

Pub trade warns MPs: “It’s a perfect storm”

A cross-party group of MPs has heard from pub licensees that recovery from the COVID pandemic will take years, with pubs needing continuing support from the Government to thrive and play their part in rebuilding communities up and down the country.

As restrictions on pubs start to lift across much of the UK, it may seem that pubs have put the pandemic behind them – but that is not the message from those running pubs.

As part of an inquiry into pubs and the pandemic, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pubs (Pubs APPG) has brought together licensees, trade organisations, academics and MPs to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the future of the trade.

Evidence heard at the meeting shows that pubs are in desperate need of Government support and that recovery from the pandemic will take years. Responses also highlighted the resilience of licensees who have supported their communities throughout lockdowns and restrictions.

The full evidence session is available to view online, and clips will be published over the coming weeks to highlight the ongoing issues faced by licensees and the trade as a whole. Key issues include the rights of pub tenants under the Pubs Code, the difficulty accessing adequate financial support throughout the pandemic, Bounce Back Loan and rent debt repayments, Business Rates and rising staffing costs.

Chair of the Pubs APPG Charlotte Nichols MP said: “It’s clear that pubs will feel the repercussions of the pandemic for years to come. All the evidence collected during the Pubs APPG Inquiry shows that licensees face a long climb back to normality, despite the arrival of ‘Freedom Day’ in England.

“I want to say a massive thank you to the licensees, organisations, and academics who took the time to speak to us, and I’d urge everyone to get online and hear first-hand from the trade about their experiences.”

Speaking about negotiating pub rent, Liz, landlady of the Millwrights said: “A lot of us have had to make business negotiations under threat of losing our homes in the middle of a pandemic, and while we see upward only rent reviews and continuing of the tied model it’s an issue that’s going to stick with us for months to come.”

Alice, landlady of Beerwolf Books, raised the challenges she’s faced accessing financial support schemes: “We feel that we’ve fallen through the gaps in support in so many ways, financially the closures have impacted us massively... it meant a loss to our business of our entire 10 years of savings, almost £100,000, despite the grants given.”

Discussing staffing, Karen, landlady of the Odd Wheel told the Pubs APPG: “A lot of our staff left because we couldn’t keep them on furlough... we took over the businesses quite new in October which meant that our payroll was 3 days after the 30th of October deadline which meant that nobody could be furloughed – so we lost everybody who was coming across on the transfer.”

The session concludes the evidence gathering phase of the Inquiry into pubs and the pandemic, and a full report making recommendations to the Government from the Pubs APPG will be published shortly.

Ends

Notes to editors:

Clips from the evidence session will be shared on the Pubs APPG Twitter account: [@PubsAPPG](#)

The All-Party Parliamentary Pubs Group (Pubs APPG) is made up of MPs from all parties and groupings, and aims to promote and support pubs, landlords and the communities around them.

The Pubs APPG heard evidence from:

- Helen, landlady of The Kings Head.
- Dr Liz Hind, landlady at The Millwrights.
- Karen, landlady at the Odd Wheel.
- Alice, landlady at Beerwolf Books.
- The Plunkett Foundation
- Dr Jed Meers, York Law School
- Dr Thomas Thurnell-Read, Loughborough University
- The British Institute of Innkeeping

CAMRA provides the secretariat service for the Pubs APPG. More details on the Inquiry, including a full recording of the evidence session, can be found on the APPG's website:

<https://apppg.camra.org.uk/>