

Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable

Re: Government Consultation Pub Companies and Tenants April 2013

Recently, it has come to my attention that certain members of Parliament have been commenting upon the relationships between Punch Taverns and the people who rent/lease pubs from them. Things being said are non-too kind against Punch and I feel that I need to voice my opinion, as I am one of these landlords.

I took over a pub in [redacted] in March of [redacted] which I already had a financial interest in. I had purchased a share in the pub and within [redacted] months of me doing so my 'partner', and I use that term loosely, went into personal liquidation and the pub looked doomed to closure.

I had been frequenting the place from the time I began my working life in [redacted] and had a love for the place and the people who drank there. I went on to run football teams from there and more recently began my musical career there too so I did not want to see it die.

Punch approached me personally, and asked if I would take the place on and run it, I thought for a short while and then replied to them that I would, even though I knew nothing about the licence trade. Punch were delighted, and offered a helping hand with a package they called their 'hit the ground running' package, which paid for me to get my training and my licence, while keeping the pub open as well as all the help I asked for to get me started. They were excellent in finding the right people to help, solicitors, training courses, accountants, suppliers and everything else needed to run even a little pub like mine. Even though regional managers were changing regularly due to reasons you do not need to know about, eventually I gained my licence, fully booked my live music acts for the following year, re-decorated, cleaned, polished and replaced things that needed to be replaced, all this fully supported by Punch Taverns.

I set up my own business on the 1st of [redacted] and it is going from strength to strength with the support and expertise of Punch Taverns solidly behind me. Eventually a regional manager arrived on the scene who was to stay and give what I can only say is excellent support. We are in constant contact, he gives me advice where needed, and is always on the ball whenever I need help, however small.

Our sales have shot up, the pub is as good if not better than it has been in years, and all is well within [redacted] And this can only be due to the fact that Punch have been excellent throughout my time in the trade. We have recently been Cask Marque accredited, after passing the certificate with a 100% mark. And I didn't do that on my own!

If these guys want to slag companies like Punch. and say that they are no good for the pub trade, then they want to come to my pub, [redacted], where we think very differently indeed. Come and see what we have been able to do with a little help from them, come and see live music acts 3 nights a week with free entry for 52 weeks of the year, every year. Come and eat a pie that is hand made by our [redacted] using only local ingredients and ales and ciders sold from our pumps and then go and find a better one anywhere! Come and meet people like [redacted] who are world renowned musicians who play regularly at my venue for next to no money so as to have a place that people can come to and chat with stars from now and from the past. They will tell you the same as me I am sure, that without the help of Punch Taverns, the place

would now probably be an Indian restaurant, or a beauty clinic, or not even there at all, but levelled to make way for a car park, or flats and then my customers would be short of one more pub in the area.

Please read this, then pass it to whoever is putting Punch Taverns down, and send him to my pub, see if he can find anything wrong with how it works as a business, and see if he can find someone to say that Punch Taverns should go back to what they did before getting involved with the licensing trade.

Kind Regards,

best live music venue by far!