



3 Christopher Way

Emsworth

PO10 7QZ

22 February 2016

Dear Ms Haywood

Re: Planning Application APP/16/00089

I have already submitted an on-line objection to this to this application. As a further comment, I enclose newspaper cuttings from

The Mail on Sunday 21 Feb 2016

The Daily Mail 22 Feb 2016.

The articles relate to betting shops and in particular to

- the widespread use of gambling machines in these establishments and the ease with which people are encouraged to bet beyond their means
- the large profits generated by these machines.

These articles underline my previous objection - this is not the sort of establishment that suits Emsworth's character.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Roger Robinson.

Roger Robinson

Huge profit of bookies' machines

By **SARAH BRIDGE**

BRITAIN'S biggest bookmakers are set to reveal that they are now making more than £1,000 in profit every week from each of their fixed-odd betting machines.

The controversial terminals, dubbed the 'crack cocaine of the high street', allow customers to play dozens of Las Vegas-style roulette and slot machines games, betting up to £100 on the spin of a roulette wheel every 20 seconds.

There are almost 35,000 such machines in Britain's 8,800 betting shops, with numbers capped at four per shop. Introduced in 2001 to take advantage of a change in betting tax, they lose British gamblers £1.7 billion of the £46 billion they wager on them.

The two biggest bookmakers, William Hill and Ladbrokes, have half such machines. In 2014 Ladbrokes had 8,966, each making an average £937 in profit a week. However, in the first half of 2015 that figure had leapt to £1,022. Just ten years ago the profit was £545.

The revenue from such terminals now far outweighs that from over-the-counter sports bets and there are signs that growth is coming from games that have a top stake of £2 but a lower rate of return, so players lose more long-term.

The industry now obliges users to register before gambling more than £50, but the Government has yet to respond to calls to reduce the maximum stake from £100.

By James Tozer

A GAMBLING addict who ran up huge debts killed himself on the day that he had blown another £500 on so-called 'crack cocaine gaming machines'.

Yesterday the father of carpenter Ryan Myers, 27, demanded action to limit the damage the fixed-odds devices can cause.

John Myers, 56, also revealed his son – a heavy user of gambling websites – was still being sent offers for free bets after his death.

'I hate fixed-odds betting terminals with a passion,' said Mr Myers, who blames them for pushing Ryan over the edge. 'You can lose hundreds in minutes and people get hooked – they should cap how much you can spend.'

The Daily Mail has long campaigned against the negative influence of the terminals, which have helped push up bookmakers' profits over the past year.

Mr Myers, who was engaged to be married, ran up gambling debts of

'He had lost all his money again'

thousands of pounds and had resorted to taking out a payday loan to help pay them back. He had also contacted gambling websites asking them to bar him in an attempt to curb his spending.

But his family were unaware of his problems, saying that a few days before his death he had been laughing and joking as usual on holiday with them.

But after losing another £500 on a fixed-odds machine he left a suicide note saying how much he loved his family and fiancée, and that he had transferred his last £300 for her to his father's account.

An inquest ruled he took his own life at his home in Liverpool in May 2014.

His father, a car factory supervisor on Merseyside, said Ryan's death showed the damage that could be caused by fixed-odds terminals, and has started a petition for tougher restrictions on betting adverts.

Mr Myers said yesterday that the day his son died soon after their family holiday 'was the worst day of my life'.

He added: 'We just couldn't under-

Gambler, 27, killed himself hours after he blew £500 on 'crack' machine



Debt: Ryan Myers with his father John

stand, but he had lost all his money again that day and felt he'd let everybody down. He must have felt ashamed he couldn't control it.'

Mr Myers is furious that his son was still getting messages after his death offering him free bets because he had not gambled online for a while.

'We got access to his email account and there were messages from websites offering him a free £10 bet if he started playing again – it's disgusting,' he said.

'I'm not here to tell people how to spend their money, but the problem

now is the industry is taking over town centres and people's lives.' Introduced in 2001 when Labour was in power and regulated by Tessa Jowell's 2005 Gambling Act, fixed-odds betting terminals in bookies' shops allow users to bet up to £300 a minute on games such as roulette and blackjack.

Ladbrokes makes more than £1,000 a week per machine – up 9 per cent in just a year. Paddy Power and Coral have also seen profits rise.

Last week the Daily Mail revealed how the NHS is resorting to prescribing a drug normally used to help alcoholics and heroin addicts to treat problem gamblers.

The Association of British Bookmakers said: 'We deeply sympathise with Mr Myers and his family. The industry takes responsible gambling very seriously and we have introduced new measures to help tackle problem gambling.'

These include a code of practice for betting shops and banning adverts for terminals in windows.

■ For confidential support call the Samaritans on 116123 or visit a local Samaritans branch, see www.samaritans.org for details.



By **OLGA CRAIG**

Mesmerising horror of watching a middle-class accountant lose £3,000 in an hour on crack cocaine gambling machines



PA, DAVID POOLE

PERCHED on a high-backed stool, a tall man with mousey blond hair sits hunched over a blinking screen, his face twisted in concentration. The William Hill betting shop around the corner from Victoria station in Central London is alive with noise, but Harry is in a world of his own, mesmerised by the flashing screen, his fingers frantically tapping out bets on a sea of digitised green 'felt'.

Tensely, he watches the ball whizz around the on-screen roulette wheel and land with a synthetic clunk. He grimaces. Another loss.

He slides off the stool and disappears to the counter at the front of the shop, wallet in hand. Moments later he is back and, hunched over once more, with a fresh cash loaded on to his terminal, begins punching random numbers again. Another loss.

On the screen, two messages flash up. One says: 'Set Your Limits.' The second proffers: 'No Limits Set.' Irritation flickers across Harry's features as he jabs the latter.

By the time he stops, an hour later, he admits ruefully that he has racked up a £3,000 loss. 'On top of the rest.'

'I've maxed out all my cards on these machines,' he says. 'The card I'm

I've maxed out all my cards on these machines

using is the emergency one my wife keeps in a drawer in the kitchen. She doesn't know I took it this morning.

'I should be back at work by now but I'm going to have to try to arrange a quick loan to cover these losses. I'm going to have to go down the pay-day borrowing route. There's no way the bank is going to give me any more.'

That might have been 37-year-old Harry's intention but, three hours later, I recognise him walking into yet another betting shop just yards away. This time the married accountant and father of three doesn't want to talk. He wants to play.

Nervously wiping his palms on his trousers, he stuffs £20 notes, one after the other, into the cash slot. As he walks away, he looks embarrassed.

'Tomorrow,' he says with mock optimism. 'Got to keep chasing those losses. Then it will be the big one.'

WELCOME to modern-day Britain's betting shops. Once these were grubby, down-at-heel outlets, housing little more than tatty betting slips, stubby pencils and endless horseracing.

Today they have been transformed into glass and shiny steel emporiums where football and horseracing have declined in favour of the new scourge of Britain's burgeoning gambling addiction: Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.

Bookmakers across Britain house almost 35,000 of these FOBTs, which made a whopping profit of £1.7 billion for companies such as Paddy Power, Ladbrokes, Coral and William Hill from October 2013 to March 2015 (compared to the £1.4 billion that football, dog and horseracing raise altogether).

This week, two of the largest bookmakers, William Hill and Ladbrokes, are set to announce that for the first time each FOBT machine is

pulling in £1,000 a week, the first time it has reached four figures.

But while the terminals are filling the coffers of the gambling industry, it is spelling misery for thousands of gambling addicts.

Such are their obsessive appeal that FOBTs have been dubbed the crack cocaine of gambling and campaigners have been calling urgently for tighter controls.

Meanwhile, the numbers involved have been increasing. According to GamCare, which raises awareness about problem gambling, a quarter of the country's gambling addicts are hooked on FOBTs, suggesting that since the terminals were introduced in 2001, they have spawned 150,000 addicts in Britain.

So widespread is the problem, that the NHS is prescribing addicts Naltrexone, a drug used to help alcoholics and heroin addicts. Each prescription costs £280 a year.

Despite the appeal of FOBTs, as Matt Zarb-Cousin from the Campaign For Fairer Gambling, points out: 'The harsh fact is that regular players never win. But the high stakes can encourage players to chase losses, snaring them in a trap that can lead to debt, family breakdown and crime.'

It isn't difficult to recognise the lure that the quickfire high stakes present. Though FOBTs offer a variety of games, easily the most popular is roulette.

In contrast to the camaraderie among punters betting on dogs and horses, FOBT addicts are a breed apart. Secretive, highly protective of their 'patch' – since each bookmaker is allowed only four machines per premises – and, oblivious to the banter around them, they play fast and furiously.

And the stakes are high. The games allow players to stake up to £100 every 20 seconds, making it possible to lose £3,000 in ten minutes.

BACK in the bookies, Harry's seat has been taken by Marcia, a young mum from a less affluent background.

Though reluctant to speak, she tells me she is due to pick up her twin girls from their childminder in an hour but has popped in to play roulette 'for half an hour'. In silence, she slips a loyalty card into the machine.

Like Harry, she has used a debit card to put money on the machine.

REFORMED ADDICT:

Justyn Larcombe with his former wife Emma and their two sons



Feeding FOBTs with credit cards is banned.

Initially, she won't let me see the screen, but it's clear that she is having a winning streak.

As her half-hour expands to an hour, she phones a friend, asking if they can pick up her children as she has 'a bit of a domestic crisis'.

Unlike the traditional amusement arcades, where profits were a pittance compared to those generated by FOBTs, there are no sounds to signal a jackpot and no rush of falling coins.

All of these, the industry has realised, simply slow down play. Winners cash in by printing out paper slips and exchanging them for cash with a cashier.

Part of their addictive appeal is the fact that over the short-term they can let you win. FOBTs offer a return for the punter of between 88 and 97.6 per cent – or put it another way, the addict will inevitably lose.

It is easy to see their appeal

for money laundress – a super-fast way of cleaning thousands of pounds of dirty money at a cost of only a few pence in the pound.

It is believed fauststers pay cash into the terminal, making low-risk bets that involve small relative loss,

I wasn't a husband or a father I was always betting

then withdraw most of the proceeds as a voucher which is exchanged for cash at the shopcounter.

Available in bookies open seven days a week, open from 8am until 10pm, FOBTs re designed, says clinical psychologist Anna Henry, who treats gambling addicts, to foster addiction. 'Basically the

industry has created casinos in the High Street,' she says. 'These machines isolate the player, there is nothing to distract him from that screen. Its speed is to encourage frenzy. And thus more spending.'

'When the Labour Government liberalised the gambling laws, they paved the way for these machines to be installed in bookies. But frankly, the Tories haven't helped either.'

Last year, the Government increased the tax on FOBTs from 20 per cent to 25 per cent and last summer, when 93 councils lobbied for the maximum stake to be restricted to £2 (currently it is £100) it turned them down.

A REDUCTION on this scale, says Justyn Larcombe, would go a long way towards alleviating the problem. And he should know.

Justyn, 45, a former Army major who became an insurance broker with Lloyds earning a six-figure salary, lost his home, his family and racked up debts of £750,000 through

his addiction to FOBTs. Today, his life is back on track. In 2012, his wife Emma walked out, taking the couple's two sons when she discovered the debt. Not only had he squandered the equity in their large home, he had spent all her savings and sold all their valuable possessions.

He had also gambled away savings and borrowed under false pretences from his mother and best friend.

'I wasn't a husband, I wasn't a father, I wasn't an employee,' says Justyn, who has documented his addiction in a book, *Tails I Lose*. 'I was just betting all the time.'

Emma believed Justyn when he said he had resigned from his job, when he had been sacked for placing bets using his corporate bank card. When she decamped to her mother's home, Justyn's addiction spiralled out of control. Dressed in shabby tracksuits, he gambled all day. He lived off a sack of potatoes and pawned everything he could find.

'I sold my tailored suits for the price of a tea towel and I gambled away my son's Christening silver and a Bible engraved with his name. I genuinely believed that the next roulette spin would win back the lot.'

Without the help of Gamblers Anonymous, Justyn believes he might have ultimately taken his own life. 'I know plenty who have, over gambling debts,' he says.

that one in five machines have been vandalised. The bookmakers rarely press charges, however, as the culprits are usually high-spending customers who are welcomed back.

Juanita shows me a leaflet telling punters that if they think they are developing a problem they should consult the staff. 'What am I supposed to do?' she shrugs. 'I have no training. And there are notices telling people to take breaks, that sort of thing. Would you fancy telling that lot to take a break? Or ask them if they are developing a problem?'

She casts a glance at three young men who have just come in, clearly determined to dominate the terminals. 'They will be trouble later, I can tell,' she predicts.

While the Association of British Bookmakers insists the machines have not fostered a huge increase in addiction, Simon Perfitt, 59, says they are ignoring a ticking time bomb. A recovering FOBT addict, Simon blew £200,000 in ten years.

Before he became hooked, he drove a Porsche and earned £55,000 in e-commerce. Feeding FOBTs up to £3,000 a day, he lost his job and ended up on benefits.

'Those Fixed Odds Betting Terminals destroy you,' he says. 'I didn't start betting until I was 45. I went in at a friend's urging and that was all it took. After that, roulette was all I thought of. All day, every day.'

'My entire personality changed. I became introverted, isolated and secretive. I made endless excuses to avoid my family and friends.'

'The bookies,' he explains, 'have taken advantage of a loophole in the tax system. They have successfully argued that feeding money into a FOBT is like betting on a horserace since the "event" you are gambling on is happening on a computer server elsewhere. This allows them to set a maximum stake of £100.'

Simon, from Dudley in the West Midlands, sought help and hasn't gambled for three years. 'FOBTs are so, so dangerous,' he adds. 'In a few spins, in a few minutes, you can lose hundreds of pounds. Then you can't resist chasing the losses. And that's where it all starts.'

Additional reporting: Sarah Bridge

BOOKIES MAKING £1,000 A WEEK – FROM EVERY FIXED-ODDS MACHINE

Financial Mail, Page 78