

# **Beer campaigners make new plea to the Government**

**Real ale campaigners have called on the Government to extend the support package to the hospitality industry.**

Nik Antona, national chairman of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), in response to the Prime Minister's statement on the COVID-19 measures on Sunday, is concerned that jobs are protected and businesses are in the best position to re-open when allowed.

And he wants a level playing field with cafes and restaurants as he argued that pubs also have outdoor spaces to enforce social distancing.

He said: "The package needs to be extended to brewers, cider producers and others in the hospitality supply chain. The £51K rateable value ceiling on pubs receiving grant support also needs to be lifted, to help the 10,000 or more businesses currently unable to access support.

"Local Authorities need to be encouraged to ensure the flow of grants is quick and easy for businesses to access. Landlords and pub companies need to cancel rent during the period turnover remain at a fraction of usual.

"The Government must recognise that even when allowed to reopen, hospitality businesses will be operating at hugely reduced trade.

"The support package needs to be extended beyond reopening and transition funding should be made available to help pubs, bars and producers start up again.

“There needs to be an immediate relaxation of licensing laws to allow all businesses to seek revenue from off-sales for delivery and/or safe collection by customers.”

And he argued: “We’re very concerned at the suggestion that while cafes and restaurants with outdoor space will be allowed to reopen, pubs and bars which could enforce the same social distancing measures will not.

“The Government needs to clearly explain the science and reasoning behind this – and ensure these businesses get additional support if prevented from reopening.

FLASHBACK: our picture shows happy customers at the craft beer festival in Edinburgh