Empty gestures, hollow words from a Government that breaks its commitments

Arbitrary Separation of Wet Pubs from Other Hospitality Businesses
Completely Unfair and Unjustified

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) has described the Government’s decision to further delay the reopening of pubs in Dublin as being an “empty gesture, backed by hollow words from a Government that broke its commitment to non food pubs again.”

One week ago the Government had committed to not singling out the non food pubs from other businesses, stating that if there were any regional restrictions it would affect other businesses and not solely pubs. Yet seven days later the Government has ignored that commitment and has set out separate treatment for non food pubs in Dublin who must remain closed despite the capital being kept at Level 2 in the Government’s new medium term strategy.

The pubs who don't serve food played no part in the rising level of infection in Dublin, yet pubs were the only businesses singled out in the ‘guidance’ provided by NPHET last week.

This latest blow to the pub sector in Dublin comes exactly six months since pubs across the country closed their doors by order of the Government on 15th March at the beginning of the crisis, the first sector in the country to close.

This the fourth time the reopening of non food pubs in Dublin has been delayed, following 20th July, 10th August and 31st August.

“This arbitrary separation of wet pubs from pubs serving food is completely unfair and unjustified,” said Donall O’Keeffe, Chief Executive of the LVA. “It is an empty gesture that will make zero impact on reducing the level of infection we are currently experiencing in Dublin. An empty gesture backed by hollow words from a Government that broke its commitment to non food pubs again. This ongoing singling out of wet pubs is now being institutionalised in the latest so roadmap and is impossible for our members to understand and accept.”

“One week ago the Government said that non food pubs won’t be singled out if there are any regional restrictions. Then NPHET says that they way to deal with infections which are mainly occurring in the home is to keep those pubs that have been shut for six months closed for even longer. NPHET says jump and the Government leaps without looking. How can anyone put any faith in a Government that just ignores its own commitments?

“Where is the scientific justification for this decision? This isn’t a remedy to the current increase in infections in Dublin. This has all the hallmarks of wanting to be seen to take action when in reality it does nothing to address the current problem. But it does have the impact of further penalising publicans, staff, suppliers and all their families. That is the one actual outcome that will come from this decision.

“This Government and NPHET take zero action against those parts of society which have caused clusters such as meat factories or direct provision centres yet they continue to punish pubs whose doors have been kept shut for more than 6 months by order of the Government. Pubs are paying the price for the repeated shortfalls in the Government’s capacity to handle this crisis,” Mr. O’Keeffe concluded.

As reported by the Irish Times on Tuesday 8th September 2020 – “Following the Cabinet meeting, a Government spokeswoman said the reopening would apply to all pubs. If there were any regional restrictions introduced as a result of rising numbers, it would be wider and would affect other businesses and not pubs solely, she added.”
As reported by TheJournal.ie on Tuesday 8th September 2020:

“If there is a change in the situation between now and then it won’t just affect pubs, it will affect all businesses,” the spokesperson added.

https://www.thejournal.ie/pubs-reopening-2-5199270-Sep2020/