

Heston Blumenthal calls for more action to save British pubs

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Heston Blumenthal OBE and owner of the Michelin-one starred gastropub The Hinds Head is calling on government and licensees to take urgent action to halt the closure of thousands of UK pubs.

The Great British pub, a cornerstone of community life for centuries, is under threat from rising costs and shifting social habits; pressures that have seen them shut at a rate of more than one per day in the first half of 2025.

The Treasury's announcement in the Autumn Budget of lowered business rates, which have disproportionately penalised pubs and other hospitality locations, was welcome, but more reform is needed.

At 20%, the UK has one of the highest rates of VAT for hospitality in Europe**. Permanently lowering the rate could make a significant difference in keeping many businesses open, while also contributing positively towards economic recovery of the nation.

At the same time, publicans can do more to raise consumer awareness and develop initiatives to encourage people to support their local pubs.

The Hinds Head – the home of world-famous dishes including the runny Scotch Egg, Triple Cooked Chips and Quaking Pudding – has recently seen an increase in bookings and footfall of 20% following various initiatives it has introduced, including music nights, wine tastings, free ice cream for kids, a Christmas feast and extended opening hours.

Heston Blumenthal OBE, owner of The Hinds Head, said: "Saving the Great British pub is about more than nostalgia – it is about preserving spaces that bring people together, support local economies and keep traditions alive. Pubs are at the heart of Britain's social fabric, offering far more than just a place to buy a pint. The pub is a cultural icon, a national treasure and must be protected. When a pub closes, it's not just

a business lost; it's a piece of local heritage and of course somewhere to enjoy a drink and delicious food with great company."