**PRESS RELEASE**

**South West pub campaigners unite to show support as pubs reopen across the region**

South West campaigners from CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale) and the Campaign for Pubs have joined forces to urge people to support their local pubs when they are able to open their indoor spaces to customers from 17 May.

The Government confirmed on Monday 10 May that, as a part of the road map back to normal life, pubs can allow customers back inside to enjoy food and drink from next week – the limits of the rule of six or up to two households will apply indoors and groups of up to 30 outdoors.

Commenting on the many challenges pubs have faced since the first lock down 14 months ago and since reopening outside areas, Cornwall CAMRA Branch Chair Vince Curtis said: “While there was much reporting of pub gardens being very busy when customers were allowed back into outdoor spaces from 12 April, this did not tell the whole story. Many pubs do not have large outdoor areas and it would have been unviable for them to reopen while this limiting option was in place. And, when the weather turned cold and wet, many customers stayed away from those pubs that did reopen.

“This has added to the many challenges faced by pubs over the last 14 months. There is no doubt that the COVID pandemic has had a terrible effect on many people and businesses alike. The hospitality sector has been particularly badly hit. We hope that the public can enjoy the social and wellbeing benefits of being back inside the local – not just in its beer garden."

Many publicans have built up substantial debts due to being forced to close and a lack of Government support. While there were loans available and the furlough scheme which were appreciated, these were far from sufficient to mitigate the loss of income coupled with the ongoing overheads for such a very long period.

As the pandemic went through various phases, publicans were faced with draconian restrictions. Whilst this took place, many pubs nationally were shutting down permanently and staff were made redundant with jobs lost in the hospitality sector**.** The sad fact is that once a pub shuts very rarely can they open again.

Alastair Kerr from the Campaign for Pubs said: “The hospitality sector and in particular, pubs, have had their worst trading year on record and with the continued trading restrictions forced upon pubs, they will and are struggling to survive. Pubs are a corner stone of our society, a bed rock of our communities and a staple of our culture and we should all pull together to ensure that pubs survive and thrive during and after this pandemic. Pubs have faced the brunt of the restrictions that have been enforced by this Government, often with no evidence to back them up, and now more than ever they need all the support they can get. The Campaign for Pubs continues to promote, support and fight for pubs, publicans and their customers all over the UK.”

Vince Curtis continued: “Pubs are vital for community cohesion in many areas. We have seen thousands close in recent years and many of these, although viable as pub businesses, have been converted to other use depriving locals of a place to meet and socialise. We hope that communities will take advantage of now being able to safely enjoy a pubs offering be it indoors or in a pub garden. It’s a cliché but it is the reality with pubs like never before - use it or lose it.

“What this pandemic has proved is how much the hospitality industry gives back to the government financially and how pubs play such an important part in our way of life. From quiet pubs, pubs with music, pubs where you can play a sport or watch sport, pubs where you can dine and much more.

“Now pubs are able to open up more, we need to focus on how to save our locals. The public can play its part in saving this great British institution by using them. Pubs are the hub of the community.”

Louise Treseder, landlady of the Driftwood Spars in St Agnes, Cornwall (01872 552428) commented,

“The worst bit of the last 15 months for me was when we were first closed and the weeks leading up to this, the uncertainty of how the staff were going to be paid was terrible, but once Furlough was announced and I secured a CIBLS loan I felt the business could survive for a while.  When we were reopening the VAT reduction & the business rates holiday added to the relief that we could have a business to come back to.  The constant closing and reopening was hard, we never knew how much to order and worried about wastage which we could ill afford under the circumstances.  We are fortunate that we are in a coastal location and have lots of space we can use, if we were in a city recovery would have been more challenging and stressful.  We are very glad to be reopening inside again as this gives me & the staff certainty that we can be open every day, at the moment it is so weather dependant.  Being on the North coast of Cornwall and exposed to the Atlantic a marquee or structure wasn't really an option as it would easily get damaged - it would a have been a wasted investment.  It will be strange having customers in the B & B again and I'm worried I've forgotten something, but I'll soon work it out when we get open.

It's been challenging for the brewery, but we managed to adapt well, we put our cask beer into minikegs to sell to customers of the pub, but we still have to dispose of almost 50 casks of beer and then the lead in time to reopening wasn't quite long enough so we spent most of last summer trying to catch up with beer production.”

Amy Newland, landlady of the White Hart in Chilsworthy, Cornwall (01822 833876) added,

“We’ve always been here for the community and it was the strangest feeling: as soon as the door closed you lost the soul of the pub. It was cold and empty. We live upstairs and it was upsetting to be there; our lives changed overnight. One night we’re buzzing with lovely customers having a great time, the next night it’s just an empty old building. It was like being in a ghost town. At the very beginning and throughout the first lockdown, we sometimes thought of giving up. It was so hard. People said: ‘It must be amazing, lockdown in a pub!’ But it was the loneliest place you could be!”

Ends

Vince Curtis,

Cornwall CAMRA Chair

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**Step 3 – from 17 May**

Following the move to Step 3, you will be able to reopen indoor areas of your venues.

You will be able to serve customers in groups of up to 6 or 2 households indoors, or in groups of up to 30 outdoors.

If your venue serves alcohol, table service will be required. Even if no alcohol is ordered, this means customers must order, be served and eat/drink while seated.

If your venue does not serve alcohol, customers can order and collect food and drink from a counter. But they must consume food and drink while seated at a table.

Indoor entertainment is allowed, including soft play areas.

This guidance will be kept up to date as we move through the steps of the roadmap.

These are the FAQs from UKH/BBPA/BII - [https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/page/FAQs](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ukhospitality.org.uk%2Fpage%2FFAQs&data=04%7C01%7C%7Ccbf469688dbb4492268c08d915dbace8%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637564855500861626%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=j%2BATFYDhmWUv0bnakN6EPAmzXKCAq5Ter%2FwUxW3xmR0%3D&reserved=0)