Professional Association of Self-Caterers UK

NEWSLETTER

18 August 2026 Issue 328

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COMMENTARY

Today is a landmark day for PASC UK, we are exactly nine years old, and as you can read below, have been serving the professional self-catering sector through a huge range of challenges and threats throughout that period. We could not have achieved anything without the support of our Members, so from me, and all the team at PASC UK, a huge thank you.

Further down, we have shared some of our key achievements over the last 9 years – and to celebrate, any new Members that join us this week will be entered into a draw to win a Fortnum & Mason Hamper to celebrate this milestone!

This week has had many unwelcome headlines, risk of wildfires, then risk of floods if the rain is heavy, and a Prime Minister on tour extolling the virtues of a holiday tax.

In turn, the wildfires are an increasing threat all across the country, and our thoughts are with those affected. We can all remember not being able to control what happens next from the Covid lockdowns. Guest behaviour is always a bit harder to manage in peak holidays, so we need to take care with what equipment we make available at the moment and how we manage guest expectations of being able to use some of that equipment.

In Wales, where the ludicrous 182 letting threshold is still in place, wildfires are causing evacuations and cancellations, and we are pressing the Welsh Government to make allowances where this has happened.

This weekend at our own property, which is surrounded by tinder dry fields, the guests brought a wood fired pizza oven. The first we knew was smoke rising from behind the cottage. This despite all the phone alarm warnings, our House Rules and Terms and Conditions. In the end no harm done, but we are revamping our guest communications set again.

The water shortages are getting worse, with extensive hose pipe bans across mist of the country. The Prime Minister has called COBRA emergency meetings and further extensions to the bans are being proposed. So far the references are to private pools and hot tubs, but we will watch and advise on this closely.

The Prime Minister looms large again this week, as he tours the UK. Whilst in Devon and Cornwall he hailed the 'tourist tax' as having the potential to be game changer for Cornwall. Read more here.

For Members and readers in Cornwall, we strongly urge you to come to the free Cornwall Tourism Tax Summit one the 11th September, details below, we will be there.

If there are other such meetings being held elsewhere in England or Wales, please let the team know. If we can't get there we can provide data and evidence. Contact support@pascuk.co.uk if you have information about any Tourism Tax events or need any data.

Back to Cornwall, good news at last post Visit Cornwall, more on that below.

We were also pleased to see that Stephanie Peacock MP will continue at Tourism Minister. Continuity with all that is going owns critical, and the Minister is the first in a long time who has made real efforts to work with support and promote domestic tourism, We look forward to continuing our work with her.

Last but not least, the team are working on various Consultation responses, not least the response to further questions around zero hours contracts, which could have a major impact on how so many of us interact with our housekeeping and maintenance staff. The deadline of this is next week, August 25th, and we hope to have that finished later today, so will put a post on Facebook when notes on this if you wish to participate on the website. They will appear **HERE** when done.

We are also working up our Westminster Budget Submission that needs to ready for 9th September and will share that with you too, any suggestions for that please contact: support@pascuk.co.uk

I will be out of comms next week, but the office remains open, and once again, thanks to all who have supported PASC UK by joining and supporting as Members. Collectively we have achieved much, and fully intend to continue to do so. Thank you

Alistair & The Team

CHAIR OUT OF OFFICE

Your Chair will be out of the office for the week of Monday 24th August. During that time please can Members use the support@pascuk.co.uk email.

POLITICAL UPDATE

The Prime Minister's tour reached the South West last week, bringing renewed attention to the pressures facing rural communities, hospitality businesses and the visitor economy. For PASC UK, the central issue remains the proposed Overnight Visitor Levy, particularly as the Government considers extending levy powers through new devolution agreements.

Prime Minister's Tour of the South West & Tourism Levy

During his visit to Cornwall, Prime Minister Andy Burnham described an overnight visitor levy as a potential "major game changer" for the county. He said the Government would be open to including levy powers within a Cornwall-specific devolution agreement and invited Cornwall Council's leadership and the county's six MPs to discuss a proposal.

The Prime Minister also linked housing pressures to second homes and holiday lets. It is important that ministers distinguish between empty second homes and professional self-catering businesses, which bring visitors into local communities, support employment and generate spending in pubs, shops and attractions.

PASC UK will continue to oppose the levy while making the case directly to national and regional decision-makers. Any proposal for Cornwall must be supported by a proper economic impact assessment that reflects the particular dependence of rural and coastal communities on domestic tourism.

Business Rates Relief: Don't Forget Accommodation!

The Prime Minister has indicated that further business-rates support could be announced at the Budget on 28 October.

The Government has already promised a 20% reduction for pubs, social clubs and live music venues from next April. However, the announced relief does not currently include self-catering accommodation, hotels or restaurants.

PASC UK will be pressing the Treasury to ensure professional self-catering businesses are included in any broader package. Supporting pubs and high streets is welcome, but accommodation businesses are an essential part of the same visitor economy and face many of the same pressures.

Backing Rural Areas and High Streets

The Government has announced £65 million in support for farmers affected by the drought, alongside £15 million for on-farm reservoirs. The measures recognise the severe pressures facing rural economies after an exceptionally difficult summer.

Ministers have also announced new planning and enforcement powers for councils intended to tackle unwanted vape shops, betting shops and rogue businesses on high streets.

As the Government develops its plans, PASC UK will continue making the case that professional accommodation businesses should be recognised as part of these relief efforts.

PASC UK IS 9 YEARS OLD! JOIN US AS A MEMBER THIS WEEK TO BE IN WITH A CHANCE TO WIN A FORTNUM & MASON HAMPER WORTH £100 TO CELEBRATE OUR BIRTHDAY!

Nine years ago, PASC UK was founded with one simple aim: to give professional self-catering businesses a voice.

Since then, that voice has become stronger with every Member who has joined us, every survey completed, every meeting attended and every business that has stood with us.

Over the last nine years we've fought on countless fronts, and together we've delivered real results.

✅ Secured major reductions in Business Rates valuations, saving many businesses thousands of pounds.

✅ Secured a meaningful review of the 182 Threshold in Wales.

✅ Worked with the VoA to simplify form VO6048.

✅ Successfully pushed back against damaging EPC proposals that would have imposed huge costs of up to £15k per property.

✅ Secured an exemption from PRS/PPL licensing fees for businesses with up to three self-catering properties.

✅ Played a leading role in shaping the Statutory Registration proposals so they are built around evidence and proportionality.

✅ Influenced changes to fire safety guidance, ensuring it became more practical and workable for small operators.

✅ Worked with insurers to challenge unreasonable policy exclusions and conditions affecting self-catering businesses.

✅ Stopped insurers being able to deduct grant payments from insurance payouts during Covid.

✅ Led the Cottagesure Action Group to ensure 2,500 affected Policy Holders received payouts for Covid Business Interruption.

✅ Helped agencies and owners prepare for DAC7 reporting, ensuring businesses understood their new obligations well before implementation.

✅ Guided the sector through Covid with hundreds of newsletters, webinars, guidance papers and direct support when businesses needed it most.

✅ Produced some of the largest and most respected research ever undertaken into the UK self-catering sector, making sure policy discussions are driven by data, not assumptions.

✅ Represented Members at Westminster, the Senedd, Government Departments, Select Committees, All-Party Parliamentary Groups and meetings with Ministers, MPs, Members of the Senedd and officials.

✅ Led the fight against the abolition of Furnished Holiday Lettings Allowances, the implementation of visitor levies, unfair taxation and the growing burden of regulation facing our sector.

But perhaps our greatest achievement is this - PASC UK has earned its place at the table.

When Government wants to hear from professional self-catering, they come to PASC UK.

When the media needs the facts, they come to PASC UK.

When our sector needs someone to challenge poor policy and speak up for small businesses, PASC UK is there.

The fight is far from over - the policy pile-on continues. Tax, regulation and intervention continue to threaten thousands of legitimate businesses and the rural and coastal communities that depend on them.

That is why your support matters now more than ever.

Every membership helps fund the research, the lobbying, the meetings, the legal work, the consultations, the campaigns and the daily support that protects our sector – and to celebrate this week, any new Members will be entered into a draw to win a Fortnum & Mason Hamper worth £100!

To every Member, partner and supporter who has stood with us over the last nine years, thank you - you have made every achievement possible.

Together, we will keep fighting, we will keep championing professional self-catering, we will make sure our sector continues to have the strong voice it deserves.

A Winner will be picked at random and notified on Tuesday 25th August 2026 by email to confirm the delivery address. There is no cash alternative. For your Membership sign up to be entered into the draw, you must join between 1000 BST on Tuesday 18th August 2026 and 1000 BST on Tuesday 25th August 2026. You will be automatically entered into the draw if you join as a Member during this period.

MEMBERS TEMPLATE: REVIEWS POLICY – IF YOU HAVE REVIEWS DISPLATED ANYWHERE, YOU NEED TO HAVE A REVIEWS POLICY IN PLACE!

Another compliance job has landed on Owners, and this one is easy to overlook – but, we've made it really easy to comply, and the templates is part of the Member Benefits for PASC UK Members. The

Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has tightened the rules around fake and misleading reviews.

This matters to self-catering businesses that publish guest reviews on their own websites or use reviews as part of their marketing, either in print, or online, social media etc.

Owners need to be able to show that reviews are being handled properly and that reasonable steps are taken to prevent fake or misleading reviews.

That means having a clear **Review Policy** explaining how reviews are collected, checked and published.

It also means being transparent about how you deal with negative reviews, incentives and anything you believe may not come from a genuine guest.

We know how important reviews are to our sector, and how much damage an unfair or malicious review can cause. PASC UK raised the problem of fake reviews with Government during the previous consultation on this issue.

But the rules have changed, so businesses need to make sure their processes keep up.

PASC UK has produced a simple Review Policy template for Members.

You don't need to start from scratch or produce pages of legal wording. We have provided a template and guidance note, written by the team at Stephens Scown who worked on the response to the CMA changes. Simply adapt it to reflect how your own business handles reviews, and make the policy available alongside the reviews you publish – we recommend popping it in the footer of your website alongside your privacy policy, cookie policy, T&Cs and anything else that lives there!

Members can find the template HERE.

NEW MEMBERS VIDEOS: TO HELP YOU USE THE T&CS TEMPLATE AND REVIEWS POLICY TEMPLATE

We know that Terms & Conditions and policies can be a bit of a minefield – a bit of an "elephant" task, that sits on your every growing to-do list waiting for that illusive quiet day!

So Livvy from PASC UK and Tom from Stephens Scown have created **two new short-form videos** to hopefully make things easier.

The first explains **how to use your Terms & Conditions,** and the second covers **the Reviews Policy**, how to use it and why having a clear policy in place matters.

Your T&Cs set out the contract between you and your guests, while your Reviews Policy gives you a clear framework for dealing with reviews and the issues that can arise from them allowing you to comply with changes dictated by the CMA.

The videos are deliberately short and practical. No hour-long webinar, just the key points you need to understand and put into practice.

We have worked with Stephens Scown before on helping Members understand Terms & Conditions, and Tom has a knack for making a fairly dry subject much easier to digest.

Please take a few minutes to watch both videos and then check that you are using both documents correctly in your business – they are located alongside the templates they are relevant to HERE.

WILDFIRE ALERS – DISPOSABLE BBQs & FIREPITS

As the weather continues to remain dry and hot (although at the exact point of writing this sentence, we do actually have rain falling outside the office!!) – on Friday evening, the Government sent out an England and Wales wide alert in response to the heightened risk of Wildfires. Most notably for Self-Catering operators is the direct reference of Firepits and disposable BBQs:

"There is a very high risk of wildfires nationally. Residents, landowners and visitors should not undertake any activity that could start a fire, including disposable barbecues, firepits, garden incinerators or fireworks. Even a small flame can rapidly develop into a major wildfire placing lives, homes, businesses and emergency responders at risk." - https://www.gov.uk/alerts/14-aug-2026-2

NEW CORNWALL TOURISM ORGANISATION IMMINENT

After Visit Cornwall's demise in October 2025 much work has gone on behind the scenes to try and restart an organisation that is independent, industry-led, financially sustainable and focused on providing strategic leadership & marketing for Cornwall's visitor economy.

This is now well underway and Members and Readers in Cornwall can find out more HERE.

CORNWALL TOURISM SUMMIT

In the absence of a fully functioning Visit Cornwall, The Cornwall Chamber of Commerce have pulled together a Visitor Levy Summit to discuss the pros and cons of the Overnight Visitor Levy (Holiday Tax).

The Atlantic Hotel, Newquay
Friday 11 September, from 1400-1700
You can sign up to attend HERE.

PASC UK will be speaking at this meeting. There will be meetings like this taking place all over England, we may not be able to attend all, but we can provide evidence and data to be presented at meetings like this.

INSURANCE TIP FROM JL MORRIS – THE TRUE COST OF REBUILDING!

As the costs of everything seem to rise faster than any of us can keep up with, rebuilding is an area that most overlook. A business owner paid for a Rebuild Cost Assessment, and upon disbelieving the £4 million in the report, still wanted to insure for only £2 million!

Another Client wanted to insure a substantial stone-build property for £1 million, where the rebuild cost guides said over 'over £2 million'.

JL Morris cannot act for policyholders who deliberately under-insure and no longer provides cover for either of the examples above. Both stated the premiums were too high when based on the correct values. If a claim occurs, the complaint from the property owners will be that the insurers have not paid, or not paid the full amount.

Why would the premium, calculated on the wrong sum insured, be a waste of money?
Because insurers could refuse to pay the claim because of deliberate misrepresentation or pay an amount in proportion to the under-insurance.

Make sure you speak to your insurance broker!

David J Morris ACII
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J L Morris (Insurance Brokers) Limited
www.selfcateringinsurance.co.uk
info@jlmorris.co.uk
01202 642840

PASC UK WEBINAR PROGRAME FOR 2026

Previous webinars and meetings can be viewed on the PASC UK Website at:
https://www.pascuk.co.uk/webinars/ Members only recordings are in the Members area.

We will be announcing a new selection of Webinars shortly for after the summer holidays!

PASC UK ON THE ROAD AND IMPORTANT MEETINGS AHEAD

PASC UK will be present at the following events:

- 5 September. Reform Conference
- 10 September: Prosper UK Tourism Roundtable, Exeter
- 11 September: Tourism Tax Summit, Newquay
- 14 September. Host Planet Nottinghamshire
- 16 September. PASC UK Members Meeting – Isle of Wight
- 19 September. Liberal Democrats Conference
- 22 September. Tourism Alliance Council Meeting
- 27 September. Labour Conference

- 27 September: Coastal Parliamentary Labour Party Reception, Liverpool
- 4 October. Conservative Party Conference
- 20 October: UK Hospitality Parliamentary Reception
- 24 October. Scale Barcelona
- 11 November. PASC UK Members Meeting - Cotswolds

SUPPORT LOBBYING BY JOINING PASC UK

There is a huge amount of work and lobbying to do to help support you all in the self-catering sector. We don't ask very often, however, if we are to fight on so many fronts, we simply need more funds. There are thousands of you that have had the benefit of this newsletter and the lobbying done on behalf of the sector.

We are now asking that as many of you as possible join PASC UK. The fight is on so many fronts, and we get much better results when we engage proper legal advice and proper PR firms to assist with campaigns. Memberships to other organisations that provide common lobbying, information feeds and support also cost many thousands of pounds a year.

Membership fees are as follows:

- Single cottage £90 plus VAT
- 2 – 4 Units £150 plus VAT
- 5 – 10 Units £235 plus VAT
- 11 + Units £335 plus VAT

Members get telephone support and priority email support.

You can join here, simple form, takes 2 mins, and you'll get an invoice, payable by BACS or Credit Card. Just click on this link to go to the joining page: https://www.pascuk.co.uk/join-pasc-uk/

Wishing every one of you all the best.

Best regards

Alistair Handyside MBE
Executive Chair
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