CAMRA Strategy 2026-2029

Our overarching vision

Our vision is to have quality cask beer, cider, perry, and thriving pubs and clubs in every community across the UK.

Our core objectives

- Reducing the rate that pubs and clubs are closing.
- Increasing the quality and availability of live beer, cider and perry.
- Encouraging excellence across the industry.
- Increasing the number of people who engage with, are members of and volunteer for CAMRA.
- Using our network of festivals as recruitment and campaigning events.
- Using our brand to finance our campaigning.

The challenge

Ensuring that CAMRA continues to be an effective campaigning organisation at a time when:

- Many membership organisations are seeing challenges to traditional membership recruitment and retention.
- Consumers interact and support membership organisations in a different way.
- Consumers face their own financial challenges and have changed their spending behaviour.
- Changes in how people consume media, and the volume of available content, has fundamentally altered how organisations need to connect, engage and communicate with them.

Key to achieving our objectives in this changed environment, this three-year strategy needs to:

- Diversify our offering to better match consumer behaviour.
- Ensure resources are used efficiently; correctly prioritising activity to avoid mission creep and ensuring strategic intentions are delivered.
- Stabilise our financial position by reducing costs while maximising income.

Our strategic focus

CAMRA represents beer drinkers and pubgoers across the UK, with a strategic focus on three core pillars:

- Our pubs
- Our pints
- Our people

We do this by:

- Supporting and encouraging the beer and pub trade.
- Running festivals to increase interactions, campaigning messages and supporting consumer choice.
- Lobbying governments across the UK.
- Running a successful awards programme celebrating our pubs, pints and people, and through developing strong digital and traditional guides, all driven by vital connections with the valued membership.
- Moving beyond a single focus on membership numbers to look at how people interact with us. This change does not mean we are no longer a membership organisation. It does, however, mean that we value and measure our success by other interactions.

Our strategic intentions

Diversify our offering: Align our activity with how modern consumers engage with an organisation.

Drive interactions: Move beyond simple membership headcounts to measure how many people actively support our campaigns, attend our events, use our data, and join us.

Mission focus: Ruthlessly prioritise activity to prevent "mission creep" and ensure every pound spent delivers a strategic outcome.

Building financial resilience: Stabilise our position by reducing costs and surplus-driven budgeting, rather than relying on speculative income growth.

Strategic objectives

Objective	Goal	Actions
Achieve financial resilience	Run surplus-driven budgets through 2028 and restore reserves to target levels	Rebase operational costs to match current (not projected) revenue streams
Deliver mission-focused campaigns	Secure measurable campaigning wins within our three core pillars (Pubs, Pints, People).	Focus staff and volunteer resources on one major, time-limited campaign per pillar at any given time.
Maximise festival impact	Transition our festival network into a high-quality engagement platform.	Implement free member entry and centralise branding/equipment to drive interaction growth.
Drive total brand interactions	Increase the total number of 'interactions' by X% year-on-year.	Diversify entry points to the 'Interaction Ladder' for non-members.
Modernise the volunteer engine	Reduce the administrative burden on volunteers and lower the barrier to entry for new volunteers.	Execute the 'root-and-branch' structure review and leverage technology.

Strategic framework

The core of this strategy is the 'Interaction Ladder,' an engagement concept designed to capture interest and convert it into impact. We will apply this model across the Campaign:

	Description
Capture	Using festivals, social media and shared anger over issues facing the industry to bring people into the CAMRA ecosystem.
Repeat	Providing high-quality data, rewards and success stories that keep supporters engaged.
Move	Encouraging consumers to take the next step from a casual user to festival attendee, a campaigner, an explorer, a full member, or a volunteer.
Revenue	Generating the surplus via lines of business such as festivals, digital, and membership required to fund our mission.

Our campaigning strategy

1. **Reducing the rate that pubs and clubs are closing, by:**

    - Campaigning for stronger, more effective, legislation including appropriate reform in all UK nations; across planning, financial and licencing policy.
    - Campaigning to strengthen community protection mechanisms for pubs and clubs where they already exist, and for introduction in UK nations where they do not.
    - Lobbying for fiscal policy support including a reduction in VAT for food and drink in hospitality, an extension of draught duty relief, fairer energy costs, and fairer business rates.
    - Increasing the use of legislation and schemes designed to protect pubs and clubs by providing an end-to-end pub saving advice service
    - Promoting pub and club going and wider awareness of the reality the sector faces.
    - Providing the UK's leading database for pubs and clubs as well as educational content both online and at our events.
    - Collecting and maintaining data that informs our campaigning, developing an effective replacement for legacy systems, streamlining volunteer data collection activities, and increasing the participation of wider stakeholders in data collection.
    - Working with others where we have shared goals.

2. **Increasing the quality and availability of live beer, real cider and perry, by:**

- Campaigning for legislation and pub owning business policy changes that allows venues to serve more local and independent products and celebrating those who do through awards and accreditation.
- Lobbying for changes to make it easier for producers to sell their own product direct to consumers.
- Campaigning to remove the beer tie in non-brewing pub owning businesses so pubs can buy more live beer and real cider at fairer wholesale prices.
- Campaigning for the reintroduction (including historical styles) of cask beer, real cider and perry where it is less common through targeted campaigning.

- Promoting the enjoyment of cask beer, real cider and perry and wider awareness of the reality the sector faces by establishing a dedicated beer group, producing an annual Beer Report and providing empowering educational content both online and at our events.
- Ensuring brewers, producers and retailers act in the best interest of consumers by actively campaigning against detrimental and misleading practices such as ‘Fresh Ale’.
- Collecting and using data to achieve our campaigning goals
- Working with others where we have shared goals

3. Encouraging excellence across the industry in all UK nations, by:

- Running awards that
    - celebrate excellence and improvement in pubs and clubs with a focus on the quality and availability of live beer, real cider and perry; and consumer-focused practices.
    - celebrate excellence in brewing and producing, particularly where this fosters the reintroduction or celebration of cask beer, real cider and perry or less common historical styles of these.
- Using data to highlight excellence in cellarmanship and producing a definitive guide on finding good beer across the country.
- Running accreditation schemes that recognise support for our objectives including serving local and independent beer, cider and perry; serving excellent quality beer, cider and perry; serving less common historical styles; and proactively acting in the best interests of consumers.

4. Increasing the number of people who engage with, are members of and volunteer for CAMRA, by:

- Conducting a ‘root-and-branch' review of our structure, roles and responsibilities, and redesigning these to make us more accessible, attractive and effective.
- Developing tools that reduce the burden on volunteers and makes volunteering more accessible and effective.
- Improving the culture of the organisation through changes in policy and practices that makes CAMRA a more inclusive, equitable and diverse organisation that is open and welcoming to all people of all backgrounds.

- Recognising distinct challenges exist in individual UK nations and ensuring tailored interaction, volunteer activation, and training and engagement plans are developed.
- Diversifying our membership offering to enable more interactions from potential members, who can be encouraged towards greater involvement with the Campaign and moving up the membership 'ladder.'

5. Using our network of festivals as recruitment and campaigning events, by:

- Leveraging our festival profile as a recruitment and retention benefit, through the free festival membership initiative.
- Campaigning to ensure legislation supports and encourages running festivals across the UK nations.
- Increasing consistency and quality at our events through a more centralised offering in terms of brand, equipment, practices, and policies.
- Increasing the focus on recruitment at our events and making this a core tenant of running a festival.
- Ensuring that every festival has dedicated resources to promote our campaigning activities.

6. Using our brand to finance our campaigning, by:

- Increasing interactions and touchpoints for potential customers to increase revenue opportunities.
- Ensuring that our brand is strong, effective and consistent throughout the Campaign.
- Producing a range of merchandise that has wide appeal, increases awareness of the Campaign, improves our image with a wider audience, and generates a surplus.
- Exploring opportunities to further commercialise our offering to increase surplus generated.

Our campaigning and resources will be organised around the three pillars, mirroring our strategic focus:

- Pubs
- Pints
- People

Each pillar will host one major, time-limited and measurable campaign at any given time.

There are different legislative challenges in specific UK nations, for example, in Northern Ireland. Where required, specific campaigns will be developed to replace, or run alongside, broader UK-wide campaigns.

Example of annual campaigns under each pillar:

	Pubs	**Pints**	**People**
Goals	Reduce pub and club closures	Increase the quality and availability of live beer, real cider and perry	Build a welcoming, diverse and efficient volunteer culture
Actions	Campaign for stronger and more effective legislation to reduce the tax burden and reform business rates. Provide an end-to-end 'pub saving' advice service to help local communities take action.	Fight for proper access to market to allow licensees to buy from independent and local producers. Actively campaign against misleading industry practices and champion cellarmanship.	A review of our structure to remove barriers for volunteers. Celebrate and encourage volunteering through sharing best practice.
Cross cutting	Encourage excellence and celebrate through focused awards and accreditation for pubs, pints and people		

Our commercial strategy

We will leverage our brand and interactions to directly finance our campaigning objectives, by:

- Maximising opportunities from our festivals to drive revenue, increase interactions and act as a capture point for moving interested consumers up 'Interaction Ladders.'
- Exploring new opportunities to commercialise our digital tools and data offerings to diversify our income streams.
- Leveraging our data to provide value that justifies the membership fee and sets our festivals apart from our competitors in a digital first world.
- Building a strong, consistent brand across our digital platform. Branches and festivals will be supported to adopt consistent branding and offerings to increase consumer trust and revenue potential.
- Exploring commercial opportunities through sponsorships and partnerships that align with our pillars but provide non-consumer revenue.
- Diversifying our offering to move beyond a reliance on subscriptions and gate receipts.

Our festivals

Festivals are our most powerful interaction point. They are no longer just social events but are the primary engine for interactions, and operational plans should be geared towards improving interactions and engagement. We will:

- Shift focus away from high-risk national events in favour of sustainable local and cornerstone festivals.
- Improve through centralised branding and equipment, tighter cost controls, and the Festivals of the Future programme to ensure they generate a surplus.
- Promoting campaigning and recruitment alongside promoting consumer choice. Recruiting consumers because of positive engagement will become a core principle of running any CAMRA festival.

Our financial strategy

To remain the UK's leading voice for pubs, pints and people, we must be both ideologically focused and commercially resilient. We will do this by:

- Rebuilding our reserves (following recent investment in our warehouse and office) by running surplus budgets throughout 2026-2028.
- Not relying on speculative income growth; budgets must balance against current revenue, with any growth treated as a "bonus" for future investment.
- Protecting our campaigning funds, and reducing central, regional and branch costs through a focus on core activities and meeting efficiencies.

Operational delivery

CAMRA is led by our volunteers - advised and supported by staff.

Our National Executive, and the key strategic committees it delegates authority to, will use this framework to work with staff to develop operational plans to deliver activity and campaigns to achieve our objectives. Operational plans will be developed, approved and monitored by key strategic committees as part of the annual budget cycle.

Branches, supported by regional structures, will adopt this framework to ensure campaigning activities, events and festivals apply the concepts of pillars, interactions and engagement.

