

From:
Sent: 03 May 2013 13:13
To: Pubs Consultation Responses
Subject: PubCo Reform

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Submission to Government's PubCo Consultation - A personal view

I am a long-time member of CAMRA and am currently Chair of the . Branch. I have many years experience of listening to licensees telling me of the joys and difficulties inherent in their work.

In this area, the problems faced by licensees have accelerated in recent years. Beer prices for licensees working with a tie are hugely higher than prices 'at the brewery gate'. After our recent beer festival, two local pubs (both with ties) were kind enough to help us out by purchasing our reserve beers from us after the festival (at some risk to themselves). It was my job to negotiate a price with them. I started by telling them what we had paid for the beers. They paid that without any demur. Eager not to take any unfair advantage I argued - were they sure? what would they have had to pay normally? The answers were shocking - typically £120 for a firkin of beer that had cost us £80. Where landlords manage to succeed in spite of this incredible handicap, the rent goes up! They are being asked to work harder and harder for less and less. We have seen several really good, experienced landlords driven out of the trade and the buildings demolished or sold on to be converted into apartments, restaurants etc.

If I was a wealthy philanthropist I would buy pubs and would have no trouble finding landlords who would do a great job - bringing me a return and making a sensible living for themselves at the same time. The freedom to innovate, to assess and accept risk, to work within reasonable boundaries of fairness, to invest time and money with the security of knowing that it's not going to be just clawed back in unreasonable rent increases, the ability to build one's business within a regulated and sensible framework must surely be the way forward. At the moment, we are getting fewer and fewer community pubs (where behaviour is regulated by the moderate majority), more drinking of supermarket 'loss leader' alcohol in parks, in the street and at home, 'no seating' bars designed to sell as much booze as quickly as possible and more bad behaviour in town centres.

At the same time, those of us who see real ale as an art form rather than a 'means of getting drunk' are driven further and further from the mainstream by ever increasing prices in pubs contrasting with ever lower prices for 'just alcohol' in supermarkets. Please please do something about it.

Chair, and District CAMRA

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