

CONSERVATIVE CLUBS MAGAZINE



Jury 2026 75p



Cheers – ACC 2026 AGM Report

July 2026
75p



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Message From Chief Executive

I hope all Clubs are enjoying the summer months. As always, I am conscious that trading conditions vary enormously across our Association. One of the unique aspects of the ACC is that no two Clubs are ever quite the same. For some Clubs, summer presents a lull in trading, a time when local sports leagues take a break and Members are away on holiday. For others, summer is the key trading season, with outdoor space, festivals, barbecues and hopefully fine weather all helping to boost trade.

As I write this, the World Cup is ongoing and hopefully assisting the trading position of many Clubs, even as they navigate the licensing requirements surrounding group games and the generally tricky kick-off times for some matches. For many Clubs, major sporting events remain an important way of encouraging Members and guests through the door, although each Committee will, of course, know best what works for its own Club and its own membership.

What unites all Clubs, however, is the need to continually adapt. The hospitality sector remains under significant pressure. Employment costs continue to rise, regulation shows little sign of slowing down

and margins remain tight. Yet despite these challenges, I continue to be encouraged by the determination and ingenuity displayed by Club Committees across the country.

Successful Clubs tend to have several things in common. They remain visible within their communities, they communicate regularly with Members and potential Members, and they give people a reason to visit. We are all competing in an increasingly crowded entertainment and leisure market. Clubs must therefore ensure they are offering a compelling reason for people to come through the door and, equally importantly, a reason to return.

As I remarked at the AGM, the Clubs that will succeed in the future will be those able to evolve whilst retaining their identity, principles and soul. If you stand for nothing, you'll fall for anything.

I am pleased to confirm that the date has now been set for our 2027 AGM, which will take place on 22nd May 2027 at the Carlton Club. I do hope Clubs will put this date in their diaries and endeavour to join us for what is always a memorable and interesting day.

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Annual General Meeting Report

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATIVE CLUBS LIMITED HELD ON 16th MAY 2026 AT THE CARLTON CLUB, 69 ST JAMES'S STREET, LONDON.

The Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman, The Lord Smith of Hindhead CBE, welcomed guests and representatives to the 132nd Annual General Meeting of the Association of Conservative Clubs.

The Chairman asked the meeting to stand for a moment's silence in memory of all colleagues who had passed away during the past year.

Chairman's Report on the work of the Association

The Chairman said it was a great pleasure to report on the work of the Association of Conservative Clubs for the past year and that it was always satisfying to follow a financial report showing that the ACC has strengthened its financial position and was investing in the continuation of our Conservative, Constitutional and Unionist Clubs.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Hospitality Industry was facing a crisis that was the worst it had ever experienced and astonishingly even worse than it had experienced during the Covid Pandemic and Lockdown. We had all seen and read the daily articles in the press and coverage in the media about the plight of Pubs with a record estimate of two establishments closing every day this year. And that statistic did not include clubs, bars or other outlets as there were no official figures currently available.

Cripplingly unfair rating increases, with eye watering multipliers, would make many establishments unsustainable over the next two to three years. Combined with increases in wages, food inflation and relentless red tape, the current onslaught had made the prospect of working and investing in the Industry, or continuing to

work or invest in the Industry, unattractive. Except for the ACC, which continued to invest in its Member Clubs, continued to assist its Member Clubs in as many areas as possible, and continued to recognise the objects for which it was originally formed.

The Chairman went on to say that it was not all about top-down government policies that had caused our Industry's problems, that was too easy and argument, too easy a blame game. The fact was that people were socialising in different ways today than they did in the past, particularly young people. Gone were the days when everyone met for a drink after work, or on a date, or four of five nights a week because that's what 'everyone did'. Not least, how could anyone afford to do so.

The Chairman said that gradually over a number of years, the UK had become a nation of Temperance. Navigating a non-drinking culture—whether by choice, health, or lifestyle—was becoming increasingly common. Driven by the rise of mindful drinking, sober-social scenes, and some excellent alcohol-free alternatives, it was easier than ever to build a social lifestyle without alcohol.

And yet, the Chairman



Lord Smith of Hindhead CBE

commented, the three most popular TV soaps, Eastenders, Coronation Street and Emmerdale, all had one thing in common. Their communities all centred around a Pub...The Queen Vic, The Rover's Return and the Woolpack. Every week...in and out of the Pub. At what point, he said, would the script writers of all three programmes understand that the most unbelievable storyline they continued to pedal, was that in each of these soaps...there was a viable pub!

The Chairman said that Conservative Clubs had always been vital community hubs and there had been many good news stories last year from across the country covering charitable donations and other community activities which were published in our monthly magazine. He extended his thanks to the ACC's national suppliers and recommended companies;

Dransfields for the excellent service which they provided to their many ACC customers; our insurance providers, 'Club Insure' whose continued professional approach to ACC Clubs was much appreciated and to K&M Club Refurbishment, all of whom the ACC were pleased to continue to endorse.

Finally, the Chairman offered his grateful thanks to our ACC Officers and Council Members and all the ACC staff for their loyalty and commitment to the Association of Conservative Clubs. In particular, the Chairman thanked Jeff Simpson, who was stepping down from the Council having completed 24 years of service. The Chairman presented Mr Simpson with a bottle of House of Lords 'Vintage Champagne' as a token of his gratitude. The Chairman concluded by saying that it was a privilege to serve the Association as its Chairman.



Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2025



Mr Thomas Leeming

The Chairman called upon Mr Thomas Leeming, Hon Treasurer of the ACC and Hon Secretary of the Conservative National Property Advisory Committee, to propose that the Statement of Accounts be received.

Mr Leeming had pleasure in reporting that the income and expenditure account for the year ended 31st December 2025 showed a surplus of £4.75 million, another strong result enabling the continued support of Clubs.

During the year £2.1 million of new loans were made available to support clubs, with £805,000 being repaid from the total loan book. The amount of loans to Member Clubs at the year-end increased to £5.3 million. Interest on loans stood at £265,000.

The Accounts also showed rental income from the sale and leaseback of Club properties had decreased slightly to £1.5 million in 2025.

The ACC held investment property, the majority of which were sale and leaseback investments, with a carrying value of over £38.8 million, comprised of club properties and some ancillary land, commercial and residential property.

The company had carried out its annual exercise of reviewing the valuation of its property portfolio,

including commissioning a sample of reports from its surveyors. Following this review, no material valuation adjustments had been made. It continued to be the company's policy not to revalue upwards in anticipation of potential 'development' gains.

Income from the sale of IA Tickets has decreased to £34,000. Commission income had remained stable at £61,000. Costs relating to the property business had increased significantly to £428,000. The principal increase was due to repair obligations at Holyhead.

Interest paid to depositors increased sharply from £317,000 to £321,000. The total Club deposits held remained steady during the year. A fixed interest rate of 2.75% had been payable on deposits from 1st January 2026.

The year end result is that the total net assets of the Association of Conservative Clubs stood at £43,458,973.

Mr Leeming thanked the Accountant and Auditor Andrew Brooker of Begbies Chartered Accountants and concluded by saying that it gave him great pleasure to, once again, propose that the accounts as set out be received by the Annual General Meeting. The proposal to receive the Accounts was seconded and carried unanimously.



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The Chief Executive's Report

In introducing Charles Littlewood to present his report, the Chairman commented that the CEO had joined the ACC in 2009 and was therefore in his 17th year with the Association. Charles continued to help and advise Clubs on the complexities of Licensing, Employment, Trust, Mutual Society, Gambling Law and general Club Management, in addition to overseeing the ACC's significant and extensive property holdings. Charles' skill in dealing with these different matters, often all of them in one day, was matched only by his patience in having to communicate them with Club Officers and Committees, for whom such matters were understandably often new and challenging.

The Chief Executive thanked the Chairman and noted that he was delivering his second annual report to the Association's AGM, once again reflecting on both the challenges and opportunities facing member clubs.

The Chief Executive began by noting that, when addressing the AGM the previous year, he had spoken about the strong legacy he had inherited from his predecessors and the considerable progress made over many years. He was pleased that this legacy continued to place the Association in a strong position to support member clubs for many years to come.

Whilst no two clubs were identical, many of the issues faced by clubs were familiar. Financial pressures, governance concerns, employment disputes and questions about long-term direction remained common themes. He explained that the Association's role was not only to help clubs resolve difficulties when they arose, but increasingly to help prevent problems developing in the first place.

Despite the challenges, he remained encouraged by what he had seen across the Association. Many clubs had recognised that standing still was not an option and had instead chosen to innovate, refurbish and adapt to remain relevant within an increasingly competitive hospitality sector.

The Chief Executive acknowledged that the headwinds facing hospitality had not diminished over the past year. Rising costs, tight margins and an increasingly complex regulatory

environment continued to place significant pressure on clubs. However, he emphasised that this was not the whole story.

Across the Association there were numerous examples of clubs that were not simply surviving but thriving. Committees had taken difficult decisions, reviewed their operations, invested in their premises and broadened their appeal. Many had successfully improved their facilities and strengthened their links with local communities.

He highlighted the important role played by the Association's lending and sale and leaseback programmes in supporting these developments. With significant funds currently deployed through loans to member clubs and many millions of pounds invested in club properties, the Association continued to provide clubs with opportunities to invest, modernise and secure their futures.

Nevertheless, he stressed that the long-term future of any club ultimately rested with its members and committee. The Association could provide support and assistance, but success depended upon local people choosing to support, use and help shape their club. Recruiting volunteers and committee members remained a particular challenge for many clubs.

Turning to the wider operating environment, the Chief Executive noted that clubs continued to face increasing employment costs, ongoing pressure from business rates and a growing number of regulatory requirements. Whilst individual changes might appear manageable in isolation, collectively they imposed a significant burden on organisations often operating with very limited margins.

He also expressed concern that policymakers did not always fully appreciate the practical realities facing clubs and similar venues. Consultations and regulatory proposals were often well-intentioned but sometimes failed to reflect the challenges faced by community-based hospitality businesses. The cumulative effect was that well-run clubs increasingly found themselves navigating a growing web of administration, compliance obligations and costs.

He observed that, at times, it could feel as though the

Government expected small businesses to have a policy for everything except how to run a good and successful business.

He suggested that this was an obvious consequence of career Labour politicians who simply did not understand that, once a month, a business had to find the money from somewhere to pay its employees. He remarked that many Labour MPs had never served in an organisation that did not have seemingly endless funds available from the taxpayer and argued that the possibility of a bank account running empty was not a reality they were accustomed to confronting.

In his view, this helped explain why additional regulatory and compliance requirements were often imposed without sufficient appreciation of the practical consequences for clubs and other small hospitality businesses.

Despite these challenges, he argued that clubs continued to perform an important and often undervalued role within their communities. As many pubs and other venues had disappeared, clubs frequently remained as vital places where people could meet, socialise and maintain community connections.

He said that a club's role within its local community was not something that could always be measured in statistics, but it remained very real nonetheless. Clubs provided far more than somewhere to eat or drink. They offered places where people could organise, socialise and belong, and in many areas had become one of the last remaining community hubs. Such institutions deserved to be supported rather than regulated out of existence.

Looking to the future, the Chief Executive acknowledged the ongoing challenge of ensuring clubs remained relevant to younger generations whose expectations and habits might differ from those of previous members. However, he stressed that this was not a challenge unique to clubs but one faced by the hospitality industry as a whole.

He suggested that the clubs most likely to succeed in the future would be those able to evolve whilst retaining their identity, principles and soul. As the old saying goes, he remarked, "if you stand for nothing, you'll fall for anything".

History, character and values remained important assets. He cautioned against the notion that clubs should abandon their traditions in pursuit of becoming generic hospitality venues. Whilst clubs must continue to adapt and evolve, they should not discard the qualities that made them distinctive within their communities.

He noted that he frequently encountered clubs which felt they needed to throw everything away in order to attract younger people. However, he questioned whether becoming indistinguishable from other struggling hospitality businesses was really the answer. The challenge, he suggested, was to strike the right balance between respecting heritage and embracing change, adapting where necessary whilst preserving the qualities that made clubs unique. He is unsure that the answer is to move to a closer operation model currently serving the ten other licensed premises which closed in the past week. At some point, a Club's inherent uniqueness might be the only thing that sets them apart from many other struggling hospitality businesses.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Association would continue to support clubs through financial assistance, property initiatives and practical advice across the wide range of issues faced by committees. The Association would also continue to work with others across the sector to promote a more proportionate and better-informed approach to regulation.

Concluding his report, he said that, whilst the operating environment remained challenging, he continued to be encouraged by the determination, ingenuity and commitment displayed by those running clubs throughout the Association.

He thanked the ACC team for their professionalism and hard work throughout the year, together with the Council for its continued support and guidance. He also expressed his gratitude to member clubs, whose efforts and commitment made the Association possible.

The Chief Executive concluded by saying that it remained both a privilege and an honour to serve as Chief Executive of the Association.

Resolution to the Party Leader



The Rt. Hon Kemi Badenock MP

“That this Annual General Meeting of The Association of Conservative Clubs sends The Rt. Hon Kemi Badenock MP, the Leader of the Conservative & Unionist Party, its continued support and pledges the

Association’s ongoing assistance to the Party.”

In a punchy and forthright speech, the Chairman proposed the Resolution which was carried by acclamation.



Guest Speaker

The Chairman said it was a great pleasure to introduce Mr Andrew Pierce. With a career spanning several decades at the heart of Fleet Street and television broadcasting, Andrew had become one of the most recognizable and influential voices in British journalism. As a consultant editor for the Daily Mail and a leading

presenter on GB News, he was known for his fearless commentary, insider political knowledge, and his ability to spark lively debate. Whether he was dissecting the latest from No. 10 or sharing insights into the Royal Family, Andrew brought a unique blend of authority and humour to every topic he tackled.

Mr Andrew Pierce



Annual General Meeting Report



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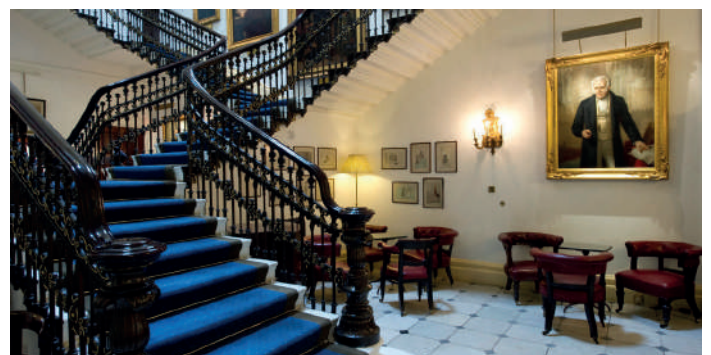
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All proceeds from the Conservative Lottery go to the National Conservative Draws Society (NCDS), which although being independent of
the Conservative Party, donates all profits to the Party or Conservative candidates.

Date and Place of the AGM for 2027

The Chairman announced that the provisional date of the AGM was
Saturday 22nd May 2027 and that the Carlton Club had been booked to host
the meeting.



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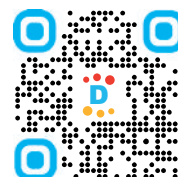
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Industry Insights

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.

Social occasions sustain spend and increased dwell time, says report

New insights from research company The Oxford Partnership suggest that UK consumers remain highly engaged with clubs and hospitality occasions, with longer visits and elevated spend continuing to support trading across the sector.

Tradings data indicates that while operators continue to face a challenging economic backdrop, consumer appetite for social occasions remains resilient.

Venue occupancy levels increased to 65.5%, up +3.4 percentage points year on year, while average dwell time rose sharply to 157 minutes, an increase of 11 minutes compared with the same period last year. Spend per head also remained elevated at £26.89.

Rising spend should be viewed in context, however, warns the company. Continued price inflation and operators passing through higher costs mean stronger spend figures do not necessarily translate into improved profitability, particularly where drinks volumes remain under pressure.

In terms of drinks categories, Stout once again emerged as the strongest performer, growing +7.6% on a moving annual basis, while World Lager continued to outperform with growth of +3.5%. In contrast, more traditional volume-led categories remained under pressure, with Core Lager declining -6.0%.

Alison Jordan, CEO of The Oxford Partnership, said: "The market continues to demonstrate resilience, but resilience now looks different to what we may historically have expected. Consumers are still making time for hospitality and social occasions remain important, but we're increasingly seeing people engage differently once



they are there.

"People are staying longer, venues remain busy and spend levels are holding up well. However, higher spend does not automatically mean stronger returns for operators. Cost pressures remain significant and consumers are often paying more while drinking less, creating a more complex trading envi-

ronment than headline figures alone might suggest."

With summer now here, venues should look to warmer weather and major occasions to help convert strong consumer engagement into stronger drinks performance in the months ahead, she advises.

• **Figures based on April trading data from oxford-partnership.com**

Soccer Aid 2026 raises over £16m for UNICEF

Soccer Aid for UNICEF 2026 has raised a staggering £16,462,353 to support UNICEF's work for children worldwide, helping children to grow up safe, healthy and able to play.

The special 20th anniversary match took place in front of over 60,000 fans at a sell-out London Stadium, bringing together football legends and stars from entertainment, sport and culture for the world's biggest celebrity football match.

Co-founded by UNICEF UK Ambassador Robbie Williams in 2006, Soccer Aid for UNICEF has raised over £137 million since its inception.

England secured a 3–2 victory against the World XI to reclaim the title, with standout goals from Jermaine Defoe and Soccer Aid debutant Damson Idris.

Hollywood stars Tom Hanks and Tim Allen kicked off the game, delivering the match ball onto the pitch.

• socceraid.org.uk





Brewers and Cider makers are recognised at International Awards

The International Brewing & Cider Awards have recognised Trophy winners at an Awards ceremony in London, applauding the finest beers and ciders from across this year's Gold Medal winners.

The Trophy judging represents the final stage of the competition, with judges selecting the overall winners from products already awarded Gold Medals in their respective classes.

This year's Trophy winners include entries from England, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, Japan, Mexico, Belgium, Germany, Canada and the USA, underlining the truly international reputation of the Awards.

Spring Valley Brewery was named Best Brewery, following its success with Juicy Hop, which also

won The International Keg Ale Competition Trophy. Bauman's Cider was named Best Cider Mill, with Endless Harvest also taking The International Classic Cider Competition Trophy.

Ruth Evans, Director of the International Brewing & Cider Awards, said: "The Trophy Winners represent the very highest standard of brewing and cider making from this year's competition. Each has already achieved Gold Medal status, so to be selected as a Trophy Winner is a remarkable achievement. These awards are judged by industry professionals and are recognised around the world as a true mark of excellence."

• brewingawards.org

Bristol Distillery named Best New English Distillery

Circumstance Distillery has been awarded Best New English Distillery at the English Whisky Awards, recognising its rapid rise as one of the most innovative new producers in the UK whisky landscape.

The award, announced by the English Whisky Awards, celebrates excellence across England's whisky industry and highlights distilleries demonstrating outstanding quality, innovation, and contribution to the category.

Circumstance Distillery is widely regarded as part of a new generation redefining English whisky. Based in Bristol, it is believed to be the first distillery to produce whisky in the city in more than 80 years, marking a revival of a long-dormant local whisky tradition and helping re-establish Bristol as a meaningful location on the UK spirits map.

Since its founding, the distillery has developed a reputation for its "flavour-first" philosophy, focusing on experimentation across every stage of production – from organic grain selection and fermentation techniques through to yeast expression and cask maturation.

Drawing inspiration from craft brewing, Circumstance prioritises process-led innovation and small-batch experimentation, exploring how early production decisions shape flavour long before maturation.

• circumstancedistillery.com

Peculier collaboration of two Yorkshire breweries

T&R Theakston and Rooster's Brewing Co. have come together for a special collaboration to create Peculier Assassin — a gluten free, new beer that fuses the legendary character of Old Peculier with the hop-charged attitude of Baby-Faced Assassin.

The limited-edition 5.4% ABV debuts at Theakston's Visitor Centre pub, The Black Bull in Paradise, and Rooster's Taproom in Harrogate, before rolling out to clubs, pubs and bars across the UK.

The connection between the breweries stretches back decades, with Rooster's Chairman Ian Fozard involved in the 1980s CAMRA campaign that supported Theakston's return to independent ownership. Years later, the two Yorkshire breweries have come together for a collaboration that blends Theakston's renowned cask ale heritage with Rooster's pioneering use of American hops.

Theakston has brewed the cask version of the beer, while Rooster's has produced the keg and can releases.

• theakston.co.uk • roosters.co.uk



The full list of 2026 Trophy Winners is:		
Trophy	Winner	Product
The International Small Pack Lager Competition	Heineken Beverages SA (Pty) Ltd	Windhoek Lager
The International Small Pack Ale Competition	Swannay Brewery	You Don't Know What You Don't Know
The International Keg Lager Competition	Robinsons Brewery	Helles
The International Keg Ale Competition	Spring Valley Brewery	Juicy Hop
The International Non & Low Alcohol Competition	ABI	Modelo Negra Cero
The International Dark Beer Competition	Rebellion Beer Co	Eclipse
The International Strong Beer Competition	Brauhaus Riegele	Riegele Weizendoppelbock
The International Speciality Beer Competition	Brouwerij De Poes	De Poes Oud-Bruin
The International Cask Conditioned Ale Competition	Goff's Brewery	Cheltenham Gold
The International Classic Cider Competition	Bauman's Cider	Endless Harvest
The International Flavoured Cider Competition	Stonewell Cider	Rós
The International Innovative Cider Competition	Annapolis Cider Company	Arctic Kiwi Jr.
Best Brewery Trophy	Spring Valley Brewery	
Best Cider Mill Trophy	Bauman's Cider	



Complaint upheld against VK Squashka Products

A complaint against VK's Squashka products has been upheld by the alcohol industry's Independent Complaints Panel (ICP).

The complaint, from a member of the public, expressed concern that the products could appeal to children due to the "childlike flavours, colourful packaging in a carton synonymous with children's drinks" and "using the word 'squash' in the title of an alcoholic drink".

The Panel considered and upheld the complaint against three products: VK Squashka Berries & Cherries, VK Squashka Orange & Pineapple and VK Squashka Apple & Blackcurrant.

Chair of the Independent Complaints Panel, Rachel Childs, said: "I am pleased that the producer has chosen to work with the Advisory Service so openly and positively to redesign the packaging and change the product's name to address the concerns raised by the Panel."

• portmangroup.org.uk

Penderyn Distillery wins coveted Gold medal

Penderyn Distillery's Rich Oak Single Malt Welsh Whisky has been awarded a coveted Gold medal at the 2026 International Spirits Challenge.

Penderyn Rich Oak is first matured in ex-bourbon barrels before being finished in European oak casks, previously seasoned with wine, to add depth, sweetness and spice. The result is a vibrant, contemporary expression, with Penderyn's signature light, fruity and elegant spirit.

Stephen Davies, Chief Executive of Penderyn Distillery, said: "Winning Gold at the 2026

International Spirits Challenge is a fantastic moment for Penderyn and for Welsh whisky. Rich Oak has been at the heart of our range for many years, and this award is a real tribute to the skill and dedication of our distilling team. It shows that Welsh

whisky can stand shoulder to shoulder with the very best in the world."

• www.penderyn.wales



Greene King welcomes clubs to Free Trade Event



Greene King hosted its first-ever Free Trade Event, welcoming more than 250 customers and 30 exhibitors to Norwich for a day focused on discovery, insight and connection.

The event brought together independent operators and leading suppliers from across the industry, showcasing a broad range of drinks categories alongside Greene King Free Trade's Value Hub partners.

Attendees were able to sample new and upcoming products, explore fresh ideas for their venues and take advantage of exclusive offers designed to support business growth.

A key focus of the day was creating opportunities for customers to connect, share experiences and learn from one another, as well as from Greene King Free Trade's expert team. Insight sessions also provided practical advice on improving performance, including new approaches to category development

and merchandising.

Claire Bates, Free Trade Marketing Manager at Greene King, said: "It was fantastic to see such a strong turnout for our first Free Trade Event and to bring together so many of our customers and partners in one space. The energy throughout the day really showed the value of creating opportunities to connect, share ideas and discover new ways to grow."

"We're committed to supporting our free trade customers with more than just product supply – from helping reduce costs through initiatives like Value Hub, to providing insight, expertise and reliable service that operators can depend on, and the event reflects that ongoing commitment."

Greene King's Free Trade Event is set to become an annual fixture.

• valueforvenues.co.uk

Raising a glass to Double Dutch Grapefruit Soda

Grapefruit Soda is the latest addition to the Double Dutch mixers can range.

Described as flamboyantly fresh, the intensely rich grapefruit taste is joined by Persian lime for a blend of sweetness and depth which works as a standalone drink or as a mixer.

Double Dutch is a premium mixer brand founded by twin sisters Joyce de Haas and Raissa de Haas, on a mission to redefine the role of mixers in modern drinking.

Inspired by their Dutch heritage and background

in flavour development, the brand champions pairing as an art – creating innovative, carefully balanced mixers designed to complement and elevate spirits rather than simply dilute them.

Alongside Pink Grapefruit Soda, the expanded Double Dutch can range also includes Indian Tonic Water, Skinny Tonic Water, Soda Water, Cucumber & Watermelon Soda, Ginger Ale, Ginger Beer, Lemon and Elderflower

• doubledutchdrinks.com



Brakes gives £8m value boost to foodservice customers

As part of its focus on supporting customers, leading foodservice wholesaler Brakes has announced that it has delivered £8.2m in value back to foodservice operators over the past 12 months, in a continued drive to focus on helping customers protect margins in a challenging trading environment.

Recognising that customers need support that is focused on them, Brakes has passed on £2m in savings across 40 of its highest volume lines including chips, butter, cheese, bacon and blue roll — categories that have seen sustained inflationary pressure across the sector.

Alongside this, Brakes' mybrakes rewards programme has returned over £6m in cashback to members. This is a personalised programme, with rewards tailored to the requirements of individual businesses.

Brakes also helped customers identify cost effective changes through its Swap & Save website mechanic.

The company says it has focused on delivering a value strategy that is built around longterm operational support, rather than headline-grabbing short-term promotions, with customers benefiting from greater value, alongside free delivery, strong availability, quality assurance, allergen and nutrition updates, and menu development expertise.

Michael Andersen, Chief Commercial Officer at Brakes, said: "Operators are under real pressure, and value has become a critical differentiator. Returning more than £8m in a single year shows the scale of our commitment to supporting customers' profitability. Our approach is simple: sustained value, consistent support and a focus on helping operators run commercially resilient kitchens. This is not a tactical campaign, it's embedded in how we operate."

Brakes has reinforced its commitment to invest in pricing, rewards and operational support throughout 2026 as part of its long-term value strategy.

• brake.co.uk



kff launches expanded meat range with 12 new products

Kent regional foodservice wholesaler kff has announced the launch of an expanded meat range, introducing 12 new products designed to give chefs greater choice, quality, and versatility across their menus.

The newly introduced lines span a mix of proteins, including premium lamb cuts such as boneless lamb leg alongside minced and diced variations. The beef and pork range has also been strengthened with additions including a quality beef topside joint and an Aberdeen Angus beef burger, complemented by two new sausage variants. Completing the lineup are Sysco Essentials chicken breast fillets and raw halal chicken drumsticks.

Commenting on the launch, Neil Williams,

Managing Director at kff, said: "Our customers rely on us for quality, consistency, and choice, and this expanded meat range reflects our commitment to delivering exactly that. These new lines offer greater flexibility for menu planning and give chefs access to dependable, high-performance products they can trust every day. We're proud to continue strengthening our range and supporting operators with both value and quality, backed by the service they expect from kff."

The expansion is expected to reinforce kff's focus on delivering highquality proteins sourced from trusted suppliers, for consistency across fresh, frozen, and prepared formats.

• kff.co.uk



Cleaning up in the kitchen

Brakes has expanded its Keystone brand offering. The range now includes more than 40 products, covering all aspects of kitchen cleaning, from dishwashing and disinfection to floor and washroom cleaning.

• brake.co.uk



Energy-saving grill launches

British catering equipment manufacturer Synergy Grill Technology has announced the launch of its latest electric model — the 450E.

The 450E champions a minimalist design approach with 'build-your-own' features such as a resting shelf and garnish rail for a tailor made, budget-conscious approach.

Chairman, Justin Cadbury, said: "The development of the Synergy 450E comes as a direct response to the real-life needs and wants of our customers and the wider market, with size, budget and power supply being the three common pain-points."

Boasting heating elements that are designed to deliver heat on the grill bars of up to 350°C to enable faster cooking times, the Synergy 450E will also deliver electricity savings of up to 25%.

The company says that, depending on the price being paid for electricity, savings on electric power can be achieved in excess of £6,000 per grill, per year.

• synergygrill.com

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