

**MEETING OF THE WEST CUMBRIA BRANCH OF CAMRA HELD AT THE
CASTLE BAR, MARKET PLACE, COCKERMOUTH ON SATURDAY 21ST MARCH
2026 AT 2.30PM**

Stephen, Acting Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed members and particularly new attendees Natasha and Gary McAteer.

1)Present

Stephen Walker, Geoff Wilkinson, Vernon Watson, Frank Birtwhistle, Andy Roberts, Andy Moores, Keith Earnshaw, Derek Wilson, Chris Chleboun, Rosie Chleboun, Gary McAteer and Natasha McAteer.

2)Apologies were received from Malcolm Richardson, Hugh Price, Phil Woolstencroft, Buster Grant and Len Wainwright.

3)Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were approved by Derek and seconded by Vernon subject to his name being removed as a volunteer POTY judge.

4)Matters Arising from above

Andy is in the throes of applying to renew the Swan's ACV. We should keep our local MP informed of the outcome.

5)Correspondence

Stephen informed us of the 'Beer' magazine's financial difficulties – only 2 printed issues will be produced this year.

The displaying of drinks prices in licensed premises is currently being discussed by government, as there is some confusion as to whether and how the list should be displayed.

Winter CBOB 2026 is 'Beer Street' by the London Brewing Company.

The proposed joint Cumbria and Lancashire Branch's social event conceived by Jack Summers-Glass has been cancelled due to lack of interest.

6)Pub and Brewery Crack

Geoff confirmed that the Bush at Tallentire and the 3 Tuns at Whitehaven have reopened.

The Lowther at Mawbray has appointed new tenants.

Stephen says Jennings Brewery plans a beer festival on 17th and 18th April and is looking for volunteers to help. This has caused some consternation as there is a possibility that we are seen as showing favour by working for free for the brewery. Stephen suggested that if members wanted to help there was no reason why they should not providing they did so as a private individual and not as a representative of CAMRA.

They are also making some staff changes and reintroducing 'Golden Host' as a seasonal ale.

7)Spring POTS

Matt has already proposed Flow, near the Cocker Bridge although this is of course subject to its intended reopening. Geoff suggested the Old Mill at Dearham, Vernon proposed Seths in Cockermouth and Gary and Natasha the Belle Vue at Papcastle.

8)GBG 2027

Stephen says he will continue as GBG Coordinator for the branch in 2028, which is much appreciated.

We have been reminded about the value of pub scoring on many occasions regarding GBG, but lots of members don't do it. Is it too complicated? Perhaps the process of completing these online needs to be made clearer.

To meet GBG criteria, any pub claiming to facilitate disability access needs to draft a mobility access statement by early June before the box can be ticked on the report form by the surveyor.

9)POTY 2026

Following a closely fought competition, The Mason's Arms at Gilcruix was awarded the accolade for 2026, by a narrow margin.

Stephen informed us that the POTYs for the other 2 Cumbrian branches were the Milbourne Arms, Carlisle (Solway) and the Swan, Ulverston (Furness). He asked for volunteers, in addition to himself, for judging on the proviso that all appointed judges would judge all 3. Judging needs to be completed by Mid May and any scores sent to him. He said that strictly speaking it falls within the Awards Officer's remit to organise POTY. Andy R said that it would help if the whole process was carried out earlier, perhaps pre-Xmas.

10)Spring publicity, recruitment and engagement initiative.

This was again deferred until our Chairman, Phil W, can be present. Meanwhile we should continue to distribute publicity material to our pubs. Phil has lots of leaflets, beer mats etc at his house so Geoff will try to arrange to pick some up and distribute them to members at the next meeting.

11)Any Other Business

Gary commented that, as discounted beer is part of the attraction of being a member, he was disappointed at the low number of pubcos, licensed premises etc prepared to accept these. Even though not now targeted specifically at Wetherspoons, they seem to be one of the few chains that accept the vouchers. It

was suggested that any refusals by 'participating' establishments should be fed back to Phil.

Keswick Brewery is to host an open day on 25th April, celebrating 20years of operation. Open invitation to all members.

12)Next Meeting

This will be held at the **Mason's Arms, Gilcrux on Sat 2nd May 2026 at 1pm** followed by the POTY award presentation at 2pm.

The **AGM** will be held at the Castle Bar, Cockermouth on 13th June 2026 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 3.20pm