



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

*New Content,*

**RE: SUPPORT FOR PUBS DURING CORONAVIRUS.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of support for pubs during the Coronavirus pandemic; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I share your concern about the future of pubs and the hardship caused by the Coronavirus outbreak. This is a very difficult time and I know just how worried people are, not just about their health, but their livelihoods as well. Pubs are important to our culture and communities and it has been good to see that many have reopened.

Many people have expressed serious concerns about what lies ahead for pubs. I share these concerns and I know my ministerial colleagues do too. That is why I welcome the Chancellor's *Winter Economy Plan* which puts in place further support to help tackle the challenges businesses like pubs now face. The Job Support Scheme will help participating businesses ensure employees on reduced hours earn a minimum of 77 percent of their normal wages, helping keep people across the country paid and employed.

It is also good news for pubs that the temporary reduction of VAT to 5 percent is being extended by a further three months to the end of March 2021. The Chancellor will also defer VAT repayments through a new scheme until March 2022. Businesses are also being given more time to access crucial loans alongside a more flexible repayment scheme for existing ones.

I should also mention that these new measures follow a robust package of support introduced since the start of the pandemic. No pub or other business in the hospitality sector will be required to pay Business Rates this year. HMRC has made it easier to claim back the duty on any beer thrown away as a result of pub closures. The *Business and Planning Act* made it easier to serve customers outdoors through temporary changes to planning procedures and licensing. The unprecedented Job Retention Scheme has rightly protected over 9 million jobs through the most difficult period of the pandemic, which I am sure has been a relief and comfort to many.

I recognise that businesses would prefer not to have restrictions in place, but I do believe these are necessary in order to help our country and communities prevent further outbreaks. Pubs and other businesses selling food and drink must now be closed from 10pm to 5am. In both indoor and outdoor licensed premises, food and drink must be ordered from, and served at, a table. Both staff and customers must wear a face covering when visiting a pub, except when seated at a table to eat or drink.



As pubs play a huge role in British society, I will continue to support the measures introduced to relieve the financial burden they are facing at this time. I have been assured that the Government will continue to look at how to adjust support in a way that ensures people can get back to work, protecting both the UK economy and the livelihoods of people across the country.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**