



Damian Hinds
MP for East Hampshire

News release

19 January 2012
For immediate release

MP Says It's Time to Call Time on Pub Closures

Damian Hinds has spoken out on the need to do more to defend our pubs. Speaking in a debate in the House of Commons, Damian underlined the importance of pubs, praising them as community hubs and part of the fabric of our towns and villages. He also held them up as examples of hard working small businesses which needed support in these tougher economic times.

Damian Hinds said

"Pubs are an important part of being British; they are an important part of what holds us together and of what, literally, brings us together."

"There are clearly far too many pubs closing in our towns and villages, and we need to find ways to stop that."

In a debate in which many MPs criticised the beer tie, the practice where pubs are restricted in which beers they serve through a tie to a specific brewery, Damian said there were other areas which needed attention. Before entering Parliament, Damian worked, for a time, in the brewing industry.

Instead, Damian highlighted the important issues of price competition and pubs being sold for conversion to other uses, usually residential.

"If we want to be totally focused on keeping pubs open we have to address two fundamental things. The first is pubs competing on price, partly against the supermarkets, but also against managed houses, particularly urban "vertical drinking establishments", as they are known in the trade, which often severely undercut the traditional tenanted trade."

"The second is alternative usage value, as one way of keeping pubs open is to make it harder and more expensive to secure a change of use for these premises. That will focus minds upon making sure that pub companies are supporting sustainable businesses."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Pictures to follow separately by email:

image 1 Damian speaking in the House of Commons,

image 2 Damian pulling a pint of Alton's Pride in the House of Commons' Strangers' Bar

Full text of the debate can be found here:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201212/cmhansrd/cm120112/debtext/120112-0002.htm#12011294001560>

For further information please contact