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**NEWSLETTER 10: 2009**

***Freedom2Choose T-shirts launched at Lincoln festival!***



**T-shirts available now from new Online Shop:**

**<http://www.backinthebar.co.uk/shop/>**

Our apologies for being late with this edition folks but we have been more than a little busy!

In September we held a **'Smokers Music Festival'** in conjunction with the Jolly Brewer in Lincoln. This event was organised by myself, Patsy Nurse and Emma of the Jolly Brewer – a remarkable lady indeed. Fed up of the cost to her business Emma approached F2C with the idea and from there it blossomed. The Saturday night was a magical night as all the staff wore newly produced F2C T-shirts, which have 'make room for smokers' on the reverse side and the F2C logo emblazoned on the front. There were live bands and the incomparable 'whispering Bob' compered the event. F2C had a stall ready for eager punters to devour the mine of information produced by our members (more than 200 info packs were distributed), the F2C banner was unveiled and yours truly had three stints onstage, furthering the knowledge of those attending. Although advertised only locally & on the Internet, we had more than 230 people attend the event.

**\*\*\* It was a diamond night indeed!\*\*\***

We have also been invited to host a meeting at the ASHTON CLUB, Bicester on Wednesday 21 October, as they are sick to death of the cost of the smoking ban to the club. The club secretary wants as many clubs as possible to attend the evening which starts @ 7pm – he can see no future for the clubs should this ban not be amended. To date 54 invitations have been sent out to the surrounding area, including one to a certain Mr Cameron who presides over the next parish!

Now the best [news](#):- Tuesday, 10 November sees F2C co-hosting a meeting in London, which conservative MPs, PPCs and a host of other concerned parties will be attending. The message will be simple. Amending the ban will save this country an absolute fortune, resurrect the hospitality sector and preserve human rights. You will be interested to know that the latest survey of Conservative MPs & PPCs shows that 58% are now in favour of amending the smoking ban. Quite simply, they can clearly see the devastating cost to this country and also that there is absolutely no need for that cost!

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**Freedom2Choose :** Contact: Freedom2choose c/o John H Baker 22 Glastonbury House, Priestfields, MIDDLESBROUGH, Cleveland TS3 0LF Tel/Fax: (0845) 643 9469

**Freedom2Choose (Scotland) :** Contact: Freedom2choose Scotland c/o The Dalmeny Bar, 297 Leith Walk, EDINBURGH EH6 8SA Tel (0845) 643 9552

That's it from your Pub & Club Liaison Officer for this edition, folks— Phil Johnson.

**Other News In Brief:** The **TOBACCO DISPLAY BAN** has just passed Stage 1 in the Scottish Parliament and is due for debate at Westminster on 12 October. Only 16 MSPs opposed the ban in Scotland. The Health & Sport Committee was unfazed by its finding that evidence in favour of the legislation was inconclusive. The Chamber was happy to rely on newly discovered evidence that heart attacks had dropped *30 per cent* resulting from the ban on smoking in public places, following several reports of heart attack miracles in the previous week, 'proving' that opposition to the smoking ban had been misguided. It can only be hoped that some sanity can be introduced to the Bill in later stages. The tobacco retailers continue to lobby MPs at Westminster in the hope of a saner approach.

In the last few months many **NHS Trusts** have declared 'bans' on their sites extending to hospital grounds. Freedom2choose has written to many Trusts to point out that no outdoor ban has legal force. This month the private company that manages the Great Western Hospital in Swindon has decided to resurrect smoking shelters, which were dismantled when the non-smoking policy was introduced just two months ago, since staff going off the site to smoke have been judged to be at risk from traffic. (Who would have thought it?) What if the government had been silly enough to mandate smoking bans on hospital grounds? Would the Trust have resisted on the grounds that it would have endangered their staff?

In Scotland, exemptions to the smoking ban still exist in psychiatric units, but the government at Holyrood intends to remove this exemption – judging by the title of its public consultation document, 'Achieving smoke-free mental health services in Scotland'. The Scottish parliament at Holyrood last week closed a petition from Freedom to Choose (Scotland) requesting a review of the consultation, without giving the Parliament an opportunity to consider it. Although at its first hearing one or two members of the Public Petitions Committee expressed clear misgivings about the wisdom of removing the exemption and their clear view that the questions asked of participants were loaded, it was felt there was nothing that could be done with the petition.

Freedom to Choose (Scotland) Chairman Eddie Douthwaite attended the Edinburgh Holyrood Conference on the display ban on the day before the Stage 1 debate. He challenged the Scottish Minister of Health for making misleading comments about products sold from vending machines, and invited her to retract them before the Stage 1 debate (she didn't).

The political Liaison Officer of Freedom2Choose attended a fringe meeting at the Liberal Democrat conference entitled [Liberal Vision](#). This meeting confirmed that, although official Liberal Democrat policy supports the smoking ban (among other things), there is growing resentment in the party about increasingly intrusive policies.

**The smoking ban was the thin end of the wedge.  
Now proposed – car ban, outdoor ban, display ban, plain  
packaging, further licensing restrictions.  
*Now do you believe us?***