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From:**Sent:** 14 June 2013 10:44**To:** Pubs Consultation Responses**Subject:** REsponse to consultation

I write in response to the consultation.

Background

Having worked in the pub industry for over 30 years at various levels including a divisional director for I set up my own company in 2001.

I have now 10 sites in my business, a mixture of private leaseholds and pub company leaseholds with three different landlords. I believe my experiences are well worth taking into consideration when reviewing this consultation.

My Views

I fear that the form of regulation outlined by the secretary of state could lead to another disaster similar to that of the last reform which attempted to dismantle the hold of the then big breweries and led to the creation of the pub co's. Any restructuring of the industry needs careful consideration or it will be "throwing babies out with the bath water"!

The area that the proposal seems to ignore in my mind is that pubs are different from other retail. They occupy premises that are invariably old, sometimes very old! They have residential areas, but often large redundant 2nd and 3rd floors that were used previously letting rooms, an area of their role in society that has been taken over by budget hotel chains.

As trends change in retail industry other businesses have moved with the times to new retail premises, retail parks, out of town stores, the internet etc. Pubs by their very nature of being essentially a landmark building in the centre of a community are unable to move!

All too often the emotional attachment of the public to "their" pubs overrides the fact that these are commercial businesses and need to be run in a commercial manner. The reason for the multitude of pub closures has little to do with the "evil exploits" of pub companies. Simply "times they are a' changing". As in all retail, demographics, environmental, population shifts, health, other entertainment options, taxes and duty, competition (supermarkets) have all had an effect and change is inevitable. If anything the role of the pub co's has been a stabilising influence, without them the recent closures of pubs would have trebled or quadrupled.

We therefore require responsible custodians of these premises, to ensure that when they are viable as businesses, they are maintained, promoted and encouraged to thrive.

My main concern is that the proposal will lead to the large property owning pub companies simply reverting to the role of property landlords, no longer considering the retail offering required of a pub, maintaining fabric of the building, offering advice to tenants, keeping compliance and Health and Safety issues up to date and ensuring that beer supplied via breweries is dispensed through well maintained equipment.

The tie to large a large pub company does mean that the tenant may pay more for their beer than a free trader. However it allows a good retailer to create an experience for the customer and community as a whole with the assistance of the expertise and capital investments of the landlord. It ensures that issues of health & safety and legal compliance are followed by the tenant, an area which many freehold operators are sometimes inclined to overlook, especially when faced with large costs.

Experience.

My own experience recently with one of the main pub co's, Enterprise Inns, has been that of a professional business that wishes to ensure that they work in partnership with operators who have a good business head and a sustainable business plan. Yes there have been disagreements at times, but these have been resolved like in any business relationship.

In the last years I have opened closed down pubs with the help of Enterprise Inns. Or put it another way Enterprise Inns have managed to open closed down pubs with my help. It works both ways.

Without the capital investment from Enterprise Inns I would never have been able to get these businesses reopened. I hope that they would say that without the vision and expertise that I brought as a retailer, they would have also found it difficult to reopen them also.

Without these kinds of relationships between operators like myself and large companies like Enterprise and Punch there would be hundreds of "beloved" pubs up and down the country that would simply be closed or very close to failure.

There are areas within the consultation I do agree need changing, but beware of changing too much and destroying the great relationships that do exist up and down the country.

Areas I agree with.

Stocking of one locally brewed beer, free of tie at no additional

Removal of gaming machine split

Removal of upward only rents

Transparent Recruitment process to prevent ill equipped tenants

Transparency of Pub Co's own P&L forecast of the business.

However all tied pubs should be included in the above including small regional breweries.

I do hope this has been of some help.

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