

Goalposts to move for low alcohol beer in health plans

By Helen Chandler-Wilde

BREWERIES will be allowed to label stronger beers as “low alcohol” or “alcohol-free”, under government plans to encourage drinkers to turn to healthier alternatives.

Currently, beers must have a maximum strength of 1.2 per cent to be able to describe themselves as “low alcohol”, and 0.05 per cent to say “no alcohol”.

This will be relaxed to 3 per cent and 0.5 per cent alcohol by volume respectively in a White Paper on health disparities, according to *The Times*. The policy intends to help cut overall alcohol consumption by encouraging drinkers to swap full-strength for weaker beers.

The paper was expected to come out this summer, but recent political

3.1pc

The amount of the beer market now occupied by low and no alcohol brands. It has almost doubled in five years

changes held up publication. It will be released in September, when a new prime minister will sign off on the plan.

The White Paper also contains policies on obesity, where it will favour a “market-based approach” to tackling the issue. Additionally, plans to reduce the harm from tobacco would reject the idea to lowering the legal smoking age each year opting instead to focus on a “vaping revolution” allowing GPs to prescribe e-cigarettes, *The Sunday Times* previously reported.

The UK market for low and no alcohol beer has almost doubled in five years and now amounts to 3.1 per cent of the beer market, according to IWSR, a drinks market analysis company.

One of the first high-profile brewers to launch a product was BrewDog, who released the alcohol-free Nanny State ale in 2011. Many major brewers now have a “nolo” product, with alcohol-free Guinness, Heineken and Birra Moretti available in the UK.



Surf's pup Marina White and her dog Coco, taking part yesterday in the UK Dog Surfing Championships at Branksome Dene Chine beach in Bournemouth. It is the fourth year of the championships which also feature family entertainment, including beach games, food stalls and music.

Nasa may use satellites to search for aliens

Space agency considering repurposing technology already in orbit as part of inquiry into UFO sightings

By Sarah Knapton SCIENCE EDITOR

THE US space agency Nasa is looking into repurposing satellites that are already in space to hunt for aliens.

Last month, Nasa announced it was launching an eight-month inquiry into hundreds of UFO sightings.

The inquiry is being led by Dr Thomas Zurbuchen, of Nasa's Science Mission Directorate, who has now

begun investigating whether satellites in orbit could be repurposed to give another view on strange aerial phenomena reported from Earth.

Speaking to journalists in London this week, Col Pam Melroy, deputy administrator of Nasa, said: “One of the big questions Thomas asked is, ‘We have a ton of satellites looking down at the Earth; are any of them useful?’

“Before you build a rover that’s going to Mars, you ask yourself, ‘What’s the sensor I have to build to detect the most interesting thing?’ How would you get the evidence that you need to be able to determine if it’s an optical phenomena or some other kind (of phenomena)?”

Bill Nelson, Nasa’s administrator,

told reporters that he had read all the classified documents relating to UFOs and was convinced that nobody knew what they were.

Asked why Nasa was embarking on such a fringe subject, Nelson said one of the agency’s remit was to hunt for life outside Earth. He pointed out that in the past, even the greatest scientists had been disbelieved or ridiculed, including Galileo – condemned in the 17th century for saying the Earth revolved around the Sun – and Edwin Hubble, who in the 1920s proved many objects thought to be clouds of dust and gas were galaxies.

“One of our missions is to reach out to see if there is life – that’s why we are digging on Mars right now,” he said.

“Is there the possibility of life in something as big as the Universe? Of course there is the chance that, in somewhere as big as that, conditions similar to Earth existed.

“Look at what Galileo had to face... and 100 years ago we still only thought there was one galaxy, and then Hubble came along and suddenly said, ‘No there are a bunch of galaxies out there.’”

Last June, the Pentagon’s Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force (UAP) released a report into 144 UFO incidents between 2004 and 2021, many of which were spotted by military pilots. Even though investigators concluded there was no evidence that the objects came from outer space or a foreign adversary,

they said most could not be explained.

The report authors said there was no doubt that the UAPs were physical objects, rather than optical illusions caused by atmospheric conditions or sensor malfunctions.

“I went to our chief scientist and said... we’re the scientific research agency and one of our missions is to look for life... there’s this phenomenon going on, so we should approach it from a scientific point of view,” said Mr Nelson.

Last year, US Navy pilot Lt Cmdr Alex Dietrich revealed that she had seen multiple UFOs while she was stationed off the coast of southern California on the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier in 2004.

They moved impossibly fast, she said,

dropping a distance of 80,000ft in less than a second and jumping dozens of miles in seconds, in an incident caught on infrared camera and radar.

According to reports, Cmdr David Fravor, also stationed on the USS Nimitz, engaged one of the oblong objects, which he estimated to be 40ft in length. It disappeared, only to be picked up seconds later on ship radar 60 miles away.

Mr Nelson said he had spoken to both pilots and believed their stories. He added that if the objects were real and not an optical illusion, he hoped they did not belong to an adversary as “they’ve got some real advanced technology”.

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Cryptocurrency fraud claim papers to be served by NFT

By Phoebe Southworth

LEGAL papers are to be served by non-fungible token (NFT) in a groundbreaking High Court move to prevent cryptocurrency fraudsters from hiding behind anonymity.

For the first time in British legal history, a judge has handed down an order permitting legal documents to be served on internet fraudsters using NFTs – online tokens that store unique information.

The case which gave rise to the landmark order concerned Fabrizio D’Aloia, an Italian engineer and technology entrepreneur who lost millions of pounds worth of digital currency to fraudsters acting anonymously.

Mr D’Aloia, who lives in England, has been given permission by Mr Justice Trower to serve his fraud claim on the scammers using NFT.

The NFT, containing legal documents setting out the claim, will be inserted into the two cyberspace wallets belonging to the fraudsters to which Mr D’Aloia transferred his currency before it was stolen.

Courts in England have previously allowed the service of documents through social media, such as Instagram and Facebook.

The NFT ruling paves the way for victims of crypto-asset fraud to bring

claims by digitally serving legal documents when they don’t know who stole from them and have no means to contact them if their website goes offline.

The anonymity of online fraudsters means they can often operate undetected and avoid legal repercussions.

However, digital serving of documents satisfies the legal requirement of giving the recipient a chance to respond so the case can then progress.

Giambrone & Partners, who act for Mr D’Aloia, who thought he was transferring currency into a trading account, said: “This is a noteworthy development in the area of service of court documents and a welcome example of a court embracing new technology.

“It is also a significant judgment as it demonstrates how England and Wales is one of the best jurisdictions in the world, if not the best, when it comes to protecting victims of cryptoasset fraud.”

Zoe Wyatt, partner and head of crypto and digital assets at the legal firm Andersen, added: “This case gives hope to those who have fallen victim to cryptoasset scams, while showcasing that NFTs can have many different real-world uses and are here to stay.”

There is only one previous case of a judge granting an order to permit the service of legal documents by NFT, which was at the Supreme Court of the State of New York last month.



Sweet day Capt Emma Humphreys gives her horse a sugar cube at Sandhurst yesterday, where 103 officer cadets were commissioned as full Army officers.

Vaccines will save children from fatal virus in five years

By Lizzie Roberts HEALTH CORRESPONDENT and Joe Pinkston SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

A DEADLY virus which surged among young children after Covid-19 lockdown will be treated by preventive vaccines within five years, the director of the Oxford Vaccine Group has said.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) causes mild, cold-like symptoms for most but can be fatal for infants and the elderly. In Britain, RSV is responsible for around 30,000 paediatric hospital admissions and 83 deaths every year, estimates suggest.

Typically spiking for six weeks in the winter, RSV puts significant strain on paediatric units but for the past two years it has surged in the summer.

Prof Andrew Pollard, chair of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and director of the Oxford Vaccine Group, said we are still in a “funny post-pandemic phase” when it comes to the spread of the virus.

“Because there wasn’t much virus circulating in 2020, there is a much larger group of children who have never been exposed to it,” he said.

“That means that we’ve had slightly odd RSV outbreaks last year and this year, while the unexposed group is sort of being mopped up by the virus.”

Prof Pollard thinks the epidemiology

of the virus will eventually return to normal but said a “transformative” moment is on the horizon when it comes to preventive treatments.

Some 20 to 60 vaccines are in development, as well as monoclonal antibody products. “Over the next five years we’ll have tools which may allow us to control these waves of RSV,” he said.

The use of such treatments would “dramatically reduce” pressures on paediatric departments, he said.

Most severe RSV infections occur in the first few months of life, so giving expectant mothers a vaccine – like those for whooping cough – would give babies protection straight away. Monoclonal products give the antibodies needed to fight the virus, without the children’s bodies having to make them.

What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus causes cold-like symptoms and is part of the same family as mumps and measles. It usually transmits via large droplets. In most cases it causes mild

illness but can cause pneumonia, bronchiolitis and even be fatal. It is often severe in babies aged under six months and is the most common cause of bronchiolitis in babies.

WHO declares ‘puzzling’ monkeypox a global health emergency

By Josie Ensor, Joe Pinkstone and Sarah Newey

THE World Health Organisation declared monkeypox a global health emergency yesterday, signalling a greater global response to an outbreak that has spread to at least 75 countries in a few weeks.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO’s director-general, took the unprecedented step of overruling a panel of advisers to make the decision.

“We have an outbreak that has spread

around the world rapidly through new modes of transmission, about which we understand too little, and which meets the criteria,” he said.

However, he added it was still mostly of concern to homosexual men.

“Although I am declaring a public health emergency of international concern, for the moment this is an outbreak that is concentrated among men who have sex with men, especially those with multiple sexual partners,” he said.

“That means that this is an outbreak that can be stopped with the right

strategies in the right groups.” The designation of a “public health emergency of international concern” (PHEIC) is currently only being used by the Global health body for Covid-19 and polio.

It is likely to pave the way for greater international co-operation on vaccines and research, and an increase in funding for countries battling the outbreak.

Dr Tedros ignored his own expert committee after nine voted against the designation with only six in favour.

It was the first time a UN health agency chief has unilaterally made such

a decision without an expert recommendation. Mark Eccleston-Turner, professor of global health law at King’s College London, described the decision as “unprecedented”.

“I think it’s an important step,” he said. “Previous director generals – including Tedros – have followed emergency committee advice even when that advice is patently poor.”

“The [question] now is: what will happen next. Questions have always been asked of what a [PHEIC declaration] actually achieves in practice.”

A PHEIC has been declared only six times before – including for Ebola and Zika. It is an alert to encourage countries to do more to tackle it rather than adding any more specific funding.

The WHO decision comes after the UK downgraded the severity of monkeypox and removed the requirement for close contacts to self-isolate, unless they are asymptomatic.

British health officials said on Friday that the outbreak may have peaked in the UK, with signs cases “may be leveling off”. Official data from the UKHSA

show cases are slowing nationwide, with the country seemingly ahead of the global curve at getting its monkeypox outbreak under control.

The United States announced on Friday that it had discovered the first cases of the virus in children.

The two cases were unrelated and were likely to be the result of household transmission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said.

The monkeypox virus has long been endemic in Africa but little is understood about how it manifests.