

Buzz Bingo and Gambling Business Group to present update to IoL Conference

EVENTS

The **Gambling Business Group** will be joined by member **Buzz Bingo** at this year's IoL National Training Conference to deliver key updates on the gaming and gambling sector to over 400 local councillors and licensing officers. One of the most important licensing events on the annual calendar, the NTC brings a crucial platform for all industries on UK high streets to help shape local council licensing policies. So what's the Buzz in Stratford-upon-Avon in a fortnight's time?

Buzz Bingo and the Gambling Business Group will take to the stage at the Institute of Licensing's National Training Conference 2025 on 26-28 November, offering insight into the changing regulatory landscape for land-based bingo.

Leading the presentation - aptly titled "Kelly's Eye on Compliance: Keeping Bingo Above Board" - will be Heidi Hards, regulatory compliance lead at Buzz Bingo, whose extensive background spans the Gaming Board for Great Britain, the Gambling Commission, and the National Economic Crime Unit. She will explore how operators and licensing authorities can work collaboratively to protect local communities, support the night-time economy and deliver safe and fair gambling entertainment.

Alongside Hards will be her Buzz colleague Samuel Moore and Charlotte Meller of the Gambling Business Group, who will provide an update on the bingo consultation currently underway.

Meller added some detail to the session: "We'll be providing a practical look at LCCP compliance issues and solutions within a diversified bingo estate from 'High street style' to 'Traditional bingo halls'. It's so important that local authorities understand how much we are and can do to assist the development, safety and activity on our high streets. This session with Buzz will provide detailed measures as to how we can assist Local Authorities in



ensuring both the local area, night-time economy, and the customer can remain protected, whilst providing safe and fair gambling entertainment."

She added: "We will also include a discussion on proposed DCMS changes and the effect this may have."

And this part of the presentation will be one of key import: Meller will give delegates a clear understanding of the emerging proposals and the potential implications for both operators and local licensing enforcement teams. Together with the Buzz team, she will offer a joined-up perspective on operational compliance and policy development at a crucial moment for the sector.

But for Meller, it's more than pre-

sensation, it's collaboration and constant communication as well. She explained: "The NTC is a must attend event for the GBG. It's a vitally important means to engage with Licensing officers from around the country all in one arena and over three days. We have built a very strong relationship with the IoL over the years and the Conference is a vital part of that engagement, alongside detailed articles in their quarterly publications, speaking at regional meetings, and of course, our joint activity at shows such as ARE and previously ICE. It's a relationship that both GBG and the CEO of the IoL Paul Adams are determined to develop."

On the issue of development, one

need look no further than the NTC itself. The event has grown into one of the most important three days on the IoL calendar where local authorities are able to engage face to face with the people they licence, as well as those that specialise in licensing issues.

This month's conference features several other key gambling presentations, including contributions from legal expert Nick Arron at Poppleston Allen and regulatory specialist Dan Waugh who will explore the involvement of Public Health in gambling premises licence applications, such as the Royal Amusements v Sheffield City Council decision, and the use and misuse of health data and evidence, and impact on gambling policy decisions. Paddy Whurr of Woods Whurr LLP will explore the influence of local authority lobbying and possible challenges to 'aim to permit'. Jane Blade of the Gambling Commission will outline the rules surrounding gaming machines, including permitted numbers, machine types, display requirements and how to identify illegal machines. Ian Angus, also from the Gambling Commission, will provide a regulatory update covering developments from strategic board-level planning to operational oversight on the high street. And the keynote speech at the NTC will be delivered by UK Hospitality chair Kate Nicholls.

Hosted at the Crowne Plaza in Stratford-upon-Avon, the National Training Conference promises actionable insights from the industry's licensing and compliance experts.

Operator praises 'seamless' pool table delivery by Sam Leisure

POOL

Sam Leisure has received another glowing five-star review, this time from an operator impressed by the company's attentive service and smooth delivery process.

The customer highlighted clear communication and careful planning from the first enquiry through installation.

"Just taken delivery of our new pool table and the process from start to finish has been seamless. Contact from the office from day one, keeping me informed of delivery date and times. The install team of Luke and Dave were brilliant, they even drove down to Devon early to make sure they arrived before parking restrictions came into effect..." wrote Mark W.



High Score Arcades to close its Swindon venue after sharp decline in shopping centre footfall

ARCADES

High Score Arcades has announced it will close its venue in Swindon after just three years, following a marked decline in footfall to the Brunel Shopping Centre.

The site will hold its last day on 18 January 2026, with the operator citing "insurmountable challenges in the current retail landscape."

"This has been an extremely difficult decision to make as a company," said

head of operations Nicki Gamblin. "Since opening in Swindon in March 2023, the high street and shopping centre have changed dramatically, with some very well-known retailers leaving the area and a growing increase in empty units in the shopping centre."

And it's another significant warning sign to government, both national and local, that the UK high street is in trouble.

Gamblin was quick to lament the decision. "We would have loved to have stayed and help try to revive the area, but



unfortunately, despite our best efforts to remain in the Brunel Centre, it just isn't

feasible as a business. We want to thank everyone who has walked through our doors and made High Score Arcades Swindon a special place over the years."

Despite the closure, High Score confirmed it will continue to operate its venues in Bracknell, Farnborough, Newbury, Newport, Poole, Southampton, and Worcester.

"We will be running as normal until our closure," added Gamblin. "I urge people to come down and enjoy the games one last time."