



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

February 2019.

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Save Our Pubs Campaign

Thank you for contacting me about pubs.

The brewing and pubs industry contributes over £1.7 billion to the Scottish economy and supports the employment of 60,000 people. I also recognise the crucial role that pubs play in the social and economic life of our nation, as well in helping to promote responsible drinking.

The Chancellor announced at the 2018 Autumn Budget that duties on beer, cider, and spirits will be frozen across the UK. My colleagues in Scotland very passionately campaigned for a spirit duty freeze, so this came as a very welcome decision. This year, the price of a typical pint of beer will be 2p lower than if prices had risen with inflation; the price of a pint of cider will be 1p lower; and the price of a bottle of Scotch whisky will be 30p lower.

This follows the removal of the beer duty escalator in 2013 and the unprecedented cuts and freezes in beer duty since then, as well as the removal of the duty escalator for spirits, wine and cider in 2014. I am pleased that the Government was able to deliver this, in order to support our great Scottish spirits distilleries, our cider producers, our brewing industry and our local pubs.

In Scotland, business rates relief is a devolved matter, and therefore the responsibility of the Scottish Government. I understand many of the pubs across Scotland pay in excess of £10,000 a year in business rates, which represents a significant cost. In 2018, the Scottish policy convener of the Federation of Small Businesses said there is "a long-term optimism gap between a typical firm in Scotland and their counterparts elsewhere in the UK." It is important the Scottish Government listen to the concerns of small businesses, such as pubs and brewers, in order to help their confidence to grow.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Alister Jack'.

Alister Jack DL MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.

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