



PRESS RELEASE

Monday 15 February 2021

Wetherspoon chairman Tim Martin is calling on the government to open pubs at the same time as non-essential shops reopen.

He says that the pub industry is “on its knees” and that pubs across the UK need to reopen in order to save the industry and the associated jobs.

Mr Martin says the pub industry makes a massive contribution to the economy, with Wetherspoon alone paying about ten pounds of tax for every pound of profit it makes.

He says: “ In the last ten years Wetherspoon has generated £6.1 billion of taxes, something we are very proud of.

“In the financial year to July 2019, before the pandemic, Wetherspoon, its customers and employees generated £764 million of taxes (please see table below), one pound in every thousand collected by the UK government.

“The amount of tax paid by Wetherspoon is replicated, according to the size of the company, throughout the pub industry, and shows just how important pubs are to the economy.”

Mr Martin continued: “ Many people have correctly pointed out that the three lockdowns of the last year have been a disaster for the hospitality, retail, arts and entertainment industries, but our calculations show that they have been an even bigger disaster for public finances.

“The taxes paid by Wetherspoon are mirrored by thousands of companies which have been annihilated by lockdowns.

“As a result, government finances have been annihilated even more.

“Since pubs reopened last summer, following the first lockdown, Wetherspoon has registered more than 50 million customer visits to its pubs, using the test and trace system, without a single outbreak of Covid-19, as defined by the health authorities, among customers in our pubs.

“Industry organisations UK Hospitality and the BBPA have provided the government with information that clearly demonstrates that pubs and restaurants are Covid- secure environments, following the investment of hundreds of millions of pounds in safety and hygiene measures.

“The government knows this is correct, since it has access to test and trace information.

“As the BBPA has pointed out, outbreaks have been concentrated in environments such as care homes, households and hospitals.

“Yet the government has ignored this information and has even banned golf – the ultimate social distancing sport.

“The big worry in the hospitality industry is that the government is playing a PR game, creating an illusion of positive action, and will find an excuse to tie the industry down with restrictions by, for example, allowing outside eating and drinking only when the pubs reopen – as a result the entire industry would be heavily loss making.

“Since the 1970s, UK governments have run out of money three times when they’ve paid insufficient attention to financial common sense.

“The last time was in the Great Recession in 2010 when the Chief Secretary to the Treasury said: “ I’m afraid there is no money.”

“Before that, billions were spent in an effort to remain in the disastrous exchange rate mechanism in 1992, and in the 1970s the government had to rely on financial aid from the IMF.

“However, this government is spending money at a faster rate than any government in history,

“In spite of that, around a million UK jobs have been lost already.

“Surely it is possible for the hospitality industry to reopen at the same time as non-essential shops, now that a vaccine exists, on the basis of the social distancing and hygiene regulations, which were agreed with the health authorities, after full consultation, for the July 4 reopening last year.

“Unless the industry does reopen on that basis, economic mayhem will inevitably follow.”

Wetherspoon Tax Payments In Financial Years 2011 To 2020

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
	£m									
VAT	244.3	357.9	332.8	323.4	311.7	294.4	275.1	253.0	241.2	204.8
Alcohol duty	124.2	174.4	175.9	167.2	164.4	161.4	157	144.4	136.8	120.2
PAYE and NIC	106.6	121.4	109.2	96.2	95.1	84.8	78.4	70.2	67.1	65.2
Business rates	39.5	57.3	55.6	53.0	50.2	48.7	44.9	46.4	43.9	39.8
Corporation tax	21.5	19.9	26.1	20.7	19.9	15.3	18.1	18.4	18.2	21.2
Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances)	0	0	0	0	0	-2.0	0	0	0	0
Machine duty	9.0	11.6	10.5	10.5	11.0	11.2	11.3	7.2	3.3	2.9
Climate change levies	6.1	10.4	9.2	9.7	8.7	6.4	6.3	4.3	1.9	1.6
Stamp duty	4.9	3.7	1.2	5.1	2.6	1.8	2.1	1.0	0.8	1.1
Sugar tax	2.0	2.9	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fuel duty	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.9	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.9
Carbon tax	0	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	2.7	2.6	2.4	0.8
Premise licence and TV licences	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.4
Landfill tax	0	0	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.1
Furlough Tax Rebate	-124.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL TAX	436.7	764.4	728.8	694.6	672.3	632.4	600.2	551.5	519.3	461.0
TAX PER PUB (£000)	528	871	825	768	705	673	662	632	617	560
TAX AS % of NET SALES	34.6%	42.0%	43.0%	41.8%	42.1%	41.8%	42.6%	43.1%	43.4%	43.0%

*Source: J D Wetherspoon plc Annual Reports and Accounts 2012 - 2020