

Dudley & South Staffs Branch Meeting

Monday 7th April 2025

The Britannia Upper Gornal

Present

John Corser (JC), Teresa Cartwright (TC), Andy Cartwright (AC), Robin Shields (RS), Andy Rex (AR), Wendy Abrahams (WA) Steve Abrahams (SA) Russell Lowe (RS)

Apologies:

Sandra Rex (SR), Matt Sparks (MS), Stuart Betts (SB)

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated we shall be discussing POTY later in the agenda

Prev minutes

Matters Arising:

None

Accepted JC, RS

Treasurers Report

Balance at Metro bank £4003.55 and Lloyds £53.62.

All DWAF 2024 bills have now been paid, final Town Hall cost £4641. The CAMRA loan has also been repaid.

Unfortunately, there is still one outstanding invoice for £130 that is due to us which is somewhat disappointing

Secretary's Report

Nothing to report

Membership Report

Our Branch is currently at 675, nationally 144845.

It was agreed that we should be targeting the 40year + group for new members

Pubs Officer Report

We currently have 390 pubs in our area that are still open or temporarily closed. Within this figure 346 are still fully open.

We have successfully surveyed 75% of our pubs (293) However 11 pubs are due to be reviewed this year, and another 83 were last evaluated over 3 years ago, these must be visited as priority. SA has the full list; Sandwell area has the biggest numbers of pubs that need to be surveyed as soon as possible. We also have 28 clubs/restaurants outstanding on the list.

The Old Bank has opened up in Old Hill replacing The Wheelie Thirsty.

The Old Chain Yards in Cradley has had the planning permission for change of use rejected.

The Bridge in Kingswinford has had change of licensee, Lindsey Bullock from the Horse & Jockey will be taking over towards the end of April.

New Inn Wombourne is still closed with a "for Let" sign

The Cottage Kingswinford is open with but is also still for let, there is an undertaking of a large refurbishment when new leaseholders take over.

The Castle in Dudley is temporarily closed as the licensee has left

The Mill Upper Gornal has reopened with new licensees unfortunately there is a need for some cellar work to get is back to full capacity

The Bush Inn Buffery which has been closed for some time has had planning permission for change of use to a childrens nursery rejected

The Crow Inn Station Rd Old Hill has lodged a planning request for change of use to retail, the pub has been closed for some time.

Mad O' Rourkes Pie Factory Tipton is for sale £2m

Nags Head Great Bridge has lodged an application for change of use to flats, retail and HMO. The pub has been closed for some years

The Court House in Dudley is up for sale

1062 pubs closed in 2024 and so far for the first 3 months of 2025 we have lost another 303 !

Pub of The Year The voting was ratified and we are pleased to announce the following:

1st place The Bull 7 Bladder (Vine) in Brierley Hill

2nd place The Beacon Hotel Sedgley

3rd place The Bird in Hand Wordsley

South Staffs:

1st place The Cross at Kinver

The voting was extremely close. Congratulations to them all, the certificates for 1st place will be organised and presented in the near future .

The Bull & Bladder (Vine) will be put forward for Regional Pub of the Year

Social Secretary Report

A trip to London 12 March, organised by RS (many thanks), 16 pubs were visited and everyone had a very good day

Burton Beer Festival trip 27th March, a few members went along and also visited some local pubs

The beer scoring in Blackheath was poorly supported but those that did attend had a good day

DWAF2024 Thank You trip saw us visiting Lichfield on 29th March. We are exploring other options for the Thank you for DWAF 2025

There is beer festival at The Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham between 10th-12th April

Severn Valley Spring Diesel Fayre 15th- 18th May, there will be 20 real ales and 4 ciders served at Kidderminster station

Burton Ale trail Friday 6/6/25

Wolverhampton Beer festival 24th- 27th July

Bewdley Beer Festival 21st- 24th August

Dudley and S. Staffs next social will be in Kingswinford on Saturday 24th May, starting at The Bridge, further details to be announced

Press & Media Report

Items covered above

Brewery Liaison Officer Report

Bright Oak Brewery Cradley Heath have launched their first brew

Ickle Brewer SB has damaged his finger and was unable to attend the meeting

RS had made contact with several local breweries. His full report is available if you want to read it, the salient points are as follows:

BCA: White Hart in Shifnal is now open after refurbishment and a large extension. The new licensees are Thom and Elosie Sutton, they have run other BCA pubs, The Anvil in Shifnal and The Plough Trysull

The 14th Real Ale Trail is underway

4 pubs in pipeline The Unicorn Ludlow, the former Barclays bank in Malvern, The Three Fishes in Shrewsbury and The Lichfield ~Brewery Tap, all are at different stages of planning refurb etc

SARAH HUGHES: Planning on producing more specials this year, the first being Target 4.2%. The conservatory is to be demolished and rebuilt taking approx. 14 weeks. There will be some disruption in particular to the inside toilets (outside ones will be open for use)

DAVENPORTS: Recently reintroduced Highgate Dark mild , predominantly in keg 3.4%, potentially casks will become available

GREEN DUCK: 19 different seasonal beers coming between April and June, some of which are brand new. These are in addition to Bostin Mild, Session IPA & Blonde

Expansion in the brewhouse

Brewery Tap and kitchen being upgraded

KINVER : Brew for VE 80 celebrations being produced 4.5 pale ale due for delivery end of April

Pub Protection Officer Report

Covered in previous agenda items

Cider Officer Report

JC has a friend in Wombourne who has acquired premises to produce cider, more information will be shared when available

Web & Social Media Report

Absent , notes sent by email. FB now has 1500 followers and is being used widely by pubs in our area too

Hopes are high for a digital version of Ales N Tales in the near future in collaboration with Haleswoen and Stourbridge, printed options are still being investigated

Branch have also invited us to score for their POTY.

AOB

Cult of Oak have moved premises, details not known(Prev Cradley Heath, may now be out of Dudley and SS area). Brewing not started yet but they have plenty of stock.

Costings for DWAF 2025 flyers have been received, logo needs to be finalised before going ahead. The merchandise/t-shirts/volunteer tops manufacturer raised an issue over the needlework required for the “priory” window on the tops. It was unclear whether this could be replicated to a good enough standard

The next regional meeting will be at The Stump (Mount Pleasant) in Sedgley on Saturday 14th June at 12 noon. All CAMRA members welcome

GBBF Birmingham 5th-9th August also want to use this opportunity to showcase our local pubs

If Burton are unable to host “Mild in May” JC has offered to host in Sedgley

Branch Meetings: All 7pm

6/5/25 – Mount Pleasant (Stump) Sedgley (Tuesday);

2/6/25 – Ma Pardoes;

30/6/25 – AGM Rose and Crown Brierley Hill;

28/7/25 – Park Inn Woodsetton;

1/9/25 – Vine Inn (bull and Bladder) Brierley Hill;

6/10/25 - Britannia Gornal;

10/11/25 – Pens Ale Micro bar;

15/12/25 – The Old Bulls Head Lower Gornal.