

# WELSH CROSS-PARTY GROUP ON BEER AND PUBS

## Annual General Meeting Minutes

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025, at 2.00pm  
Via MS Teams

1 Attendees: Joel James MS (Chairman), Carolyn Thomas MS, Charlotte Owen, Ioan Bellin (office of Delyth Jewell MS), Sam Rowlands MS  
Secretariat: Paul Edgeworth, Rita King, Barry Watts  
Apologies: Mike Hedges MS, Mark Isherwood MS

### 2 Re-election of Officers

Joel James MS was elected as Chairman. Proposed by Carolyn Thomas MS, seconded by Sam Rowlands MS.

### 3 Appointment of Secretariat

Sam Rowlands MS proposed that CAMRA, SIBA and the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group should be re-appointed to provide the Secretariat for the CPG going forward. Seconded by Carolyn Thomas MS.

### 4 Beer and Pub Sector – Current Challenges and Issues

There were a number of areas where the industry continued to experience specific challenges in Wales.

#### DRS:

The Welsh Government was currently consulting on plans for a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), scheduled to begin in October 2027. The scheme would apply to both single-use and reusable drinks containers and would be operated by a newly established Deposit Management Organisation (DMO). The closing date for submissions was 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

The beer and pub sector remained concerned that the proposals for the Welsh scheme continued to include glass and it would, therefore, differ from schemes in the rest of the UK, which would bring challenges for those operating across the four nations. Ideally, there would be one inter-operable scheme with the same scope, timeframe and rules.

Carolyn Harris MS highlighted that the Cabinet Secretary was still keen to include glass in DRS in Wales, but it was noted that there were some exemptions in place for smaller brewers.

### MUP:

The Welsh Government was also consulting on maintaining the minimum unit pricing (MUP) for alcohol in Wales beyond March 2026 and raising the unit price from 50p to 65p. The consultation had launched in early August and was due to close on 29<sup>th</sup> September. MUP had been increased from 50p to 65p in Scotland in 2024.

### Community Right to Buy:

It was noted that there weren't currently the same protections in the planning system in Wales for pubs as in England and Scotland, eg. Community Right to Buy.

### Statutory Review of the Pubs Code and Pubs Code Adjudicator:

It was noted that UK Government was currently reviewing responses to its consultation on the Pubs Code and Pubs Code Adjudicator which was held earlier this year.

The Group discussed the impact on the sector of the 2024 Budget, which had significantly increased employment costs for brewing and hospitality. In the region of 100 small breweries had been lost in the last 12 months and pub closures were also increasing. By the end of the year, it was estimated that 110,000 jobs would have been lost in hospitality. The All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group in Westminster was due to publish a Report in October following its Inquiry into how brewing and pubs could help drive economic growth.

Key asks from the sector ahead of the Budget on 26<sup>th</sup> November included:

- Business rates reform to make use of the highest multipliers for hospitality businesses, with robust transitional relief in the interim;
- There was an opportunity to further extend the draught duty relief again this year to maintain the differential for beer sold in the on-trade compared to the off-trade.

5 Report on Recent and Planned Activities in 2026

The Secretariat reported on the following activities of the CPG in the past year:

- A Welsh Beer Tasting Event had been held at The Coal Exchange on 12<sup>th</sup> February.
- The CPG had taken a stand in the Y Farchnad on 15<sup>th</sup> July.

It was agreed that the Y Farchnad had been a very useful way of engagement with Members of the Senedd and could be repeated next year following the Elections.

6 Activity of the CPG in 2025/2026

The Senedd Election on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026 was likely to curtail activity from March onwards, however it was agreed to hold a Pub Quiz early in the new year.

Secretariat

The Group considered whether a mini Manifesto might be helpful in terms of setting out the asks of the CPG for the new Welsh Parliament. It was agreed to consider this further.

Chair/Secretariat

7 Any other business

Ioan Bellin MS enquired about the guest beer arrangements in Scotland. This was linked to the Pubs Code in Scotland which enables tied pub tenants to have a guest beer, which can be a local Scottish beer for example. There were other arrangements within the sector itself, at company level, which also allowed this, but there was no similar legislation in England and Wales. The UK Government was also currently reviewing market access for small breweries.

The meeting closed at 3.00pm