

Morning Advertiser

Officially the pub trade's favourite

morningadvertiser.co.uk
18 February 2010 £2.00 No. 480

Take a trip around the world

Boost your sales with beers from around the globe – p60-62

Alcohol labelling could cost £136m

Gov't estimates 1% fall in consumption

John Harrington

john.harrington@william-reed.co.uk

A proposed mandatory alcohol labelling code for producers could cost the on-trade up to £136.2m per year in lost sales.

That Government estimate assumes there will be a 1% fall in consumption as people are more conscious about how much they drink. The total cost to the on and off trades would be £194m.

While the Government admitted it's "not possible" to quantify the reduction, it's "likely" that some people would drink less. Other estimates put the impact to the on-trade at £16.3m (0.1% consumption fall) and £5.6m (0.02% reduction).

The Government has proposed a mandatory scheme after a new report found just 15% of drinks producers included five key pieces of information agreed in a voluntary code in 2007. Other options are do nothing or strengthen self-regulation.

"Despite responsible efforts from brands such as Bulmers, Foster's, Kronenbourg and the major supermarkets, overall progress on labelling is very disappointing," said public health minister Gillian Merron. "We will not hesitate to act decisively if industry does not deliver."



Health secretary Andy Burnham said: "We have now received assurances to comply from most of the major manufacturers and retailers. I invite industry as a whole to deliver on these assurances, and look forward to finding a way to make this happen during the consultation."

But the British Beer & Pub

Association (BBPA) said "considerable" progress had been made. For example, 91% of beer cans and bottles have unit information, 75% have a responsibility message, 82% have the Drink-aware logo, 40% have the responsible drinking guidelines and 31% have a pregnancy warning.

BBPA boss Brigid Simmonds said this "not only shows the merits of the voluntary approach, but demonstrates why Government should continue to back the voluntary approach as the best way of achieving their objective of better information for consumers".

However, the Government's concern is that only 15% have all five elements.

Meanwhile, Diageo committed to adopting the five messages on all its packaging – 200 million bottles and cans – by the end of 2012.

Heineken UK said currently all five pieces of information are carried on its packaging, while Molson Coors is "firmly committed" to its 2007 promise.

Miller Brands UK said it includes the information on its outer packaging for retail as well as on labels. Managing director Nick Miller said: "We even stopped importing one of our products because of the complexities of putting advice on that niche brand."

The consultation, which closes on 9 May, can be found at www.dh.gov.uk.



Use your local:
great ways to
draw in punters
– p56-57

42 PUBCHEF

Slice of the action
Tasty tips and ideas
for British Pie Week



52 INNOVATION

Aid for the trade
The latest ways of
helping struggling
pub tenants



Mine's a parcel

Stuart Mills, founder of useyourlocal.com talks to **Jo Bruce** about parcel collections, pubs connecting with their local communities and bringing in football fans

According to Google, the word pub is entered into the search engine 20 million times a month.

This super surfing of our industry's favourite three letters highlights consumers' continuing affection for and interest in the British pub.

Website useyourlocal.com aims to tap into this feeling for the British pub and help licensees connect with their local communities in order to drive extra business.

Stuart Mills, founder of useyourlo-

cal.com, says: "It is all about helping pubs cement their place at the heart of their local community, ultimately getting them more customers through their doors, more often."

"We're best known for our parcel collection service, which lets people have parcels delivered to their local pub, but we're also a social network for pubs that helps them to market themselves better and communicate with their customers."

He adds: "Consumers do want to help their pubs, but pubs have to help themselves. It is not a magic bullet, but it's a very valuable tool to help



Driving football: according to Stuart Mills, right, being part of the parcel delivery scheme will ultimately help pubs get more customers through their doors

them get more people in the door."

Useyourlocal.com is a joint partnership between Mills and his former employer Heineken UK (formerly Scottish & Newcastle (S&N)), which Mills describes as being his equivalent of Dragons' Den's Theo Paphitis. He says: "I have the freedom to operate as a separate business, but with the backing and support there, if needed."

It was an internal S&N Dragons' Den-style competition that saw Mills pitching his idea to the S&N board on the London Eye. The board were "in", as the dragons say, and seven months on Mills's useyourlocal.com has 1,500 registered pub members.

The highest profile element of useyourlocal.com is the parcel delivery service. This has captured the media's attention and licensees pass-

ing parcels over the bar have featured on the *Chris Evans Breakfast Show*, *Jeremy Vine Show*, *BBC Breakfast* and in the *Sun*, *Times* and the *Independent*.

The parcel scheme works by customers searching for their nearest registered pub on the useyourlocal site. They register their parcel for free on the site and give it a unique code. Useyourlocal.com then emails the licensee with the delivery details. The pub has a responsibility to contact the parcel owner three times by email and keep packages for 21 days. Customers are alerted to the fact that the pub is part of the parcel scheme through table talkers and window stickers.

Licensees need not fear that their cellars and store rooms will end up overflowing with parcels as they can set a limit on the number of parcels they are willing to hold at any time, and parcels are never bigger or heavier than aircraft hand luggage.

Parcels are also insured up to the value of £300, just in case any damage occurs during their time at the pub. Licensees may need to tell their insurers that they are going to be offering additional services, but in most cases this shouldn't mean an increase in premiums.

Given that there are some 40 million unsuccessful first-time deliveries every year by Royal Mail, Mills believes licensees can offer consumers a good solution.

So are brown paper packages tied



“

This is all about helping pubs cement their place at the heart of their local community



up with string among licensees' favourite things?

Lee de Villiers, of Young's pub the Nightingale in Balham, London, believes useyourlocal.com has helped attract new customers to the pub.

"Being part of useyourlocal.com has been really positive and the best £50 I have ever spent," says de Villiers. "It is bringing new customers in and it has created a buzz among customers. It has been great PR too, with the pub featured on the news. I would recommend it to other licensees."

Martin Hill, licensee of S&N leasehold the Black Horse, in Bristol, says: "I think it is definitely worth doing. It is a positive way forward for pubs. We have a few parcel deliveries a week and the website is a good tool."

Others are more lukewarm about the business benefits of the scheme. Ian Street, licensee of Charles Wells tenancy the Old Crown Inn, Ashton, Northamptonshire, says: "I don't think the scheme is going to increase our trade, but the parcel collection is a service to the local community and good PR."

Gemma Duck, of the Cressy Arms, Dartford, Kent, says: "We take in deliveries for neighbours, which brings some people in for a drink. Being involved in useyourlocal.com has people talking about the Cressy and is great PR for the pub."

Although accepting parcels is one of the main benefits of the scheme,



“I can't think of a possible reason why licensees wouldn't want to be part of this scheme

licensees are able to opt out of offering this service.

Local web links

But useyourlocal.com isn't all about postal services. Other benefits include every pub getting its own homepage area on the website, which enables licensees to email

news and offers to registered locals, and customers can post their own local news on the pub's page.

The cost of setting up a pub website can be prohibitive for many licensees and the web page offered is among one of the most popular elements of useyourlocal.com.

As licensee David Murray, of the Woolpack, Rossendale, Lancashire, says: "The website is the main area we benefit from. Setting up your own website can be very expensive and this is a good-value way of getting a web presence.

"We use Facebook to send messages to customers and link them to our useyourlocal.com site. I update it every day with things like what football games we are showing. It is really easy to use. I would definitely recommend it to other licensees."

Malcolm Gilbert, licensee of Pleasure Pub Company outlet the Charles Dickens in Worthing, West Sussex, adds: "For what it costs a year, which is about a £1 a day, it is another way of advertising our business on the web and we link it to our own website."

Licensees get point-of-sale kits, including table talkers and window stickers, to help encourage locals to join the pub online.

Some licensees are linking their own websites to their useyourlocal.com homepage. This means they can effectively get all their customers to join them online and contact them about things they have going on at their pub.

Bringing in the fans

Other benefits of the scheme include consumers being able to see which pubs are showing certain football matches, when they are on the move.

This is delivered through a link up between samsungfootball.co.uk, the website that shows people where they can watch televised football in pubs, and useyourlocal.com.

A mobile-phone application has been developed that identifies pubs showing the big match. The application has been embedded in hundreds of thousands of UK Samsung mobile handsets since January, with Android and iPhone apps launching later this year.

Mills says: "It only takes a few seconds to automatically update the Samsung website and phone apps free of charge and bring more customers to watch football in your pub." Enterprise Inns is using the website to update details of which of their 7,200 pubs show football.

Registered pubs also benefit from discounts from various suppliers, such as 20% off products from online printing company promoteyourpub.co.uk and discounts of up to £500 on Samsung TVs and AV equipment.

But to get more consumers coming through pub doors and really engaging with the parcel collection scheme more pubs need to sign up.

As Mills adds: "I can't think of a possible reason why licensees wouldn't want to be part of this scheme." At just £50 a year for a web area and the chance of more people coming into your pub it is certainly a chance worth taking.

Going local

Licensees can register for the scheme by paying £50 a year plus VAT by credit or debit card. For more information visit www.useyourlocal.com