

Trade bosses unite against retail code

Bill lobbying letter sent to Home Secretary

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Trade chiefs have united against plans to force costly new restrictions on pub trading through the mandatory alcohol retailing code.

Lord Redesdale, who chairs the industry-backed Best Bar None scheme, has tabled an amendment to the Policing and Crime Bill calling for the code to be scrapped.

Meanwhile, a major lobbying process is underway. A letter from the BII, counter-

signed by five other trade bodies, has been sent to Home Secretary Alan Johnson spelling out how the plan will damage the trade.

All 15,000 members of the BII have been sent copies of the letter to forward to their MPs. All 80 Best Bar None scheme members and other trade groups have been asked to do the same.

The planned mandatory code will see all licensees forced to abide by strict new trading conditions, includ-

15,000
number of BII members urged to lobby their MPs

ing serving drinks in smaller containers and not running certain drinks promotions.

The letter says: "The planned mandatory conditions for all licensed premises are for the most part blanket, indiscriminate and disproportionate. Existing legislation can deal with irresponsible on and off-trade retailers.

"Collectively, Best Bar None, BII, the ALMR, the FLVA, Noctis and the BBPA – the trade bodies and associations that have given their support to this letter – represent circa 75% of the businesses operating in the licensed retail industry.

"Our members provide employment for young people starting out in their careers, make a significant tax contribution and contribute around £80k per annum to their local communities and economy.

"The added burden of these mandatory conditions will close pubs and decimate a vital UK industry."

Redesdale said: "This activity is the industry at its best; uniting against legislation that could have disastrous consequences."



Round the clock: training can be provided to suit shifts

CPL plans night-shift training

Training provider CPL is to provide training courses 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The move is designed to cater for employees who work shifts. The new 24/7 offer will make organising training courses for night staff a lot easier.

"The last thing the hospitality industry needs is a nine-to-five mentality when providing a valuable service like training," said CPL Training chief executive Daniel Davies.

"All of our trainers are experienced at an operational level so they've put

in plenty of shift work in their time."

Britannia Hotels is among the first to take advantage of the offer, with night porters receiving fire-marshall training during night shifts.

Mike Marten, group personnel and training manager for Britannia Hotels, said: "We have thousands of staff across our business and almost all of them work outside normal day shifts.

"This idea is inspired. Now we don't have to re-schedule our shifts to suit the trainers. The trainers work with us at whatever time of the day or week that we need them."



Under threat: the proposed code will affect glass sizes

Van de Berg wound up

JD Wetherspoon's former "property finder" Van de Berg has been formally wound up by the High Court, following a petition brought by the pub company.

The move comes two months after JD Wetherspoon triumphed in a multi-million pound High Court damages claim against Van de Berg, which a judge found had perpetrated a "fraud" by helping third parties profit at the pub giant's expense.

In April, Mr Justice Peter Smith ruled in Wetherspoon's favour in its claim against Van de Berg & Co – a former property partner, which found most of the

chain's pubs during its rapid expansion period from 1989 until 2005 – for damages for fraud and dishonest breach of contract.

Last week Mr Registrar Jacques formally wound-up the company, following a petition by Wetherspoon over an undisclosed debt.

The Registrar granted a "usual compulsory order" in a hearing lasting only seconds, which effectively handed over the company's affairs to an official receiver.

His job now is to do his best to ensure that debts are paid off, by selling any assets available and then bringing business to a close.

BII rent-review roadshow

The BII is running another of its rent-review roadshows in Surrey at the end of June.

Pub tenants and lessees will be able to get information on how rents are calculated, how to prepare for

rent reviews, how to ensure a fair rent review is achieved and how rents are resolved.

Morning Advertiser editor Andrew Pring will chair the meeting, sponsored by Magners, Fuller's and Enterprise

Inns, at the Brooklands Museum in Weybridge on 30 June.

Speakers will include Barry Gillham of Fleurets, Nick Light of Enterprise Inns, Steve Howe and Phil Dixon of the BII. "Just the very thought of a rent review can incite fear in a licensee," said Martin O'Grady, chairman of BII Southern Region. "If you're not properly prepared, they can be a very stressful experience."

Tickets cost just £25+VAT for BII members and £29+VAT for non-members. To book visit www.bii.org or phone 01202 242714.

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Fleurets: Barry Gillham



BII: trade expert Phil Dixon