

Public Relations Toolkit

For CAMRA Branches



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The CAMRA Press Office is more than happy to assist you with any of this material. Please feel free to contact us on press@camra.org.uk or on 01727 337 863.

Introduction

Every organisation, no matter how large or small, ultimately depends on its reputation for survival and success.

CAMRA's reputation as a brand is powerfully shaped not only by our dedicated volunteers, but also by the press – which impacts on how consumers, brewers, licensees, and members of the industry see us.

These perceptions drive decisions that shape how successful we are as a campaigning organisation. A brewer might decide to partner with us at a beer festival based on an article they read last week, or a beer lover could decide to volunteer after listening to a radio interview with their regional director.

Public Relations is all about reputation. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and the outside world.

As a local volunteer, you are responsible for upholding CAMRA's reputation and are best-placed to build strong relationships with the local media. Whether you use this guide to help promote a local beer festival or to brief a spokesperson ahead of a radio interview, we hope to provide you with the tools you need to protect and promote the reputation of CAMRA in your area.

This toolkit aims to provide instructions on the approved practices for public relations activity, which includes working with the press, issuing press releases and utilising media such as images and video content.

We are always happy to provide additional support and advice. Simply get in touch via press@camra.org.uk or call 01727 798 452.

Building relationships

Whether you already know your local journalists or are brand new to the role, building up strong relationships with the local press is key for good public relations. When pitching a story for the media, you should consider your strategy in advance – who to speak to, how to approach them, what type of story they will be interested in, etc.

The most important thing to bear in mind is what the journalist will find interesting and to pitch that angle as succinctly as possible. Journalists are usually hard-pressed for content and incredibly busy, so the more information you can provide as easily as possible, the better.

Who are your local media?

Identify which media outlets are relevant to your area and therefore most likely to cover local news stories. Local media are usually comprised of:

- ✓ Print media – who are your local papers? Have you had much contact with them before? If you are contacting them for the first time, you can Google their phone number and speak to someone on the news desk. When you first get in touch, ask them if they also cover the wider area and/ or if the story you are talking to them about will be put on their website.
- ✓ Broadcast media – who are your local radio/TV stations? As with print media – the first thing to do is speak to someone on the news desk. Ask them if the news story you are discussing will also be put on their website (Heart FM has regional websites as do ITV and BBC News).
- ✓ Online media – are there any local websites you want to be included on? Have a chat with their website editors, most are attached to groups of newspapers (for example, www.thisisgloucestershire.co.uk is the website for the Gloucester Citizen and the Gloucestershire Echo)

If you need any help compiling a media list, please contact the communications team on press@camra.org.uk who can help.

What stories are the press interested in?

Generally speaking, your local media will be interested in stories with a local angle that affects residents in the area. Stories the press is likely to be interested in include:

- ✓ Local beer festivals
- ✓ Awards, such as Pub of the Year
- ✓ CAMRA campaigns in the area
- ✓ Regional statistics
- ✓ Local perspectives on national news

It's best not to contact the press about internal politics or branch meetings, as they are only of interest to CAMRA members.

Approaching the press

Once you've decided on your angle and the best person to contact, you should consider the best way to approach them.

Some tips are as follows:

- ✓ A press release is a great way to present your news story in an easy-to-digest format for the press. More tips on how to write and structure a release will follow.
- ✓ Timing-wise, press releases should be issued at the start of the week and at the start of the day. Press releases issued at 5pm on a Friday are rarely picked up.
- ✓ Consider calling a journalist in advance of sending a release through to increase the chances of it being picked up.
- ✓ Arrange a coffee/beer with local journalists to introduce yourself, let them know what type of stories you can provide and begin building that relationship.
- ✓ Consider pitching to journalists directly on twitter - track #journorequest and #mediarequest hashtags for opportunities to share a release or case study.

As a representative of CAMRA, you should exercise caution, sound judgement and common sense in interviews, press releases and in meetings. You should always adhere to CAMRA's values and code of conduct and ensure that you are never libellous, insulting or discriminatory. You should also ensure that you do not represent a political bias or infringe copyrights. More information on legal obligations will follow.

When liaising with journalists on behalf of CAMRA, you are representing the organisation as a whole and not yourself. Anything you say can and will be reported as a 'CAMRA spokesperson', so please keep personal opinions to a minimum.

National news should always be passed directly on to the CAMRA communications team on press@camra.org.uk

Writing a press release

A 2018 study by a PR agency found that press releases are still the number one source for finding out more information about a story, though the format and content should be tweaked to cut through the volume of releases that journalists and news outlets receive.

It also found that most journalists are now expected to turn around a minimum of seven stories per day, so the more information that you can give them and the easier you can make it for them, the better.

Quick wins to help your release get picked up:

- ✓ **Headline** – use short, snappy headlines, and consider puns. Including the name of the media title in the subject line will increase open rate but this is difficult to do when sending emails en masse.
- ✓ **Typos and spelling errors** make the recipient switch off – give the press release a good proofread before you hit send, and ideally, ask someone else to check it too.
- ✓ **Journalists prefer to receive press releases in plain text, not HTML.**
- ✓ **Sending releases with big files is a bugbear** – use Dropbox for image files or use a programme such as compressor.io to reduce the size
- ✓ **Include contact information** – although it has been previously recommended, the new guidance is not to bury these details at the bottom of the release.
- ✓ **Consider sending a release under embargo** – i.e. for an awards presentation you could notify the press that the announcement and event will happen on a certain day in advance but ask them not to report on the story until that day, which can help them planning-wise.
- ✓ **If you send out a release over email, do make sure to BCC all press contacts.**

Things to consider before sending:

- ✓ **Is there an interesting angle to the story?** E.g. a new brewery bar at a festival, or a celebrity attendee?
- ✓ **Do you have a comprehensive list of all local media outlets, including newspapers, magazines and radio stations?**
- ✓ **Do you know which newspapers will be interested in the story** – e.g. have an interest in local events?
- ✓ **Does the release need to be tailored to specific types of publications?**
- ✓ **Do you have a spokesperson ready and prepped to deal with any press enquiries that may come through?**

Structuring your press release

When structuring your press release, you should ensure all the key points of the release are at the top with additional information added according to its relevance and newsworthiness.

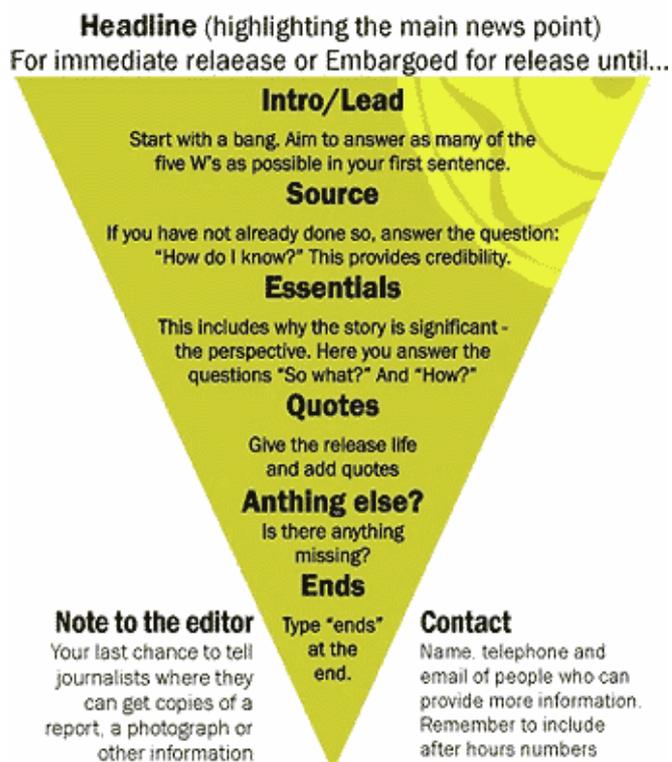
Imagine how you would tell a friend a story and bring it alive with quotes and images. End with additional information, notes to editors and contact information.

Make sure to include the 5 “W”s:

- ✓ Who – is organising it?
- ✓ What – is happening?
- ✓ When – is it happening?
- ✓ Where – is it taking place?
- ✓ Why – is it an annual event etc?

Generally speaking, the two most important elements are the WHEN and WHERE.

Press Release Format



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Press release template

[If under embargo make clear and in red]

Date

Eye-catching headline

Image

For more information, contact [name] on [phone number] or [email]

Paragraph 1 - Highlight the importance of the news in this paragraph usually within three or four lines. What is the story you want to announce and include the name, date and details of the event or story?

Paragraph 2 - Further explanation, statistics, background, or other details relevant to the news. A little more information about the event – why it is taking place, how many times it has taken place etc.

Quote from a contributor: three or four lines long – summing up the event or announcement. Make sure all quotes are signed off and agreed by the speaker.

Paragraph 3 - Any other information.

Ends

Link to video / additional photos

Media Contact:

Local press contact or you can include CAMRA Press Office press@camra.org.uk
01727 337 863.

Notes to editors

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is a not-for-profit consumer group with nearly 200,000 members that has been operating since 1971. Our vision is to have quality real ale and thriving pubs in every community.

Incorporating videos & graphics

Today's journalists are desperate for content that can be used to accompany stories published online. As most people have easily accessible, good quality cameras in their pockets via their smartphones, providing this content couldn't be easier.

Including photos in your press release is a great way to bring a press release to life and increase the chances of it being covered by your local papers. However, you should be very mindful of what photos you send out to the press – both in terms of the images used, as well as ensuring that copyrights are protected!

If there isn't a suitable image to include with the release you can consider taking your own photos for the media – this is particularly powerful for local campaigns to save pubs or at local beer festivals.

If you employ models for your photo you will need to ask them to sign a photo release form (available on the following page). General snaps of a group of people attending a beer festival are excluded from this as they are in a public setting.

Programmes such as [Canva](#) are free and user-friendly ways to create graphics and audiences are increasingly enjoying short videos and gifs – you can create these with Instagram stories, Boomerang or even create professional-looking videos using a smartphone app.

Example of a CAMRA branded image:



More information and support on creating videos can be found in the [Social Media Toolkit](#).

Types of photos to send to the press

- ✓ Posed group photos (as appropriate)
- ✓ Natural action photos or ones that capture the essence of the event (e.g. next to signs/branding, at the venue)
- ✓ Quality high-resolution photos

Types of photos not to send to the press

- ✓ Photos of people drinking alone or excessively.

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- ✓ Photos that portray CAMRA in a negative light.
- ✓ Dark, low-resolution photos.

You should try not to send too many photos as attachments to the press as many spam filters will automatically block e-mails with large attachments. Choose just 1-2 good photos to share, or create an album on Dropbox that you can provide a link in your original e-mail with information on the copyright status of the photos.

When sending out a video with your press release, please consider:

- ✓ Embedding the video on your branch website (not YouTube) and sending the link in the email.
- ✓ Transcribing the video and put this on the same page on the website - this saves journalists having to watch and stop/start the video to transcribe the video.
- ✓ Including transcriptions of quotes and make these clear on the webpage so journalists can quickly copy and paste.
- ✓ If possible using captions or subtitles on the video to ensure messages aren't lost for those watching with no sound.
- ✓ Videos should be short – 60-90 seconds for a news story and 30 seconds for follow up content.

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Photo permission form for models

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE (CAMRA) LTD

Photo Permission Form

Name of individual: Date:

Address of Individual: Tel no:

..... E-mail:

Location of the photoshoot:

I am over 16 and able to give consent for myself

I am under 16 and have a parent/ guardian providing consent for me

I understand that:

- These images may be used, either in print or electronically, in any publicity and public information materials produced by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).
- Copyright for photographs belongs to the photographer. The copyright for videos and/or interviews belongs to the Campaign for Real Ale.
- The Campaign for Real Ale is a not-for-profit, voluntary organisation. This material may be used by CAMRA's national office and also be shared with CAMRA's branches and volunteers to use in their work.

Signature: Date:

Parent/ guardian signature.....

Inviting media to an event

It can sometimes be helpful to consider inviting the media to your event, where they will have the chance to take photos, conduct interviews and get an “on the ground perspective” of the event. This approach can also help build relationships and encourage positive coverage in the future. Please note that media should not be invited to internal CAMRA branch or committee meetings unless they themselves are CAMRA members.

If you have press attending one of your events, please ensure that you:

- ✓ Have a spokesperson(s) available to speak to them.
- ✓ Provide the journalist with a point of contact and phone number.
- ✓ Consider providing the journalist with a few beer tokens at festivals.
- ✓ Use the opportunity to explain what CAMRA is all about and any interesting local news with the branch.
- ✓ Always be friendly and polite. One bad meeting can tarnish a paper’s perspective of the local branch indefinitely.

Taking part in interviews

Being interviewed by the press can be a daunting experience for anyone – even the most experienced PR professional. The key is to keep calm and practice your messages in advance. Extensive preparation, a clear idea of what you want to say and how to say it is essential.

Logistics

- ✓ Try to arrive well before your interview so that you can gather your thoughts and sort out any technical problems.
- ✓ Make sure you check your appearance before going on TV – avoid brightly patterned shirts/jackets or a lot of jewellery.
- ✓ Try to relax – your body language and appearance can matter as much as what you actually say.
- ✓ If the interviewer is with you look at them and not at the camera.
- ✓ Stay calm – if you have prepared thoroughly you should be able to handle whatever is thrown at you.

Approach

- ✓ When you speak to the media, don’t panic, take your time – take a deep breath and speak slowly and clearly.
- ✓ What are your key messages?
- ✓ Say the most important facts first.

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- ✓ What do you need to get across in the interview?
- ✓ Listen to the question that is asked and think about what you want to say before you speak. Anticipate the reporter's questions, especially the hard ones.
- ✓ You are the expert – be confident and make eye contact with the interviewer.
- ✓ Always correct inaccuracies straight away – it would be worse if you leave it to be corrected at a later date!
- ✓ Keep a sense of humour and react in a human way – don't be robotic!

Your answers

- ✓ Avoiding one-word answers, keep answers short and to the point.
- ✓ Make sure your response can stand on its own – the journalist's question may be edited out. This is especially important for television and radio interviews.
- ✓ Repeated questions – sometimes reporters ask the same questions a number of times – stick to your messages.

Be aware

- ✓ Don't use too much jargon – simplify your language.
- ✓ If you don't know the answer, make sure you communicate that (I will have to clarify etc) – and say what you do know the answer to.
- ✓ You are never off the record. Never say anything you do not want to read in print, hear on the radio or see on television or the internet.
- ✓ Don't repeat negative questions in your response – they could be attributed to you.
- ✓ Never ever say 'no comment'.
- ✓ If you are asked to speculate – don't! Stick to the facts.

Golden rules

- ✓ It should feel like a conversation.
- ✓ Successful interviews are 95% preparation, 5% improvising.
- ✓ The media don't owe you a quote and they are not there to "sell" CAMRA for you. It's up to you to make CAMRA/ the story interesting.

Interviewing on Skype/ Facetime

Broadcast media outlets are increasingly choosing to interview over Skype or via Facetime because the connection can be much better than over a phone. Stay positive, calm and try to make yourself as comfortable as you can.

- ✓ Make sure you are in a quiet room and that anyone else who may be in your house knows not to interrupt (as happened to this [BBC interviewee](#)).
- ✓ Very often, cameras are attached to a laptop or a mobile, which is sitting on a desk. This can mean the camera looks straight up your nose! The best pictures are achieved when the camera is level with your eye line – consider putting a large book or box under your computer if you need to raise it a little higher.
- ✓ TV is landscape, so make sure to rotate your device if using Facetime or a phone.
- ✓ Interviews look dull if the camera is pointing towards a plain wall. Angle the camera so that you can see the environment you are in.
- ✓ If you are indoors, try not to point the camera directly towards a window as that is likely to result in either in you looking too dark, or the sky looking too bright.
- ✓ Close any programmes other than Skype that are open on your device and switch off your mobile phone once the call is connected. The first person you will speak to will usually be a test to make sure the sound and picture are fine.
- ✓ Once the line is checked, the programme editor will usually let you know where your interview fits into the programme and how long it will last. Wait until you hear the presenter introduce you by name – then you will know you are live on air and the interview has begun.
- ✓ If you have any problems or need to speak to someone, the best person to call is usually the producer who booked the interview or the press team at CAMRA.

Press page on websites

Most CAMRA branches already have a local website in place, which is a hugely important resource for sharing information and updating branch members and the public about events.

CAMRA offers a website builder tool called “Beer Engine” to support branch website creation. In addition, CAMRA can also centrally host branch websites. Please contact CAMRA IT for more information.

Journalists will often look at the website for more information before calling up to ask you a question. Therefore having as much information online as possible is preferred. As a branch, you can consider hosting a ‘media hub’ for local journalists to find and download information – an example of which can be viewed on the national site here: <https://www.camra.org.uk/about/media-centre/>

Some tips on setting up a page

- ✓ Host content on press page and contain links in releases back to the press page.
- ✓ Consider publishing spokesperson bios with their areas of expertise and share examples of their previous interviews if possible.
- ✓ Prepare case studies and make them easy to find - journalists want access to as many details as possible to make it easy for them to do lengthy feature pieces. We often get asked for stories about pubs that are currently at risk, pubs that have been saved by the community, info on local breweries etc. It’s worth taking some time to prepare details of pubs in your area that fit this criterion and think about displaying them on your website and linking to them in relevant releases.
- ✓ Keep your navigation simple and include images

Potential legal risks

There are several legal issues that you must be aware of as a social media account manager.

Copyright

Copyright infringement occurs when a publication reproduces work without seeking permission or negotiating payment for the use of that work. Severe financial penalties can be levied for copyright infringement.

Just about everything is copyrighted. Anything which has been “created” automatically attracts copyright and the creator does not need to register for copyright or make any indication work is copyrighted in order to benefit from the protection of the law.

This includes material available on the internet. Just because something has been posted online, or appears in a search, does not mean it is in the public domain and free of copyright. It is safest to assume that you cannot use anything you find online, unless permission is sought from the copyright owner for its use, or the material is

clearly identified as royalty-free or has explicit permission for use by others. Preferably use a link to the content instead.

Similarly, branch volunteers often give up their time or skill to provide photos, artwork/logos and written work for branch activities, such as branch magazines or websites. Bear in mind that they, not the branch, holds the copyright. They may choose to withdraw permission to use the work they have created - especially if a member has fallen out with a branch! It would be advisable to seek written permission for ongoing usage of copyrighted work from any volunteer who supplies it for branch activities.

Example:

A branch used the "I Love NY" logo in its festival branding. This attracted the attention of the legal firm representing the City of New York which contacted the branch.

The firm threatened legal action against the branch unless they paid tens of thousands of pounds in royalties.

While we successfully negotiated an agreement for the use of the logo, this still ended up costing CAMRA hundreds of pounds.

What to do if you infringe someone's copyright

- ✓ Acknowledge receipt of any communications - ignoring it doesn't make it go away
- ✓ Don't make any statements or acknowledgements of responsibility which could potentially be used against you - inform them that you're investigating the issue and will get back to them
- ✓ Contact the CAMRA communications team on press@camra.org.uk who can give you advice on negotiating a settlement

CAMRA's Media Library

As a volunteer for your local branch, you have access to a wealth of images in the online media library available [here](#) – password is c@mr@d@m. All images in the library are copyright-free and therefore available to share with the media.

Libel

Libel occurs when someone publishes a defamatory statement about another identifiable person.

Defamation is a slightly woolly concept often argued in court, but essentially it's publishing something which would cause an ordinary person to think less of the person the statement is about.

To bring a libel action the claimant (the person who claims they have been defamed) only needs to prove:

- ✓ that the published statement is defamatory
- ✓ that it identifies or refers to them
- ✓ that it has been published to a third party
- ✓ that the statement caused, or is likely to cause, serious harm (in the case of bodies trading for profit, they must prove it has caused serious financial loss)

It's important to note that the claimant does not have to prove the statement is false. The onus falls on the person who has published the statement to prove that it is true.

The Defamation Act 2013 added in the requirement to prove "serious harm" had been caused, but did not define what this mean - leaving it to the courts to judge whether "serious harm" had been caused. There have been few cases since to set precedent and further clarify what this means.

Like copyright, publishing defamatory material does not just put the branch at risk of action, it potentially risks the whole of CAMRA, its finances and reputation.

If in any doubt, don't do it. We don't have deep enough pockets to publish and be damned, or to fund expensive court cases to defend ourselves against actions. Consider the value of publishing potentially defamatory information - is there another way of writing it, or do you have to publish it at all in order to achieve our objectives?

As with copyright, if you have any issues concerning libel, get in contact with CAMRA's communication team as soon as possible on press@camra.org.uk

Identification

Identification is one of the largest pitfalls when it comes to defamation and often unintended defamation can occur when someone is trying hard to avoid creating a libel risk.

At its most straightforward, identification is when you name someone and make a defamatory statement about them such as: "Tom Stainer, who runs the Orange Lion in St Albans, embezzles money from his pub company."

However you can risk identifying someone even if you don't name them such as by saying: "the licensee of the Orange Lion has been embezzling money from his pub company."

But enough people will know who the licensee of the Orange Lion in St Albans is - so Tom could still claim he has been identified and defamed.

Even trying to be vague can get you into trouble – such as: "a licensee of a pub in Hatfield Road embezzles money from his pub company."

If there's only one pub on Hatfield Road, you've identified him. Worse still, you're now running the risk of group identification. Say there are five pub company pubs on Hatfield Road - now all five licensees can claim people might think you are referring to them, and have harmed their reputation. You could be facing five libel actions -

and even if you have robust evidence about the original licensee, you will have no way of proving the statement applies to the other four.

Defences against a libel action

1. It was true

You can provide a complete defence against a libel case if you can prove the statement made was “substantially true”. The onus is on the defendant to prove the allegation, so if you are knowingly publishing something defamatory you have to be confident that you could prove it in court if necessary.

Bear this in mind when repeating rumour or gossip, or reporting facts from anonymous sources. Will those sources back you up in court if it comes to it?

2. It’s honest opinion

Designed to allow people to speak their opinions freely, use of this defence needs to satisfy several criteria:

- ✓ the defamatory statement was a statement of opinion (in other words, it is clearly comment, rather than a statement of fact)
- ✓ the defamatory statement must contain in general terms, the facts on which the opinion is based
- ✓ an “honest” person could have held a similar opinion based on any fact which existed at the time of publication; and/or anything asserted to be a fact in a privileged statement published before the defamatory statement

Like much in law, a great deal of this is open to interpretation and argument - so like the truth defence, think very carefully before knowingly publishing something defamatory even if you think you might be able to justify it as honest opinion.

Public interest

A libel action might be defeated if it can be shown that there was a reasonable belief that making the statement was in the public interest.

This can be a complicated and lengthy defence as definition of public interest can be very wide (although precedent suggests something simply being “newsworthy” does not make it public interest). A successful defence on grounds of public interest would also need to explore attempts made to verify the truth of what is being published, the nature of the sources of information and the extent to which the claimant was given an opportunity to respond or comment.

This suggests that a public interest defence needs to be backed up with robust evidence of editorial consideration and judgement in deciding to publish - meaning hoping to claim public interest after the fact is likely to be problematic.

Privilege

Qualified privilege allows publication of reports from things like court cases, where defamatory things might be said. To benefit from this defence the reporting needs to be a fair and accurate report of the proceedings made without malice.

As the defences above, relying on this defence requires confidence that you are reporting on a proceeding covered by qualified privilege, and that you are doing so in a fair and balanced way.

Not defences against a libel action

- ✓ They can't prove they didn't do what I'm claiming - see above, the plaintiff does not have to prove the statement is false, you have to prove it is true
- ✓ It's satire/comedy/a joke - judges are not famous for their sense of humour and you don't want to base a legal defence on how hilarious you think you might be
- ✓ It's "campaigning" - regardless of how right you may think you are, or how worthy the cause, this does not give you licence to say what you want about people, or companies, without robust evidence
- ✓ Someone else printed it - just because another publication has made an allegation, this doesn't mean you can safely repeat it. They may be facing a court case already. They may not have attracted attention, but you might. They may have access to evidence to defend themselves which you don't. Don't forget that every publication of a defamatory statement creates a new risk of libel - while time may have run out on the original defamation, if you republish it, a plaintiff may have a new case against you
- ✓ We just published someone else's opinion - a libel action can be mounted against everyone who took part in distributing the libel, from the original writer, the editor of a publication, the publisher of a publication and even - theoretically - the person who physically delivered it.
- ✓ We have a disclaimer - no disclaimer provides you with protection from legal action if you publish defamatory information

What you should do

- ✓ Ensure you understand what defamation is and the risks associated with libel actions
- ✓ If in any doubt, get in touch with CAMRA's communications team for further information
- ✓ Understand the branch responsibility in producing publications
- ✓ Ensure processes are in place to proof read and check magazines (and web content) for risky material
- ✓ Consider the value of publishing risky material and if in doubt - don't do it

What if the worst happens?

If you are contacted by someone claiming they believe they have been defamed by a branch publication:

- ✓ Acknowledge receipt of any communications, ignoring it doesn't make it go away
- ✓ Do not make any admission of fault, or offer of recompense
- ✓ Inform them that you will investigate and get back to them
- ✓ Contact the CAMRA communications team for advice

Additional Resources

For further information or support, please contact press@camra.org.uk

There are additional resources available in the Volunteers' Area of the website, which includes:

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Membership Charter](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Complaints Procedure](#)

[Brand Guidelines](#)

If you are also responsible for Press & Publicity or Social Media for your branch, please also refer to the associated toolkits for those roles.

[Press & Publicity](#)

[Branch Magazine](#)

There are also a number of free training resources, such as the below:

[Facebook Blueprint](#)