

InnQuirer

Newsletter

January 8th 2025

Dry January

Here we are again, post-Christmas when everyone is encouraged to abstain from alcohol for January. Now, whatever decision you make, is this a reason to abandon your local completely? You don't have to buy alcoholic drinks if you don't want to these days. Pubs have had, and are still having, a pretty awful time without being abandoned for over four weeks. Pubs are a good social hub but they can't survive without customers and too many are closing down throughout the country. Some pubs' finances are on a knife-edge so it is quite feasible that some may not survive - a number of pubs know this is a difficult month so close for re-furbishment or even to give the staff a break but that doesn't mean they don't have any outgoings like rates/rent and even wastage if they have cask ales part-used with no prospect of selling the remainder for a month.

Dont' forget we had 'Go Sober in October' before Christmas so that represents one sixth of a year when pubs potentially see a significant drop in sales.

Despite what you see on the Police TV programmes, there are plenty of people out there who are sensible in their consumption of alcohol so whatever you feel you want to do this month, please don't forget your 'local'.

More on the Royal Oak Sparkbridge

This is getting a bit like a serial - there does seem to be a serious ambition to open this pub and it is being worked on but being January, we are not sure how and when all this will settle and the pub will return to a permanent opening venue, latest estimate was 10th January.

Problems with staff accommodation

While not in our Branch region, we noticed that the Travellers Rest Inn in Grasmere is having a planning problem with their proposed staff accommodation block building. The Lakes Parish Council reckon it would 'harm the Heritage'. Now this highlights problems in our area too where pubs cannot get staff as they cannot afford/find somewhere to stay in the area and with transport thin—on-the-ground in most areas no-one can travel back and forth, particularly in the evenings. Heritage is one thing but we rely heavily on tourism and we need to make sure that visitors have somewhere to eat and drink. We are looking forward to the return of the Kings Arms in Hawkshead and that is a prime example of needing good staff to operate as do the pubs in Coniston where a high percentage of the properties are holiday related and therefore either unavailable or expensive.

Local awards

We were very pleased to see that Alex Douglas of Logan Beck Brewery picked-up a Gold award in CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain (Session Bitters) for his Proper (a 4% English bitter). Alex is not the only local brewery who has picked up awards recently - Cumbrian Ales, Ulverston Brewing and Fell Brewery are other examples of how our local breweries do not go unnoticed nationally. Alex is being presented with the award on Saturday 1st February at the Devonshire in Ulverston at 2pm.

Meeting venues

Furness isn't the easiest place to arrange meetings given the transport issues but we would like to expand our choice of pubs for meetings this year to give more of our members the chance to get together and get involved in the discussions and decisions that the Branch covers during meetings.

If you have any thoughts then please contact us, all the contact details are available on the main Furness CAMRA website.