



## **GBG NEWSLETTER 20 NOVEMBER 2024**

### **GBG REVIEW OF THE YEAR (November 2023 - October 2024)**

Whilst this is not an exhaustive list we thought Members would be interested to see a summary of some of what the GBG has achieved over the past 12 months and our thoughts on some of the challenges for the year ahead.

We thank Members for their involvement in our various working groups and for their continued input and support in progressing the GBG's Strategic Aims.

#### **GBG's STRATEGIC AIMS**

Whilst we all had high expectations for significant progress with the Gambling Act Review over the past year, and the first 6 months were looking promising in that regard, none of us could foresee the curveball of an early General Election, which led to further frustrating delays to the much-needed changes to gambling legislation.

Against the backdrop of this continued uncertainty, the GBG continued to deliver on its goal of being:

“The respected voice for the cross-sector land-based gambling industry, with social responsibility at the heart of everything that we do.”

Crucial to achieving this goal have been activities of GBG's various groups in delivering the GBG's four Strategic Aims:

#### **STRATEGIC AIM 1**

**To lead on raising Corporate Social Responsibility across the land-based sector and demonstrate how gambling premises can contribute to the wellbeing of communities & society**

- The GBG Responsible Gambling Charter: Carried out a benchmarking exercise to understand how members were meeting the Charter and shared findings and good

practice examples. GBG's Land Based Responsible Gambling Group then reviewed and updated the Charter in March.

- Hosted the second successful GBG High Street Hub at ICE in February with the "Ask the Experts" opportunities to learn about different aspect of land-based gambling and responsible gambling measures attracting lots of visitors. "Last week was extremely impressive – I haven't seen so much engagement on a trade body stand at any of the shows." said the Editorial Director of Coinslot at the time.
- Paul Terroni, Novomatic and Steve Sharp launched the revamped GBG's Strategy at ICE.
- GBG attended many meetings and provided feedback, championing the land-based requirements that were missing from the Ombudsman's draft Code of Conduct.
- Peter moderated a Panel session at the Global Age Assurance Standards Summit in Manchester.
- Introductory meeting with the British Holiday and Home Parks Association to explore partnership working opportunities.
- Positive face to face meeting with GBG's MSA members discussing a range of subjects including Customer Interaction and the Ombudsman.
- Agreed with Swan Events to fully support a pioneering land-based retail gaming event in Manchester in 2025 where we can show case our social responsibility credentials.

## **STRATEGIC AIM 2**

### **To lead on holding government to account in developing robust evidence-based gambling regulation**

- Responded to various consultations, following engagement with members, and in particular relevant GBG Working Groups.

Consultations included:

- Statutory levy (having attended a DCMS led Chatham House rules Q&A session on the levy)
- The Commission's autumn consultation on changes to the LCCP and RTS and on its consultation on financial penalties

Supplementary consultation from DCMS around the 80:20 proposals, engaging closely with the other trade bodies.

- The pre consultation phase(s) of the GMTS, also liaising closely and raising awareness and

triggering action with the other trade bodies.

- The Department of Business & Trade's consultation on changes to the Growth Duty. The Duty requires regulators to have regard to the desirability of promoting economic growth, alongside the delivery of protections set out in relevant legislation. Following the consultation regulators (including the Commission) are now required to report on how they are meeting the Growth Duty requirements.

- Heavily involved in a data collection exercise with other trade bodies to inform the DCMS' proposals around machines in bingo and AGCs.

- A substantial amount of work relating to the Commission's Gambling Survey for Great Britain, both before and after its publication in July

- Whilst at ICE, the GBG Hub hosted a meeting of the cross-industry GSGB Scrutiny Group, of which the GBG is a founding member.

- Attended the Commission's "Better Evidence, Better Outcomes" conference in March and raised questions about the Sturgis review of the GSGB which had just been published

- Raised concerns about the new GSGB methodology with DCMS and Andrew Rhodes and via trade press articles.

- Signed up to the cross-industry action plan for engaging with the Commission, DCMS and other stakeholders about the GSGB, with the ultimate goal of discrediting the current figures and forcing the Commission to review its approach and produce more accurate data.

- At the request of GBG, the Commission added the list of all respondents to its Regulatory Returns consultation to its response on the website. Andrew Rhodes committed to ensuring this will happen automatically with all future consultations.

- Engagement with DCMS, beyond the regular catch ups, included:

- Wrote to the then Minister requesting the department focus on a triennial review in the summer.

- In April, met with the then shadow DCMS Minister Stephanie Peacock

- Post General Election wrote welcoming the new Minister and attended a DCMS cross-industry meeting.

- Meeting scheduled with Stuart Andrew, DCMS Shadow Secretary of State and Louie French, DCMS Shadow Minister

## **STRATEGIC AIM 3**

### **To be the industry point of contact for local regulators**

- Networked with the national audience of local authority licensing officers at the Institute of Licensing (IOL) training conference in Stratford-on-Avon and delivered two sessions. Andrea Rushworth at Crown Leisure led a session focusing on the benefits that land based operators and businesses bring to the community and our high streets; whilst the GBG Exec delivered a session on the facts and fiction surrounding gambling.
- Fantastic feedback from the jointly hosted session with the IOL at ICE which was attended by licensing officers from London and the South East.
- Presented at various IOL regional meetings.

GBG articles featured in the IOL's magazines which are circulated to all Licensing Authorities in the Great Britain:

- o Engagement in Gambling Q&A (Adam Hodges, City Gaming)
- o Welcome Break/MSAs (Nick Jackson, Welcome Break)
- o Gambling and planning (Charlotte Meller)
- o Feature on LAs attending the GBG Hub at ICE (Charlotte Meller)
- o Customer engagement (Andrea Rushworth, Crown Leisure)

## **STRATEGIC AIM 4**

### **To be the innovative lead on technology to meet industry's challenges**

- Over 50 attendees were at a GBG organised Cashless Technical Event to discuss the technical challenges, practicalities and potential issues in the DCMS cashless proposals.
- The outcome of the GBG's cashless event was subsequently discussed and shared with both the cross-industry group on cashless and DCMS.
- The GBG cashless event marked the handing over of the GBG Technical Forum leadership from Rob Wheeler to Mark Gibson. Once again, we thank Rob for his years of loyal service and support to this highly important work on behalf of the industry.
- Site visit to see Link4Pay cashless TiTO transactions and GeWeTe systems in AGCs.
- Updated the GBG Code of Conduct for the Use of ATMs and ATRs in Licensed Gambling Premises to reflect the Commission's guidance on credit cards.
- Engagement with GBG Machine Group members prior to submitting a B3 testing strategy proposal for the Commission (they subsequently rejected as they believe the

current testing policy works well for them, and they have not factored a review into their budgeting).

- As a result of the GBG's engagement with the Commission on machine testing, the Commission issued clarification on re-skins testing requirements.

Reviewed the GBG website which now hosts information relating to all GBG Technical Standards and Protocols (with the latest protocols available in the Members' area of the website).

## COMMUNICATIONS

1. Throughout the year we had regular engagement and partnership working with a range of partners and stakeholders included but not limited to
  - DCMS
  - The Gambling Commission
  - The Chair of the Commission's Industry Forum
  - The Institute of Licensing (IOL)
  - The National Licensing Forum
  - Other gambling and hospitality trade bodies - bilaterally as well as via cross-industry groups on topics such as the Gambling Survey for Great Britain (GSGB), cashless and more recently the GMTS proposals
2. We invited engaging and varied guests to meetings. Speakers over the past year included
  - GBG Board:* Brad Enright, The Director of Strategy at the Commission
  - Kieran Sull, the Head of Land Based Gambling at DCMS
  - Simon Thomas, Executive Director of the Hippodrome Casino
  - David Forrest, Professor of Economics at Liverpool University
  - Nick Rust OBE, Chair of the Commission's Industry Forum
  - Kate Nicholls OBE, Chair of IOL and CEO of UKH  
  - GBG Members Meetings:* Chris Jones, Business Editor of Coinslot
  - Nick Rust, Chair of the Commission's Industry Forum
  - Synthesia demonstrating AI training tools
  - Paul Sculpher - Gaming Recruitment Solutions discussing recruitment challenges in the gambling sector.
3. Through our (12) newsletters and (17) bulletins we endeavoured to share pertinent information and news that Members are unlikely to pick up quickly through other channels and not just duplicate information that you will be receiving in Commission emails for example.

4. Members have also showcased their businesses and activity in communications to licensing authorities - such as the IOL's conferences and magazines which go out to all local licensing authorities in Great Britain. Sharing information and raising awareness of the positive things that happen in gambling premises has been well received by licensing officers (see Strategic Aim 3 below).
5. The GBG has placed regular features in Coinslot drawing attention to topical and controversial issues, as well as welcoming new GBG members. Over the past month we have also increased our presence and activity on LinkedIn having engaged a social media company to develop a plan to grow followers of the Gambling Business Group and attract new members. The posts have already generated an increase in approaches from potential new members

## **NEXT 12 MONTHS**

Turning to the next 12 months, the industry is facing another period of considerable and intense change. These are some of the known challenges we are expecting;

- Implementation of the 'White Paper' changes (consulted on by the previous government), although potentially there will be some adjustments to the proposals set out by DCMS in May 2024.
- Implementation of the changes consulted by the Commission earlier in the year.
- Further consultations from the Gambling Commission including on the Gaming Machine Technical Standards which, if the pre consultation proposals do not change, will have substantial impact on the industry and potentially lead to business closures and job losses.
- Creation and implementation of an Industry Ombudsman
- Introduction of a Statutory Levy
- More consultations from the DCMS..
- Continue working with the Industry Forum to help improve relations between the National Regulator and the Industry.
- Changes to licensing authority policy statements to reflect the Gambling Act Review amendments, including increase in premises licence fees.
- Ongoing implications of the Gambling Survey for Great Britain.
- More publications of gambling related research that will need to be 'fact checked' and challenged accordingly.

- Progression of Martyn's Law, (The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill) through Parliament which will have an impact on all premises, even if they fall below the proposed capacity thresholds.