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Harrogate Tipple

HMRC waives UK duty on hand sanitiser production after distiller and MP lobby Treasury



Gin distiller Harrogate Tipple, which recently announced that it would be switching production from gin to hand sanitiser, has been supported by Andrew Jones, MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough, and, together, they have successfully lobbied the Treasury to remove duty from alcohol used in the production of hand sanitiser across the UK.

Harrogate Tipple, the distiller of Harrogate Gin and Rum along with the Downton Abbey gin and whisky range, is planning to produce a not-for-profit alcohol-based hand sanitiser for the care sector in response to the growing need due to the spread of coronavirus. With duty due on a 25 litre bottle of alcohol currently £25, the waiving of the tax will make the products dramatically cheaper to produce.

“With organisations such as care homes, GP practices and dental practices all struggling to source much-needed hand sanitiser, we realised that we could help by quickly switching production,” explains Steven Green, co-founder of Harrogate Tipple.

“Working with my fantastic production manager, Andrea Natiello, we consulted World Health Organisation guidelines and last week successfully produced our first batch of 500 bottles of 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

“Our plan is to supply the hand sanitiser at cost, with no profit margin, to the care sector, charities and other businesses providing vital public services. However, as a

distillery, HMRC told us we would still be liable to pay duty on the alcohol used in the hand sanitiser. Fortunately, hearing of the problem, Andrew Jones MP got in touch and has been in discussions with HMRC which has now agreed to waive the duty, enabling us to make the product at a realistic cost.”

Harrogate Tipple is currently producing four different bottle sizes from 250ml to 5l.

Co-founder Sally Green adds: “We’ve now been inundated with orders from all sorts of businesses – for example, Ripon police station as well as the Royal Mail in Harrogate which will be delivering medicines. We’ve already started production and our plan is to make as much sanitiser as we can – we’ve ordered more alcohol and other ingredients and believe we have the capacity to produce thousands of bottles a day.

“We are struggling to source enough plastic bottles of all sizes, so if any businesses have large quantities they can donate, we would really appreciate it.”

Andrew Jones MP, added: “Yorkshire is renowned for its innovation and sense of community - this is a great idea from Steve of how we can contribute to the health emergency. I am proud to be supporting the initiative. In fact, I believe that my approach to the Treasury on behalf of Steve and Harrogate Tipple was the first such approach made to the Treasury in the entire country about this issue but now the idea is being rolled out nationally. This initiative and the tax relief making it happen are a locally distilled solution to a national problem.”

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Picture 1 shows: Harrogate Tipple production manager Andrea Natiello and co-founder Sally Green