

Hosbis Dewi Sant

Hyrwyddion Dewi Sant Cyf
Swyddfa Cofrestredig
Hosbis Dewi Sant
Ffordd yr Abaty
Llandudno LL30 2EN



St David's Hospice

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Cwmni Rhif Cofrestredig 3288579
Cofrestrwyd gyda Bwrdd Napschwerau Prydain Fawr
o dan Cefnwr 1A i Act Loteriau a Napschwerau 1976
Hywngddwr: J S A Ashwin, Prif Weithwddwr, Hosbis Dewi Sant

Company Registered No. 3288579
Registered with the Gaming Board for Great Britain
under Schedule 1A to the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976
Promotor: J S A Ashwin, Chief Executive, St David's Hospice

Mrs Betty Williams AS/MP
House of Commons
London SW1 0AA

9 January 2004

Dear Betty



I am writing to you to ask for your help regarding the new Gambling Bill. The draft Bill is currently before the joint committee chaired by Mr John Greenway, and the committee has commenced the pre-legislative scrutiny procedure. You will be well aware of the financial difficulties we at St David's Hospice are experiencing, and you will also be aware that the Hospice's weekly Lottery is a crucial fund-raising arm of the Hospice. I am most concerned that in its present form the Gambling Bill will adversely affect our Hospice Lottery.

We in the Hospice Lottery company operate strictly within the regime of the 1976 Lotteries and Amusements Act, and under the watchful eye of the Gaming Board for Great Britain. The Act and the Board impose harsh penalties for minor Lottery management infringements. The paperwork is onerous and costly, but we are happy to comply because registering with the Board demonstrates the integrity of our Lottery and also affords us protection from unlawful lotteries.

At present, 10,400 of the population of North West Wales and beyond play our Lottery game each week, and last year (2003) we contributed £253K to the Hospice. I venture to suggest that most of our members play the Lottery game in order to support the Hospice, and not in order to win- in fact, since we started in 1997, over £30K in prize money has been returned to the Hospice by way of donations- and we cannot consider it fair that commercial organisations will be able to operate schemes similar to ours, but in a way far less subject to scrutiny than our Lottery.

What I am particularly concerned about is the Government's intention in the new Bill to ignore the recommendations of the Gambling Review Body, the Gaming Board, and the Lotteries Council (of which we are a member) and permit commercial organisations to operate what is termed pseudo-lotteries or prize draws. Participants will have to demonstrate the depth of their general knowledge by answering a question such as "What is the capital of France?" or "Who works in a fire station?" and the winner is then chosen by a lottery. The organisers will not have to be registered; there will be no public protection; they will not have to pay at least 20% of their proceeds to a charity or good cause as at present, or indeed ANY of their proceeds; and there will be no public accountability.

Not only is this proposal unfair, it is also a potential threat to our fundraising. If the Government stands by its statement that "A scheme in which a degree of skill or knowledge is needed in order to secure a prize will not be capable of being a lottery" we fear being swamped by schemes operated by shops, supermarkets, bookmakers and direct mail promoters, all of which could take custom away from our fund-raising Lotteries.

All three Hospices in North Wales- St Kentigern's, Nightingale House, and St David's- operate weekly Lottery games and in each case the Hospice Lottery is integral to their fund-raising. Please speak up for us all as the new Bill goes through the various committee stages.

I am taking the liberty of copying this letter to our friends at the North Wales Weekly News.

Yr eiddoch yn gynnes,

Tom Williams
Lottery Co-ordinator

/lotbetty