

## Positive measures for pubs in Programme for Government

### **Recognition of the need to support hospitality sector very welcome**

### **LVA looks forward to participating in Night-time Economy Taskforce**

The Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) has welcomed the measures put forward for pubs in the new Programme for Government. The document underpinning the formation of the new Government includes a commitment to additional support measures for the hospitality sector on the back of the current Covid-19 crisis.

The LVA has been campaigning for such assistance for pubs following the massive strain put on the sector during this crisis. Pubs were the first sector to close en masse across the country with many pubs expected to be among the last businesses to reopen. Social distancing will also dramatically reduce capacity across pubs, making it much more difficult for these businesses to remain viable. In these circumstances, Government support will be essential in the months ahead.

Other welcome measures in the Programme for Government include the creation of a Night-time Economy Taskforce, reviewing of the licensing application process and trading hours for pubs. The LVA looks forward to engaging on these issues with the sector having strong views on both licensing and late trading hours. The LVA believes the reform of the licensing application process is long overdue, as the current process is overly expensive and bureaucratic. While participation on the new Night-time Economy Taskforce will be a key issue for Dublin pubs.

The LVA also supports the commitment to introduce minimum unit pricing on alcohol and believes this should be implemented in the coming months.

Speaking in reaction to the Programme for Government, LVA Chief Executive Donall O'Keeffe said, "Overall there are a number of very positive measures in this document which, if implemented correctly, will make a major difference to the recovery of the pub sector in this country. Of course the devil will be in the detail and that is why we will be seeking to engage extensively with the new Government on several of these proposals. What is vital is that nothing is done to further damage a pub sector that has been forced to take unparalleled action and which will require support and assistance over the coming months if it is to recover.

"In particular the measures to support pubs and the rest of the hospitality sector in the stimulus plan will be vitally important. The pubs in this country are unique. They are not only significant employers but also a part of the community in every city, town and village across the country while also being a strong contributor to our tourism offering. This will need to be recognised in any recovery packages, something we will be discussing with the new Government as soon as the opportunity arise," Mr. O'Keeffe concluded.