



## **Press Release**

14 February 2007

### **BINGO PLAYERS CALL ON HOLYROOD TO SUPPORT BINGO**

Bingo Players called on the Scottish Parliament today, 14 February, to act immediately to stop more bingo clubs from closing in Scotland. Players from one of Scotland's leading Bingo Businesses, Premier Bingo, went to Holyrood to hand in a petition from their clubs in Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Edinburgh containing almost 1,500 signatures. The petition calls on the Scottish Parliament to support bingo in local communities throughout Scotland by urging the UK Parliament to cut unfair taxes that are part of a regime that is crippling the game.

Continued operation of bingo is being made doubly difficult by the parallel burdens of a punitive tax system, which sees Scotland's 300,000 predominantly female regular bingo players paying more to the Treasury than their male counterparts at the bookies, and legislation that will substantially increase operating costs while reducing income options for clubs. These issues are in addition to those brought by the smoking ban, which the industry continues to support, despite the severe negative impact it has wrought.

Speaking at the petition handover Mike Lowe, operations manager of Premier Bingo, stated: "Scotland's Bingo clubs are having a tough time and Premier Bingo members have come together to highlight the seriousness of this situation. We have already had to close one of our clubs in Denny and smaller independents in the North have also recently announced closures. As a result of an unfair tax system, overbearing legislation and the impact of the smoking ban the industry's back is against the wall."

"The industry in Scotland needs the Scottish Parliament and Executive to recognise this plight and use their influence to press the UK government into action. Without this much

needed support operators will be forced to wind up their businesses and many communities will lose an important social amenity.”

### Ends

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### Notes to Editors

- Premier Bingo operates five clubs in Scotland. These are located in Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath, Edinburgh, Alloa and Perth.
- There are 79 Bingo clubs in Scotland employing more than 3500 people  
Scottish Bingo operators are reporting downturns in business of between 17-27% since March 2006
- Bingo is taxed harder than other gaming:

### Taxation Comparison

<b>Gaming</b>	<b>Taxation</b>	<b>VAT</b>
Bingo	15 % GPT	17.5%
Bookmakers	15 % GPT	0
Casinos, taxed on Gross Gaming Yield	Minimum 2.5%, on a sliding scale	0

The Bingo Association is calling on the Treasury to reduce the taxation on the industry by creating a level playing field with VAT zero rated.

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