

25 March 2004

**THE WOLVERHAMPTON & DUDLEY BREWERIES, PLC ('W&DB')**  
**25 WEEKS TRADING STATEMENT**

The Board of The Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, PLC is pleased to announce its pre-close period trading up-date. For the first 25 weeks of the current financial year to 20 March 2004 ("the period") trading has been in line with expectations.

The Union Pub Company has performed well, with like-for-like sales +5.2% over the period. Second-half performance will be assisted by the contribution of 25 pubs transferred from Pathfinder Pubs and by pub acquisitions. To date, contracts have been exchanged or are completed for the purchase of 11 pubs, and negotiations for a further 9 are at an advanced stage.

In Pathfinder Pubs, we are making good progress with our major refurbishment programme, 30 having been completed during the period. This programme continues to deliver cash returns above our target of 20%. Our new build programme is also underway, with three sites under development and a further 28 under negotiation. Total like-for-like sales were +2.8% for the period, despite the fact that more pubs were closed for refurbishment in the second quarter, as planned.

Trading in WDB Brands has been satisfactory in a competitive market, with good progress being made in respect of the planned investment in the Banks's brand and the launch of Marston's FC.

The operating margin for the business overall has been maintained in line with last year and cash generation continues to be strong. The Company has just completed a successful re-financing which will reduce future borrowing costs and provide scope to exploit acquisition opportunities or to make further returns to shareholders.

Ralph Findlay, Chief Executive, said: “Our first half performance shows that we have good underlying trading momentum and are implementing our growth initiatives in line with our plans.”

The Interim Results for the period will be announced on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

An analyst conference call will be held at 9.30am this morning. Please contact Lara Meinertzhagen at Hudson Sandler for details - Tel: 020 7796 4133.

**ENQUIRIES:**

**The Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, PLC**

Ralph Findlay, Chief Executive

Paul Inglett, Finance Director

Tel: 01902 329516

**Hudson Sandler**

Andrew Hayes

Nick Lyon

Tel: 020 7796 4133

Ends