

**Minutes of the Newark CAMRA Branch Meeting**  
**Held at The Prince Rupert on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**Attendees:** Richard Trafford, Carolyn Gibbons, Sam Lucas, Rory Audsley-Spence, John Dunstan, Andrew Birkhead, Stephen Allwood, Ros & Russ Briggs, Peter Harris, Colin Campbell, Jim Mason, Andy Sear, Trevor Gill

- 1) **Apologies for absence** – Stuart Clift, Allister Ferguson, John Williams, Dominic Haythorne, Jo Dunstan
- 2) **Review of Actions from Previous Minutes** - The action log was updated (see below). All dealt with actions for 2025 have been archived.
- 3) **Chair's report** – Unfortunately Stuart was unable to attend the meeting. In his absence, Richard (Vice-Chair) agreed to take the meeting. Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and The Prince Rupert was thanked for providing the venue. As this was the first meeting since the Beer Festival in November, Richard took the opportunity to thank everyone who assisted with, or attended the Beer Festival.
- 4) **Treasurer's Report**  
**Winter beer Festival**
  - The books are closed on the Winter Beer Festival, and a healthy £2.8k surplus is reported.
  - There were significant revenue shortfalls, due predominantly to people who bought tickets and then did not attend, and lower drinks per person who did attend, particularly Saturday attendees who seemed to move on elsewhere rather quickly. This shortfall was offset in part by cost savings. Many thanks to those that gave their time and effort for free, and to our sponsors and supporters.
  - The above result does depend on a £500 refund from the Town Council on the rent. The branch has been informed that this is on its way, but has yet to be received.
  - The surplus, plus an additional £1,000 in branch funds, has been remitted to HQ.
  - £308.76 was raised for charity and has been sent to the Newark Crusader.
  - Learning on no-shows has been fed back to CAMRA HQ as this was not flagged as a consideration by HQ when we submitted the budget. No response as yet.

**Branch Funds** - Remain in good health (£547) following the remittance of our surplus to HQ, and below the £1,000 recommended ceiling from HQ.

**Social Media** – CAMRA HQ have suspended its use of X/Twitter following reports of Grok AI in the news and will review its use of the platform once Ofcom's findings have been made available. HQ have suggested that branches review their usage of it in light of this. John confirmed that our branch do not currently use X so no action is required.

- 5) **Secretary's report**
  - **Members Weekend/CAMRA's AGM** is taking place 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> April in St Albans. Registration is open to attend this event. For those who can't make it in person, CAMRA will be livestreaming the main hall business giving members the opportunity to vote remotely on Conference motions. Details of how to register to vote online will be issued nearer the date of the event. The deadline for submitting motions for consideration by Conference Procedures Committee is 12pm on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and the deadline for submitting motions for drafting advice from Conference Procedures Committee is 12pm on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The form to submit a motion can be found [here](#).

The Secretary reported that the current branch committee members have multiple roles and there are still vacancies - including the key roles of Membership Secretary & Young Members Contact. As much as the committee tries, they can't be everywhere and ask members who may be interested in standing for any positions to contact [secretary@newark.camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@newark.camra.org.uk) for further information about the roles.

Other things branch members can do to help the thinly-stretched committee are:

- Help deliver leaflets, magazines & beer festival promotional documents
- Survey pubs and clubs & check their entries to [camra.org.uk/pubs](http://camra.org.uk/pubs) and submit amendments
- Score beers - this helps shortlist Pub of the Year and Good Beer Guide entries.

6) **Membership/Young Members** – In the absence of a Membership Secretary, Carolyn reported that the current membership is 494. In the last month, 5 members have left and 3 new members have joined.

7) **Vice Chair / Pub Database / Web /Tasting Panels**

- **Tasting Panels** - Rob Green, The Deputy Regional Director, is setting up a tasting panel – dates for training sessions are awaited.
- **Pub Database** – all information has now moved to the [CAMRA website](http://CAMRA website)  
Over the next few months the branch hopes to carry out a full audit of all of all licensed properties (pubs & clubs) in our area on the CAMRA website to check details are up to date (particularly opening hours) and at the same time encourage licensees to check their own information and keep the branch updated of any updates. It is hoped that as many members as possible will assist with this.

8) **Pub of the Year (POTY) & Good Beer Guide (GBG)**

**GBG entries** – Reminder given to members that the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is to be used as a “significant” factor when determining GBG entries. Richard explained how NBSS scores, linked with pub nominations from members have been used to shortlist pubs for POTY & GBG. Members are asked to regularly enter beer scores for pubs they visit via the CAMRA website [Find Pubs & Clubs to Visit - CAMRA - The Campaign for Real Ale](http://Find Pubs & Clubs to Visit - CAMRA - The Campaign for Real Ale) (Log-in required).

**Branch Pub of the Year and Cider & Perry Pub of the Year 2026**

For the past few months our volunteer judges have been visiting the list of venues selected principally by their [NBSS](http://NBSS) scores. Each pub is judged against a nationally defined set of criteria, not least the quality and consistency of the beer or cider.

The winners and runners up have been announced as follows:

Town Pub of the Year: Winner – Organ Grinder                      Runner-up – Fox and Crown  
District Pub of the Year Winner - Final Whistle, Southwell      Runner-up – Milestone Brewery Tap, Cromwell

The overall winner was the Final Whistle and they go forward to the, Nottinghamshire Pub of the Year competition and we wish them well.

Cider/Perry Pub of the Year: Winner - Organ Ginder              Runner up - Final Whistle

We are blessed with some excellent pubs in our region making the competition very hard. Congratulations to all our winners. Arrangements for presentation of the awards will be notified in the near future.

9) **Cider Update** – nothing to report other than the announcement of Cider Pub of the year above.

10) **Pub/Club Protection Officer** – It was reported that the Vine, Baldertongate, Newark has reopened and is now known as The Rose. The Belvedere Club is selling real ale, usually Abbot or Old Speckled Hen. The Lord Nelson, Winthorpe has closed. It was reported that Stonegate are changing several of their managed houses to tenancies.

11) **Brewery Liaison Officers(BLOs) -**

Allister Ferguson (Milestone) – reported on the Milestone Brewery Tap with investment being made in the accommodation with a new heated building and covered area in the front.

Dominic Haythorne (Cat Asylum) – the most recent contact with Henry Bealby was on Sunday the 11th of January at an event at the brewery. The only regular beers being produced at the moment are Newark IPA & a single hopped pale ale called Simcoe. Current specials are Kellerbier & a pale ale called Grisette. The band "The Activators" are performing live at the brewery on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> January from 6pm.

Jim Mason (Jacaranda) – Following a couple of failed attempts to visit the brewery in person, email contact was made today. The brewery has taken a break over the Xmas period but has now recommenced brewing, including producing a 3.5% house beer for the Final Whistle called "Rail". They would like to expand their reach into pubs locally and will be brewing some "specials" soon.

12) **Beer Festival** – Sam, the Beer Festival Organiser, reported that a meeting has taken place to discuss the outcome of the beer festival. The Castle Grounds will not be available for May 2026 so the Committee's next decision is whether to hold another 'winter edition' festival in 2026.

13) **Forthcoming Social Events** - Rory, the new Social Secretary arranged for a circular to go out to members earlier this month. In this, he asked members to complete a short questionnaire to help plan events that members want to attend. He reported that based on the initial responses to the questionnaire, there is a good appetite for attending beer festivals, pub crawls, trails and brewery tours, preferably local or easily accessible by train in a day trip. There is overwhelming support for an event every two months. There have been a few specific suggestions regarding venues and events which will be included in future plans for socials.

There is still plenty of time to complete the [survey](#) by clicking on the link. If members would like to discuss any ideas with Rory direct, his email is [socials@newark.camra.org.uk](mailto:socials@newark.camra.org.uk)

- The first social of 2026 is on **Saturday 31st January**, supporting our local pubs by joining in the Newark Beermuda Triangle, visiting all three hosting pubs and one or two others less often visited. This will start at approximately 2pm at the Fox and Crown, Appletongate.
- **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March** - A train trip to Matlock, with five GBG pubs to visit plus others to check out.
- **Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup>** - train trip to 8 Sail brewery in Heckington (details to follow).

Members are asked to please save the dates and let Rory know if you hope to attend any event as an idea of numbers is always helpful [socials@newark.camra.org.uk](mailto:socials@newark.camra.org.uk)

**Non-CAMRA members are welcome on social trips in an effort to encourage new members, so please invite your friends.**

### ***Forthcoming Festivals etc***

- **29<sup>th</sup> January – 1<sup>st</sup> February** - BeerMuda Triangle Beer Festival, Newark (Fox & Crown, Just Beer, Organ Grinder)
- **12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> February** [Hucknall Beer Festival](#),
- **5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March** [Loughborough Beer Festival](#)
- **19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March** [Burton and South Derbyshire Beer and Cider Festival | CAMRA](#)

*Please note that events are subject to change – check websites/socials for regular updates.*

### **14) Dates and Venues of Forthcoming Meetings**

- **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February** – Just Beer, 32A Castle Gate, Newark @ 7.30 pm
- **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026** – The Rose & Crown, 25 Main Street, Farndon @ 7.30 pm. Those wishing to travel by public transport from Newark can take the 90 bus from Newark Bus station at 7.12 pm. Return bus @ 9.20 pm. [Pathfinder 90 Web Timetable.pdf](#)
- **Wednesday – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026** – The Flying Circus, 53 Castle Gate, Newark @ 7.30 pm

### **15) Any Other Business**

#### **Recent email from The National CAMRA Chairman, Ash Corbett-Collins**

The email gave details of how CAMRA have been campaigning for Government to have a rethink on the higher business rates bills that pubs will be facing from April. Members were asked to pressure their MPs to commit to a rethink. Members are asked to use [our template email tool](#) to contact your local MP to ask for a rethink on business rate hikes for pubs.

**ACTION** – Vice Chair to send an email on behalf of the Branch

**European Communities Beer Union (ECUB)** - Peter Harris reported that he had been asked to prepare a tourism guide for the Midlands for beer tourists coming from Europe. This will include an introduction about beer. If any members have any ideas for inclusion in the guide relating to pubs, beer or breweries that particularly relate to the East Midlands, please forward them to Peter at [southwellfocus@gmail.com](mailto:southwellfocus@gmail.com)

## Newark CAMRA Action Log 2026

Date	Owner	ACTION	Update	Date Closed
14/1/26	RT	Recent email from The National CAMRA Chairman, gave details of how CAMRA have been campaigning Government to have a rethink on the higher business rates bills that pubs will be facing from April. ACTION – Vice Chair to send an email on behalf of the Branch.		
<b>Closed items</b>				
13/8/25	RAS	Richard reported that a former member of our branch, who has moved to Louth had invited members to Louth for a social. ACTION - details passed to Social Sec to investigate transport options.	<b>14/1/26</b> – The new Social Secretary confirmed that there were no suitable public transport options – Action closed  <b>10/9/25</b> - On hold until the new year with a view to a possible social in 2026.	14/1/26
13/8/25	RAS	The possibility of a visit to 8 Sail Brewery has been looked into. The return train costs approx. £30. Branch members were interested in visiting the brewery. ACTION – Social Sec to investigate transport options	<b>14/1/26</b> – The new Social Secretary reported that a visit to 8 Sail was being planned for May – Action closed  <b>10/9/25</b> - On hold until the new year with a view to a possible social in 2026. Also investigate possibility of running a joint social with Worksop branch.	14/1/26