

# Donny Drinker

## NEWSLETTER

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It is with some disbelief how I've viewed how the Covid-19 virus crisis has been managed. It's often quoted that it is based on science and having qualifications in science subjects I know a bit about that. The balancing side of the argument has usually been about economics and I have some sympathy with some of the points put forward. The government and members of parliament have been faced with difficult situations and it would be wrong of me to suggest I know all the answers. However, I have plenty of questions about some of the things that have been decided and my ability to find some kind of logic to what has happened is somewhat challenged.

You've probably guessed by now that one of the many areas I have questions relates to the treatment of the pubs and brewery business. I've seen the arguments about when people drink there is an increased ability to forget some of the rules, just like visits to castles in the North East seems to have the same affect. It's a fair point but most pubs have gone to extreme and costly lengths to provide a safe environment. An article in this edition covers some of these issues. We've all seen the impact of the 10pm curfew which caused huge crowds of people into the street without any prospect of distancing from their fellow drinkers. We've seen the impact of short notice changes to the rules on the opening of pubs which, again, resulted in mass drinking sessions the night before lockdown.

There has never been any evidence provided to show that pubs have been a strong vector for spreading the virus. The government could argue they can't produce the evidence because their test and trace system, supposedly world class, completely failed so we didn't know where the likely virus contact places are. If it could be proved that pubs are a problem then I would be the first to support the erratic, short notice closures but at the moment I can't.



How it used to be

My heart goes out to all the pubs, clubs and breweries that have worked hard to apply the rules and abide by them, only to see their means of earning a living and paying the bills disappear for very long periods. Many pub owners and landlords have suffered from the reduced financial support for those who are self-employed. Many are now conjuring with the prospect of either having to close their pubs or breweries, or telling their staff they can no longer afford to retain them. The recent offer of £1,000 to pubs affected by tier closures was an insult.

I can't find the logic in this when certain sectors and parts of the country are opened up or remain opened up when logic says they are very high risk areas for spreading the virus.

As stated before, some very difficult decisions have had to be made and it is a very difficult balancing act between the health of the public and the economy. All I ask for us some fairness and a system built on evidence and effective enforcement on those that put the health of others at risk

Editor

## A Message from the Branch Chairman

Since my last article, I'm afraid things have become even tougher for the region's publicans, as a result of stronger and more restrictive lockdown measures. As I predicted, those that could have found ways to battle on, offering a wide range of take-out and home delivery real ales and ciders. With some adapting their kitchens to offer take-away meals and soft drinks. Of those that have had no alternative but to temporarily close, some have continued the refurbishments begun during 'lockdown one', whilst others have made plans ready for the glorious day of reopening. The good news is, that as I write, I haven't heard of any of 'our pubs' that seem to have closed for good. This could change over time of course, and unfortunately, it seems that some fairly well-known pubs in neighbouring branch areas have closed their doors for good.

No-one knows what the future has in store for the pubs and clubs in the area covered by the Doncaster and District Branch. One thing we can all be sure of however, is that all of them will need our support. Now more than ever before, if they are to survive.

The threats to our pubs and clubs from cost-cutting supermarkets, the operating practises of several major pub chains, changes to drinking habits, less people venturing out as social media and digital technology become more addictive, have now been joined by the daunting threat of the Corona Virus. Single-handedly, this one threat alone, has the potential to be responsible for more permanent closures than any of the others.

When all this is over, I appeal to you all to support your local / favourite pub. When you feel safe, please take a trip into town to sample the delights of the pubs in the town centre. Alternatively, dine out in one of the many country pubs in the surrounding area as they also need your help. Why not try one of the smaller centres in the region, such as: Conisbrough, Mexborough, Hatfield, Thorne, Goole, Tickhill, Haxey or Epworth to name but a few. You'll be surprised at the diversity you will find, from micros to 'foody' pubs to community pubs, all with their own appeal and character. All will need, and be grateful for, your custom, and all have been taking extra care to implement sanitisation procedures to keep you safe.

It's not all bad news, and there are some exciting moves afoot ready for when the great day comes. I was particularly pleased to hear that after the damage caused by the recent floods, the Boat Inn at Sprotbrough was able to reopen (albeit briefly) and refurbishment

work on the long-closed Coach and Horses at nearby Barnburgh has also been completed. This pub was purchased by the Don Valley Brewery, who in another brave move, have relocated to a new site at Sandtoft with brand new equipment I'm told. Luckily this is also in our branch area. The original site and brew kit in Mexborough, on the canal bank, has now been taken over by Gorilla Brewery.

At branch level, although unable to arrange our usual programme of monthly socials and meetings, we are attempting to keep members informed of news and events affecting the pubs and clubs in our area by using social media and our website. In spite of the difficulties faced by all of us, it is heart-warming to know that there are over a thousand members in the branch and we will do our best to keep you up to date. Thank you for staying with us, your support is more important now more than ever, both locally and nationally. There are more worrying times ahead but I know the pubs and clubs in the Doncaster and District Branch will do their best to meet the challenges they face. Stay safe everyone.

*Jan Jones, Branch Chairman*

## What Covid Protection Measures Have Pubs Taken

This article is based on a the few pubs I visited when it was possible to do so and also guidance provided nationally from expert sources. If we do get to a situation when local pubs can open, whilst there is still a possibility of catching the virus, these are some of the things you should look for to assess whether you are entering an environment which is working hard to protect your health. You still need to keep in mind that no environment will be 100% safe and even when you have been vaccinated, which you should do at the earliest possibility, protection may not be absolute.

First of all, before or on entering the pub you should look or ask for the opportunity to register the fact that you have attended the establishment. If you have got a mobile with the NHS Covid app look for the signs with a 2D barcode which you can scan to register your attendance.

Look generally around the pub. If it is very crowded, has poor ventilation and people are shouting then don't think twice about stopping there. Also beware of customers being allowed to stand at

the bar. Table service should be the order of the day.

Arrangement of the tables and chairs should also follow the current social distancing rules. I've been in some pubs that have gone to the expense of putting screens between tables for greater safety.

Staff at the bar should be wearing masks or at least behind protective screens. Sanitisers should be available at least on entry and possibly on exit. The best pubs will sanitise tables and chairs between occupants. Try to assess that the the number of people around a table do not exceed the maximum allowed by current rules and, where applicable, meets the guidance on the number of households allowed to meet. This may be very difficult.

The tiers are constantly changing and the guidance above may not be relevant in a few weeks, months or even a year from now. Hopefully the day will come when we can be allowed to enjoy the type of pub life we had at the beginning of 2020 before the darkness Covid-19 brought upon us arrived.

Steve Pynegar

## CAMRA Joins Alliance to Campaign to Support Pubs

CAMRA has joined an alliance of organisations with the aim of campaigning to get people talking about why pubs across the UK are a force for good. The alliance is call **Pubs Matter** and consists of organisations that represent people that love pubs, people who run them, people who brew beer for them and, most importantly, people and communities who use them. The other organisations involved are:

### British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA)

The beer and pub sector in the UK employs a total of 900,000 people – 600,000 of which are directly employed in pubs. The British Beer & Pub Association is the leading body representing Britain's brewers and pub companies. The Association is more than a century old and was originally founded as the Brewers' Society in 1904. Our members account for some 90 per cent of beer brewed in Britain today, and own around 20,000 of the nation's pubs.



### British Guild of Beer Writers

The British Guild of Beer Writers was formed in 1988 to help spread the word about beers, brewing and pubs. It's members represent the country's beer and pub media experts – be they journalists, authors, producers, photographers, illustrators or PR people.

### British Institute of Innkeeping (BII)

The BII is the leading independent licensee support organisation for individuals working in hospitality, with over 9,000 individual members running premises across the UK – predominantly tenanted, leased, managed and freehold pubs. The organisation provides expert helplines, online business support, and guidance on key industry issues, face-to-face networking opportunities and savings on a range of supply deals for its members.

### The Independent Family Brewers of Great Britain (IFBB)

The IFBB represents the 29 Family Brewers whose breweries and pubs have been at the heart of the UK's brewing and pub tradition for over 300 years. They remain family-owned and fiercely proud of their brewing heritage throughout England and Wales.

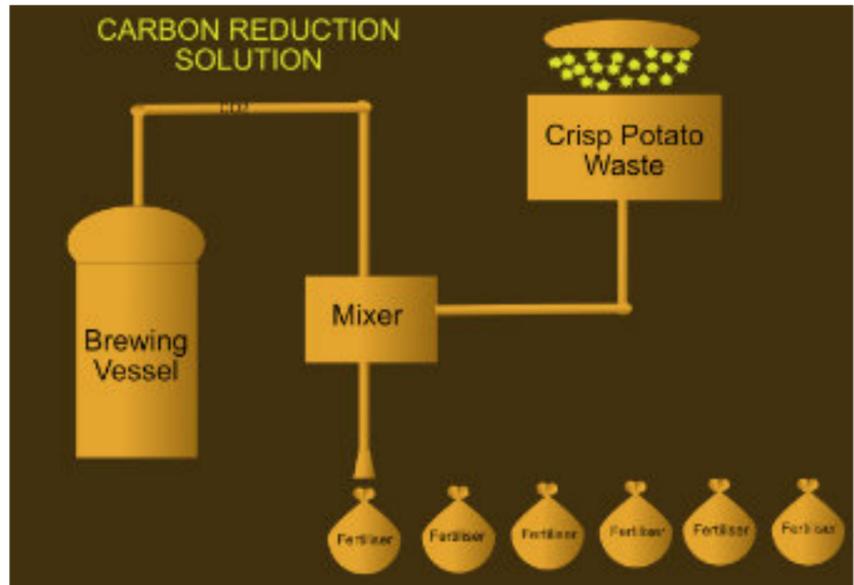
### UKHospitality

Representing more than 700 companies in a sector that employs over 3.2 million people, UKHospitality speaks for a sector that represents 10% of UK employment, 6% of businesses and 5% of GDP.

If you are not a member of CAMRA and support our campaigns then why not become a member. To join go to:

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

## Beer Can Help Save the Planet



A certain crisp manufacturer, associated with a former Leicester City footballer, has come up with an ingenious way of helping to save the planet. You may well ask why this is featured in a beer magazine. The answer is, it's because it involves beer production which can involve the release of CO2 into the atmosphere.

It has been discovered that if you capture and mix the CO2 with the potato waste produced from crisp production the end product will be a fertiliser that can be used to produce the next potato crop. Not only do you prevent the release of CO2 from beer production but CO2 is also not produced in making fertiliser.

So far the brewery to be used in the process has not been identified.

## Can Supermarkets Do More to Help Local Breweries

Supermarkets have benefited from remaining open and selling their vast range of products including beers. No problem with this but it has mainly been to the benefit of the large brewery conglomerates and beer products that originate from other countries. True, they have supported some of the medium sized breweries but what about making themselves an outlet for the small local breweries.

Years ago one of the national supermarket chains devoted shelf space to beer brewed in small to medium Yorkshire breweries and it was a very welcome development. Given the limited capacity of our small local breweries, it wouldn't take up a lot of space to provides some choices that are well known local success stories and support the local business community. In some European countries supermarkets proudly have sections devoted to a range of local products.

Some of our local pubs and breweries have shown, through their own effort and enterprise, that these beers can sell, even if it is only in bottles. So, come on all supermarkets, prove you have a heart when it comes to supporting the local community around your businesses.



Doncaster CAMRA



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