



# Campaign for Pubs

Promote, Support and Protect Pubs

Lorraine Kelly  
Good Morning Britain  
ITV  
WestWorks Building  
1st Floor,  
White City Place  
195 Wood Lane  
London  
W12 7FQ

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020

Dear Lorraine,

## **Your comments on pubs reopening on Good Morning Britain**

I am a licensee of two pubs, The Cellar House in Norwich and the [Old Ram Coaching Inn](#), an 11-bedroom inn in Norfolk. I am also a campaigner and [Committee member with the Campaign for Pubs](#) and am also a local Postmistress, as when the local postmaster retired in 2016, our local Post Office was integrated into the Cellar House. This gives you a small sense of the role pubs play in our communities and how ill-judged and disappointing your recent comments, made on the Lorraine Kelley Show, were and they also suggest that you are not someone who is a regular visitor to proper, community pubs.

I am writing this letter at passed midnight and I have been on my feet since 6am (yesterday) dealing with deliveries, writing staff rotas, finishing risk assessments and moving furniture – the list is endless. This alongside trying to home school my 12-year-old son and manage the local Post Office.

Last night I heard about your comments about going to the pub, so I watched Tuesday's Good Morning Britain. Both you and Dr Hilary slamming people thinking about going to the pub this weekend. To the thousands of publicans who are making huge efforts to open safely, following the strict rules and guidelines laid down by the Government, this was deeply insensitive and frankly offensive. You also clearly fail to realise that many pubs are not able to open or are choosing not to, as they cannot comply with the rules. Publicans, despite most having been without any income for months (and all with hugely reduced trade), are taking their responsibilities of looking after customers and staff with the upmost seriousness and investing considerable amounts of money into doing so, despite having no income (and other publicans forgoing any income, due to not have the room to be able to safely open). So for you to publicly criticise all those involved in pubs prepared to safely operate is a slap in the face to thousands of licensees and, by effectively making a moral judgement that people are wrong to be considering going to the pub again tomorrow, you are in danger of damaging our trade even further, when we have already been hit hard.

I am not aware you have been similarly critical of supermarkets, shops, off-licenses and traditional markets that have continued to trade throughout the lockdown, whilst pubs have been closed and with publicans like me and many of our members with no income and many with very large

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ongoing costs, including rent, despite being unable to trade. Some publicans have had no access to Government grants and support, many are still being charged levels of rent that mean all their grants go to the property owners/landlords/pub-owning companies. Many are now in considerable debt due to rent and other costs building up. Some have had no choice but to already walk away. You also, bizarrely, have been saying how grateful you are for your hairdresser and it seems welcoming hairdressers opening again, even though, unlike service in a pub, this involved direct physical contact between two people. This is surely perverse and smacks to publicans and others of double standards. I am sure that in your position, you have had access to private hairdressing/styling (not unreasonably in your job) but it does then make your comments about pubs and hardworking publicans (unable to trade or get a hairdo or haircut!) stick in the craw.

It is very easy for wealthy people with privileged lifestyles and ongoing incomes, unaffected by the Covid-19 crisis, to criticise others who need to safely return to operating their businesses. As you must know, there are many incredibly desperate people who have had no income since mid-March, plumbers, hairdressers, kitchen fitters and publicans to name but a few. Some are in serious financial difficulty. Some have struggled to put food on the table for their own families. So yes, whilst we all agree that we must all, as a society, do our best to control the spread of this awful disease (and publicans are fully committed to that) it is also a simple fact that lives are being ruined due to the loss of income and the failure of businesses. There isn't a trade-off, but all of these things are very real and serious, but frankly it is time that those who are lucky enough to have jobs, salaries and businesses unaffected by Covid-19 to start accepting that sitting in an ivory tower telling others they should starve or go onto benefits rather than operating a business safely and following Government rules really isn't a fair or a very edifying position to the hundreds of thousands of people who are suffering from loss of income, livelihoods and businesses.

It is clear from your comments that you have no idea the efforts being put in by publicans up and down the country and that all publicans have made careful decisions as to whether or not they are able to open this Saturday or later on. Many are opening the following week (and we all share the dismay that the Government gave us only 11 days' notice to open and had a Saturday as the first re-opening day, neither of which are helpful, but neither of which were our decisions. So I would like to ask you a few questions:

- Have you any idea of the number of landlords working hard to ensure safe pub environments?
- Have you any idea how many guidelines we have had to read through and interpret?
- Have you any idea of the investment we have had to make in our buildings £1000s in some cases yet without £1 of income since 20th March, with no insurance payments, £1000s of beer and stock poured down the drain or thrown away?
- Have you any idea of the number of staff on furlough worried about their future – I have 42 staff aged between 16 and 64?
- Have you any idea about the stress on small business and the supply chain that supports them – local brewers, cheese makers, ice-cream makers, gin makers etc?

So as a successful businesswoman, publican, postmistress and campaigner, I would like to meet with you to discuss your issues surrounding pubs reopening and the reality of what we have been doing to follow rules and keep our customers and staff safe. Pub landlords have spent many weeks

& sleepless nights getting pubs across the country ready. I have written out Bounce Back Rules, risk assessments, start staff training today, bought new furniture, signage and hygiene equipment. We want to be open this weekend because we need to be and the government have said it is safe to do so, but we are doing so following strict rule and guidelines and investing our own money to be able to operate safely and within the rules.

Pubs are not dens of iniquity. Landlords and landladies have not been counting the furlough money and grants and sunbathing and shed painting. Instead thousands of us know how important the pub is to their local communities - looking out for the elderly, the lonely, raising money for charity. Thousands have been working through the entire lockdown providing meals on wheels to the vulnerable and food banks, food for NHS workers, In my case a small shop & post office where I've worked single handed for the last 11 weeks of lockdown.

So please think before your throwaway comments, by all means advise people to be sensible, of course tell people if they are ill or vulnerable to stay away, as we are, by all means tell people to act sensibly and safely when they use any businesses, as we are, by all means tell our customers to be kind to our staff, as we are, but don't tell people to stay away. That is not only unfair and showing a profound lack of understanding of how hard publicans are working to keep people safe, but also is risks destroying many more pub businesses and seeing even more pub staff laid off and publicans facing hardship.

So I hope you will reflect on your comments and, if you would like to see the reality of how pubs are safely operating, like other businesses can and are, then I'd be delighted to show you in person if you would like to visit and give publicans a proper right of reply.

Yours sincerely,



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Licensee of the Old Ram Inn & Cellar House

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