

Honourable Mr. Robert Jenrick
Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2, Marsham St.
SW1P 4DF.

17th. May, 2020.

Dear Mr Jenrick,

We have been running a campaign with over seventy hospitality operators onboard, called the UK Grand Summer Outdoor Cafe www.ukgsoc.org, proposing that your Government grants permission for hospitality businesses to use squares or pedestrianised streets for tables and chairs. Our proposal were sent to Kate Nicholls of UK Hospitality and then sent to Mr Alok Sharma in the open letter attached.

We were therefore delighted to read in today's Sunday Telegraph that you are considering a "blanket permission" to allow our suggestions to actually happen.

We would like to offer your department our help in drafting safety protocols and operating procedures to make this become a reality. It clearly has to work for the government, local authorities, our operators but above all the public in towns and villages across the country.

We are now about to start raising funds for the public to buy food and drink vouchers that will be donated to frontline workers to be used at the outside hospitality venues.

If you would allow Trafalgar Square to be used as a Grand Summer Outdoor Cafe as well as other open spaces, it would be a wonderful affirmation that we are re-emerging safely. A hugely visible way of saying thank you to the public for their lockdown responsibility, rewarding the frontline and enabling our hospitality businesses to start repaying the debt we owe to the Government for all the help we have received.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Lorrimer
On behalf of our many hospitality industry members
Founder
The Piano Works
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Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
Westminster
London
SW1H 0ET

8th May 2020

Re: UK's Grand Summer Outdoor Café

Dear Mr Sharma,

Following Health Secretary Matt Hancock's comment on Thursday 6th May on the possibility of cafés, restaurants and pubs being able to use outdoor spaces for the summertime, the hospitality industry is proposing Government allows a temporary suspension of restrictions that will allow a transformation of selected UK streets and squares into a Grand Summer Outdoor Café.

A significant number of operators are supporting this campaign which will allow the hospitality industry to re-open slowly with low risk to the public and at no financial cost to the government.

Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, has opened seating outdoors on the pavements, streets and squares outside of restaurants and bars, allowing the public to enjoy physically distanced meals and drinks for two people or larger tables for families and those within their households. The tables are all well-spaced and there is a clear passage in and out of specific areas for the public to walk, to avoid spreading the virus.

We propose a similar action that could be rolled out across the UK, within high streets and open spaces. This is an opportunity for operators to start trading again and will boost public morale hugely. We will also fundraise to say thank you to our frontline workers with vouchers for use at the outdoor cafés.

- It is a safe way to start to re-open our cities. Covid-19 is proven to transmit far less in open outdoor spaces. A study of 318 outbreaks in China found transmission occurred out-of-doors in only 1, involving just 2 cases.
- It will allow hospitality operators to start trading again, potentially saving thousands of businesses and jobs.
- It will allow the public to safely start to dine out again, benefitting public wellbeing and mental health.
- With physical distancing measures required, many hospitality operators will not be able to survive reducing the capacity of their venues. Three quarters of restaurant and bar operators in the UK have warned that they do not expect their businesses to survive with physical distancing measures in place. Allowing for additional outdoor trading space gives them a higher chance of survival.

We would ask that the government issue a directive to local authorities that will permit them to allow existing hospitality businesses to designate outdoor space for the placing of tables and chairs outside of their premises to permit the service of food and drinks. We propose no fees to be charged and outside liquor licensing and selected highway zoning regulations be suspended until September.

All safety protocols which will be agreed with the government by the industry will be adhered to.

The UK hospitality industry employs over 3.2 million people, making it the third largest sector in the UK, accounting for £130 billion in revenue, 6% of all UK businesses and 5% GDP.

The Grand Summer Outdoor Café is a way to thank the British people for obeying the lockdown rules so responsibly, start rebuilding the hospitality industry, improve public wellbeing and safely re-open the UK.

Experiences like pubs, craft beer bars, street food stalls, live music venues, food halls and high-end restaurants have been a part of this country's identity for locals and visitors alike. Slowly and safely allowing us all to enjoy this summer is an essential step in the right direction, demonstrating the UK's creativity and determination to be able to safely start to discover and enjoy our 'new normal'.

Kind regards,

Alan Lorrimer

Founder of The Piano Works

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Additional signatories:

Brian Hannon

Co-founder & Director

Super 8 Restaurants Ltd (Kiln, Brat, Smoking Goat)

Kevin Georgel

Chief Executive

St Austell Brewery

Sarah Weir

Managing Director

Albion & East

Charlie McVeigh

Investor and NED

Bunker Projects

Laura Sheffield

Founder

Corazon

Bruce Isaacs

CEO

Poppies Fish & Chips

And many more