

Branch Website Guidelines

For CAMRA Branches

Branch Website Guidelines

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The CAMRA volunteer Branch Website Support Team is more than happy to assist you with any of this material. Please feel free to contact us at support@branchwebsites.camra.org.uk.



Branch Website Guidelines

Introduction

Branch websites have become an essential component of CAMRA's communication. Kept up to date with Branch information and wider information about CAMRA, they provide an opportunity to connect the Campaign with your local community.

A 'shop window' for the local branch, each website has the potential to convert the casual pub-goer or beer lover into a member and demonstrate the tangible benefits of getting involved.

By the same token, websites can also do a lot of reputational damage to the Campaign. Branch websites should therefore adhere to CAMRA's policies to ensure that they represent the campaign in the most positive light possible.

These guidelines aim to provide clear guidance on the responsibilities of Branch Website Coordinators, sometimes known as 'Webmaster', which are summarised in the document which can be found at <https://members.camra.org.uk/volunteers-area/branch-resources/branch-information/> under Publicity Roles.

Notwithstanding its publicity role, building and maintaining a website requires some IT experience, skills and confidence. For branches wishing to build or replace a website, CAMRA recommends to use either

1. '[BeerEngine](#)', CAMRA's in-house platform, if your Website Coordinator has limited IT experience, or
2. a freely available content management system, the most popular of which among non-BeerEngine CAMRA branch websites is [WordPress](#), for Website Coordinators with website development experience and there are many others available, which may suit your coordinator's experience.

If you use BeerEngine and follow its structure, you are guaranteed a CAMRA-compliant website. Reading the [BeerEngine User Guide](#) will, in any case, give you a clear overview of typical CAMRA Branch Website elements.

We are always happy to review and provide feedback on individual branch websites. Simply get in touch via support@branchwebsites.camra.org.uk

Branch website coordinators can get a wealth of resources and additional support on the [Branch Websites Hub](#) page in the Volunteers area of the CAMRA national website.

These Guidelines will be reviewed annually to ensure they are kept up-to-date.

Please note that the Key Guidelines and Best Practice Guidelines are used by the Branch Website of the Year competition judges.

Important

The guidelines in this document relate to matters of content and layout, but not Brand. Please ensure you also follow the [2025 Brand Guidelines](#) and contact brand@camra.org.uk if you have any questions.

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Key Guidelines

In order to publish a website under CAMRA's name and branding you **should** adhere to the following guidelines:

- ✓ The website should be secure (use https and have an SSL certificate),
- ✓ The website should be mobile-friendly.
- ✓ A contact should be displayed clearly, with appropriate contact details, or alternatively a contact form should be available.
Only a single contact is required at a minimum.
- ✓ A branch diary should be available and be up-to-date with details of where and when meetings and socials are being held.
- ✓ There should be a clear hyperlink to the [national CAMRA website](https://camra.org.uk) (camra.org.uk).
Ideally this link should be on the home page.
- ✓ A link to joining CAMRA should be included i.e. join.camra.org.uk.
Ideally this link should be on the home page.
- ✓ There should be a disclaimer link on the homepage. The disclaimer could be a link to <https://camra.org.uk/terms-conditions/>. A typical disclaimer is “*Except where otherwise indicated, all content © Copyright CAMRA. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the information on this site is accurate and up to date, no responsibility for errors and omissions can be accepted. The views expressed on this site are not necessarily those of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd*”.
- ✓ There should be a privacy policy link on the homepage. The privacy policy could be a link to <https://camra.org.uk/privacy-policy/>.

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Best Practice Guidelines

Alongside the key requirements, Branch Website Coordinators should take into consideration our best practice guidelines to make the most of their website and ensure it is presented as a quality site.

General

- ✓ No content should be offensive, discriminatory or could be considered to bringing the Campaign into disrepute. Content should not have a party-political bias.
- ✓ Defunct campaigns or calls to actions for events that are in the past are only found on archive pages and past posts.
- ✓ Ensure that the website content conveys a branch that is active and enjoyable, and there a variety of different content, e.g. about beer festivals, pub walks, presenting awards.
- ✓ Have acronyms been avoided? And where used have they been explained?
- ✓ Does the website use good spelling and grammar?
- ✓ Are there advertisements or articles about the upcoming Great British Beer Festival and/or Great British Beer Festival Winter? Are there advertisements or articles about prominent regional festivals?
- ✓ Are there advertisements or articles about the Good Beer Guide?

Campaigning

- ✓ Is there content promoting wider campaign activities and future campaigning events? e.g. Good Beer Guide launch, AGM & Members' Weekend, Mild in May, Cider and Perry month and Parliamentary Lobby Days?
- ✓ Does the website encourage visitors to get involved in campaigning, e.g. signing a petition or attending a branch campaigning event or activities?
- ✓ Is there a dedicated, relevant and up-to-date page about local real ale brewers, cider and perry makers?
- ✓ Does the site include personal anecdotes of members' experience of being involved in both local and regional/national volunteering?

The Local Branch

- ✓ Ideally contact details of all the key roles on the branch committee should be given along with a role email address e.g. chair@branch.camra.org.uk.
- ✓ Are visitors able to read information on the key objectives of CAMRA via a link to <https://camra.org.uk/about/who-we-are/>?
- ✓ Is there content about local campaigns?
- ✓ Is there an explanation of the local branch structure and committee members?
- ✓ Is there a clear explanation of the area the branch covers? Is a map included?
- ✓ Is there a link to national, regional or local social media accounts?
- ✓ Is there a dedicated page to local public transport? Are visitors encouraged to use public transport to attend CAMRA events and visit pubs?
- ✓ Are there links to other local branch websites?
- ✓ Is there a clear explanation of how the branch chooses its Pub of the Year, Good Beer Guide inclusions and other awards?
- ✓ Is there a balanced amount of content promoting non-CAMRA social events, offers or news from local breweries, pubs and clubs?
- ✓ Does the website list past winners of the various local?
- ✓ Are there details of local pub trails or other ideas for visitors to try?
- ✓ Does the site include a history of the branch, particularly recent campaigning successes?
- ✓ Does the site explain how the branch fits into the wider Campaign?

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- ✓ Is there a list or map of local breweries and producers?
- ✓ Can visitors engage with the local branch and get involved with campaigning and volunteering directly from the site?

User-Friendliness

- ✓ Is the landing page attractive and engaging?
- ✓ Does the home page avoid having verbose multi-page content, difficult to navigate on a mobile phone?
- ✓ Can every page of the site be reached within three clicks?

Editing

Before your website, or any new pages or posts, go live you should ideally ask another person to proofread the copy. It can be difficult to pick up errors yourself and minor mistakes can make the website appear sloppy and unprofessional.

The basic editorial guidelines for national CAMRA publications is as follows.

Editorial Guidelines

- ✓ Numbers one to ten should be written out in full, numbers 11 and upwards should appear in numerical form
- ✓ Headlines and subtitles do not need punctuation at the end. They should also be written in a larger font and are clear above the following article, to ensure that the reader has context straight away
- ✓ Links shouldn't be too long (avoid www. and https://) and there shouldn't be a full stop at the end
- ✓ Check punctuation
- ✓ If using multiple quotation marks within a sentence, make sure you complete both sets of quotes, e.g. "CAMRA now neutral on 'cask breathers'" not 'CAMRA now neutral on 'cask breathers'
- ✓ Beer styles do not need capitalisation, unless they included in the name of a beer e.g. *Siren Brewery's Broken Dream Breakfast Stout* should have capitalisation, *the selection of bitters and stouts* should not
- ✓ Only capitalise names, places, dates, acronyms (see below)
- ✓ When using acronyms (e.g. POTY, COTY, CBOB), make sure you write out what they stand for the first time you use them: e.g. CAMRA announced their winner of the *Champion Beer of Britain (CBOB)* - after this you can refer to the award as CBOB
- ✓ The names of publications (including your own website!) should be italicised
- ✓ Where possible, include a photo with an article
- ✓ Do not reproduce or copy an article from another publication, unless given express permission. If you have had permission, it is good practice to include a short line paying tribute, e.g. *Article first published in <insert publication name and issue number or date here>*
- ✓ Before introducing a quote, outline who has said it and their title e.g. *Alex Metcalfe, CAMRA's Learning and Discovery manager said...*
- ✓ When quoting someone's speech, use double marks "like this" not single marks 'like this'. If the quote needs to be split into separate paragraphs, you should start the new line with " to indicate the quote has continued. You should only use closing quotation marks when the quote has ended
- ✓ The closing quotation mark should follow the punctuation, as shown in the example above. An exception is if the quote is embedded into the sentence e.g. *Alex continued to explain the importance of pubs in the UK, stating that they are "necessary for communities", among other benefits*

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Potential legal risks

As a Branch Website Coordinator, you are responsible for ensuring that the content you produce under CAMRA's brand is truthful, authentic and non-libellous.

Legally speaking, CAMRA is recognised as a single organisation. While it may not seem worth taking legal action against an individual branch with very limited funds, legal infringements (including copyright and libel) could expose the entire Campaign to potentially ruinous legal costs and financial penalties.

It is therefore very important that Branch Website Coordinators familiarise themselves with copyright and libel laws to avoid potential pitfalls.

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 websites or websites. Bear in mind that they, not the branch, hold 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.

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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

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.

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, such as when someone makes a defamatory statement such as “the licensee of the Orange Lion has been embezzling money from his pub company.” If enough people know who the licensee is, then the defendant could still claim he has been identified and defamed.

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. As Branch Website Coordinator, you should ensure you are familiar with defamation and the risks associated with libel action. Processes should be in place to proofread and check websites and web content for risky materials.

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

What to do if you produce something libellous

- ✓ Acknowledge receipt of any communications
- ✓ 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

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Additional Resources

As a volunteer for your local branch, you have access to a wealth of images in the [CAMRA Image Library \(digital asset library\)](#). More information is here: [CAMRA Digital Asset Library](#)

All images in the online media library are copyright-free and therefore available to share with the media.

Access is on three levels:

- Not logged in (see the least, mainly for media through press releases)
- Members logged in (see more but not everything)
- People logged with volunteer positions, including magazine and website editors etc (can see everything).

For further information or support on branch website production, please contact support@branchwebsites.camra.org.uk

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

[Branch Websites Hub](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Membership Charter](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure](#)

[Brand Hub](#)

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

[Press, Publicity and Social Media](#)