

## Media Release

**Date: 20 March 2020**

**Embargo 3pm 20 March 2020**

### **COVID-19: Restrictions on bars, clubs and all licensed premises from 6.30pm today**

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From 6.30pm today:

- Nightclubs will have to close
- Bars that do not serve food will have to close, and
- Pubs and restaurants that serve prepared and plated food are also able to serve alcohol to their customers, provided that it is ancillary to the service of food

This is a temporary measure to mitigate against the spread of coronavirus in the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

Restaurants and pubs which do serve food will need to observe new restrictions, which would mean alcohol can only be served with prepared or plated food to customers sat at tables.

These temporary measures will be reviewed in 10 days' time. They are part of a response to delays in receiving the results of tests for coronavirus. Efforts to resume timely testing through the UK have been encouraging and it is expected the results of these tests will soon start coming back more quickly. Work to introduce on-island testing in April is also underway. The restrictions on licensed premises are part of a 'pause and assess' strategy, and once there is reliable data, and if it shows that community seeding is not occurring, it is hoped that the restrictions can be lifted.

Deputy Gavin St Pier, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Authority said:

'As we stated yesterday when we made our announcement on schools, we are in a position where it's become less clear to what extent coronavirus may be spreading in our community. We will not take any chances. Bars and clubs present a very real risk. This will come at very short notice to licensees but we will not make apologies for taking swift action to protect our community. This is a fast-developing situation and we are having to react in real-time. We have worked to come up with a proportionate solution, given the circumstances. Licensees must not only respect

the new legal restrictions, but also the reasons we are introducing them. In other words, we expect both customers and licensees to follow the spirit not the letter of the law. If anyone is trying to think about how they can 'get around' these rules, they have failed to grasp the severity of the emergency we face and our determination to act in the wider interests of the community. We will have no hesitation whatsoever, as I've said before, in continuing to introduce stricter and more prescriptive rules, if we judge it is the right thing to do. We don't want to do any of this. And we want as many businesses as possible to continue trading for as long as possible but, as I've said before, our ability to do so is entirely dependent on everyone working together to minimise the impact of this virus. Today's measures are to reduce contact between individuals and support social distancing recommendations.'

Deputy Heidi Soulsby, President of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care said:

'Individuals have a moral responsibility too. Those that continue to visit pubs and restaurants for meals, must make sure they observe social distancing. We need the community to work with us, for everyone's sake. I'm hopeful that Islanders will do this. These measures may seem severe but they are similar to the old-fashioned Sunday licensing rules. We are looking to our past for a solution to this new present. We don't want to curtail all social interaction, we know it's important for people's mental health and wellbeing, but these are extraordinary times and we will do what we must to keep people safe.

I especially want to appeal to students, many of whom have just returned to the Island. We know this is a strange time for them with a lot of disruption, but it's incredibly important they respect these new restrictions and observe social distancing. I cannot stress that enough.'

The States of Guernsey and Guernsey Police will work with licensees to manage the introduction of these new restrictions, and monitor establishments to ensure they are observing the new rules.

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## Notes to Media

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