
Sent: 03 June 2013 19:08

To: Enquiry Enquirv (Other Government Departments)

Cc:

Subject: Government Consultation Pub Companies and Tenants April 2013

Government Consultation Pub Companies and Tenants April 2013

Dear Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills,

With regard to the ongoing debate around the role of large pub companies in the licensing trade, I recently read a report in the press that stated you were keen to implement a statutory code of conduct to end "exploitative practises" by the pubco's and help publicans. As a publican I would like to add my brief opinion on this subject.

Along with my partner I have been a leaseholder of a small community pub since 2004 and since around 2005 the pub has been under the ownership of Punch Taverns PLC, whilst we could never have described ourselves as a thriving business we were able, up until a couple of years ago, to just about keep our heads above water (through a mixture of hard work and luck!). For the last 2 years or so, however, we, like so many other business's, have found it virtually impossible to survive and I have to say that without the help of Punch Taverns our business would definitely have gone under.

I feel it is only fair that credit is given where it is due and my own experience is that in the last few years Punch Taverns have certainly changed the way they operate. I have a very good open relationship with my Business Development Manager and can honestly say that both he and the company have tried their best to help us, they have invested in my business by funding a refurbishment, have reduced my rent and have given us large discounts on the price we pay for our stock.

Sadly the situation at the moment is that it appears we may be fighting a losing battle to keep our little pub trading BUT I would be lying if I said this was the fault of the pub company, indeed apart from the general economic climate my own experience is that the reasons our business is struggling at the moment are;

A) The ridiculously low price of alcohol in supermarkets

- B) Crippling levels of Business Rates (for what ??)
- C) VAT at 20%

As I say I can only speak of my own dealings with one pub company but I feel it is only right that amongst all the horror stories (and I've heard a few from other licensees!) the facts of my situation are heard by people such as yourself.

On a slightly more general note I would like to add that, whilst I am aware that times change and things move on, I feel very strongly that the demise of the 'Traditional British Pub' will only prove to be detrimental to our society as a whole and that the full effect of this will only be realised when it is too late to do anything about it. You only have to walk around any average town to see the increased levels of street drinking/drunkenness and anti-social behaviour to understand where the ever increasing availability of cheap alcohol and unregulated consumption of it is leading us (to say nothing of the effects on peoples health!).

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