

Campaigners plead for a cut in beer tax

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has marked 1 September as 'Pub Tax Day' and has used the occasion to call for reductions in the tax charged on draught beer to halt the decline in Britain's pubs and to keep beer affordable.

With four months, or one third, of the year remaining, Pub Tax Day marks the point after which everything spent on beer in pubs for the rest of the year will effectively go straight into the taxman's pocket. One third of the price of a pint of beer is made up of the cost of taxes.

The Campaign is calling on the Government to use their next Budget to shake up the beer tax regime so that for the first time it redresses the imbalance between the cost of drinking socially in community pubs and consuming alcohol at home.

CAMRA are using the symbolic day to urge the Government to seize this opportunity to give Britain's beleaguered pubs a shot in the arm and immediately slash duty specifically on draught beer – helping community locals to compete with supermarkets.

If Britain leaves the EU on 31 October, it will allow the Government to charge different rates of tax on beer depending on where and how it is served – and for the first time levy different rates which reflect the huge social and community benefits that pubs bring.

The calls come ahead of CAMRA's annual Parliamentary reception

on September 3, the first day MPs return to Westminster after the summer recess, where they will be urging MPs to back their calls for cuts in beer tax as well as reforms to the business rates system which has been crippling for pubs.

Nik Antona, CAMRA's National Chairman said: "On Pub Tax Day, many pub goers will be shocked to find out that a third of the price of a pint of beer is going directly to taxes, rates and charges and not to helping to keep local pubs open, alive and thriving.

"Pubs are a vital part of the social fabric of our communities. The Government should be doing everything it can to support them in order to reduce the levels of pub closures.

"The uncertainty surrounding leaving the EU is understandably a concern for those in the beer and pub industry – but a commitment to cutting tax on beer served in pubs and reducing prices for consumers would at least offer some hope to local pubs.

"A lower rate of tax served in pubs would also level the playing field between cheap supermarket alcohol consumed at home and beer sold in a community pub."

Image courtesy of Ugli Fruit Media