

8<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Pubs Consultation  
Consumer & Competition Policy  
Dept. of Business Innovation & Skills  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Orchard 2  
1 Victoria Street  
Westminster SW1 HOET

Dear Sirs,

Given that the consultation on the issue of the Government committing itself to introducing a statutory code of practice for the large pub owning companies and brewers that will enshrine in law the principle that the tied licensee should not be worse off than that of a free of tie licensee is due to end on the 14<sup>th</sup> June, this may be the right moment to alert those considering the various matters involved in such consultation that not all publicans – tied or otherwise – are supportive of the thinly disguised attacks directed towards the pub owning companies.

Save the Pub Group Chair and Campaign Coordinator of Fair Deal for Your Local, Guy Mulholland, is quoted as saying recently "We have lost too many of our Great British pubs due to the unfair business practices of the large pub companies. It is now time for the Government to take this issue seriously and introduce a statutory code of practice for large pub owning companies to stop unsustainable overcharging".

As the landlord of a successful home counties pub - tied to my owning brewery for beer and cider – I strongly disagree with the tenor of Mr Mulholland's comments. "Unsustainable overcharging" is an emotive phrase and inaccurate. I have never had a problem selling my beer at an acceptable price, generating a healthy profit. In addition I consider the recent attacks upon Enterprise Inns (my owning company) by the Daily Telegraph to be thoroughly unwarranted.

During the past six months, I have taken a particular interest in the reasons for pub failures and have concluded that such failures have very little, if anything, to do with the behaviour of the large pub owning companies. If any business fails, the blame must lay squarely upon the shoulders of the management team purporting to run it.

Men – and those in particular who have recently retired – believe that running a pub is an easy way to make a living. It most definitely is not. Further, given the propensity of the British male to be greedy as well as lazy, failure is often inevitable and to blame the pub owning company is inexcusable.

My pub is successful - not only because of my hard work and that of my manager and staff – but also because of the support, encouragement and training we have always received from Enterprise Inns.

A lack of preparation, understanding of the issues involved and forethought by a new landlord who does not grasp the fact that the owning companies are in business to make money in a particularly difficult economic climate, leads to him thinking erroneously that if anything goes wrong it must be down to the big bad wolf that owns his pub. The new publican is made aware of any tie involved and should act accordingly, tailoring his pricing to his particular market or not enter the licenced trade in the first place.

My advice to wingeing publicans and their allies is to stop moaning, start working twelve hours a day seven days a week and when problems arise, to call upon their pub owning company which, as we have discovered, have a vested interest in helping as much as they can to ensure the success of each little part of a worthwhile countryside institution.

Yours faithfully,

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Proprietor.