single malt whisky, including two casks of heavily peated spirit. The expression offers a more oak-driven character with integrated peat smoke, notes of mandarin, ginger, vanilla custard, candied citrus, dark chocolate, and brown sugar, finishing with dried fruits and warming spice.

The striking artwork is inspired by the timeless Musha-e where warriors straddle the boundary between myth and reality.

• specialitybrands.com

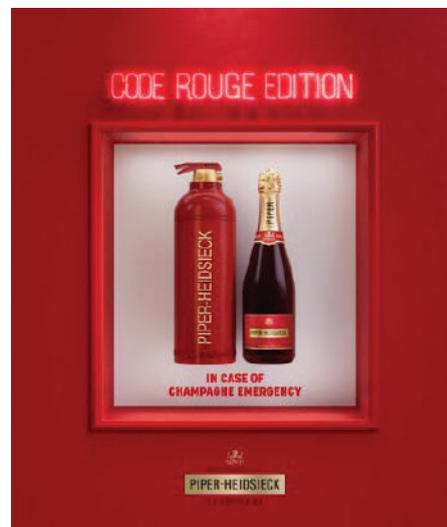
Piper-Heidsieck debuts Code Rouge Edition

Encased in a sculptural red-and-gold package inspired by a vintage fire extinguisher, Code Rouge's eye-catching case design comes emblazoned with the invitation: "In case of Champagne emergency, break open case."

Crafted from a blend of Pinot Noir, Meunier, and Chardonnay grapes sourced from over 100 crus across Champagne, this multi-vintage cuvée has bright notes of pear, white peach, citrus, and orange blossom are layered with toasted bread, almonds, and mint.

"This is Piper-Heidsieck at its boldest," said Stéphane Decaux, CEO of Piper-Heidsieck. "Piper-Heidsieck lights up life's celebrations with joy. This uniquely designed set is not just a gift, it becomes a call to celebrate boldly, transforming any occasion into a thrilling experience."

• piper-heidsieck.com



Monkey 47 Distiller's Cut 2025

Fleur de Sel is the 15th edition of Monkey 47 Distiller's Cut, an annual release from Monkey 47 which adds an additional botanical to the 47 used in its flagship offering.

The new 48th botanical used are hand-harvested sea-salt crystals from the pale-pink salt marshes of Camargue in the south of France.

• monkey47.com



drinkers love to explore bold flavours and unforgettable experiences. That's why the Sweet Vintage Cider range continues to deliver something more for cider fans – combining our iconic refreshment with a higher strength ABV, for a taste experience that captures the spirit of Kopparberg in every sip."

• kopparberg.co.uk



CAMRA Club of the Year finalists announced

The top four finalists in the CAMRA Club of the Year competition, run in association with Club Mirror, were announced at November's Club Awards, held at the Athena in Leicester.

Club Mirror MD Sean Ferris said: "It is our privilege to work with CAMRA and to be part of the ultimate judging of the final four clubs as they race towards the treasured title, the CAMRA Club of the Year."

Phil Gregg, CAMRA Club of the Year Co-ordinator said: "These fantastic finalists sum up everything that is great about the club scene: Friendly and inclusive spaces with top-quality cask beer, real cider and perry. I do not envy those judging the overall winner, as the quality of candidates for the Club of the Year competition seems to get better each and every year!"

Appleton Thorn Village Hall, Cheshire

Previously an old school, the building dates back to the 1880s and was converted into a club in 1978 when a group of villagers voiced a need for a central meeting place in the village. It is now the heart of the Appleton community. The club has won overall Club of the Year four times and boasts a wide range of cask beers from independent brewers, plus real ciders and perries.

Billingham Catholic Club, County Durham

The club is renowned for hosting weekly band nights and supporting the local live music scene. Featuring in the Good Beer Guide for almost 20 years, the club has gained a reputation for its ever-changing cask beer line-up, serving 150 different beers annually. The club stages regular beer festivals throughout the year, in particular the annual garden party in August, which raises



money for local charities.

Orpington Liberal Club, London

Run by a committee of cask beer enthusiasts, the club has a particular focus on local brewers and micro-breweries, with up to five cask beers available, including a stout or porter and a changing range of real ciders and perries. Live music is a key element of the club, hosting the Orpington Jazz Club. The club runs beer festivals twice per year and frequent "Meet the Brewer" evenings.

Cheltenham Motor Club, Gloucestershire

Formed in 1906, this friendly and welcoming club has won the overall Club of the Year three times. The bar is decorated with motoring paraphernalia and has six cask beers on tap and at least one cider plus a range of bottled Belgian beers. The club hosts local darts and pool teams plus an annual beer festival, along with regular "Meet the Brewer" and takeover evenings.

The overall winner will be announced in early 2026.

• clubawards.co.uk

T&R Theakston and Swinkels UK announce nationwide partnership

A new nationwide on trade sales partnership between T&R Theakston and Swinkels UK has been announced, bringing together over 500 years of combined brewing heritage.

The collaboration unites the beer portfolios of two independent, family-owned breweries.

Under the new partnership, Theakston will represent Swinkels' portfolio in the UK on-trade, expanding reach across both free trade and national accounts. Alongside Theakston's cask and keg beers – including Old Peculier and Theakston Best Bitter – customers will now have access to Swinkels' distinctive international range:

- Fruitage by Rodenbach
- Bavaria Pilsner
- La Trappe Trappist beers
- Uiltje Brewing's Juicy Lucy NEIPAT

Simon Theakston, Chairman, T&R Theakston, said: "Our portfolios perfectly complement each other, and this partnership enables us to offer a broader, more diverse selection to our customers while growing our national footprint together.

"As two independent, family-run brewers, we



Pictured left to right: William Theakston, Gijs Swinkels, Simon Holland, Richard Bradbury, Simon Theakston DL, Huub in der Rieden

share the same approach to quality, service and long-term commitment. Together we will strengthen our UK presence and deliver more value to customers."

Gijs Swinkels, Royal Swinkels, said: "Our portfolios perfectly complement each other, and this partnership enables us to offer a broader, more diverse selection to our customers while growing our national footprint together."

• theakstons.co.uk

Merrychef gains EcoVadis accreditation for sustainability

Manufacturer of high speed ovens, Merrychef®, a Welbilt brand, has announced its accreditation of a bronze medal in its first assessment from EcoVadis, an independent global leader in business sustainability assessments.

Colin Lacey, Merrychef® Managing Director, said: "Achieving the Bronze Medal from EcoVadis places Merrychef in the top 35% of all companies assessed globally and in the top 17% of companies rated within the Manufacture of Special-Purpose Machinery industry – an incredibly impressive achievement for our business.

"Our Director of Total Quality & Business Excellence, David Sellars, along with his team have worked incredibly hard to achieve this medal and my thanks go to them for their dedication. In recognition of our commitment to embed sustainability throughout all parts of our business, we have recently appointed an Environmental & Sustainability Manager, Gavin Scott, to further focus our efforts."

The EcoVadis appraisal evaluates 21 sustainability criteria across four core themes: Environment, Labour & Human Rights, Ethics and Sustainable Procurement. Following a comprehensive assessment aligned with international standards such as the UN Global Compact, the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards and the ISO 26000 standard, the Bronze medal rating provides an evidenced-based independent analysis of Merrychef's current performance and provides an actionable roadmap for continuous improvement.

• merrychef.com

Velvet Fig returns in limited edition

Kings Barns Distillery has launched Velvet Fig 12 Year Old in the UK, with the EU and the rest of the world following this month.

Kirsty Mackinnon said:

"Velvet Fig has always had a loyal following, so bringing it back as a very limited 12 year old release felt like the right move, something crafted for those who appreciate single malts artfully blended, shaped by thoughtful cask selection, and defined by a rich sherry-led profile. This edition brings added maturity and depth, while still holding onto the character people remember.

"I'm looking forward to seeing how it builds as we head towards the releases in other markets early next year."

• kingsbarnsdistillery.com



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Timperley Conservative and Social Club Reopens After Major Refurbishment



The Timperley Conservative and Social Club in Altrincham has reopened in style following an extensive refurbishment carried out over the summer months. Members were thrilled to return to a greatly refreshed and modernised Club, transformed through a series of major improvement works.

The renovation included full plastering, brand new flooring, three bespoke bar installations and completely updated seating. The result is a brighter, more welcoming and contemporary environment designed to enhance

members' enjoyment for years to come.

The reopening night celebrated both the completion of the works and the spirit of the Club, with a lively 1980s-themed event. Members turned out in force, filling the Club to capacity and enjoying some of the biggest hits of the decade as they explored the newly refurbished space.

The Committee extends a huge thank you to Steward and Bar Manager William Kellock and the bar team for delivering outstanding service throughout



the opening night celebrations. Appreciation is also given to Sale Excelsior Working Men's Club for generously accommodating Timperley's members during the closure period.

With its refreshed look and renewed energy, the Timperley Conservative and Social Club is well and truly back, ready for an exciting new chapter.

Roose Sports and Social Conservative Club Supports Local Under-8s Football Team



Roose Sports and Social Conservative Club in Barrow-in-Furness has proudly stepped forward to support local grassroots sport by sponsoring Walney Island Under-8s Blues football team.

With the colder months approaching, the Club has provided the young players with high-

quality, warm coats to ensure they stay comfortable and protected throughout the winter season. The gesture has been warmly welcomed by the team.

Walney Island Under-8s Blues shared their appreciation, saying, "A massive thank you to the Club for their kind and generous sponsorship.

We really appreciate it and look forward to events at the Club."

Roose Sports and Social Conservative Club takes great pride in supporting local sportspeople and community groups, and hopes the new coats will help the young players stay warm, dry and ready to enjoy their football all season long.



Penketh and Great Sankey Conservative Club Becomes New Home for Independent Street Markets

Penketh and Great Sankey Conservative Club in Warrington, fondly known as the Conny Club, has proudly become the new home of the popular Independent Street markets.

The Club's car park was transformed into a bustling marketplace as around 60 independent stallholders set up for the day, offering a wide range of goods and produce. Despite the weather, the rain did nothing to dampen spirits, with hundreds of visitors turning out to support local traders.

Inside the Club, families enjoyed face painting and children's entertainment, ensuring there was something for everyone throughout the day.

The Club extends its thanks to St Joseph's Church for providing additional parking facilities, and to Sharon, Michelle and the entire Club team for organising such a



successful event. Thanks to its popularity, the Independent Street market is now set to become a regular feature at the Conny Club, strengthening its role at the heart of the local community.



Haydock Conservative Club Updates

The Club was saddened recently by the loss of two highly respected and long-standing members whose contributions and presence will be deeply missed.

Michael Henaff, Club President, passed away after many years of dedicated service. A long-standing member, Michael previously served as the Club's Treasurer, where his financial expertise greatly benefited the Club. Four years ago he took on the role of President, a position in which he continued to serve with

commitment and distinction. He is fondly remembered by all who knew him.

The Club also bids farewell to its oldest member, Gerald Anders, who has passed away at the remarkable age of 103. A war veteran who served in Germany, Italy and Africa, Gerald remained an active presence at the Club well into his later years. He was still attending dance socials until September, only stepping back when his health began to decline after an impressive 78 years of dancing.

Amid recent sadness, the Club also celebrates some uplifting news thanks to the exceptional efforts of Stewardess Sheena Round, whose dedication to charitable causes continues to inspire members.

In 2023 Sheena raised an impressive £1,000 for St Helens Hospital's Lilac Centre cancer charity. This year she set herself an even greater challenge by taking part in Willowbrook Hospice's annual Strictly-themed charity event. Paired with an experienced dancer and a complete novice herself, Sheena delivered a fantastic performance and exceeded all expectations by raising £1,650 on her own.

As a thank-you to the membership for their support, including raffle ticket purchases and donations, Sheena performed a full run-through of her dance



routine at the Club's social evening a few days before the competition. Staff, friends and family were there to cheer her on at the main event, where combined efforts contributed to an outstanding overall total of £56,700 raised for Willowbrook Hospice.

The Club is proud to recognise Sheena's continued commitment to supporting local charities and the community.

Pages From The Past

In this month's Pages From The Past we go back to December 1925 for an article on the Art of Public Speaking.

The article highlights several items that Club Committees holding AGMs may find familiar such as dealing with casual persistent and interruptions and dealing with opposition!

Whilst the advice was given over 100 years ago it still makes just as much sense today and shows that when dealing with Clubs some advice is timeless.



THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING.

IV.—Interruptions and Questions.

[By G. E. M. WALKER.]

Whether it is wise to draw, or provoke, opposition depends on the style and capacity of the speaker, and can be learnt only by experience. Some people thrive on it. Others, particularly beginners, are apt to lose their heads, or at least to become over-nervous. It is almost invariably the case that a courteous, and argumentative, speaker has an easier time than an assertive and abusive one. The moral is obvious. This does not mean that hard-hitting is always to be deprecated. The average audience respects a speaker who has the courage of his convictions, so long as he fights fairly and hits above the belt.

How to Deal with Opposition.

The beginner should remember, in dealing with opposition, that the speaker nearly always has the advantage. Except in a definitely hostile and rowdy meeting the majority of the audience are ready to hear him rather than his opponents, and the more numerous and unfair the latter may be, the more will sympathy be with him. The innate sportsmanship and love of fair play of the average Briton is the speaker's greatest ally in time of trouble: let him see that he keeps it always on his side. The speaker also has the advantage of elevation, and therefore of vocal carrying-power. He should have the additional asset of thorough knowledge of his subject, such as is not possessed by the average interrupter. Therefore, the first injunction to be remembered by the speaker, whether the opposition be slight or considerable, is "*Don't get rattled.*" The controversialist who keeps both head and temper has an advantage not lightly to be thrown away.

Reply Courteously to Questions.

Next, do not appear to resent questions or opposition. There are two sides to every case, and those who give public expression to their own views have conferred immediately the right of objection on those who disagree. Always remember that every reasonable question or interruption deserves a courteous and considered reply, and that even if your opponent is neither courteous nor fair you do no harm in the eyes of your other hearers by giving him the same treatment as if he had been a model of logic and deportment.

In this respect it is well worth while to remember that in dealing with opponents, humour is a dangerous weapon and sarcasm is to be shunned as the plague. Make your audience, if possible, laugh *with* you, but bear in mind that there is no art more difficult. Do not make cheap scores, or cause your opponent to look ridiculous. The first will leave your hearers unsatisfied; the second will rankle and leave the opponent confirmed in his view, and perhaps with a bitterness which previously was absent.

Casual and Persistent Interruptions.

Whether to deal at once with interjections during a sentence or an argument is very debatable: it depends so much on circumstances, especially on whether a reply will interrupt or assist the development of the speaker's case. A casual interruption is usually best left alone, unless it can be dealt with crisply, and at once. The persistent interrupter may need to be handled thoroughly and at length. In that event bear carefully in mind the point at which you turned aside to deal with your enemy, so that you can pick up your case where you dropped it. Afterwards always remember to recall to the minds of your hearers the point that was being made before the digression.

In dealing with questions—which should never be taken until the end of a speech, except as a special concession on agreed terms—two points should be remembered. The first is, do not assume that every question is hostile. However clumsily a question may be put, try to get at what is in the

mind of the questioner. Repeat his question word for word, if possible, then ask if the meaning is what you take it to be. Often it will be found that a friendly questioner was "bowling for sixes," presenting a problem which would help the speaker to prove his case. *Never misrepresent or distort a question, but give it the same fair play that you expect for your own speech.*

Secondly, and this is the golden rule—don't hedge! If a question hits a weakness of the case as presented by the speaker, ask for information which is not possessed, or contains a statement that cannot be refuted, never mind: stand up to it. Don't be afraid even to give your opponent credit for having scored, especially if you are able to give him blow for blow. A fair audience enjoys a battle of wits and appreciates chivalrous and honest controversy. Therefore, don't twist, or avoid an awkward issue; you only depreciate your own case and transfer the esteem of your hearers from yourself to your opponent by so doing. If you don't know of a fact which is asserted against you, or cannot give information that is asked for, say so, whatever saving clauses may be added. If you are completely "stumped" (which may be a sign of insufficient study and preparation) ask your questioner to give his name and address, privately if need be, that you may obtain the necessary information from Headquarters and send it to him. That will be a far more effective proof of the good faith for which audiences look, than any attempt to hedge and shuffle.

Give Opponents Credit for Good Faith.

Lastly, remember that no controversy can be properly carried on in a democratic state, if opponents are not given credit for honesty and sincerity of purpose. No matter how much you may abhor their views, never forget that this is a free country where the only forms of controversy that are forbidden are sedition and blasphemy, and that it is better that the opinions you do not like should have free expression than that they should be driven underground. Give your opponent credit for good faith, and show that you do so. Only if you know him to be insincere, or guilty of a deliberate attempt to mislead or deceive your hearers, are you entitled to handle him severely. These are the only circumstances in which it is permissible to use personalities, and in such a case it is a public duty to deal faithfully with anyone who so abuses the right of free speech.

A final hint may be given; it is usually unwise to ask an audience questions; *put* questions, if you like, but don't *ask* them. In face of opposition, bear in mind that some of the hearers are probably looking for an opening, and if you have given it to them by asking something, you have no just cause for complaint if a reply is made and if it happens to land you in difficulties. Some speakers are artists in putting questions to which they know answers with which they are able to deal, but only with experience and full knowledge of the subject is it justifiable to take such a risk.

(To be continued.)

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Trusteeship

The ACC Trusteeship Service is a free facility offered by the ACC. The transfer of Trusteeship to the ACC has increasingly become popular amongst unincorporated clubs and there are two main benefits for the Club. The first is that the ACC will pay for all legal expenses involved with the transfer of Trusteeship. The second is that the Association's financial and legal resources are such that the Club's position will be greatly strengthened when negotiating loans or defending itself against legal action taken by a third party.

The ACC do not become involved with the day to day business of any Club for which we act as Trustee. The Club will continue to be able to call upon the ACC for advice on any matter without needing to make reference to our Trusteeship. We will only act on behalf of the Club in accordance with the lawful instructions of the Committee and Members. The Club Committee will therefore continue to run the Club's affairs and will only refer matters to the ACC as and when they consider it appropriate to do so



Sale and Leaseback

Since launching the ACC Sale and Leaseback service, over 150 Clubs have entered into this arrangement with the ACC.

Under what circumstances would a Sale and Leaseback be appropriate? The most successful examples of ACC Sale and Leasebacks are Clubs which have a dedicated Committee and Membership and want to secure their Club's future. By unlocking the Club's freehold, Clubs can be provided the means of repaying debt, often undertaking refurbishments and providing a significant cash sum. The rent payable to the ACC following the completion of a Sale and Leaseback can often be less than a Club was paying for servicing debt.

Documentation Available Free Of Charge

ACC Room Hire Agreement - The room hire agreement is designed to be completed at the time a booking and includes space for a deposit to be taken to secure the room is applicable.

ACC Catering Franchise Pack - The ACC Catering Franchise pack can be used by Clubs which have a franchisee who uses the Club's facilities to prepare and serve food within the Club. The Franchisee Contract permits the Committee to decide if the franchisee shall pay a set fee per month to the Club for use of the Club's facilities, shall pay to the Club a percentage of the profits from the sale of food or that a combination of both methods of remuneration shall be utilised.

Health and Safety and Risk Assessment Documentation - The ACC has extensive documentation to assist a Club in creating a Health and Safety policy and conducting regular risk assessments. This documentation is available free of charge. Examples include template health and safety documentation, risk assessment forms and practical advice on completing a Club risk assessment and first aid information.

Candidates for Admission Sheets - The admission sheets can be posted on the Club's Notice Board to detail prospective new Members and have spaces for: Date, Candidate Name, Address, Occupation, Proposer, Seconder.

To obtain any of the documentation packages please email charles@toryclubs.co.uk or phone 0207 222 0843. To enquire about any of the ACC's financial assistance packages please email assistance@toryclubs.co.uk or phone 0207 222 0843.