



For immediate release
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‘Association Welcomes High Street Review by Mary Portas – retail and community champion’

Mary Portas’ independent *Review Of the High Streets*, presented to Parliament yesterday, has raised issues that are not only significant to the future of towns and city centres, but also the fabric and structure of our local communities.

Paul Talboys, Chief Executive of The Bingo Association said:

‘We very much welcome Mary Portas’ endorsement of bingo as a brilliant way to bring people together for a bit of community fun and her call for more bingo nights on our high streets. Some may wonder about Mary’s reference to bingo as a possible means of re-building communities and increasing social interaction, however, as many bingo players will testify this is very much on target.

The issues of social cohesion and inclusion become increasingly important to the future of our communities, as traditional opportunities for interaction and social coalescence fall away. While we no longer need to go to town and community centres for many traditional shopping activities, communities still need ‘town centres’ and opportunities for social interaction, in order to flourish and grow.

Bingo has long been, and continues to be, a bed-rock of many communities across the UK, providing both a social centre and community, that is open to all. In light of bingo’s unique social position and contribution to local communities, it is a shame that bingo remains singled out for unfair treatment and continues to be taxed at a higher level than other gambling activities.

I hope that the issues raised by the Report will be used to shape and inform future Government policy in a wide range of areas.’

- ENDS -

For further details please contact:

Oli Winton

Email: OliWinton@luther.co.uk

Tel 020 7618 9156

NOTES TO EDITORS

Review of High Streets

The report sets out Mary Portas' recommendations which include:

- Free car parking in all town centres and a national league table of the best places to park in England.
- Introduction of 'Town Teams' made up of landlords, shopkeepers, businesses, local politicians and residents to put in place a visionary management structure to create high streets that people want to use.
- Empower successful Business Improvement Districts (BID) to take on more responsibilities and powers and become 'Super-BIDs'
- A new 'community right to try' allowing local people who do not have the means to buy empty property to test co-operative ventures.
- Making explicit a presumption in favour of town centre development in the wording of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- A new national market day to encourage the talent of the future and bring people into our high streets.
- A number of pilots across the country to put the recommendations of the report into practice.

Gambling Tax Rates

Activity	Duty
Bingo (in a licensed club)	20%
Bingo (online)	15%
Casino & poker (online)	15%
Sports betting (betting shops)	15%
Betting Exchanges	15%

Football Pools	15%
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- Since 2008 76 Bingo clubs have closed, including 12 in 2011

The Bingo Association

- The Bingo Association is the trade association of the licensed bingo industry in Great Britain, representing the proprietors of bingo clubs licensed under the Gambling Act 2005.
- There are 50 proprietors in membership. Membership profile ranges from the large operators, including Mecca (99 clubs) to smaller operators like Carlton Leisure (14 clubs) and many single unit businesses.
- Around 70% of all Bingo players are women and overall, 10% of all women in the UK play bingo

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