

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals APPG



Minutes of Meeting

Extraordinary Meeting of the Fixed Odds Betting Terminals All Party Parliamentary Group

Date: Monday 19th March 2018

Time: 4:00pm

Location: Committee Room 6, Houses of Parliament

Chair: Carolyn Harris MP

Minutes taken by: Holly Ramsey, Interel UK

Minutes

- Carolyn Harris MP began the meeting by introducing herself as Chair of the Fixed Odds Betting Terminals APPG and noted that the APPG is committed to reducing the stake on FOBTs from £100 to £2. She then asked other members present to introduce themselves and say a few words if they wished.
- Sir Peter Bottomley MP introduced himself and noted his strong commitment in ensuring the Government makes the right decision in reducing the stake on FOBTs to £2.
- The Bishop of St Albans introduced himself and noted that he is involved in the campaign due to the damage that he has seen within communities, particularly poorer communities, as a result of these machines. He said that these machines have ruined many people's lives and that the time is right to reduce the stake on FOBTs to £2.
- Fiona Bruce MP introduced herself and said that she supports the campaign in all respects, but is particularly involved due to the impact FOBT machines are having on families.
- Lord Singh of Wimbledon introduced himself and said that the impact FOBTs are having on families and children is devastating.
- Lord Clement Jones introduced himself stating he was strongly supportive of a £2 stake on FOBTs.
- Councillor Anita Lower introduced herself as Deputy Chair of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board on the Local Government Association (LGA), which represents over 350 local authorities. She noted that the LGA's view has always been that a £2 stake is necessary to reduce harm. The LGA is also concerned about the clustering of betting shops on the high streets.
- Liz McInnes MP introduced herself and noted her support for the campaign.

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- Matt Zarb Cousin introduced himself from the Campaign for Fairer Gambling and said that as a former FOBT addict, it was heart-warming to see so much cross-party support in both House of Parliament for the campaign. He said that many people have felt powerless over these machines and the vulnerable are finally being listened to.
- Lord Foster of Bath introduced himself and noted his strong support and commitment to reducing the stake on FOBTs to £2.
- Ronnie Cowan MP introduced himself and noted the amount of money that is lost in his constituency to FOBTs. He said that money could be better spent within the community which would positively contribute to the local economy. He also said that he is proud of what the APPG and the wider campaign is doing, which is giving vulnerable people a voice.
- Stephen Timms MP then introduced himself also stating his commitment to a £2 stake.
- Carolyn Harris MP then explained the purpose of the meeting which was to discuss the next steps in the APPGs workplan in light of the Government nearing a decision on its Consultation on proposals for changes to Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures.
- She then noted how far the APPG had come in raising its concerns over the harm that FOBTs are causing to communities, and was proud that the issues were now firmly on the top of the political agenda.
- A short discussion was held on the Gambling Commission's announcement that day which recommended setting a limit on the stakes of £30 or less. The APPG noted its disappointment that the Commissions recommendation was not £2.
- Carolyn Harris MP then asked if anyone else present wanted to say anything and John White, Chief Executive of bacta aired his disappointment with the Gambling Commission's recommendation and said he was concerned that the recommendation didn't consider the broader community impacts of the machines.
- Leslie MacLeod Miller, LMM Associates, also shared his disappointment with the Gambling Commission's recommendation. He added that it is important for society to represent and protect the vulnerable.
- A short discussion was then held on potential next steps for the APPG to take as part of its workplan.
- Concluding the meeting, Carolyn Harris MP thanked all those in the room for attending and participating in the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.53pm.

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Members Present

Carolyn Harris MP
Ronnie Cowan MP
Sir Peter Bottomley MP
Fiona Bruce MP
Tom Watson MP
Liz McInnes MP
Stephen Timms MP
Judith Cummins MP
Kevin Brennan MP
Danielle Rowley MP
Lord Bishop of St Albans
Lord Clement Jones
Lord Foster of Bath
Lord Singh of Wimbledon

External Guests

Simon Thomas - Hippodrome Casino
John White - bacta
Linda Malcolm - bacta
Parveen Sharma – bacta
John Stergides - Electrocoin
Paul Terroni - Novomatic
Zane Mersich, Novomatic
Byron Evan – Praesepe
Matt Zarb-Cousin - Campaign for Fairer Gambling
Leslie McLeod Miller - LMM Associates
Rachel Senior - Assistant to Lord Bishop of St Albans
Kirsty Gough - Parliamentary Assistant for Stuart McDonald MP
Councillor Anita Lower, Local Government Association
Rebecca Johnson - Local Government Association
Kate Langston - Money and Mental Health
Niamh McDade – RSPH
Martin Kettle – Church of England
Warwick Hawkins – Faith in Society
Ewen Dymott – Hanover
Toby Ward – Hanover
Oliver Hogan – Cebr
Beatriz Cruz – Cebr
Katherine Morgan - Interel UK (Secretariat)
Tosin Adedayo - Interel UK (Secretariat)
Holly Ramsey - Interel UK (Secretariat)
Michael McLaughlin - Interel UK (Secretariat)
George McGregor - Interel UK (Secretariat)
Sonia Kharaud – Interel UK (Secretariat)