

Paper to Support 'Axe The Beer Tax – Save The Pub'
Proposed by Tim Barrett, ICU Welfare Campaigns Officer
Seconded by the Welfare and Representation Committee

The Union notes:

- 1) The campaign by CAMRA and the British Beer & Pub Association named, 'Axe The Beer Tax – Save The Pub,' supported by numerous MPs, over 25,000 members of the public and the UK's largest trade union Unite, sets out a five point plan to Save the Pub.
- 2) That Public Houses' are closing at a rate of just under six every day across the UK.
- 3) That beer sales are at their lowest level since the Great Depression of the 1930s.
- 4) In the 2008 Budget, the Chancellor not only imposed a duty rise of 9 per cent but also proposed the creation of an alcohol duty escalator. This is designed to increase duty on beer by 2 per cent above the rate of inflation in each of the next four years.
- 5) In 1971, 90% of beer sales were in the on-trade. Today, that figure is just 56% and decreasing every year.
- 6) Today, a student buying a pint of beer for £2.50 pays 80p in tax. This is one of the highest tax rates in the world - and means that the Government now makes 50 times the brewer's profit on each pint sold.

The Union believes:

- 1) That public houses and bars play a vital role in communities across Britain, and are a unique part of our country's heritage.
- 2) That having a safe and comfortable social space such as a public house is a key component to the student experience at Imperial.
- 3) That the increasing costs at public houses, directly related to taxation, having a direct cost on the long term welfare of students – both financially and damaging student welfare through losing affordable places to socialize, thereby limiting the student experience.
- 4) That public houses are the home to responsible drinking offering a safe environment to enjoy alcohol and/or socialise.
- 5) There is public concern about "binge drinking", particularly among young adults. Supermarkets running loss-leading promotions and selling deeply discounted alcohol is a growing concern. Irresponsible promotions, by supermarkets, other parts of the off-trade and pubs, must be brought to an end.
- 6) The Government is right to provide public information about the effects of excessive drinking. But people should be free to make choices for themselves, as long as it does not affect the liberty and safety of others.

The Union resolves:

- 1) That this Union should support the Axe The Beer Tax – Save The Pub campaign and it's five key objectives:
 - a. To stop plans to increase beer tax by up to a third.
 - b. To enforce existing laws – not create new ones - to deal firmly with irresponsible drinkers and premises.
 - c. To end the irresponsible promotion of alcohol in supermarkets, pubs and elsewhere.
 - d. To trust responsible adults to make informed choices about what they drink, not punish them for the actions of an irresponsible minority.
 - e. To support the British pub as a vital part of social life in local communities.
- 2) That this Union should actively promote the campaign through free resources provided by the campaign's founders, appearing as a supporter on www.axethebeertax.com and providing a link to the campaign from our website.
- 3) To write to the Mark Field MP, informing him of our support for the campaign and encourage him to support the campaign.