# Exmoor Ales to close historic Somerset brewery amid financial pressures and move production to Surrey



An iconic British brewery, Exmoor Ales, has announced it will be closing its factory in Wiveliscombe, Somerset, after more than 40 years of operation, as it moves production to Surrey. Founded in 1979, the brewery has become a well-known supplier to pubs across the country. The company's managing director, Jonathan Price, cited several financial pressures as reasons for the move, including recent tax increases, minimum wage hikes, and a new bottle tax, all of which he says have hit small businesses hard.

In a letter to customers, Mr Price explained that Exmoor Ales, like many other breweries, has struggled since the pandemic due to inflation, shifting market conditions, and increased taxation. These factors have compelled the company to restructure and ultimately close its longstanding brewery location. "We looked at a number of options, including linking up with any other local brewer, but we were concerned that we would lose nearly all the jobs, our brands, and our independence," he wrote in the letter. Mr Price emphasised the brewery's strong and loyal customer base that has been built over four decades, and the search for a solution that would maintain local employment and allow the company to manage its own sales and future.

Exmoor Ales will enter into a partnership with another family-owned brewery, Hogs Back Brewery, based in Surrey. Hogs Back Brewery will temporarily brew Exmoor's beers using the same recipes and yeast, ensuring the continuity of taste and quality. Mr Price stated, "Exmoor's Head Brewer, Sanghrash, will be brewing with them using the same recipes, same yeast for each Exmoor Brand to match the same taste and quality as now." The partnership will also see Hogs Back assisting with national distribution, while local distribution will continue from Wiveliscombe.

Mr Price told the BBC that he hopes to bring the brewery back to Somerset in the future, adding, "We very much hope times will change and Exmoor will retain the support of its loyal local customers." He also highlighted that the partnership is genuine and that the business will remain independent, operating with the goal of preserving as many jobs as possible and providing a solid foundation for future growth. Plans are underway to launch new products, including a lager, a low-alcohol beer, and a new IPA, as well as to explore collaborations with other local businesses.

The announcement has been met with sadness and concern by many loyal customers, who took to social media to express their feelings. Graham Brown commented, "Lovely brewery with some cracking beers, another great loss to the industry," while another user noted, "So farewell @exmoorales. Another brewery bites the dust. Big Beer is really starting to flex its muscles."

This closure is part of a wider trend affecting British pubs and breweries. In a related development, the 485-year-old pub Hole in the Wall in Torquay, Devon, has announced that it will close its doors permanently in April 2025. The pub, which had served the community since 1540, is owned by a brewery but has been forced to shut due to unsustainable running costs and inability to pay rent, according to landlord Richard Rossendale-Cook. Speaking to ITV News, he expressed his sadness about the closure and hinted at the financial challenges ahead: "I'm very very sad, of course I'd like to carry on. But unless somebody comes up - a Russian oligarch or someone will give me £360,000 to go and pay off the bill, you are going to shut and that's the end of it."

The announcement of these closures highlights ongoing difficulties within the UK brewing and pub industries, reflecting broader economic pressures faced by small and independent businesses. The Daily Mail is reporting on these developments, underscoring the significant changes impacting long-established institutions in British beer and hospitality sectors.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.quaffale.org.uk/php/brewery/60> - This source provides historical information about Exmoor Ales, detailing its founding in 1980 and its relocation in 2015, corroborating the brewery's long-standing presence in Wiveliscombe and its move to Surrey.
2. <https://www.wsfp.co.uk/news/wiveliscombes-bear-inn-owners-jon-and-millie-coward-relaunch-micro-brewery-to-supply-estate-712101> - This article discusses the reopening of a microbrewery in Wiveliscombe by the owners of The Bear Inn, highlighting the local brewing scene and the community's response to changes in the industry.
3. <https://www.torbayweekly.co.uk/news/home/1734586/torquay-s-oldest-pub-at-serious-risk-of-closure.html> - This report covers the financial difficulties faced by The Hole in the Wall, Torquay's oldest pub, which is at risk of closure due to rising supplier costs and roadworks, reflecting broader challenges in the hospitality sector.
4. <https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/torquay-landlady-locals-devastated-shock-7842086> - This article details the closure of The Printers Elbow II in Torquay, highlighting the impact of rising costs and eviction notices on local pubs, underscoring the financial pressures in the hospitality industry.
5. <https://www.somersetlive.co.uk/news/somerset-news/historic-somerset-brewery-could-turned-7455683> - This piece discusses plans to convert the historic Golden Hill Brewery in Wiveliscombe into affordable housing, illustrating the challenges faced by traditional breweries in adapting to modern economic pressures.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-somerset-62523224> - This BBC article reports on the proposed redevelopment of the Golden Hill Brewery site in Wiveliscombe into flats, highlighting the economic challenges leading to the closure of longstanding establishments.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14665603/Iconic-brewery-close-factory-40-years-not-orders-yet.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data