

## GBG High Street Hub keeps industry issues at the centre of the regeneration debate

EVENTS

The Gambling Business Group's High Street Hub, which took up residence at this week's ARE Expo in Manchester, attracted its highest number of attendees since its launch four years ago. Over the two days, representatives from the industry, DCMS, local authorities and police visited the Hub to discuss the key issues facing the high street and the land-based gaming and gambling sector.

Charlotte Meller, General Manager of the GBG, coordinated the programme for the two days which included workshops on topics ranging from training and education to player protection and facial recognition. In addition, she noted, "there was a very informative discussion on how the land-based gambling sector can learn from the hospitality sector on how to change perceptions of gambling premises on the high street."

As well as the workshop discussions, the GBG hosted "an extremely positive breakfast get together" with the land-based betting sector to explore opportunities for their engagement in future shows.

Key to the two day pro-



gramme were a number of delegates who had made their way down from the Institute of Licensing's Gambling Conference which was held in the same venue. The GBG led circa 50 delegates on a tour around several of the exhibitors to view some of the technology and equipment used to protect consumers.

The groups of delegates, which included police, licensing officers, DCMS officials and licensing lawyers, were able to see how much innovation has gone into player protection.

Charlotte Meller

explained: "The feedback from delegates about the tour was really positive with some of them spending time after the conference and even coming back the next day to spend more time looking around. It's an ideal setting for them to ask questions and familiarise themselves with the equipment and technology they see when visiting gambling premises."

The Hub also reinforced the developing relationship between the GBG and Institute of Licensing which Meller considers one of the most important dialogues

on the trade body's network.

"Our work with the IoL is really important to us and I was delighted to be invited to participate in their conference, on a panel discussing topical issues, none more so than Gambling Impact Assessment, which both industry and the IoL have grave concerns about. The more detail you go into the proposed legislation amendment, the more unworkable it appears to be. Both ourselves and the IoL have similar positions on the GIA and the problems it will create."

## Work commences on £20m Southport Pier restoration as contractors arrive

PIER

Southport Pier has taken a step closer to reopening, as contractors arrive on site to begin pre-construction works for its £20m restoration.

The project, led by Sefton Council and carried out by AE Yates, aims to restore the landmark attraction, which has been closed since December 2022. Full works are expected to take up to 16 months, raising hopes the pier could welcome visitors



again next year.

"Contractors are on Southport Pier this week car-

rying out pre-construction works which are required as part of the set up for the Pier's

refurbishment," read a statement from Sefton Council. "The first task contractors will have is to assess the current condition of the existing paintwork on the structure's columns."

Officials warned further work may be needed depending on the findings, concluding: "If the condition is good it can be left as is, however if not we will also need to repaint the whole structure as part of the repair works."

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