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Carlsberg Britvic proposes closing Marston’s Brewery in Burton, risking 310 jobs

The company said the brewery and its main logistics site could shut in 2027 after years of falling cask ale demand.

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Carlsberg Britvic has proposed closing Marston’s Brewery in Burton upon Trent in the summer of 2027, a move that could put about 310 jobs at risk at the brewery and its main logistics operation, according to Business Matters and the company’s own statement on the plan.

The brewer said it informed employees and trade union representatives on Thursday that it wants to shut the brewery and the primary logistics site based there as part of a broader restructuring of its ale business. The proposal is subject to consultation, and the company said both the brewery and the logistics operation are expected to keep

running during the transition while discussions continue.

In a statement dated Oct. 8, Carlsberg Britvic said the decision was driven by a long decline in the cask ale market and by what it described as a need to create greater long-term value. The company said some priority ale brands, including Hobgoblin, McEwan’s and Brooklyn, would remain in its multi-beverage portfolio. It also said it is seeking new owners for other cask and regional ale brands, though it did not identify which brands might be sold or name any potential buyers.

Paul Davies, chief executive of Carlsberg Britvic, said the proposal reflected changes in consumer demand and the weakening position of traditional cask ale in Britain. He said UK cask ale volumes have fallen by more than half in less than a decade and that the trend is expected to continue.

“It is my role to ensure Carlsberg Britvic’s multi-beverage portfolio is focused where consumers are today, and where customer demand is growing,” Davies said in the company statement. He added that smaller ale brands still have loyal followings and said the company would try to help them continue under “more specialist or local ownership” in the future.

The announcement affects one of the best-known brewing locations in England. Burton upon Trent has long been associated with British beer production, and Business Matters reported that the Marston’s site has been operating for nearly 200 years. Davies said the brewery’s history and its role in Burton are “iconic,” and he said the proposal was not a reflection on the workforce.

The company said it would make efforts to support affected staff during the consultation process. It did not publish expected savings from the closure, and it did not provide production figures or capacity data that would allow a direct measure of any reduction in ale output.

The plan follows Carlsberg’s full takeover of the brewing business that had operated as a joint venture with Marston’s. In July 2024, Carlsberg bought Marston’s PLC’s remaining 40% stake in Carlsberg Marston’s Brewing Company, giving it full ownership of the brewing operation, including Marston’s Brewery and its beer brand portfolio.

Carlsberg Britvic said the current consultation is being carried out by Carlsberg Britvic and does not involve Marston’s PLC.

The proposed closure comes as Britain’s cask ale market remains under pressure. Business Matters cited NielsenIQ data showing that the volume of cask ale sold in British pubs fell by 7.1% in 2025, after dropping 11.2% the year before. Those declines add to several years of weaker demand in a category that has faced changing drinking habits, rising costs and a shift toward other beer styles and drinks categories.

The wider brewery sector has also been shrinking. Business Matters reported that the number of breweries in the United Kingdom stood at 1,550 on June 30, down from 1,634 a year earlier, according to the UK Brewery Tracker compiled by the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates, known as SIBA. The same report said 2025 brought record closures across the country, and that the tracker showed a net loss of 16 breweries in the first six months of 2026, following a net loss of 137 during all of 2025.

SIBA Chief Executive Andy Slee said in August, according to Business Matters, that closure numbers might be starting to stabilize after several very difficult years, but he warned that many brewers were still under strain. The publication also cited figures from accountancy firm UHY Hacker Young showing that 43 breweries became insolvent in the year to February 2025.

Marston’s Brewery is not the only traditional beer site to face retrenchment. Business Matters noted that Banks’s Brewery in Wolverhampton, another historic brewery once owned through the Carlsberg Marston’s Brewing Company, closed last year. It also pointed to Greene King’s decision in May to sell the Old Speckled Hen brand to Damm UK, another sign of structural pressure in the cask ale business.

The proposal has already drawn criticism from campaigners linked to traditional beer. Business Matters reported that Ash Corbett-Collins, national chairman of the Campaign for Real Ale, called the decision “an absolute disgrace” and said Burton’s place at the center of British brewing made the announcement especially damaging for the town.

For now, Carlsberg Britvic has not said how the consultation could change the final outcome or whether parts of the Burton operation could be preserved in another form. The company has also not set out any detailed plans for the transfer of brands beyond saying that Hobgoblin, McEwan’s and Brooklyn will stay in its portfolio and that it is looking for new homes for other cask and regional ales.