

**Brewers' Research and Education Fund,  
Grant Report  
Club Soda  
April 2021**

1. **Project Title:**  
Low and No Alcohol Beer Summit
  
2. **Project Summary:**  
(Maximum 200 words, a full project proposal must be appended to this application):

Based on the work we did in 2018 and early 2019 with BREF funding, we want to host a national low and no alcohol beer summit in 2020 that will allow us to:

- Bring together all the UK brewers brewing or considering brewing low or no alcohol beers
- Share the full findings from our research so far and discuss :
  - areas of interest to work together on in the future
  - education on the challenges of brewing low and no alcohol beers
  - how to educate consumers and the trade to boost the profile of low and no alcohol beers
  - ways of collaboration to support challenger brands in this space
  - taking forward the recommendations from our research.
- Continue to keep the sector updated, and bring the brewers together to discuss strategies for changing the labelling descriptors for low and alcohol beers
- Get a steer from the sector on how Club Soda can mobilize customers as vocal champions for low and no beer, both in terms of raising its profile and campaigning
- Raise the profile of low and no alcohol beer in the trade media
- Produce a report of the outcomes of the event.

3. **Covid Amendments**

Initially the conference was planned for April 2020. This was cancelled once the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Initially we hoped to be able to organise the event in November 2020. When it became evident that this would not be possible either, we decided to dissect the conference into a series of monthly online roundtables, accessible for free to all beer brands and future brewers.

The evaluation is below.

#### 4. Roundtable events

Since June 2020 we have organised the following roundtable events:

##### **Boosting the popularity of low and no post lockdown - Thursday 18th June**

As you may know, AB inBev has invested in a pilot to help us grow clubsodaguide.com this year as part of their 100+ accelerator programme. So we are also focusing on how we can promote brands and the venues in which they are served, and build the audience of fans of low and no in the UK and beyond.

*We want to know how we can use this opportunity to work together, to make the most of the opportunities ahead, and amplify all our individual efforts as well as look at collaborative ideas.*

- *What will the appetite be for low and no drinks post-lockdown? Is there some research needed?*
- *Using the Club Soda Guide as a platform to promote low and no post-lockdown. Any collaboration ideas?*
- *Training on low and no. We have built our training programme for venue managers and staff - how can we use it?*

##### **Data and insights - Wednesday 23rd September**

Diving into data: how can we use research to improve sales of low and no alcohol drinks - and what are its limits?

*The world of mindful drinking is growing exponentially and traditional metrics around alcoholic drinks sales can obfuscate the trends taking place. It is more important than ever for us to make sure we are understanding who wants to buy low and no alcohol drinks, and how they do so. This session will ask: what are our areas of least understanding? How can we use data to learn more? What are the differences between traditional alcoholic drinks sales, and how can we understand them?*

Speaker: Paul Marsden

Video: <https://youtu.be/qsymZDcKAsE>

##### **Claiming R&D tax credits - Wednesday October 7th**

How to get RnD tax credits for innovation in drinks making

Speaker: Greg Ludovic, Claimer.io

Video: <https://youtu.be/qNC3nDnEznc>

##### **Preparing for Dry January - Wednesday 21st October**

Winning Dry January: how to make the most of the annual opportunity

*Dry January always swings around quicker than you imagine so we'll be discussing how to make the most of it.*

*We'll be sharing and looking at marketing strategies that have worked in the past and ideas for this year. We will also discuss with you other ways Club Soda can support you in January and the format of our Global Mindful Drinking Festival which will once again be 'Global' and taking place online and in venue!*

Video: <https://youtu.be/8nSbW7gJr4>

### **Looking forward to 2021 - Wednesday 18th November**

*Looking forward to 2021: How to sell, grow and tackle the year ahead  
What will 2021 hold for the low and no alcohol market? We'll discuss what trends we expect to see from the market for the year ahead and talk about how we can make the most of them*

Speaker: Anne Stephens

Video: <https://youtu.be/FoiKtQ2knuQ>

### **Manufacturing process and quality in the bottle - Wednesday 16th December**

*A discussion led by member brands, in light of the Guinness Zero recall, about bottling, closures and testing.*

Video: <https://youtu.be/gp-iLAu-KVc>

### **Department of Health event discussion - Wednesday 25th January**

*Consultation roundtable ahead of the Department of Health roundtable with low and no alcohol drink producers and other stakeholders.*

*A roundtable to discuss the forthcoming meeting with the Department of Health where Laura was representing brand members and consumers.*

### **E-commerce - Wednesday 17th February**

*Maximising e-commerce: how to have a successful online sales strategy  
Coronavirus has turned sales on its head. Pursuing leads in the on and off-trade has been usurped by making the most of online sales. In this session, we'll discuss:  
How can you make sure you stand out the crowd when it comes to selling online?  
How can you get listed with online retailers? What are customers looking for when it comes to buying online?*

Video: <https://youtu.be/tDGw2D4GUSQ>

### **Investment strategy - Wednesday 17th March**

*Designing an investment strategy that works for you: pursuing capital or crowdfunding.*

*The world of investment can often look quite murky. Should you pursue venture capital? Or try and crowdfund the sums required? In this session, we'll discuss the*

*pros and cons of both and how you can figure out what works best for your business*

Speakers: Crowdcube, Five Seasons Ventures

Video: <https://youtu.be/IdD-Nm2nr8U>

### **Upcoming events for the first half of 2021**

#### **Brand New World - Wednesday 21st April**

*To create a new brand where would you start? Where could you take it in the market?*

Speakers: Taste Pilot

#### **Club Soda research launch - Wednesday 7th May**

Our new research report on consumer behaviours around low and no alcohol drinks is available for all brand members.

#### **Bottle deposit schemes - Wednesday 18th May**

The new bottle deposit scheme in Scotland and its implications for drink brands.

Speakers: Soft Drinks Association, Conscious Container

### **5. Primary Outputs:**

- 12 roundtable events on a variety of subjects
- Attendance of 240 people (average of 20 people per session)
- Beer brand attendees 60 (average of 5 per session)

### **6. Secondary Outputs:**

*Whilst the events themselves were the primary outputs there were some outcomes from the events that are worth noting:*

- Training course for venues on selling low and no alcohol built and ready to launch
- Introduced at least three brands to Claimer.io, who have all now claimed R&D tax credits but had not considered it before - this is worth thousands of pounds to the brands involved
- Club Soda represented the low and no drinks sector at the Department of Health Low and No Roundtable.

### **7. Conclusions:**

Whilst we had to pivot to adapt to the impact of Covid-19, BREF funding has meant that we have been able to develop a style of collaborative event that is working well for our brand members. A mixture of expert speakers and peer-led sessions on topics led by the member brands themselves has proven to be a popular combination.

These roundtables will now continue beyond the lifetime of this grant, and we welcome future topic ideas from all Club Soda partners and supporters.

We would also welcome a further discussion with BREF about our learnings, and further ways to support the low and no alcohol beer sector.