## Vintners welcome earlier pub reopening dates

Publican representatives have welcomed the Government announcement that pubs will reopen on 20<sup>th</sup> July, three weeks earlier than originally planned and that pubs who serve food can reopen at the same time as the rest of the hospitality sector on 29<sup>th</sup> June. Both the Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI) and the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) said this will come as a "major relief" to the pub sector across the country.

Both organisations also welcomed the commitment made by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Tony Holohan that the National Public Health Emergency Team will develop guidance for the hospitality sector in the coming days and that a review of the 2 metre social distancing requirement is being undertaken by Secretaries General across different Government Departments.

Padraig Cribben, VFI Chief Executive, said: "This is a welcome shot in the arm for publicans who will have been closed for more than four months by the time they reopen on 20th July. Pubs were the first sector to close on 15th March, a decision our members supported for the good of public health.

"Moving the reopening of pubs to July means publicans can avail of an extra three weeks trading, something that is particularly relevant as it extends the summer season. While the Government's announcement will come as a major relief to the trade, it shouldn't mask the precarious future faced by pubs. Altering social distancing guidelines to one metre remains a priority as this would give publicans some chance of running a viable business until a time when social distancing rules no longer apply."

Donall O'Keeffe, LVA Chief Executive, said: "After a prolonged period of uncertainty pubs who serve food are relieved to finally receive the green light from Government that they can definitely reopen along with restaurants on 29th June. We were consistent in advocating for pubs to receive the same treatment as other hospitality businesses that serve food and drink, so we are pleased that the Government has taken this on board in the adjusted reopening roadmap.

"Attention throughout the sector will now switch to what guidelines will be in place for the reopening. Pubs will need time to adapt their premises to address the guidance so we are eagerly awaiting the advice to come from NPHET. As our recent capacity report showed utilising the World Health Organisation (WHO) social distancing guidance of one metre will make a substantial difference to business viability and we hope that will be addressed in the hospitality sector guidance.

"Pubs will adapt and while it may take time for our valued customers to become accustomed to this new reality it's important to remember this won't be forever and a strong and vibrant trade will emerge at the end of this crisis," concluded Mr O'Keeffe.