

## Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West

4<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about support for pubs.

Pubs play a crucial role in the social and economic life of our nation, as well in helping to promote responsible drinking, which is why I am encouraged by the support which has been made available to pubs and our manifesto commitment to further cut taxes for small businesses.

Through the Asset of Community Value scheme, communities can list facilities of local importance, including pubs. This means that if a pub owner wishes to sell up, the community has six months to come up with a plan and funding in order to try to save it. I am glad that there are now around 2,000 pubs across England listed as assets of community value.

In 2013, the Government took the decision to end the beer duty escalator, and beer duty has been frozen or cut several times since then. Duty on spirits has been frozen over the past two years. I have spoken with colleagues at the Treasury, who assure me that as a result of these changes, a typical pint is cheaper than it would have been had these measures not been introduced.

Following the announcement made in the Queen's Speech that alcohol duty will be reviewed, I am confident that the Government will continue to support pubs and will keep costs low for consumers. Any decision to modify alcohol duty is a matter for the Treasury.

The Spring Budget 2017 also provided a £1,000 discount on business rates bills in 2017 for pubs with a rateable value of less than £100,000 – 90 per cent of pubs in England – and I was pleased to see this extended in the Autumn Budget 2017 for a further year, through to March 2019.

You may be interested to know that a one-third discount to business rates for pubs and bars with a rateable values below £51,000 was introduced in 2018 and has now been increased to a 50 per cent discount for 2020-21. On top of this, as many as 18,000 pubs are expected to benefit from the new Pubs Relief set to be introduced this April, which will take £1,000 off the business rates bills of qualifying small pubs.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

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