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Popular Dufferin Public House to launch patio service as Ontario reopens economy

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Chris Petersons, the owner of Shelburne's popular Dufferin Public House restaurant and pub, says he is ?so grateful for all the support? his business has received during the pandemic closures.

And now, he says, ?seeing all the familiar faces back enjoying our patio,? he could not be happier.

Like so many businesses across the province, the Duffy closed on March 14 as the Province moved to get control over the rapidly spreading COVID-19 virus. Since then, the pub has offered take-out and delivery of food and beer, wine, cider, and coolers - and still does.

As Dufferin County opened to phase two of the provincially mandated pandemic recovery on June 12, so did The Dufferin Public House. As of Friday, face masks are mandatory for staff and customers in all Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph commercial businesses. However, with social distancing regulations in place, restaurant patios are exempt from the mask regulation, so that customers can consume a meal.

?We ask you bring masks,? says Chris Petersons, ?as you will need to wear them to use our washrooms or pay inside.

?There are tons of new rules and procedures behind the scenes to keep things safe and clean,? says the owner. ?Guests will notice that we take down names, phone numbers, and times for everyone who comes in to help trace back any one who gets sick.

?We going to be doing lots of new creative and delicious specials all summer long and the new faves will go on our new menu when we launch it,? says Chris Peterson. ?Many want to know when I will be allowed to have live music, karaoke, and trivia nights again.?

According to medical research, singing, or speaking loudly is thought to expedite the spread of the virus through water droplets, so entertainment is still restricted across the province.

The mood has been one of excitement, Mr. Petersons told the Free Press.

?We're excited to see our friends back here on the patio with us and so grateful to be open,? he reports. ?The guests have all been having a blast laughing, joking with us and I think really happy to be out for a nice dinner and feeling a little normal.?

For Chris Petersons, like so many business owners, the experience of the pandemic ?was scary.?

He says, ?Being closed was financially very difficult - and hard on me because I become friends with so many of our regulars and you miss seeing those people out laughing, eating, dancing, having fun.?

He concludes, ?All our guests have been amazing about the rules, very positive and happy, we are lucky to be part of such a great community when fighting COVID-19.?

The Dufferin Public House will be opening at noon on weekends very shortly.