



**For release time 10:00
Date Monday 21st December, 2020**

Save St Albans Pubs Calls For Urgent Financial Support

Increased Financial Support Required for Pubs to Survive

St Albans – 21st December – Following the move to Tier 4, Save St Albans Pubs Campaign Urges the Government for Increased Financial Support to ensure pubs can reopen in 2021

Following a closure of the St Albans Hospitality Industry due to the arrival of Tier 3 earlier this week, Tier 4 followed and the situation is clearly very grave. Firstly we fully support all “Medically Advised Closures” and we expect a well-managed response to this emergency. We urge the Government to think long term about the way we can safely re-open again in 2021 without having to go into further lockdowns and until we get to that point we urge them to give more financial support. We are all in this together.

A significant number of our pubs have remained closed since the November Lockdown and those that have managed to re-open are trading at 10-30% of normal capacity. This is not sustainable and moving into Tier 3 a few days ago has caused enormous losses as pubs had to stock up for the Christmas period ahead wasting thousands of pounds.

We have since moved into Tier 4 and we are in crisis. We do not see the end to this current Tier with this new strain of the virus and we expect the restrictions to continue beyond March. We are asking for urgent help now, not after it is too late. Business cannot afford to take on further debt.

- Following this latest Lockdown we ask the Government to increase the Discretionary Grant Funding to Local Authorities who are working with and know their local businesses in order to get cash to those that need it. Our Pubs and High Street urgently need the funds to ensure we have a High Street at the end of this crisis. Some Business Rates have been repaid by Supermarkets and other companies unaffected by the pandemic to the Government and we urge them to use this money to increase the funding available to local Authorities.
- For those that need to refinance their “maxed out” BBL loans we ask that the Government increases the BBL allowance to at least 100k with further increases if pubs are in tier 4 and a new 12 month holiday from the day the new agreement starts to ensure that businesses do not have to start paying back BBL whilst they are in lockdown or above Tier 1.

Moving forward to 2021/22 we have to be able to plan and we ask the Government for the following

- Zero Business Rates for 2021/22 for Public Houses, Hospitality and High Street premises to ensure that our precious High Streets and small businesses survive.
- Corporation Tax and VAT already deferred to be deferred by another 12 months to 2022 with an affordable 24 month payment plan.
- Government to keep the 5% VAT rate on food and to include alcohol sales for the 5% rate for 2021/22.