



Embargoed till
1 November 2011

‘ASSOCIATION GIVES EVIDENCE TO SELECT COMMITTEE’

Paul Talboys, Chief Executive of The Bingo Association, will today appear as a witness in front of the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, investigating the effect of the implementation and operation of the 2005 Gambling Act.

The invitation to appear before the Committee was issued following The Association’s submission of written evidence in June this year to the Committee.

Talboys said;

“We very much welcome the opportunity to appear before the Select Committee as we believe that on balance the 2005 Act was positive for bingo but could have been so much more than it is and should have delivered so much more than it has.

The Act was to have created a framework that would allow the gambling industry to evolve and develop in a regulated and competitive manner, enabling sectors to fully maximize benefits and opportunities. While the Act has delivered a new framework, it has also inadvertently created anomalies, such as the issue that players in a bingo club may gamble on their own mobile devices in clubs, yet operators of licensed clubs may not provide dedicated internet enabled terminals to offer games to players.

However, we welcome recent government announcements to re-instate the Triennial review, to increase the stakes and prizes on machines and to look at the regulatory and tax regime for offshore operators. We would urge the Government to ensure that they do act in these areas and undertake sensible de-regulation as technology develops.

Our biggest concern still remains the level of tax that bingo is subject to. Bingo is still taxed at 20% Gross Profits Tax (GPT) compared to 15% for many other forms of gaming such as betting and adult gaming centres and online bingo. Anything that the Select Committee can do to recommend that bingo is taxed in a fair and equal way will be very welcome.

- ENDS -

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Culture, Media and Sport Commons Select Committee inquiry into gambling, looking in particular at the implementation and operation of the Gambling Act 2005 was launched on 17 May 2011.

The Committee were inviting written submissions and requesting views on the following issues:

- How effective the Act has been in its core objectives to:
 - ensure that gambling is maintained crime-free and conducted in an open and fair manner,
 - protect children and vulnerable people from the adverse effects of gambling,
 - update the legislative framework with regards to online gambling;
- the financial impact of the Act on the UK gambling industry;
- the effectiveness of the Gambling Commission since its establishment, and whether it represents good value for money;
- the impact of the proliferation of off-shore online gambling operators on the UK gambling sector and what effect the Act has had on this;
- why the Act has not resulted in any new licences for casinos or “super” casinos;

- the effectiveness of the classification and regulation of gaming machines under the Act;
- what impact the Act has had on levels of problem gambling.

The deadline for written submissions was 30th June 2011.

A full list of submissions can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmcmds/writev/gambling/contents.htm>

The Association's submission is GA 58

The first evidence session commenced on Thursday 18th October 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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