

thePublican's
**Morning
Advertiser**

23 May 2013 £3.00 No.103 Established 1794

www.morningadvertiser.co.uk

**IS IT TIME
TO RELAX
THE
SMOKING
BAN?**



SAVE OUR PUBS & CLUBS

AmendTheSmokingBan.com

CAMPAIGN NEWS ■ CAMPAIGN NEWS ■ CAMPAIGN NEWS ■ CAMPAIGN NEWS



Making their point: SOPAC campaigners believe the smoking ban has had a devastating impact on the pub trade

New call for smoke-ban review

SOPAC encourages the Government to assess the impact the ban has had on pubs and clubs

Six years after the introduction of the smoking ban in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, campaigners have renewed calls for a review of the ban that they say was promised by the previous Labour Government.

Simon Clark, director of smokers' group Forest, which runs the Save Our Pubs & Clubs (SOPAC) campaign, says politicians must address the issue as the impact on trade has been devastating and pubs continue to close.

A report commissioned in 2011 by the SOPAC campaign found traditional inner-city pubs had suffered the most since the introduction of smoking bans in Scotland, England and Wales.

Researchers found the areas with the greatest number of closures were in Labour-held constituencies — with an average of almost 11 pubs per Labour constituency, compared to 9.9 per Liberal Democrat constituency and 7.6 per Conservative constituency.

"It could be," says Clark, "that the coalition is less concerned by pub closures because more pubs have closed

in Labour constituencies. If that is the case, it's very short-sighted.

"Local communities cannot afford to go on losing pubs. The Government must review the smoking ban and consider options that bring us into line with most other countries in Europe where smoking is permitted in separate smoking rooms or designated smoking bars.

"We're not asking for the ban to be repealed. We know many people, including a lot of publicans, support the ban. It's about choice — for customers, staff and proprietors.

"Anyone who wants their pub to be smoke-free will still have that right. For them, nothing will change. However, an amendment to the ban to allow separate smoking rooms in pubs and bars could be the boost the industry needs.

"We anticipate a huge national de-

bate and the trade would benefit from the chance to promote the importance of pubs to society in general and local communities in particular."

Pub closures

Research also suggested that smoking bans were the main cause of pub closures in the UK and Ireland. Using data from a respected industry database, researchers found the number of pub losses shows a very close statistical relationship between the introduction of smoking bans and the acceleration of the decline of the British pub.

They discovered a striking similarity in the rate of closures in Scotland, England and Wales following the introduction of smoking bans in each country.

Analysis of statistics from CGA Strategy showing the net figure of pubs clos-

ing revealed that losses accelerated after the first year of the ban in each country — from between 0.5% and 1.2% in the first year to between 3.8% and 4.4% in the second year.

According to the report by CR Consulting: "While there is significant variation in the trajectories of pub closures before the ban, there is an almost total correlation between the three countries after the ban.

"This indicates they are affected by a strong common factor — the smoking ban. The correlation is in fact so close that the trend line for the three countries is identical."

Clark adds: "Politicians can pretend otherwise but there is little doubt that the smoking ban has had a devastating effect on a great many pubs.

"We were told the ban would encourage a new wave of non-smoking customers but that hasn't happened. Instead, many smokers have chosen to stay at home, and thousands of pubs have closed as a result.

"For the sake of our local communities, the Government must review the ban and it should include a full independent audit of the impact the ban has had on pubs and clubs. It should also take into account job losses in the hospitality trade since July 2007."

☒ **Keep tabs on the ban: p50-52**



For more information visit: www.amendthesmokingban.com

SOPAC: what the campaign is all about...

The Save Our Pubs & Clubs (SOPAC) campaign is a coalition of groups and individuals who believe the public smoking ban introduced in Scotland in 2006 and the rest of the UK in 2007 is excessive and should be amended to allow, for example, smoking rooms.

It is not trying to repeal the ban.

SOPAC's goal is to persuade the coalition to: (a) review the impact of the smoking ban on pubs and clubs; and (b) relax the ban so everyone — landlords, staff and customers — has a choice. (The previous government promised a review of the legislation in England and Wales in 2010, and we believe it would help us make our

case for amending the ban.)

The aim is to develop the campaign at a local level and urge supporters to write to MPs, councillors and media. We hope to avoid further restrictions on public smoking — for example, exclusion zones around public buildings, including pubs and clubs — that could

have more serious repercussions for the hospitality trade.

SOPAC is strictly non-party political. Members of parliament from the three main parties have expressed support and the campaign will continue to engage with politicians from all of the mainstream political parties.

MORE CAMPAIGN NEWS: P 81 ■ MORE CAMPAIGN NEWS: P81 ■ MORE CAMPAIGN NEWS: P81





Time for ban debate

Campaigners hail the 'UKIP effect' and hope it will spark a nationwide discussion about pub culture and fuel ideas about how to revive the industry

Campaigners say that the 'UKIP effect' could reignite the debate about smoking in pubs.

Simon Clark, director of the smokers' group Forest, which runs the Save Our Pubs & Clubs (SOPAC) campaign, says: "UKIP [UK Independence Party] supports an amendment to the smoking ban and [leader] Nigel Farage's very obvious love of a 'pint and a fag' hasn't done him or the party any harm.

"This has not gone unnoticed in Westminster and we have a great opportunity to have a national debate about the ban and how to secure the future of Britain's ailing pub trade."

Clark adds that, while he welcomed the UKIP leader's comments about the ban, it would be unwise for any campaign to align itself with any political party.

"It could be counter-productive and would almost certainly alienate representatives or supporters of other par-

ties. Nevertheless we hope it will lead to a long overdue debate about the impact of the ban and the need for an amendment to the legislation.

"Many people – especially those who enjoy a pint and a cigarette – feel disenfranchised from the political system. Successive governments have turned the screw on their habit and made it difficult to enjoy a relaxing evening in their local.

"It's our hope the 'UKIP effect' will generate a national discussion about Britain's pub culture and what can be done to revive an industry that has faced enormous problems in recent years."

Forest is also calling on the Government to relax the regulations on outdoor smoking shelters so pubs can provide outdoor smoking rooms where customers can smoke in a "warm and comfortable" environment all year round.

Strict regulations

The current regulations, Forest adds, are unnecessarily strict. At present, 50% of a smoking shelter has to be open to the elements. Clark describes the regulations as "petty and spiteful".

He adds: "If they have space, publicans should be allowed to erect proper smoking rooms, not shelters, outside their pubs. There is no good reason why they shouldn't be allowed to do this.

"Our other objective is to prevent the extension of the smoking ban to outside areas such as beer gardens. In 2009, under the previous government, this was a serious threat. Today the threat of an outside ban could come from local



How it all started: the launch of the Save Our Pubs & Clubs campaign in 2009. Speakers at the event included UKIP's Nigel Farage, Conservative MP Greg Knight and Labour MP David Clelland

authorities that have been given responsibility for public health.

"Some councils have already begun to introduce smoking bans in and around kids' play areas. This is being done for two reasons. First, they want to reduce children's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. Second, they want to 'denormalise' the act of smoking so children don't see adults lighting up.

"The danger is some councils could take this further and decide smoking should be banned outside pubs or in beer gardens to 'protect the children' even though there is not a shred of evidence that smoking in the open air is a risk to any bystander, including children.

"Should the threat of a ban on smoking in outdoor public areas materialise it is essential that the hospitality industry is not only ready with its response, it must be united in opposition to a measure that could be the final straw for many more pubs. We understand the health risks of smoking, drinking too much alcohol or eating too much fatty food, but our concern is excessive regulation that treats adults like children.

"Artist and smoker David Hockney once said, 'a pub is not a health club'. If Government can ban smoking in every pub and bar in the country it can also dictate people's eating and drinking habits."

For more information visit: www.amendthesmokingban.com



Amendment backing: Nigel Farage

Hosts urged to go for GBPA Best Smoking Area title

Does your pub provide excellent outdoor smoking facilities? Well, the Great British Pub Awards (GBPA), for single-site operators, could be right up your street.

Now in its third year, the Best Smoking Area accolade recognises pubs that provide excellent outdoor smoking facilities for adult customers.

A GBPA is recognised as "the one to win" by licensees. Attracting hundreds of entries from thriving pubs around the UK, this is a fantastic opportunity to be recognised as the very best in the business.

Simon Clark, director of smokers' group Forest, which runs the Save Our Pubs & Clubs campaign that supports the Best Smoking Area

award, says: "Since the ban was introduced, a lot of people who used to enjoy a beer and a cigarette in their local now stay at home.



Outside chance: excellent smoking areas will be hailed at the awards

"Sadly, many smoking areas still leave smokers ostracised. The best areas are designed to make smokers feel welcome. They are also clearly designated so smokers aren't told off or made to feel guilty for lighting up.

"If you've gone that extra mile since the smoking ban to accommodate customers who wish to smoke, enter the Best Smoking Area award and get the recognition you deserve."

To enter, download an application form at <http://bit.ly/10G8HgS> or log on to www.greatbritishpubawards.co.uk

GIVE PUBS A CHOICE

AmendTheSmokingBan.com



WWW.AMENDTHESMOKINGBAN.COM

SHERATON HOUSE, CASTLE PARK, CAMBRIDGE CB3 0AX
T: 01223 370156 E: CONTACT@AMENDTHESMOKINGBAN.COM