

Heatwave and rail strikes disrupt trade at All Bar One owner M&B

Pub and bars giant Mitchells & Butlers (M&B) has revealed that sales were “disrupted” by the summer heatwave and rail strikes in recent months.

Nevertheless, the group said sales still grew over the past quarter following strong demand for food.

[Shares](#) in the company slipped in early trading as Phil Urban, chief executive of the [All Bar One](#) and Miller & Carter owner, said the trading backdrop remains “very challenging”.

M&B said sales increased by 1.5% over the 13 weeks to September 24, compared with the same period last year.

The trading environment for the hospitality sector remains very challenging

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“Like-for-like sales improved in the fourth quarter, despite

the ongoing impact of extreme heat as well as further rail strikes, both of which disrupted trade,” the company said.

The company added that sales were particularly “encouraging” over the August bank holiday, with 6% like-for-like growth over the three-day weekend.

However, the company highlighted that it has come under increased pressure from rising costs throughout its supply chain.

It said its energy and utility costs have increased to around £150 million for the past year, compared with £80 million before the pandemic, and highlighted that it expects this to increase further next year even after [Government](#) action.

Mr Urban said: “The trading environment for the hospitality sector remains very challenging, with cost inflation putting increasing pressure on margins, and we are also mindful of the pressures on the UK consumer over the coming months.

“We remain focused on the delivery of our Ignite programme of initiatives, driving sales and delivering cost efficiencies.

“This will, combined with our diverse portfolio of well-known brands and strong estate locations, put us in a stronger competitive position to face the challenges ahead.”

Shares moved 6.4% lower to 126.4p on Thursday morning.