Irish pubs use vans and drones to lift spirits

Level 3 ● Advanced

1 Warmer

With a partner, discuss ways in which businesses in your country adapted in order to survive the coronavirus crisis. For example, *My local restaurant started offering takeaways for the first time because customers weren't able to go out to eat.*

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences with these key words from the text.

sabotage	temperance	upheaval	bustle	pioneer
diaspora	partition	founder	balmy	revenue

1. _____ weather is warm and pleasant.

2. If people _____ something, they deliberately damage or destroy it.

3. _____ is the practice of not drinking alcohol and the belief that it is wrong to do so.

4. _____ is a sudden or violent change, especially one that affects people's lives.

5. _____ is a lot of noisy activity in a crowded place.

6. If people _____ something, they are the first people to do it.

7. A _____ is a large group of people who come from a particular place and are now living in many different parts of the world.

8. If businesses _____, they begin to fail.

9. _____ is income from business activities.

10. A _____ is a wall, screen or piece of glass used to separate one area from another in a room.

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

1. According to the article, how many pubs are there in Ireland?

2. What will be the maximum number of people allowed in Mark Grainger's pub if the proposals to end the lockdown are accepted?

3. How many people have lost their jobs in the Irish pub industry as a result of coronavirus?

4. What is the maximum distance that pubs can do deliveries under lockdown regulations?

5. What percentage of Dublin pub-owners believe their businesses will fail if they have to stay closed for the rest of 2020?

6. How old is Avril McKeever's pub?

It's raining Guinness! Irish pubs use vans and drones to lift spirits

Ireland's 7,000 pubs, 50,000 staff and millions of customers are in crisis. Time for some blue-sky thinking …

Rory Carroll
9 May, 2020

1 If it's a balmy evening and you hear buzzing in the sky over Rathdrinagh, a townland in the middle of Ireland, the odds are that it's not bees but beer – specifically, a drone carrying bottles of beer and maybe a bag of crisps. "Bottles of beer usually or sometimes a few cans of cider," said Avril McKeever. She is the owner of McKeever's Bar & Lounge, a 152-year-old pub that serves a rural community 30 miles north of Dublin. It used to offer drink, food and entertainment, but then came the coronavirus lockdown, so now it offers aerial delivery.

2 The drone, operated by McKeever's nephew, Paul Clarke, criss-crosses the neighbourhood, bottles dangling from a string. "We had a bottle of wine and a bag of crisps ready to go last night, but it didn't take off because of the wind," McKeever said. The innovation is a way to stay connected with customers but is part of a deadly serious struggle for survival confronting Ireland's 7,000 pubs.

3 When the pandemic hit Ireland in March, pubs were among the first businesses to close, leaving 50,000 workers without jobs and the population missing a part of Irish culture. Seven weeks later, a question mark hangs over when – or even if – pubs will reopen. They have taken a big financial hit by missing the boom weekends around St Patrick's Day and international rugby matches, lost beer that went stale and faced ongoing pressure to pay rent and utilities.

4 Under the Irish government's lockdown roadmap, they may be able to reopen on 10 August, but customers' fear of infection plus social-distancing rules could yet sabotage any revival. Donal O'Keeffe, the chief executive of the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA), called the rules a "complete nightmare" for pubs, which raises a question: can a business model based on bringing people together exist in an era of staying apart?

5 Ireland's pubs have faced challenges before. The temperance movement, depopulation, political upheaval and economic boom-and-bust all took their toll. But the survivors adapted and thrived. Covid-19 presents an existential threat. Former customers have become used to stocking up at supermarkets and drinking at home. How many will return to pay higher prices and risk infection in pubs stripped of bustle and atmosphere?

6 Pubs are responding as best they can. For McKeever, the drone deliveries are a way to lift spirits – no pun intended – and foster her pub's connection to the community. Other pubs are racking up brisk sales by delivering pints to customers' doorsteps. "You ring up, order pints and pay with a credit card," said Mark Grainger, owner of Graingers Hanlons Corner, a Dublin pub that has pioneered the strategy.

7 Staff pull the pints – usually Guinness – seal the glasses and put them in a coolbox. Drivers with gloves and masks deliver them within the 5km radius permitted by lockdown rules. "The pint would be perfect. We're now nearly six weeks in and not had one complaint," said Grainger.

8 Orders come from all over the world – Britain, the US, Australia, Dubai – as the Irish diaspora seizes on the chance to send some love, in the form of drinks and cooked meals, to Dublin relatives in lockdown. "It's good business-wise but not as good as if the pub was open. It's survival. If we didn't do it, we wouldn't be getting any income," said Grainger.

9 One publican has installed a keg and pump in a van so he can pull pints at customers' houses. The Big Romance, a north Dublin pub, takes orders online and dispatches drivers with two-pint bottles. These are emergency measures. Survival hinges on reinvention in a Covid-19 world.

10 A survey found that six out of ten Dublin pub owners fear their businesses will founder if forced to stay closed for the rest of the year – a prospect flagged by the Irish health minister, Simon Harris, who suggested full reopening may need to await a Covid-19 vaccine. Hope of sorts came when the government's lockdown roadmap proposed letting pubs open on 10 August. Physical-distancing measures, however, will increase costs and shrink revenue.

11 The LVA and the Vintners' Federation of Ireland, which represents publicans outside Dublin, have submitted a request to let pubs open in June – with cafés and restaurants – on the promise of a new type of pub: no more than four people per ten square metres, no more than six per table, no

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live music or DJ, no sitting, standing or ordering at the bar, using hand sanitizer upon entry and staff keeping their distance from customers. The government is reviewing the proposals. No one knows how many pubs will cope with such restrictions.

12 Mark Grainger's pub used to draw 300 people on a Saturday night but will have to limit that to 70, he said. He is installing partitions, converting a bar area into a newsagent's – and crossing his fingers. "It's terrible to see your pub empty; it's like a death in the family. We have to do what we have to do. That's the deck of cards we've been dealt."

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4 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

1. When will pubs in Ireland reopen?

    a. St Patrick's Day

    b. no one knows

    c. 10 August

2. What may discourage people from visiting pubs when they reopen?

    a. no standing or ordering at the bar

    b. higher prices than drinking at home and the risk of infection in pubs with no atmosphere

    c. only six people allowed in at any one time

3. How are some pubs continuing to operate despite the lockdown?

    a. They are delivering drinks by drone in Britain, the US and Australia.

    b. They are providing hand sanitizer to customers as they enter the pub.

    c. They are providing a home-delivery service within the radius permitted by the lockdown rules.

4. According to the Irish health minister, when might there be a full reopening of pubs in Ireland?

    a. when there is a Covid-19 vaccine

    b. when pubs have installed plastic partitions to separate customers

    c. when pubs have implemented appropriate physical-distancing measures

5 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a two-word verb meaning *go across a place and back again any times, taking a different path each time* (para 2)

2. a verb meaning *hang or swing* (para 2)

3. a three-word verb phrase meaning *suffer damage or loss* (para 3)

4. a three-word noun phrase meaning *a situation in which a country's economy regularly goes through periods of success followed by periods of failure* (para 5)

5. a three-word verb phrase meaning *harm or damage something, especially in a gradual way* (para 5)

6. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *get a large number or amount of something* (para 6)

7. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *depend on* (para 9)

8. a three-word verb phrase meaning *hope for good luck* (para 12)

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6 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

1.	face	a.	orders
2.	submit	b.	people's spirits
3.	lift	c.	costs
4.	take	d.	a challenge
5.	increase	e.	your distance
6.	keep	f.	a request

7 Word-building

Fill the gaps in the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

1. Ireland's pubs are facing a struggle for _____. [SURVIVE]

2. Any _____ might be sabotaged by fear of infection and social-distancing rules. [REVIVE]

3. The coronavirus pandemic represents an _____ threat to Irish pubs. [EXIST]

4. _____ is the key to being able to survive in the world of Covid-19. [INVENT]

5. It is possible that the full _____ of Ireland's pubs will have to await a Covid-19 vaccine. [OPEN]

6. Customers will have to use hand _____ when entering pubs. [SANITIZE]

8 Discussion

a. **What new services are the pubs in the article offering in an effort to survive the coronavirus crisis?**

b. **Two other challenges all businesses currently face are:**

   - the climate crisis
   - rapid technological change.

   With a partner, make a combined list of four companies in different sectors. Then answer the following questions:

   - What changes have these companies already made in response to the challenges above?
   - What further changes would you advise each company to make in order to survive and thrive?

c. **Share the results of your discussion with another pair of students and offer more suggestions for the companies they discussed.**