

## The Super Sixteen: Licensee of the Year 2017 Semi-Finalists Announced

The British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) - the leading professional body representing the UK's licensees - is delighted to announce the sixteen semi-finalists for this year's Licensee of the Year competition have been selected. Sponsored by Sky, the Licensee of the Year competition is widely regarded as the most rigorous and hard-fought award for individual licensee operators in the U.K; a longstanding award it has been held annually for over 20 years.



The finalists have made it through the early stages of the comprehensive entry process, competing against over 200 other entrants who also entered the competition. The final sixteen include licensees from across the breadth of the UK, from many different types of pubs; judges will now visit and assess these pubs in person and conduct 1:1 interviews.

The 2017 Licensee of the Year semi-finalists are as follows:

- Paul Wiscombe – The Anchor Inn, Bridport
- Nicola Storey – The Mustard Pot, Leeds
- Martin Barnes – Geroge and Dragon, Cheshire
- Mark and Clare Higgs – Castle at Edgehill, Edgehill
- Clive Price – Bletchingly Arms, Redhill
- Chantelle Tupman-John – Waggon Inn, Oldham
- Tim Tomlinson – Merchants 1688, Lancashire
- Jennifer Kuhn – The Windsor Fenchurch, London
- Mark Anderson – Ruddington Arms, Ruddington
- Ian Ridley – The Highlands, Uckfield
- Mark Thornhill – The Kings Head, Hursley
- Tania Irwin – The Princess Royal, Farnham
- Roland and Kay Keech – The Castle, Bedford
- Gavin and Carole Austin – George and Dragon, Arundel
- Hendrik and Dutson – The White Horse, Banbury
- Sam Good – The West Bay Hotel, Bridport

Ashley McCarthy, chair of the judging panel and himself a former winner of Licensee of the Year, added: *“The standard of entries is higher than it’s ever been in all the years I’ve been involved; it has been very difficult to get down to even this list of sixteen. I’m very much looking forward to seeing these pubs in person and getting to know the semi-finalists”*.

BII Chief Executive Mike Clist also commented: *"I would like to reiterate what Ashley has said, the standard of entries this year has been second to none. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who entered the competition this year, and wish the semi-finalists good luck for the final".*

David Rey, managing director of Sky Business, said: *"We sponsor the BII Licensee of the Year Award because we recognise the importance of rewarding outstanding licensees for the tireless work they do to support the on-trade. Congratulations to all those that have been nominated as semi-finalists."*

After their pub 'road trip' the judges will select just six entrants to go through to the final Panel Judging Day on 12<sup>th</sup> June, where they will be put through their paces by industry experts in three areas; Marketing & Business Development, Financial Awareness and People Development. All six finalists will be presented with a trophy at the BII Summer Event on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, where the winner of Licensee of the Year 2017 will be crowned.

As was the case last year, people working in the licensed trade were encouraged to not only register themselves but also nominate others. Yet again the BII has been delighted with the result, seeing customers, colleagues, pub companies, breweries and fellow operators all nominating their favorite 'local'.

The BII would like to thank everyone who entered the competition this year.

ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

The BII is a membership organisation for individuals working in the licensed retail sector, with over 8,000 individual members running premises across the UK - predominantly tenanted, leased, managed and freehold pubs. The organisation provides free helplines, online business support, and guidance on key industry issues, face-to-face networking opportunities and savings on a range of supply deals for its members. It is the only organisation of its kind to represent the individuals working at the front line of licensed retail.

The BII Summer Event, which takes place on the 13th June 2017, is the biggest industry event of the summer. The 2016 event saw over 800 of the top licensees and pub operators in the UK flock to London's stunning HAC Marquee for a day of networking, entertaining, celebration and fun. Tickets are still available, click [here](#) to register your interest and find out more.

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