



# Connaught Leisure

CONNAUGHT LEISURE LIMITED,  
CONNAUGHT HOUSE, 32-34 MARINE PARADE, WORTHING BN11 3QA.  
TELEPHONE: (01903) 210081 FAX: (01903) 210083  
email: [connaughtleisure@talk21.com](mailto:connaughtleisure@talk21.com)  
web: [www.connaughtleisure.com](http://www.connaughtleisure.com)

Mr Nick Gibb M.P.  
House of Commons,  
London  
SW1A 0AA

23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2004

Dear Mr Gibb

I am sure you are aware that the proposed Gambling Bill was recently published by the DCMS and the All Party Scrutiny Committee are due to deliver their recommendations to the Government by the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2004.

A recent report, produced by the Henley Centre (in association with consumer trend experts BrandDriver), analyses the 'Economic and Social Impacts of the proposed new Gambling Bill and raises a number of serious questions.

The Henley Centre Report indicates that the Bill as currently proposed fails to achieve the balance of necessary safeguards both socially and economically. It benefits two new market sectors (Vegas style casinos and new media) but hugely disadvantages much of the existing traditional UK markets of which we belong. It will also damage communities, limit customer choice and do nothing to regenerate areas most in need.

The Henley Report highlights:

- The Nation will gamble an extra £1 billion per year by 2010
- The Government will gain at least an extra £400 million in tax
- New style 'Vegas' type casinos will form a significant part of the UK market
- Internet, interactive and mobile phone gambling will grow

**BUT**

- Thousands of traditional family owned businesses will disappear
- Social clubs, pubs, bingo halls, seaside and inland arcades will suffer
- Significant redundancies in community based established businesses will offset employment gains in new sectors
- The number of problem gamblers will grow to over 700,00 by 2010

We operate as retailers of amusement and gaming machines in the Worthing, Littlehampton, Hove and Sydenham areas and employ 60 people. As our local MP we have decided to write to you to express some general and specific concerns that we have with the proposed Bill in its current format and that have been highlighted by the report.

Our concerns are:

- 1 We believe that opportunities and controls should be equally applied between all market sectors and not only favour the new emerging sectors. We will be facing restrictions relating to machine categories and stakes and prizes whilst new sectors will be offered a multiplicity of gaming products and virtually unlimited stakes and prizes.
2. The existing gaming industry has evolved successfully and responsibly over many years and the current measured regime is key to the relatively low levels of problem gambling experienced in the UK. The 0.8% quoted in the 2001 prevalence study is one of the lowest in the world. The Bill imposes insufficient restrictions upon the expansion of the new style casinos producing a very real risk of over-supply and a high risk of increased problem gambling.

Grandfather rights, stakes and prizes and switching of powers to Local Authorities as mentioned in our previous correspondence to yourself are also still concerns. We hope that, once again, you will be able to make representation to the Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP, Cabinet Minister ultimately responsible, Lord McIntosh of Haringey, the Minister with responsibility for the Bill and John Greenway MP, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

We do hope that you are able to help us by contacting the Minister and members of the Scrutiny Committee, and we look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat O'Neill', written over a light blue circular stamp or watermark.

Pat O'Neill  
**Managing Director**