
Sent: 14 June 2013 08:38

To: Enquiry Enquiry (Other Government Departments)

Subject: BIS Committee Pubs Consultation

MP

Dr Vince Cable MP

I should start by saying the views and opinions I express below are my personal views and opinions and are not the views of my employer nor are they sanctioned by my employer in any way.

I have been employed in various job roles within the pub industry for 25 years and I'm proud to say I'm currently employed by Enterprise Inns as a Retail Standards Executive. My job role has many components but most important of these is to provide Publicans with support, advice or information on aspects of their business designed to help them provide their customers with an excellent retail experience thus enhancing their business.

I am concerned the current Government Consultation into the relationship between large pubcos and their publicans has effectively been hijacked by self-interest pressure groups who have no interest in getting to the facts and have done nothing more than simply put their own views and opinions forward as facts.

It is with regret I have to say, in my opinion the BIS has actually allowed itself to become hijacked by these groups. The fact the committee has not robustly interrogated the views and opinions put forward by these groups means it has allowed itself to fall prey to their *received wisdom*.

Not only has the BIS been complicit in allowing these self-interest pressure groups to distort the true picture of what is happening within the industry, the BIS has itself put forward (as fact) information that is comprehensively inaccurate.

I refer to the Consultation Documents which specifically refer to a statement about *the British Institute of Innkeepers having received over 400 complaints to it's hotline over the past three years. Some of these complaints were on other issues but the vast majority were about pub-owning companies with large numbers of pubs.*

The BII have confirmed that over a four year period, of over 700 calls to its hotline (276 from Enterprise publicans) **only four** were classified as complaints. Hardly the "vast majority" you spoke of.

I could explain the benefits and opportunities the low cost start-up our industry provides for entrepreneurs, the fantastic training our company provides for its employees and publicans, the great staff I have the privilege to work alongside every day, the number of publicans willing to sign up to another agreement with Enterprise, the extensive range of products available to publicans, and so it goes on.

On the other side of the coin I could illustrate the carnage wrought on our industry (and high streets) by supermarkets selling alcohol at a retail prices that are in fact below the cost of production and the untold damage these constant and repeated investigations do to publicans and the industry.

I could further illustrate the cost to our company of a failed publican i.e. it is not in our interest that any publican's business fails. In short it is in everyone's interest (yes, including ours) the publican and the pub thrive, I and many of my colleagues work hard every day to achieve that goal.

To us as a company, and for our employees, every one of our publicans and pubs is like a precious gem, something to be nurtured and valued, something that serves the community within which they reside, something to be cherished, and if necessary supported when times are difficult, as they are now.

But you know all these things, or at least I thought you did.

However what you may not know is job I undertake on a daily basis.

So, before you wander off into the cosy, cosseted and subsidised tea rooms and bars of the Westminster Village and decide to meddle in an industry you know virtually nothing about, my challenge to you is this; "walk a mile in my shoes."

Before you judge me, the outstanding colleagues I work with and the fantastic industry I am honoured to work in, phone me, spend a day with me, see what I do, and see what's truly happening at the sharp end of the pub industry.

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