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From:**Sent:** 05 May 2013 11:35**To:** Pubs Consultation Responses**Subject:** My views of your consultation

I have filled in your questionnaire and welcome the opportunity to tell you my experiences as a customer, as well as someone who has worked in pubs and also who have had friends in the pub trade, as landlords who have retired (forced out!) and one who is still working.

Pubs in my area are closing to such an extent that [redacted] has now got involved to try and halt the trend, which you are no doubt aware of. It is also quite clear that there isn't a level playing field with regard to Pub Co owned licences and others. A landlord where I used to stay for B&B in Gloucestershire had the misfortune to work in a PubCo licensed premises. His competition could sell beer cheaper than he could buy it from the PubCo. When he pointed this fact out, he was told to increase his food sales! Needless to say he eventually gave up. The PubCo boarded the pub up saying it was unviable and tried to sell it for housing! Fortunately Camra made such a fuss they couldn't change the premises usage and it has since reopened.

In another instance a friend of a friend took over a pub in [redacted]. The pub had been closed for a year or so. Over a couple of years he gradually built up the business, real ale, a basic but wholesome food menu, allowing dog walkers in with their animals, getting teams to play there, (darts quiz league etc). When he wanted to do some basic painting – he was told the PubCo architect would have to be involved and he would have to use their approved painters, whose quote eventually was twice those of the 3 quotes he provided from local painters. Eventually he won the local CAMRA pub award but that didn't help as the lease was coming up for up for renewal, and they made a crippling increase because of his success and all the hard work the couple had put in – The pubco's greed would make the place unworkable and it became apparent weren't bothered when so and his partner said they couldn't afford it, as because of its location in a tiny village he couldn't maximise the business any more. They left; the pub closed and was then boarded up – pure greed and the village lost its pub.

It is quite clear that the PubCOs have had long enough to stop these practices. Because of the levels of debt they have accumulated in greedily purchasing all their pub portfolios – they are financially driven. Customers and Tenants are being unfairly treated due to the financial mismanagement of the PubCos. Their shareholders and bonus earners should take more of the pain. There is no consideration of the local community unless money can be squeezed out of it. Their landlords are treated appallingly, they are expected to absorb cost increases, which cut into the little income they have. They are not given a level playing field to compete on, it really is amazing in this age there is such a great deal of unfairness, which would not be tolerated in any other business.

So besides being properly regulated the PubCos should be forced to offer their landlord a Market Rent option and to stop their cosy deals with their "preferred" breweries, there should be statutory right to sell a guest beer. This right should go further, as in one case I know, when the customers voted with their beer purchases – the landlord was told he could only sell a very limited amount of guest ale in future it was affecting the PubCo's profits. Both the customer and the landlords feelings were ignored – because PubCo's have a near monopoly in places.

Both these reforms would introduce competition which would make things more efficient and over time more viable. From experience it is clear that this whole industry needs independent regulation/adjudication as the PubCOs will never act in anyone interests but their own. They have pushed what is a great British Institution into near fatal decline which cannot be allowed any more.

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